

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

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Podestay

New Schools Venture Fund
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Redwood City, CA 94063
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Kimberly C. Smith
President

*PHOTO - NEED TO MAKE
SOME CONTACT; see
what they're doing, whether
we can borrow
some under to promote - PK*
newschools

*CM
4/25/00*

newschools

Public education:
Our most important business

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

To: ~~A~~ Loretta M.
Eric L.
Amy R.
Paul G.
Stephanie C.

FR JOSH G.

Feb 7 → web site
charts
for education
tour.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 21, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: JOHN PODESTA

00 APR 21 PM 2:37

FROM: LORETTA UCELLI
JOSH GOTTHEIMERCC: JOE LOCKHART
BRUCE REED
GENE SPERLING
KAREN TRAMONTANO
MINYON MOORE
STEPHANIE STREETT

SUBJECT: WEBSITE CHAT SERIES

Earlier this year, on the heels of your successful DLC Internet Town Hall Meeting, we proposed a series of online chats – dubbed “Webside Chats” – that would allow you to speak directly to the American people via the Internet. By utilizing the latest technology, these chats would offer you the opportunity to target specific constituency groups – including students, mothers, and older Americans -- to discuss your agenda, accomplishments, and other relevant issues.

To date, you have used the Internet on several occasions as an effective form of communication. In November, you held an online town hall meeting at George Washington University; last Christmas, you purchased gifts online from the Oval Office; in January, you responded to electronic mail following your State of the Union Address; and in February, you gave your first online interview. Following that event, you asked us to propose other online opportunities for you to consider.

After conferring with your press and policy offices, we suggest that you conduct a series of Webside Chats during the next several months. Each chat would be conducted in an interview format, and would address a specific topic. You would be joined by a reporter or media representative who would moderate the discussion, and present you with questions sent by the public via electronic mail. The press office would determine the proper media agency to conduct the online interview, and help recommend the topic, target audience and venue for each virtual discussion.

We would like to schedule a Webside Chat at an elementary school during your School Reform Tour early next month. We are also considering options for other chats, including one on the culture of violence, and one targeted at older Americans. After the first chat, our office, in conjunction with the press office, will determine the best way to proceed.

I. EDUCATION

We suggest you hold your first Webside Chat as part of your School Reform Tour next month. This would offer you the opportunity to address education issues, and to demonstrate the power of technology in the classroom. Your Administration has introduced several initiatives to help connect classrooms and libraries to the Internet, giving them access to information with the click of a mouse. It's time to take full advantage of that progress, by plugging into this network yourself from a charter school, and "chatting" directly with students about college opportunities, interactive learning, and other challenges young people face in their schools and communities.

We propose that the Channel One Network conduct the first interview. Channel One is a cable television and Internet company with programming that reaches 12,000 middle, junior and high schools, 8 million students, and 400,000 educators.

Location/ Date: At a middle school, during your School Reform Tour early next month.

Would you like to hold a Webside Chat during your School Reform Tour? ☒ Yes ☐ No

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

II. SENIORS

140
145
In celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Medicare this July, we suggest you conduct a Webside chat targeted at the senior population. In your online discussion, you could address issues important to older Americans, such as Social Security, Medicare, prescription drugs, and other health care issues.

Seniors are the fastest growing group of Internet users. By providing advice from health advice to safety tips, the Internet offers them an opportunity to easily tap resources that have long been out of their reach.

We suggest that AARP.org, the Internet division of AARP, conduct this online interview. AARP is the largest organization representing the interests of older Americans. AARP.org and its monthly magazine, *Modern Maturity*, have an audience of more than 34 million members.

III. KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM VIOLENCE

As part of our ongoing discussion, we suggest you conduct a Webside Chat on issues regarding the culture of violence. We believe that it would be most effective to target this discussion to mothers, a group that traditionally has been most concerned with the recent rash of violence in our country. The Internet has become an essential tool for mothers, offering them information on parenting, as well as an at-home outlet for research and conversation on child-related issues.

We suggest that Oxygen.com host this interview. Oxygen is the first combined online and on-air network designed to serve women, and therefore would present a logical connection to this issue.

IV. DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER BLAIR

You have already agreed to conduct an Internet conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair this summer. The DLC is hosting and organizing the event. The Prime Minister will be online in London, and you will be at a site in Washington, DC. While the topic has yet to be determined, we suggest you address the history and principles of the Third Way, and your vision of democracy in the 21st Century.

→
OK
in summer, as
other interviews?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 21, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: JOHN PODESTA

FROM: LORETTA UCELLI
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the vice letter
to S. Friedman
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A NATIONAL TEST FOR NEW TEACHERS SOUGHT BY UNION

TOUGH STANDARDS URGED

Reform Advocates Hope Better
Preparation Will Improve
Esteem of Profession

By KATE ZERNIKE

Facing a growing national movement to impose tougher standards on teachers, the American Federation of Teachers, the nation's second-largest teachers union, today will propose a national test and rigorous new standards for those who want to become teachers.

The proposal, a departure from traditional union opposition to increased teacher testing, comes amid heightened worries from educators, parents and politicians about the declining quality of the nation's teaching force and those entering it.

About a third of all teachers lack a major or minor in the subjects they teach, meaning that about four million children every year learn math from someone who may not have taken a math class since high school. While most states have teacher tests, most require only the equivalent of a high school education to pass, in part because unions have blocked efforts to set the bar higher.

Some two million teachers are due to be hired or replaced nationwide over the next decade, with many states struggling to find enough qualified people to lead their classrooms.

The union said it wanted to take advantage of that opportunity, and was making its recommendations after two years of studying teacher preparation programs. The proposal would not affect current members.

"We've taken an honest and hard, critical look at what's out there, and most of it is terribly inadequate," said Sandra Feldman, president of the one-million-member union. "If we could get folks to follow this prescription, we would have a much rosier future."

The union has consistently talked about the need to improve the nation's teaching force, but has never before proposed or endorsed such a high series of hurdles.

The proposal would require that prospective teachers pass two tests, one after their sophomore year in college and a second before entering the classroom. Addressing the common complaint that teachers learn too much pedagogy and not enough subject matter — that is, they learn how to teach but not what to teach — the test would require all prospective

teachers to demonstrate college-level knowledge in math, science, English, history and geography.

Unions have long said that tests are a poor measure of the gifts that make a good teacher. But ultimately, Ms. Feldman said, tests and tougher standards can give the teaching profession the same rigor, and the same status, that board and bar exams give doctors and lawyers. With schools in almost every state subjecting students to tougher tests, she said, it only makes sense to demand the same of teachers.

While the union proposal comes late to the bid for better teachers, it also adds a crucial voice to the lawmakers and parents who have called for reforms.

"People from the outside need permission to talk about teacher quality without it seeming like bashing teachers," said Kati Haycock, executive director of the Education Trust, a Washington-based nonprofit group that has studied teacher preparation and advocates for poor and minority students. "When the second-largest national teachers union talks about teacher quality, it gives other people permission to talk about it, and to do something."

Any attempt to adopt such a national program will be bucking a long tradition of strong local control over education.

Still, Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University, said the proposal would give impetus to about 39 states that are now considering some form of tougher teacher standards.

"Several states were afraid to act for fear unions wouldn't support them," Mr. Levine said. "Given the huge number of teachers we have who are uncertified in math and science and English as a Second Language, this is a godsend."

The National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union, said yesterday that it had not yet seen the report and so would not comment even on whether it supported the notion of a national test.

The report also calls for creating a national core curriculum for what teachers need to know, much like the standards that states have begun using to test students over the past few years. New teachers in California, then, would be held to the same standards as those in Connecticut, and teachers certified in any one state could teach in any other. The lack of portability for current teacher certificates, the union report says, has made it hard for many states to recruit new teachers.

The report, "Building a Profession: Strengthening Teacher Preparation and Induction," also calls for raising entrance requirements for teacher education programs, demanding that students have a college grade point average of 2.75 initially, with a requirement for a 3.0 average passed in over time.

Prospective teachers would also have to have a major in the subject they wanted to teach. The proposal would also expand teacher education programs to five years, with the fifth year devoted to observing and work-

ing in schools under the tutelage of more experienced mentors.

Who would administer the test, and what the standards would be, remained to be worked out. But the union suggested the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, a private group that for about a decade has offered intensive and rigorous certification for teachers who want to achieve master status, or an organization like the Educational Testing Service, which administers college entrance exams.

Educational Testing Service administers the Praxis exam, the teacher test considered relatively basic and used by many states. Most states also set a low passing grade, allowing those who leave even half the questions blank to pass.

Last year, a report on teacher tests by the Education Trust said most state exams for elementary school teachers require only 9th or 10th grade knowledge to pass, and those for high school teachers require only about an 11th or 12th grade education.

Many teachers lack preparation for the subjects they teach.

Some have feared that requiring tougher tests will hurt states' efforts to recruit enough teachers. While the Education Trust praised Massachusetts for its rigorous teacher exam, 59 percent of prospective teachers failed the first test, given two years ago. In California, where an initiative to reduce class size required thousands of new teachers, schools in Los Angeles ended up giving "emergency certification" to about 2,100 teachers who had no practical experience and had not passed a basic credentialing test.

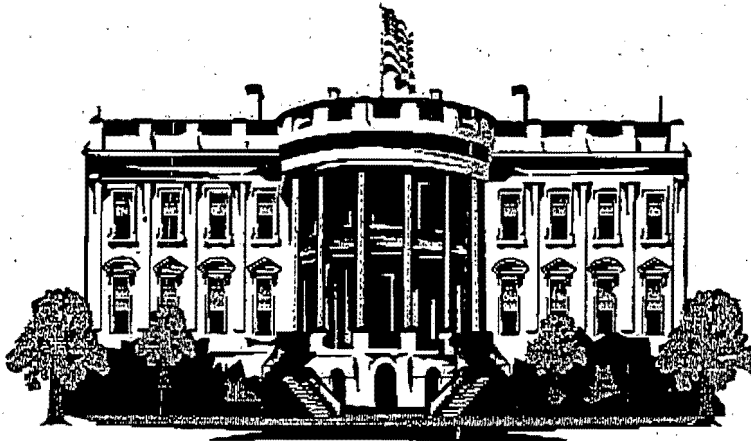
But advocates of reform hope that making it harder to get in can improve the esteem of a profession long plagued by the snide adage, "Those who can't do, teach," and thereby attract more, and more qualified, candidates.

"What it shows is that unions care about teacher quality, and that's a statement they need to make," Mr. Levine of Teachers College said. "There are too many politicians out there who regard unions as the single largest obstacle to reform."

The report makes no mention of higher salaries, a more common union proposal. But Ms. Feldman, the union president, said that it was clear that if teachers were asked to meet higher standards they would have to be paid better.

Reform advocates, too, say there is still room for more far-reaching changes. Suggesting tests for prospective teachers, Mr. Levine said, is a low risk for the union, because it does not affect any members.

"Is this the whole loaf? No," he said. "There ought to be assessment of teachers throughout a career, in the same manner there is in other professions."



FAX COVER SHEET

ERIC LIU
DEPUTY ASSISTANT FOR DOMESTIC POLICY
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20502
PHONE: 202/456-5565 • FAX: 202/456-2878

DATE: 3/28/2000 NUMBER OF PAGES (INCL. COVER): 2

FROM: Anna Richter

TO: Karin Kullman & Andy Rotherham

FAX: 67431 & 65581

COMMENTS: Official Teach For America Invitation

The document accompanying this Facsimile Transmission Sheet is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. This message contains information which may be privileged, confidential or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible for delivering the message to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, dissemination, copying or distribution, or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately at the number above.

One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

TEACHFORAMERICA

March 9, 2000

President Bill Clinton
The White House
The Office of Scheduling & Advance
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton,

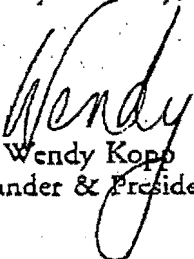
I am writing to invite you to speak with the 1,000 Teach For America alumni expected to attend our Tenth Anniversary Alumni Summit, to be held at Columbia University the weekend of May 20-21.

As you know, our alumni are already proving themselves to be real leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity and improve the quality of life in under-resourced areas. Through this Summit, we aim to inspire them to do still more, with still greater urgency. Jonathan Kozol and Marian Wright Edelman will be sharing their thoughts with corps members, and we are also putting together informative sessions on topics ranging from economic development to education reform.

We are very hopeful that you will be able to speak at some point during the course of the Summit. Your passion for social justice and insight into issues of social welfare would be a real inspiration for all of us. It would be particularly meaningful to have join us at this particular juncture, as we will be celebrating ten years of achievement and launching a new decade of growth.

We would be deeply honored to have you join us, and I think you would greatly enjoy a discussion with this tremendous group. If this is something you are interested in doing, we can work with your schedulers to identify a time that would work with your schedule and our agenda.

Very Sincerely,


Wendy Kopp
Founder & President



AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841
125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53702
(608) 266-3390 TDD (608) 267-2427 FAX (608) 267-1052
Internet Address: www.dpi.state.wi.us

John T. Benson
State Superintendent

Steven B. Dold
Deputy State Superintendent

December 21, 1999

cc : Bruce Reed

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President
United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

*Andy -
A helpful leak
BR*

Dear Mr. President:

As the chief state school officer in Wisconsin, I sincerely thank you for your continuing and steadfast support of public education. I fully recognize that the remarkably good news that was contained in the recent federal education appropriations would not have happened without your personal and determined involvement. School children throughout Wisconsin will benefit from your commitment to improving the education that they receive.

I am writing now because of published reports, really rumors, that consideration is being given to holding your FY 2001 federal education budget proposal to FY 2000 levels. ~~While I don't believe the accuracy of those reports, they must receive a response simply because the stakes are so high.~~ Throughout your Presidency, you have been an advocate for improving the quality of our schools. I can't imagine that you would change or lessen that commitment so close to the end of your last term.

As a goal, I support the framework for federal education funding that has been proposed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Although it may not be feasible for you to adopt that framework in your FY 2001 budget, I hope that you will make significantly increased investments in education.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

John T. Benson
State Superintendent

C: John D. Podesta, Chief of Staff to the President ✓
Bruce N. Reed, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
David Beier, Chief Domestic Policy Adviser
Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of management and Budget
Gordon M. Ambach, Executive Director, CCSSO

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.

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Reed
any good ideas
Filer?

In America

BOB HERBERT

The Teacher Crisis

It used to be fairly easy to get large numbers of decent teachers for the public schools.

In the 1930's and 40's, young people shaped by the harsh lessons of the Depression were happy to have a steady job that was respectable, even though the pay was low. In the 1950's and 60's, when the baby boomers flooded the schools, women moved en masse into teaching. Few other professional options existed. Women who wanted a career became, for the most part, teachers or nurses.

In the late 60's and early 70's, a wave of men went into teaching. These were young, draft-eligible guys anxious for a deferment that would keep them out of Vietnam. Only one out of five remained in the profession for the long haul, but that 20 percent was a significant boost to the ranks of teachers nationwide.

Those more or less natural sources of teachers have long since vanished, and the U.S. now finds itself in the midst of a teacher shortage that is threatening the viability of school systems from coast to coast.

"This shortage of competent teachers is one of the most glaring problems we face right now," said Senator Charles Schumer, who plans to introduce federal legislation that is

A senator's plan to ease the shortage.

designed to encourage more young people to become teachers.

"We've entered a whole new type of economy in which ideas are the generators of wealth, of jobs and growth," Mr. Schumer said in an interview last week. "But the No. 1 storm cloud on the horizon is the lack of a young, high-quality, dedicated group of professionals to teach our children."

Referring to the teacher shortage in a speech yesterday, the U.S. secretary of education, Richard Riley, said, "It's gotten so bad that some schools have been forced to put any warm body in front of a classroom."

The shortage will only grow worse over the next decade as tens of thousands of teachers reach retirement age. It is estimated that two million new teachers will have to be hired during that period. But how many first-rate teachers can you reasonably be expected to recruit when the average starting salary is roughly \$25,000 a year?

Senator Schumer noted that the greatest need for new teachers is in the areas of math and science. School systems find it particularly difficult to recruit competent men and women in those disciplines because they can so easily command much higher salaries and much better working conditions elsewhere.

"The shortages in math and science are desperate in all but the wealthiest districts," said Mr. Schumer. "So of the 40,000 math or science teachers we needed last year, only 3,000 had the necessary math or science training."

The shortage over all is so acute that many school districts are hiring just about anybody with a college degree. "They get into a classroom," said Mr. Schumer, "and they don't know what to do. They don't know how to teach."

A number of states and local districts are offering enticements to young people to go into teaching. Gov. George Pataki of New York has put together a tuition subsidy plan, and Gov. Gray Davis of California is proposing, among other things, cash bonuses and low-interest home loans.

Senator Schumer's proposal, which he is calling "The Marshall Plan for Public School Teachers," would offer a variety of federal incentives to potential teachers across the country. The key elements are as follows:

- All undergraduate student loans would be forgiven for anyone who becomes certified and teaches for five years.

- The federal government would provide a \$5,000-a-year salary supplement for teachers who pass a special test in math and science given by the National Academy of Sciences.

- The federal government would cover 75 percent of the cost of a cadre of master teachers who would serve as trainers and mentors for new teachers.

- Federal employees who retire and go into teaching would be permitted to begin receiving their pensions as soon as they left their federal post. Mr. Schumer said he would encourage local governments and private businesses to adopt a similar policy.

The senator said his program would cost about \$15 billion over 10 years.

"People are beginning to see education as an important issue," he said, "but they don't yet see this teacher shortage as a real crisis. It is."

Andy

December 6, 1999

Mr. Paul D. Houston
Executive Director
American Association of
School Administrators
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209-1813

Dear Paul:

Thank you for your letter regarding federal education programs. I'm sorry I was unable to respond sooner. I value your insights on this important issue, and I have forwarded your correspondence to members of my staff in the Domestic Policy Council.

I share your concern about the discrepancy in academic performance between our poorest children and those from middle and upper-class backgrounds. I firmly believe that my Administration's Elementary and Secondary Education Act proposal would improve academic performance at high-poverty schools. By investing in what works and by stopping support for what does not, my proposal would fundamentally change the way we spend federal funds on education. It would hold states and school districts accountable for the academic achievement of all their students by requiring states and school districts to turn around their failing schools, phase out the use of unqualified teachers, issue report cards to parents on how their schools are doing, institute fair and effective discipline codes, and end social promotions the right way -- through early identification and extended learning time to help all children meet challenging standards. I agree that we must continue to target federal money to those students with the most need, and my reauthorization proposal would do so.

Additionally, my ESEA proposal includes a reduction in class sizes in the early grades -- a step that would have a significant impact on the education of our poorest children. With smaller classes, teachers would be able to better tailor

their lessons to the needs of their students and give each child more individualized attention. Furthermore, reduced class sizes would ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of the third grade. As you know, learning becomes increasingly difficult for those students who do not master reading by the end of third grade, and this phenomenon is a main factor in the gap in academic performance among our children.

As we continue our efforts to strengthen and improve education, I'm glad to know I can count on your help.

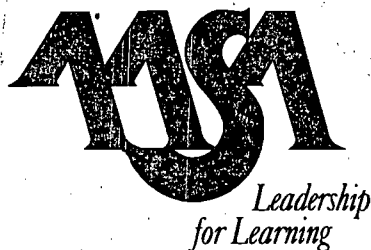
Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

BC/CKS/DDA/JW/SH/JW/DC/lynn-pfs-efr (Corres. #4424012)
(11.houston.pd)

cc: Bethany Little, w/incoming materials, 217 OEOB

DPC



American Association of School Administrators

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From
Student
Cory
H. Allen
3/26
(7)

President William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

Enclosed is AASA's reaction to the early proposal for new or existing federal education programs. AASA sees the proposals as a mixed lot, including good, bad and indifferent proposals. The major feature of the proposals, taken together, is that they do not focus in a coherent way on schools where poverty is concentrated, meaning greater than 50 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced cost lunches. In response we ask that the Administration and the Congress stop and think again about how to give their proposals a sharper, more coherent focus on the poorest children.

The primary federal role in education for the past 30 years, promoting equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, is very important because states and local school boards are not able to focus significant resources on schools serving concentrations of poor students.

For the foreseeable future the federal government will contribute only a relatively small portion of total school funds. Yet if those funds are targeted, they can make a real difference.

Lately it has become fashionable to criticize programs such as Title I that are targeted on the poor, in part because despite 30 years of effort and billions of dollars those students still lag badly behind middle class and wealthy students. However, the achievement gap between African-American and Hispanic students and white students has been *cut in half* in that period. There is still far to go, but the signs of progress are everywhere at the local level. In states such as Texas, with at least 5 years experience with the same statewide test, the results are truly heartening.

The states created school finance systems that comfort the wealthy and shortchange the poor. In this climate the federal role remains the last best hope for equal educational opportunities for children where poverty is concentrated.

AASA urges the Administration and every member of Congress who is pressing an education proposal to look for ways to make the federal effort more coherent and focused on the poorest children. AASA stands ready to vigorously support proposals we think will improve results for the poorest children.

Sincerely,

Paul D. Houston
Executive Director



Leadership
for Learning

American Association of School Administrators

THINK AGAIN—AND FOCUS ON POVERTY

After careful review of the Administration's budget and policy proposals and the early proposals from Capitol Hill, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) asks both the Administration and Congress to go back to the drawing board and think again. Don't throw everything out, because there is much that is laudable. But, both the Administration and our friends in Congress must reconsider their proposals about how the federal government can best deliver on its principal role — promoting equal opportunity.

Both the Administration and the authors of the early proposals on Capitol Hill seem to have concluded that the three principal problems of public schools that the federal government should address are:

- a lack of standards;
- inadequate teachers; and
- unnecessary bureaucracy.

AASA profoundly disagrees. The *most* intractable problem of public education is the persistent failure to achieve desired results in schools with concentrated poverty. The federal government must concentrate on this most pervasive problem because state and local efforts alone are inadequate. A recent GAO study, *State and Federal Efforts to Target Poor Students* (January 1998), makes this point: "Federal funding was more targeted to poor students than state funding in 45 of the 47 states." The report stated: "On average, for every dollar a state provided in education aid for each student in a district, the state provided an additional 62 cents per poor student. [In contrast,] on average for every one dollar of federal funding districts received for each student, they received an additional \$4.73 in federal funding per poor student." Helping establish standards, improving the quality of teachers and eliminating bureaucracy are all good ideas, but the federal role must be focused on improving results where poverty is concentrated.

The Prospects study done for the Department of Education in 1994 by Apt Associates found that once poverty in a school exceeded 50 percent of the student body, high achievement was difficult to obtain. More importantly, the Prospects study found that when poverty in a school exceeded 75 percent, the achievement of all students, poor and non-poor was far below the achievement of similar students in low-poverty schools.

One might wonder why this is so. The reasons are multiple. High-poverty schools have much lower expectations for student achievement, less experienced and less well-educated teachers and fewer instructional resources. Children in these schools often come to school unready to learn, the school facility is inadequate and support for high academic achievement or aspirations is lacking.

Addressing the issue of persistent failure to achieve acceptable results in high-poverty schools will require actions that involve massive changes of mind, heart and action. Most of the needed changes require changes for states and school districts. However, some changes have a clear federal role. Among the changes AASA recommends to spur the dramatic improvement we seek for the poorest children are:

1. Building smaller, safer, more focused schools—schools where every adult knows every student, and where teachers know the children's families.
2. Establishing smaller, safer, more focused classes—classes where teachers have the time to help *every* child reach high standards.
3. Improving the quality of teachers and administrators.
4. Placing the best teachers and administrators together with the students with the greatest needs.
5. Treating parents like customers, and trying to provide parents with the schools they want for their children within the public sector.
6. Intervening dramatically where failure is persistent.

There are several good ideas in the current crop of legislative proposals. The Smith-Kerry legislation makes provisions to fully fund Title I. AASA regards this infusion of resources as a step in the right direction because it will help school leaders meet the challenge of concentrated poverty. Additionally, the Administration's decision to use targeted grants to increase funds to such schools is a good one, but the ideas are insufficient to adequately address the problem. The remaining parts of both the Administration's plans and the Smith-Kerry proposal either solve the wrong problem, or address symptoms rather than causes.

Since 1965 the federal role in education has been promoting equal educational opportunity for disadvantaged students. Constitutional considerations make the federal role supplementary to the state and local role in education. The relatively small federal contribution to education funding and continuing federal budget constraints argue for tight targeting on concentrated poverty with well-focused programs.

The median size of charter schools is just over 100 students, and for private schools the median size is just over 300 students. In contrast, public school districts for the sake of economy are building huge schools. Some elementary public schools now enroll over 1,000 students. Polls all agree parents first want their children to be in a safe, respectful, nurturing environment. Only after children are safe and nurtured are parents concerned with achievement. Congress and the Administration should consider assistance to help communities build or rehab more schools to address the first concern of parents. There is no federal policy of "smaller is better," and there should be. The federal government, through research and incentives, should give states and local school boards the needed push to change deeply ingrained thinking about the economy of scale.

The Administration has spoken on class size in a targeted manner. But school administrators have no confidence that long-term support for the program will endure. And, there are no classrooms for the new teachers. Class size is one area where the research is clear. We ought to pay attention to it.

Improving teacher quality is a state and local matter having to do with higher wages, better working conditions and more stringent undergraduate preparation programs. But, the proposals from the administration and Smith-Kerry to improve the abilities of teachers and attract more strong students into teaching are welcome.

Local school districts have the authority to assign the best teachers and administrators to schools with the highest concentrations of poverty. They don't for logical reasons. Teachers generally want to teach highly motivated students in a safe, high quality facility. Teachers can find such a situation in any one of the elite suburban or small city schools districts around the country. Assigning the best teachers to the worst schools isn't easy and no one in Washington improves a ticklish situation by making sweeping "ought to" statements. Federal intervention into this area will make a complicated business more political than necessary, and will certainly add "administrivia" and paperwork. If the federal government adequately funds Title I and the corrective actions are implemented, the federal government will have provided adequate assistance. The federal government could benefit by carefully studying efforts like Superintendent Arlene Ackerman's in Washington, D.C., to see if disproportionate resources (including the best teachers) can succeed in the toughest situations.

Treating parents like customers requires understanding both what customers want and need, as well as understanding what they really don't like. Then schools will have to delight their customers more than private schools and charter schools. Proposals like the expansion of the 21st Century Learning Centers are on target for meeting customer needs. A parent center for every school where poverty is concentrated makes sense to us. Additionally, schools need help through authorizing provisions that tie funding streams for children together in ways that permit local variations of connectivity, but where students' school readiness is the focus. For example, permitting use of ESEA, HHS and Juvenile Justice funds for a family center in every rural or high poverty school that wants one, is a good idea.

AASA recommends thinking again about charter schools. This innovation is new, but some early looks at the effectiveness of charter schools are disturbing. Pushing a reform that has appeal but clearly has failed in some cases argues for a more deliberate approach, rather than a complete endorsement.

Where failure is persistent, local school districts need to take dramatic steps to close and reconstitute schools. There is no federal role in the actual reconstitution of schools. However, federal programs such as Title I must focus on results. The federal government should require proof of learning through means such as statewide or districtwide tests, stay out of the business of defining proficiency.

Congress must recognize that intervention in failing schools is a relatively new activity and, as such, needs room for variation in the method of take over. Nearly everyone who knows urban and rural education well enough to successfully intervene works at the local level. But the roots of failure are also local, usually found in the lack of political will or desire to create and maintain quality public schools. The most successful reconstitution of schools we can find are successful as a result of *local*, not state action. However, where local school districts are indifferent or corrupt another way to run schools must be available. We think municipal government, a local non-profit organization or other local third parties should be considered. However, right now the data just aren't there to prescribe an approach from Washington.

A major part of the federal role in education is to provide the funds needed to promote equal educational opportunity where poverty is concentrated. Promoting opportunity means both targeting and funding programs such as – IDEA – adequately and enforcing IDEA'S cost-sharing provisions. These measures will ensure schools no longer must reduce the amount they spend serving poor students in order to serve disabled students. Local school budgets are overburdened by the failure of the federal government to pay its promised share of special education costs. The burden of inadequate federal funding disproportionately falls on the poorest students in the poorest school districts, and on small districts where costs cannot be spread out over many students.

Flexibility is very important in tailoring the concentration on poverty to local situations. However, if flexibility reduces the targeting on the poor, the focus on smaller schools and smaller classes, and the focus on results, then flexibility is counterproductive. Block grants that permit innovation in improving equal educational opportunity for disadvantaged students would be helpful. However, block grants that do not tightly target concentrated poverty, or lack accountability are counterproductive. Charter schools that shrink schools and classes for their most disadvantaged students would be helpful. However, charter schools that have unqualified teachers, breach the wall of separation of church and state, or lack academic standards are counterproductive.

Think again. Help teachers, principals and superintendents to solve the problem that has defied our best efforts: improving results where poverty is concentrated. Address the problem that state legislatures and governors have failed to resolve.



Cynthia A. Rice

12/07/99 05:36:17 PM

*Lana - please give
(1) copy to Andy
(2) copy to Eric G*

*And return original
to me*

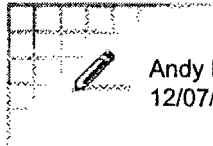
CR

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc: j. eric gould/opd/eop@eop
bcc: Records Management@EOP
Subject: Re: Andy--could you get me a copy of that letter from Whitney Phipps? Thanks

Thanks, Andy -- we'll give you your copy back along with some other materials that should be helpful:

- (1) Notes from the President on Phipps on a matrix we did of possible faith based ideas;
 - (2) The weekly we did following up on his questions on the matrix, which gave him a summary of Phipps program
 - (3) And Eric will get you the file he's got on the US Dream Academy (the info he used to put together the weekly).
- Andy Rotherham



Andy Rotherham
12/07/99 04:09:45 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc: j. eric gould/opd/eop@eop
Subject: Re: Andy--could you get me a copy of that letter from Whitney Phipps? Thanks

I put it on your chair, it is my only copy so please keep track of it.

Joshua S. Gottheimer
11/11/99 12:23:45 PM

Record Type: Record

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

cc:

Subject: Revised Budget Statement

6

Revised Final 11/11/99 12pm
Glastris/Edmonds

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

11-11-99

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS ON EDUCATION BUDGET

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, DC

November 11, 1999

cc: speechwriting

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Bruce Reed; area teachers, some of whom were hired through our class size initiative.

Perhaps there is no more fitting way to honor our nation's veterans than by reaching agreement on a budget that honors the values for which they served -- opportunity, responsibility and a better future for our children. I am pleased to say that we have made important progress towards that end.

Last night, after many hours and days of discussion, Congress agreed to continue supporting our efforts to hire 100,000 new, highly-qualified teachers for our schools, to reduce class sizes in the early grades.

This is truly good news for our children, and for their future. We know school enrollments are exploding. We know record numbers of teachers are retiring. We know that the research is clear that students do learn more in smaller classes with quality teachers.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

11-11-99

Every parent and teacher in America knows that if their child is in a second grade class with twenty-five students, that child will not get the attention he or she needs and deserves. And just this week, we learned that our class size initiative, which Congress agreed to last year, is working. Communities are using the funds from last year's agreement to hire more than 29,000 teachers and reduce the average class size for 1.7 million children ~~from 23~~ down to 18.

That's why I have made the honoring of our commitment to reduce class size such a high priority in

the budget negotiations.

The agreement we have reached has bipartisan support, and keeps us on track to hiring 100,000 teachers by the year 2005.

As I said in my State of the Union Address earlier this year, we don't just need more teachers, but better teachers. This agreement furthers that goal. All teachers hired under this program must be fully qualified. The program gives school districts the flexibility to use 25 percent of the funds from this program to train teachers and test new teachers. It

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

11-11-99

to get the money
flexibility to get the funds ~~certified~~ certified in public they say
increases flexibility, but it is not an open-ended block

grant.

Through this plan, taxpayer dollars will go for reducing
class sizes in public schools, not for vouchers for private
schools. I want to thank members of Congress *including* from
Sen. Boozie in the Senate, Mr. Clinton
both parties for coming together to support this
agreement.

We have achieved a victory for America's children
who will get smaller classes and better teachers as a
result.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
11-11-99

In addition to reducing class size, we have made progress on a number of other vital education initiatives: we have more than doubled funds for after school programs and increased funding for computers in our schools, mentoring to prepare kids for college, and Hispanic education programs. We are also making progress on other vital budget priorities, from hiring up to 50,000 new community police officers to setting aside ~~FUNDS~~ ^{resources} to preserving ^eour natural resources and protecting ~~ing~~ our environment for future generations.

I am committed to continuing to work with Congress to reach agreement on the remaining issues, including ensuring assistance to those who have suffered from the devastating effects of Hurricane Floyd, and paying our dues to the United Nations.

If we continue in this bipartisan spirit of progress, we can very soon complete our work on a budget that honors our values, lives within our means, and looks to the future.

Thank you.

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Message Sent To: _____

Joshua S. Gottheimer
11/11/99 12:23:45 PM

Record Type: Record

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

cc:

Subject: Revised Budget Statement

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
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Thank you.

#

Message Sent To: _____

From: Ben Johnson, Assistant to The President and
Director of The White House Office On
The President's Initiative For One America

Date:

11/10/99

Andy -
FYI
BR

TO:

Bruce Reed

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Prepare reply for President's signature | ☐ Call me on this | ☐ Please return call |
| ☐ Prepare reply for Director's signature | ☐ For Your Action | ☐ Please file |
| ☐ Prepare reply for my signature | ☐ For your approval | ☐ Set up meeting on this |
| ☐ For your signature | ☐ For your comments | ☐ Draft scheduling request |
| ☐ Reply directly-copy to me | ☒ For Your Information | ☐ Process special letter |
| | ☐ For your support | ☐ Set up tour |

Remarks:



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ROBERT C. LARSON

October 19, 1999

Ben Johnson
Assistant to the President
Director of the President's Initiative
for One America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Ben:

The recently concluded National Education Summit at the IBM Conference Center in the Palisades was both thought provoking and constructive. In our judgment, the Summit moved the dialogue about achievement beyond a focus on higher standards per se, to a much-needed discussion of how to help youngsters meet those standards.

At the Summit, I presented some ideas about how to hoist the achievement levels of urban children by concentrating henceforth on creating successful schools instead of attempting to reform school systems. In essence, I said it was time to:

1. Assert no-nonsense state leadership and responsibility;
2. "Charterize" all urban schools;
3. Professionalize the teaching profession; and
4. Transform the role of school superintendents from operations to accreditation.

Enclosed is a National Urban League position paper that presents these points in greater detail, beginning on page 6. In the paper, I also call for real-world academic standards and challenge the wisdom of school vouchers.

I hope that this position paper is helpful as you consider the most appropriate strategies for raising the achievement levels of urban children. Thank you for your consideration – and your leadership.

Sincerely,

Hugh B. Price
President

Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban League
October 12, 1999

**The Aim of Urban School Reform:
Successful Schools, Not "Systemic" Reform**

The saga of public education played out on both sides of the Hudson River the other day. At the IBM Conference in the Palisades, the nation's self-proclaimed education governors and corporate leaders convened to take stock of the education accountability movement and map plans for improving the caliber of public schools.

Given the recent obsession of politicians and policymakers with ending social promotion and imposing tough standards, the dialogue at IBM was refreshingly candid and constructive. The joint declaration issued to close the conference focused, finally, on what it will take to boost achievement and hoist children over the higher bars for graduation.

Yet to the East, the City of Yonkers was roiled by a rancorous school strike. At issue was an instructionally-sound proposal by the new Superintendent to devote more classroom time per day to fewer core subjects. The local Federation of Teachers cried foul; the school board called their bluff; and the union walk-out was on. So the grown-ups in charge of the school district made a sorry mess of a solid idea that principals and teachers probably could have sorted out rather easily in their respective schools.

Even so, these developments on either side of the Palisades represent progress. Until then, tough love was about the only remedy for low achievement that impatient politicians and anxious school administrators could come up with. End social promotion, they proclaimed. Send the laggards to summer school and hold them back if they still cannot cut it academically.

These tough love measures, increasingly in vogue across the country, are too timid structurally and off target pedagogically. Ending social promotion alone won't educate all youngsters to their fullest potential. America's most vulnerable children – in low-income urban and rural communities – will bear the brunt of this educationally bankrupt policy because, as things stand now, they'll be left behind by the millions.

Thus for the sake of public education and, above all, for the sake of the children, what's urgently needed is a radical reform that structures public education so that its sole raison d'être is student success.

Successful schools produce successful pupils. Not a smattering superstars per building, mind you, but the bulk of the student body. After a generation of research and experimentation, examples abound of urban and rural schools that serve low-income youngsters quite admirably, with some even outperforming their more affluent suburban counterparts.

Research by Linda Darling-Hammond and others demonstrates that urban minority children can achieve roughly on par with more affluent students -- provided the quality of education they receive is of comparable quality.

Yet try as big-city school boards and administrators might, few if any urban districts can honestly claim that they educate the vast majority of kids remotely up to their potential. Pick a report card -- *Education Week's* annual *Quality Counts* volume or any other objective measure -- and the best that a mere handful of urban districts can claim is modest increases in test scores. The pace and scope of progress is unacceptable and the reform prescriptions in vogue these days are too feeble for the task ahead.

Real-World Standards

Since the education standards movement is driving school reform these days, let's start there. The rush to impose rigorous standards begs the question of where they should be pegged. It was startling to hear several governors at the National Education Summit confess that in their haste to get tough, their states probably had given less thought than they should have to the actual content of the standards.

In my view, the standards students are expected to meet should be pegged to the proficiencies that real people need to succeed in the real world. They shouldn't be mirror images of the admissions standards for selective universities.

It isn't anti-intellectual to acknowledge the reality that most Americans never obtain college degrees. By their late 20s, nearly two-thirds still lack BA or AA degrees. One third never even start college. What's the point of placing the bar for graduation so high that it denies high school diplomas to conscientious youngsters who nevertheless aren't college bound? Why write off future truck drivers, deliverymen, short order cooks, chefs, train conductors, newsstand operators, construction workers and artisans as unworthy of diplomas?

Kate Maloy of the University of Pittsburgh puts it best:

"The purpose of every school, whatever its setting or resources, is to educate children for what lies ahead of them —further education for some, jobs for most, citizenship, somewhere, for all."

That is why the standards imposed by states should not be designed by academicians alone. States and school districts should assign this chore to a task force of thoughtful representatives of such sectors as business (big and small), organized labor, higher education and community organizations.

Among their many challenges, the drafters must wrestle with the contentious issue of deciding exactly what knowledge and skills should be assessed. For instance, why ask students to recite minutia and display skills that most mortals will never use as adults -- or that easily can be discovered using modern technology? In other words, need we require that students recite the capitals of Texas and Utah, much less East Timor?

As I reflect on my own professional career and life experience, it strikes me that six clusters of competence are critically important. I hasten to add that these insights aren't novel. In my judgment, the following proficiencies are relevant regardless of one's station in life.

- Literacy – workable command of reading, writing and speaking in English
- Mathematics – command of the basic computational skills required in the workplace and everyday adult life
- Reasoning and critical thinking – capacity to ferret out information, find answers and solve problems
- Science – appreciation of the nature and uncertainties of the scientific inquiry
- Citizenship – understanding of the primary historical, cultural, demographic, political and economic forces and values that have shaped this country. Appreciation of America's relationship to the rest of the world, as well as the major forces shaping the other hemispheres.
- Technological literacy

This educational platform should be placed beneath every youngster. Beyond these basic proficiencies, the remaining courses that students choose should be shaped by their aspirations and ability. Those headed straight for the labor force may opt to specialize in certain workplace skills suited to their

interests, while college-bound students could elect more advanced academic courses that equip them for higher education.

Unless and until the public schools demonstrate convincingly that they instill these proficiencies in the vast majority of students, all other subjects that consume class time should be deemed secondary and jettisoned if need be.

The Folly of Vouchers

Low-income and minority parents who are fed up with lousy public schools find vouchers increasingly alluring. Their impatience is perfectly understandable. Parents cannot be faulted for seeking the best for their children.

Nevertheless, vouchers and their first cousin, education savings accounts, serve so few students that they're less an option for kids than a prod for public schools – at least at this juncture.

According to Kim Metcalf and Polly Tait, who co-authored a recent article on vouchers in *Phi Delta Kappan*, there's no question that parents of youngsters receiving vouchers are pleased to have a choice of public or nonpublic schools. In effect, vouchers subsidize the escape of motivated parents from the public schools.

Even so, vouchers do not necessarily improve the academic achievement of children who use them. The evidence on this critically important point is mixed. It is unclear that pupils with vouchers perform better than they would have had they remained in public school.

Equally troubling, non-public schools enjoy decisive advantages over public schools. By law, public schools must admit all comers. Non-public schools can be choosy. Public schools are severely constrained in meting out discipline; non-public schools are considerably less restrained. Public schools cannot suspend or expel with impunity; non-public schools can.

Above all, given the fact that concern over achievement provides the main impetus for vouchers, public schools must report their results; non-public schools do not.

How ironic, then, that in name of education accountability, vouchers and education savings accounts would shift precious public resources to non-public schools that are completely unaccountable to taxpayers for their academic results. Advocates of vouchers argue that competition is healthy for public schools. But the rules of competition are rigged against them. So trumpeting vouchers as the answer to what ails public education is both dangerous and specious.

The Goal: Successful Schools, Not "Systemic" Reform

Declaring that vouchers are unfair isn't tantamount to saying that the performance of urban public schools is satisfactory. The paramount issue facing educators and policymakers is how to boost the academic performance of urban youngsters, especially minority children who chronically lag behind, without dismantling public education in the process.

All of the ferment, the pressure and the reforms focused on urban education are starting to pay off. Some school districts report encouraging gains in reading and math scores. This is important because it helps restore public confidence in urban schools.

But let's be clear. Modest gains in test scores help politically. But inching ahead won't prepare our children adequately for the unforgiving world that awaits them after graduation from high school.

After a generation of urban school reform, it can be said with certainty that there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of high performing schools serving poor and minority youngsters all across the country. This spring the Education Trust, a highly respected research and advocacy organization, released a revealing survey of several hundred high performing schools around the country that serve minority and low income children. Many of them even outshine suburban schools on state tests.

These stellar schools share certain attributes, among them:

- These schools use high academic standards to design their courses, assess their students and evaluate their teachers;
- They devote lots more time than the typical school to reading and math instruction, even if that means lengthening the school day;
- They invest heavily in professional development so that their faculty stay on top of their game and focus on teaching methods that help their students meet tough academic standards;
- These highly successful schools monitor their students closely and intervene quickly if they falter. They don't dawdle during the school year and then impose massive doses of summer school after the students fall way behind;
- They get parents involved, not just with staging bake sales but with helping their children to do better in school and meet the standards; and

- They place the onus for improvement mainly on the educators, where it belongs.

The evidence is clear that principals and teachers know how to create schools that enable low-income and minority youngsters to achieve at very high levels. In other words, educators know how to create successful urban schools. But no one has figured out how to create successful urban school systems.

So it is time to stop trying to reform public school "systems." I say we concentrate instead on creating successful public schools throughout the system.

According to the legendary educator Anthony Alvarado, the sole focus of the educational enterprise should be student learning. Everything else, he argues, is "details." "A typical educational system is so top-heavy with details that learning can suffocate under the tonnage."

The thrust of federal, state and local education policy from this day forward should be to remove the tonnage so that educators can practice their profession and children can realize their academic potential. And so that both meet the legitimate expectation of society that students graduate with certain critically important proficiencies that equip them for self-reliance and citizenship.

Here then is the National Urban League's reform agenda aimed at transforming all urban schools into high performing schools:

1. Assert no-nonsense state leadership – and responsibility

Conventional wisdom holds that public education is a local responsibility. But the reality is that the quality of school graduates is a compelling societal concern that justifies aggressive leadership by states and by the federal government.

In the agricultural era, youngsters tended to live where they were reared. But contemporary children often grow up in one town, only to live and work elsewhere. Employers and society at large have the overriding stake in the caliber of education delivered by every school. America's very civility and competitiveness depend on it.

In recent years, states have stepped up to the plate to impose loftier standards and high stakes tests. Having set the bar, states now bear the primary moral, financial and, I'm convinced, legal responsibility for seeing to it that all children have a fair chance to clear it.

No longer should poor and minority children be held hostage to communities with low tax bases, weak commitments to quality education, and skinflint taxpayers who oppose providing adequate support for local schools. No

longer should the children be crippled by school districts riddled with unqualified teachers, insufficient books and antiquated schools. Having imposed high standards on all children, the states must step in and guarantee high quality education for every child.

2. "Charterize" all urban schools

Urban schools should be liberated from the stifling central school district bureaucracy and given the latitude to operate the way independent secular schools do. Under the scenario I propose, each school would be overseen by a governing board comprised, say, of local business and community leaders, educators and alumni who view student success as its paramount mission. The boards should be self-perpetuating so that they are spared the potential turmoil and unpredictability of elections.

Each school would be run by a principal, or headmaster, hired by the board. The principal would serve at the pleasure of the board, subject to due process. The principal in turn would assemble the faculty, who would serve at the pleasure of the principal and board, subject again to due process.

The local school district superintendent would grant each school a revocable contract -- or charter -- to operate for ten to fifteen years. The school would be accountable for seeing that, say, 75 percent of its students meet the state's real-world proficiency standards.

If the school meets this standard, it retains its charter, which can be renewed. If the pass rate falls below this threshold, the school would be placed on a watch list and required to come up with an improvement plan.

If after a reasonable period it fails to boost its performance, then the charter can be revoked. In effect, this means that the governing board and faculty responsible for operating the educational enterprise in that building can be dismissed and replaced with a new team. If need be, the facility itself can be shuttered temporarily or even permanently.

Given the public nature of the school, pupils should be chosen via a mix of self-selection (application) and lottery. This will prevent the creation of what are perceived as "loser" schools that are filled with students who weren't chosen by some other school.

The state would allocate an annual amount to each school based on its enrollment. The allocation formula should be sufficiently generous to guarantee small classes, modern facilities and equipment, sufficient supplies, and abundant high quality professional development.

The state education agency can negotiate purchase agreements with vendors of textbooks, food and supplies so that individual schools get an advantageous price. The states would also assume responsibility for ensuring that individual schools are properly sized and furnished. And for guaranteeing that there is no disparity -- in resources, teacher quality or physical plant -- between urban, suburban and rural communities.

Once each school's allocation is set, the actual utilization should be left entirely to the board and professional staff of each school. In other words, schools should be accountable for how many students they graduate, not for how many gallons of paint they purchase.

3. Professionalize the teaching profession

Given the projected shortage of principals and teachers, plus the need to increase teacher quality in urban and rural schools serving low-income children, the compensation offered education must be improved dramatically in order to create a strong demand for these jobs.

This can be done by increasing salaries to levels comparable with other professions and by offering attractive inducements like generous student loan write-offs for graduates who enter the profession. Why not offer young people with masters' degrees the same initial salaries as young MBAs, attorneys and engineers? Since most urban and rural districts are strapped financially, the federal and state governments should take the lead in financing the economic incentives needed to attract stronger educators to these school districts.

These special incentives should only be available to educators with masters' degrees who are certified by the state and who sign up to teach for at least five-to-ten years in low-income communities. If they leave the profession early, the loan relief would cease.

The critically important quid pro quo for paying educators like real professionals is that they in turn must relinquish those contract-based protections that other professionals do not enjoy. I speak of tenure, seniority, overtime, guaranteed class size, length of class periods and other provisions that severely impede the ability of principals to run their schools in the best of children.

If governors and state legislators truly believe their assertion that states are the engines of school improvement these days, they should muster the political courage to grant individual school boards and principals the discretion they need to run their schools.

Unions should be allowed to bargain district-wide, indeed state-wide, over salaries and fringe benefits. But, subject to appropriate oversight by their boards, principals should make all personnel decisions, such as whom to hire and for

how long, as well as the standards for measuring staff performance and the consequences if they fall short.

It isn't realistic politically to expect school districts to redefine the scope of union agreements this radically. So it's up to governors and state legislators who profess to care about children to override existing agreements and impose these conditions.

4. *The 21st century superintendent -- accreditation, not operation*

Local school boards and central administrators operate their school systems today. As such they represent a major source of the "tonnage" that cripples the schools.

Rare is the school board – elected or appointed -- that would be considered an asset to the educational process from the perspective of poor and minority children. Superintendents come and go so quickly that they seldom leave a lasting mark, much less a favorable one. Just below the surface, the central school bureaucracies rule – and stultify.

So what is the solution? The oversight of public schools needs to be professionalized and depoliticized. To cite Anthony Alvarado again, his experience indicates that urban youngsters can learn at high levels. But, as he cautions, "It takes time, continuity, concentration of focus."

Revolving door school superintendents, ongoing rhetorical battles between mayors and superintendents, mayoral use of fiscal support to hold school boards hostage – all contribute chaos and confusion, instead of continuity and concentration, to the educational enterprise. Our children and our community are the victims.

The role of the local school superintendent should be converted from operations to accreditation. In other words, the school superintendent should be responsible for awarding -- and revoking -- the charters and reporting to the public on whether the individual schools meet their targets.

If they do, the superintendent can extend the charter. If they fall short, the superintendent can monitor the school's remediation plan, revoke the charter if need be, and award it to a new educational team.

Given the state's dominant role in ensuring education quality, the local school superintendents should be appointed by and ultimately accountable to the state education agency. The superintendent in turn can be assisted by a local board of advisors, chosen by the superintendent and drawn from such sectors as parents, business, organized labor, the religious community, higher education and community organizations.

The National Urban League's school reform agenda is premised on what we know can work – individual public schools that are given the wherewithal and room to succeed. Our agenda parts company with the failed efforts to reform urban school systems.

When the clock strikes midnight this New Year's Eve, the policymakers, administrators, educators and unions that share responsibility for public schools had better leave all those excuses – and all that bureaucratic tonnage – in the litter baskets along with the noisemakers.

It will be a new millennium for humankind. If urban public education is to survive in the 21st century, it'd better be a new day for urban children.

cc ~~Andy~~
Andrea
Eric

+ return

Andy - could you call the Test
Prep for ^{low-income and} minorities person - interesting idea
for State of Union

Andrea - could you call the New Orleans person?
Thanks

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
10-15-99

① I want to sign please
+ letter to their folks

② act as a lobbyist to
HRC, etc.

③ send the information
to Chuck Bolton for
press contacts, with
by VP — AC

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 14, 1999.

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Podesta
HRC
Reed/EL
Bunson
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on reply)

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY WITH THE PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

DATE: Friday, October 15, 1999
TIME: 10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
LOCATION: The Oval Office

FROM: Kris M. Balderston *KMB*

I. PURPOSE

To congratulate the winners of the 1998 and 1999 President's Service Awards, the most prestigious presidential recognition ever given for volunteer community service.

II. BACKGROUND

The winners of the 1998 President's Service Awards did not receive their awards last year because the presentation ceremony scheduled with the First Lady was cancelled due to a breakthrough in the Mid-East peace process. Following this photo opportunity, John Podesta will make the awards presentation to the 1998 and 1999 winners on behalf of YOU at a ceremony in the Indian Treaty Room. Corporation for National Service CEO Harris Wofford and Points of Light Foundation President and CEO Bob Goodwin will also participate in the program.

The President's Service Awards program was created in 1982 to honor outstanding individuals and organizations engaged in volunteer service and is co-sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service. The 342 recipients of the President's Service Awards over the past 18 years have included individuals from all walks of life and organizations ranging from small grassroots groups to international corporations. What they have in common is a commitment to solving the critical problems that face all of our communities.

This year, more than 3,500 nominations were submitted and reviewed in four activity areas: human needs, environment, education and public safety. Special consideration was given to those activities that either benefit or involve young people. A group of distinguished Americans served as the final judges, choosing the 1999 award recipients from a group of 53 finalists.

photo office
Marge Morrison

III. PARTICIPANTS

YOU

Harris Wofford, CEO, Corporation for National Service
Bob Goodwin, President and CEO, Points of Light Foundation
President's Service Award winners (39)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Closed Press. White House photo only.

V. REMARKS

None required

VI. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- **YOU** will participate in a photo receiving line with thirty-nine 1998 and 1999 President's Service Award winners.
- **YOU** greet Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin and participate in a photo opportunity with them.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- Presidential Message to Awardees
- Brief descriptions of Awardees

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 13, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in the Indian Treaty Room for the presentation of the 1998 and 1999 President's Service Awards. I am delighted to recognize the outstanding honorees for their many invaluable contributions to the life of our nation.

If we are to make our world a better place, each of us must take responsibility for solving the problems around us. We must be interested not just in getting but in giving, not just in looking out for ourselves but in looking out for others.

That spirit of service is powerfully reflected in the work of the 39 remarkable individuals and organizations we are honoring at this year's event. Whether bringing hope and friendship to homebound seniors, serving as mentors for at-risk youth, helping to protect our environment, or teaching children and adults to read, they are making a real difference in the lives of countless people across our country.

I commend our honorees for working to solve the problems of today and to meet the challenges of the future. Each of you represents America at its best, getting things done and reinforcing our nation's deepest values: community, responsibility, and compassion.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful ceremony.

Bill Clinton

PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS - 1998

Camp to Belong
Highlands Ranch, CO

Lynn Price

Camp to Belong was founded by Lynn Price to bring together siblings who have been separated by the foster care system for a weeklong camping experience.

Columbus Fire Fighters Local Union #67
Columbus, OH

Kevin Harr

Union members deliver donated food for Operation Feed, raise funds for organizations like Charity Newsies and Muscular Dystrophy and volunteer for Christmas in April.

Community Visions Unlimited
New Orleans, LA

Jeannie Tidy

Founded by Jeannie Tidy, Community Visions Unlimited has built neighborhood pride and turned a blighted neighborhood around through neighborhood watch efforts, community gardens and assistance in implementing the sale of 42 abandoned homes, resulting in reduced crime and increased property assessments.

Connect-A-Kid
Tampa, FL

Kelly McWilliams

Connect-A-Kid matches low-achieving, at-risk middle school students as reading tutors to elementary students and as pen pals to area seniors, raising the performance of both the middle school and elementary students

Handwritten note:
Awarded to Lynn Price for her work with Camp to Belong. She has been a great help in working with the kids.

1998-2

*CC
ITC
you
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visit*

Cyberangels
New York, NY

Nancy Savitt

Cyberangels is the largest online safety and educational program in cyberspace, providing online family safety tips and assists victims of cyberstalking and online harassment.

EDS
Plano, TX

Randolph Dove

EDS establishes partnerships with schools through Education Outreach, with more than 4,000 employee volunteers serving as mentors, tutors and in providing education enrichment activities in 150 schools worldwide.

*CC
Champion
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Martin Flores
Los Angeles, CA

Martin Flores established the Rogelio Flores Foundation in memory of his brother, who was killed in a drive-by shooting, to keep young people out of gangs and in school.

Foundation for Interfaith Research and Ministry (FIRM)
Houston, TX

Dr Earl Shelp

FIRM involves 75 Care Teams, comprising members of 80 local Jewish and Christian congregations, who provide home assistance to people with HIV/AIDS, families who are touched by Alzheimer's and other dementia diseases, and 350 frail elderly.

Jeremy Martin Hall
Salem, OR

Jeremy Hall took a yearlong leave of absence from college to serve as community garden coordinator for Family Head Start and established a program to educate preschool children and their parents about recycling.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
10-15-99

1998-3

Hospice Teen Council, Palm Harbor University High School
Palm Harbor, FL

Brenda Corace
Alison Titus

The Council is a 25-member group of 10th and 11th grade students which leads the student volunteer effort at the hospice, which involves 200 volunteers who are trained in intergenerational care and then matched with hospice patients.

Clara Kirk
Chicago, IL

Clara Kirk founded Clara's House which houses nearly 70 women and children who are the victims of domestic violence.

People's Test Preparation Service
Berkeley, CA

Chitra Aiyar

Chitra Aiyar established People's Test Preparation Service in 1995 to provide no-cost SAT preparation classes for low-income students.

Ruppert Landscape Company, A Division of TruGreen LandCare
Ashton, MD

Don Jarratt

Ruppert involves employee volunteers, many of whom are recent immigrants, each year in rehabilitating area soccer and baseball fields and improving the grounds of Washington, D.C., public schools through planting trees, shrubs and perennials.

Jason Summey
Asheville, NC

When Jason Summey was in 8th grade, he established "Be Cool . . . Stay in School," to provide support and counseling for students who are considering leaving school.

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let's go*

1998-4

Terry Thompson and Claire Braeburn
Tustin, CA

Terry Thompson and Claire Braeburn, a mother-daughter team, established Orange County On Track to provide mentors to teens, open lines of communication about culture and conflict among high school students and share positive teen stories through a magazine.

Texas Young Lawyers Association
Austin, TX

William Mateja

The association involves lawyers and businessmen as mentors to at-risk young people through sports, reading, taking students to work programs and through mock courtroom efforts, a program that has now spread to 35 states.

PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS - 1999

*George Raughter
AG*

American Institute for Learning
Austin, TX

Joanne Midwikis

To address the economic and housing boom in Austin, the American Institute for Learning created the Environmental Corps and the Casa Verde Builders, programs that mobilize local at-risk youth to build energy efficient homes and improve public lands and watersheds.

*Raughter
Anacostia
to help - can
do*

Anacostia Watershed Society
Washington, DC

Robert Boone

The Anacostia Watershed Society, through the help of local volunteers and neighbors, is restoring and protecting the Anacostia River, one of the nation's most polluted rivers, to a swimmable and fishable state.

Dental Health for Arlington Volunteers
Arlington, TX

J. Moody Alexander

Dental Health for Arlington is a free dental clinic that provides dental care (e.g., exams, fillings, sealants) and education to more than 25,000 low-income residents in the Arlington community.

Emily Elizabeth Douglas
Powell, OH

Emily, through her founding of "Grandma's Gifts" and its volunteer base, provides food, clothing, books and educational experiences to children of Appalachian Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia.

1999-2

Elderplan's Member-to-Member Program
Brooklyn, NY

Mashi Blech

Based in Elderplan, a nonprofit HMO, Member-to-Member is a seniors-helping-seniors volunteer program that allows seniors to run errands, shop, escort and perform minor home repairs for each other so they are able to "purchase" similar services if they need to do so at a later date.

Betty Frey
Tucson, AZ

Betty Frey founded the Tucson Adult Literacy Volunteers program in 1961, training hundreds of tutors during over 38 years and teaching English to thousands of adult learners

Hemmings Motor News
Bennington, VT

Terry M. Ehrich

Hemmings Motor News initiated the First Day of School Holiday to promote the first day of school as a holiday for parents and a community celebration, enhancing education by encouraging parental involvement and community support from day one of the school year.

Hewlett Packard's Hispanic Student Outreach Program
Boise, ID

Elena Buxton

To help reduce the high dropout rate among Hispanic students in Boise, Hewlett Packard established the Hispanic Student Outreach Program, providing the students with positive role models, tutoring and mentoring support, field trips and career days at the Hewlett Packard site.

1999-3

The Homeless Children Tutorial Program, Project Northstar
Washington, DC

Lorin Brown

Project Northstar provides tutoring for children living in homeless shelters and formerly homeless children and continues tutoring the children once they have left the shelters, adding needed stability and a continuity of relationships to their lives.

of J. Blair
Edward Joseph Jagen
Stevensville, MD

Acting as the Blue Knight, Edward Jagen has knighted and empowered more than 3 million children nationwide to stay safe from potentially dangerous individuals.

Jail Library Student Group
Madison, WI

Amy Mark

The University of Wisconsin's Jail Library Student Group has dramatically improved the quality of library service and the quality of life for thousands of Dane County inmates by creating a jail library, providing books and reading materials to fill their self-improvement, educational and recreational needs.

Jonestown Community Association
Hot Springs, ARK,

Glenn Gallas

The Jonestown Community Association mobilizes neighborhood volunteers in a community watch program, home renovation and garden projects, neighborhood cleanups and a mentoring program for young people.

Reverend Monsignor Ignatius McDermott
Chicago, IL

Father Mac, as he is known in the community, has implemented a compassionate approach to addiction through personal actions and a full-scale substance abuse treatment center, the Haymarket Center.

1999-4

Lans
Merrill Lynch
New York, NY

Eddy Bayardelle

Through Merrill Lynch's ScholarshipBuilder Program, 250 youth from 10 cities have been given the support and resources over a 16-year period to complete their high school graduations and pursue a fully funded college education.

Olomana School's "Mixed Plate with Extra Salad"

Kailua, Hawaii

Estelle Wong

"Mixed Plate with Extra Salad" is an interdisciplinary service learning program that involves students from Olomana School, the state's largest alternative school for adolescents with serious conduct disorder problems.

Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 25 & Mechanical Contractors Association

Rock Island, IL

Donald Walsh

*Plumbers
Pipefitters
R*
The Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 25 and the Mechanical Contractors Association have worked together to donate time and valuable labor to various service projects, including cleaning furnaces for the elderly, building playgrounds and shelters, and installing plumbing at the local United Way and a soccer complex.

Felipe Reinoso

Bridgeport, CT

As founder and director of the Saturday Hispanic Academy, Felipe Reinoso teaches disadvantaged Hispanic youth math and science helping ensure that these students have an equal opportunity to achieve academic excellence and pursue a college education.

1999-5

Robert Richmond
Seattle, WA

Since 1991, Robert Richmond has made contributions of time, money and high tech telecommunications equipment to Community Voice Mail, a national program that provides personalized voicemail for homeless job seekers.

The Service Learning Class of Brethren High School
Brethren, MI

Deborah Crandell

Brethren High School's Service Learning Class works to revitalize and bring economic development and tourism to their town through student volunteer projects like cleaning up an abandoned park, opening a Welcome Center and renovating a train depot as a railroad museum.

John Stephenson
Santa Fe, NM

John Stephenson, 84-year-old owner of the Community Farm, mobilizes volunteer farm hands and donates the entire farm harvest (worth more than \$25,000 a year) to the homeless, hungry and disabled of Santa Fe.

The Young Leaders' Academy of Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge, LA

Kirt Bennett

The Young Leaders' Academy provides an academic curriculum, tutoring, mentoring, field trips and community service projects for young at-risk African-American males, empowering them to improve the quality of their lives and assist them in becoming productive citizens.

10-6-99

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

10-6-99

Nation's Wealthy, Seeing a Void, Take Steps to Aid Public Schools

By JACQUES STEINBERG

Long dismissed as the runts in the family of philanthropy, public schools and their students are getting fresh attention from high-profile donors plainly concerned about the nation's academic future.

Rather than donating only to their college alma maters, the wealthy givers — including George Lucas, the film maker, Theodore J. Forstmann, the Wall Street financier, and Leonard Riggio, the chairman of Barnes & Noble — are increasingly bestowing their largess on those individuals struggling just to make it through high school.

Their gifts were trumped last week by a \$1 billion scholarship program for disadvantaged minority students announced by William H. Gates 3d, the chairman of the Microsoft Corporation.

And yesterday, Eli Broad, chairman of Sun America, a Los Angeles-based financial services company, said he was setting aside \$100 million for urban school systems, primarily to help train superintendents, principals and staff.

Though the motives vary, the thread through all of these gifts is a conviction that government has been

unwilling, or perhaps unable, to rescue the public education system and its students. Moreover, many of the donors believe that the success of their businesses — the source of their wealth — hinges on an educated work force.

"I think the national community has realized it isn't enough just to give to higher education," said Eugene Lang, who may have sowed the seeds of this movement when he adopted 54 sixth graders at a Harlem school in 1981 and committed to send them to college. "You've got to catch children before they fall into that abyss," Mr. Lang said.

Though gifts to universities show no sign of abating — an annual survey tallied \$18.4 billion in donations to higher education last school year, a national record — fund-raising consultants say that the broader spec-

trum of educational institutions, including elementary and secondary schools, have begun to attract the very rich.

In part, the donations have been driven by the need for a helping hand. Long seen as the responsibility of taxpayers, the problems and demands of the nation's public school students increasingly seem to be too overwhelming for Government to address. At a time when politicians are unwilling to raise school budgets, the wish lists of principals have never been longer: billions of dollars have been requested to buy computers, reduce class sizes, retain teachers and, perhaps most important, close the gap between rich and poor students.

"It's a large, intractable problem that our government and public institutions can't solve alone," said Nancy Raybin, a management consultant who specializes in nonprofit institutions. "I think we're seeing the philanthropists trying to get the money to organizations and individuals directly, without too much bureaucracy in between."

In committing to provide \$1 billion in college scholarships to the neediest high-school seniors over 20 years — with hopes of subsidizing at least 1,000 students a year — Mr. Gates and his wife, Melinda, chose to do so not through a university or a group of universities but through the United Negro College Fund along with the

Hispanic Scholarship Fund and the American Indian College Fund.

By identifying talented but needy students before they reach college, Mr. Gates is following Mr. Lang, whose idea has been replicated in 64 other cities through the I Have a Dream Foundation, and Walter H. Annenberg, whose contributions to public education have exceeded \$800 million since 1993.

They have been joined by many others.

Mr. Forstmann, the financier, last year committed \$50 million to a \$200 million effort that would permit at least 40,000 inner-city public-school students to attend private schools over the next four years.

Mr. Broad of Sun America, who had previously contributed to Mr. Forstmann's private voucher program, said that almost all of his latest donation, the \$100 million that he committed this week, would go to public schools. He said he had not yet decided how the money would be distributed.

The George Lucas Educational Foundation, founded by the creator of "Star Wars," has spent \$10 million since 1991 to help elementary and secondary school teachers find creative ways to teach students, largely through film and technology.

Mr. Riggio, the chairman of Barnes & Noble, convened a campaign last year to raise \$10 million for Brooklyn Technical High School, the public school from which he graduated.

And expanding a program that

they began a decade ago, Michael Milken, the Wall Street financier who was convicted of six counts of securities fraud, and his brother, Lowell, will award \$25,000 grants to 172 elementary and secondary school teachers next month — bringing to nearly \$40 million the amount that the Milken Family Foundation has given to teachers.

Like Mr. Gates, who said he wanted to demonstrate that "private philanthropy can be part of making sure there is equal opportunity," each do-

Donors tie the future of their businesses to better public schools.

nor has entered the educational arena for particular reasons — reasons that don't include having their names emblazoned on a college library (though in some cases, like Mr. Gates', the scholarships will bear the names of the donors).

In an interview conducted via E-mail, Mr. Lucas said he was trying to help students avoid the "frustrating" experiences that he had as a child growing up in Modesto, Calif.

"I was often bored," he wrote. "I often found myself wondering, 'Why can't school be more interesting?'"

To that end, Mr. Lucas's foundation is providing schools with 30,000

copies of a documentary he produced. The film, "Learn and Live," profiles five innovative school programs, including a fourth-grade class at a California charter school that studies insect anatomy with an electron microscope.

Mr. Forstmann, a senior partner in Forstmann Little & Company, an investment firm, and the chairman of Gulfstream Aerospace, has said he intends to use his program, which would transfer students to private schools from public schools, as a wake-up call to force public schools to improve.

His initiative has been seen as an effort to establish a foothold for the school-voucher movement, which would use taxpayer money for private-school tuition, a proposition that has pleased parents whose students are languishing in inner-city schools but has angered teachers unions.

Mr. Gates has not escaped criticism either. Though praised by the president of the United Negro College Fund for raising the prospect of minting hundreds of minority Ph.D.'s, Mr. Gates has been criticized for excluding white students.

"If you give money to the public schools, you're going to make the private schools unhappy," said Peter Dobkin Hall, a senior research scholar at the Yale Divinity School who studies the history of philanthropy. "If you give money to particular groups within the public schools, other groups will feel left out."

"Philanthropy is, intrinsically, not even-handed," Mr. Hall said.

The New York Times

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1999

9-13-99

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9-13-99

Chartering a Course

Students Settling Into Works-in-Progress

By VALERIE STRAUSS
Washington Post Staff Writer

Undeterred by workmen installing windows and sawing wood two floors below, Lei Kendale got on with the business at hand: Teaching his new fourth-grade students the "Code of Civility" they were expected to honor.

Pointing to the blackboard, he asked the uniformed boys and girls, "What's the word?" then snapped his fingers. "Responsibility!" they answered. He moved to the next word, snapped again and the response came back louder, "Respect!" And so it went this week in the opening days of the new Robert Louis Johnson Arts & Technology Academy Public Charter School for kindergarten

through fifth grade in Northeast Washington.

Across town, at the Booker T. Washington Public Charter School for Technical Arts in Northwest Washington, the construction work was closer and louder. With the buzzing of electric saws filling the air in the partially built room, 22 teenagers sat in chairs with no desks as they began a high school program of traditional subjects and training in the construction and building trades.

The schools—both works-in-progress—are two of 10 public charter schools opening this and next week in the District. They join 19 others already in operation, part of a public education movement that advocates say will have a profound impact on education in the nation's capital.

The District, where two charter schools began operating in fall 1998, now has the fastest-growing charter school movement of any city in the country. With a congressional mandate that allows 20 new schools to open each year, proponents say it may not take long before the number of independent charter schools comes close to rivaling the city's 146 traditional public schools, which serve about 71,000 students.

There are more than 1,100 charter schools across the country, with some 250,000 students. There were about 3,500 students in D.C. charter schools last year, and supporters say enrollment could double this year.

The learning-amid-construction atmosphere is typical of new charter schools, which operate with public funds, are free to students and enjoy a great deal of autonomy.

Proponents say that such schools offer parents an option within the public system and will force traditional schools to improve to keep students. Opponents say charter schools drain resources from traditional schools, making it difficult for them to improve.

Charter school programs in the District are diverse—so much so that they don't all have regular 180-day school years. Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School in Northwest Washington, for example, operates on a 221-day year and gives students only a month off for summer vacation. Some schools are designed for children with learning disabilities, adjudicated youths and high school dropouts. Others emphasize technology, math and science, language immersion, the arts or vocational training.

Booker T. Washington, which has about 100 students in grades 9 through 12, offers training in trades including carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring and bricklaying as well as computer skills. It also has a night program for adults.

"The school offers me a chance to learn the skills I am interested in," said Alicea Bland, 18, a senior who last year attended a charter school that didn't reopen this year. She opted for charter schools, she said, because her neighborhood public high school has no vocational training, an example of how vocational education in

the District has all but disappeared in recent years.

Students at Booker T. Washington said the first few days there were marked by disorganization, with staff members feeling their way through what many liken to the start-up of a new business. But the students said they expected improvements and were willing to take a chance on the new school.

Booker T. Washington was founded by Ed Pinkard, a construction and real estate consultant who said he wants to fill the city's vocational education gap. Robert L. Johnson was started by parents who were upset in 1997 when D.C. school officials closed their neighborhood elementary school. They won approval to open a charter school in the same building.

Both schools are experiencing the same first-year growing pains most charters face.

"I sympathize with those people just starting to open schools now because I was there a year ago," said Inesema Salcido, founder of the well-regarded Cesar Chavez high school, now in its second year and located in the same building as Booker T. Washington.

"It is hard, impossibly hard. You can't imagine the difficulties," she said. "Now,

the second year is very different: We are not dealing with the unknowns. . . . You know what you have control over and what you don't."

Source: *Washington Post*
9/13/99

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9-13-49

Tale of Two High Schools: An Object Lesson

Chicago-Area Students Witness How Disparities Affect Education

By WILLIAM CLAIBORNE
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO, Sept. 10—Three busloads of students from a down-at-the-heels, 90-year-old high school in Chicago's South Side and their teenage counterparts from a new, \$62 million state-of-the-art school in the wealthy suburb of Naperville had a close encounter today with an adage from legendary songstress Sophie Tucker:

"I've been poor and I've been rich, and I can tell you that rich is better."

The two groups of students, spent the day touring each other's facilities and getting a close-up lesson in the inequities of educational funding. In other words, seeing how the other half lives.

Orchestrated by Jesse L. Jackson and his Rainbow-PUSH Coalition, the event was designed to throw a spotlight on the huge disparities that exist around the country between the quality of public education delivered to poor students vs. that showered on the rich. While most of the national education debate has focused on taxpayer-funded vouchers for private schools, the more immediate concern in many communities is how to address what many argue is the unfairness of having children in one part of the city get a far better education than those in another. The amount of funding in suburban school districts, Jackson argues, is often three times higher than that in inner-city neighborhoods.

For the mostly white, well-off students at Naperville's Nequa Valley High School, about 35 miles southwest of the city, the eye-openers from their visit to Harper High School in the economically depressed Englewood neighborhood were the peeling paint in a food service classroom, a science laboratory devoid of water or gas connections and any visible sign of chemistry equipment, a music room without soundproofing or uniforms for the school band, a gymnasium with dilapidated bleachers and a computer room without connections to the Internet.

"I just want to cry," said Lauren Drane, a 16-year-old junior from Nequa Valley, as she walked through the dimly lit corridors of Harper High with her classmates. "This is so out of this world, I can't believe it. I'm just so lucky to have what we have."

But she was no less astonished than Sarra Walker, 15, an African American sophomore at Harper High School, upon seeing the Nequa Valley school's three gleaming new gymnasiums, two Olympic-sized swimming pools, elaborately equipped laboratories and lavishly appointed music rooms and

computer centers.

The 2,500-student school, situated on a landscaped, 50-acre campus, has a 12-court tennis complex, fitness rooms with row upon row of exercise equipment, and even a functioning bank for use in business and economic courses.

It has a handsome new stadium for its Wildcats football team; Harper's athletes have to walk more than a mile to a city park for daily practice.

"In some ways it makes me jealous, because Harper is a very old school and they have more materials to help them succeed in life," Walker said. "I can't feel angry with them if they happen to have this advantage, but I sure can see myself in a school like this."

But the inequities between Harper High, whose enrollment is 99.3 percent black, and Nequa Valley, which is 85.8 percent white, go beyond the physical plants, Jackson stressed in an interview while riding in a school bus between the two schools.

At Nequa Valley, almost 94 percent of seniors graduate, compared to 52 percent for Harper High. Chronic truancy is 12 percent at Harper and zero at Nequa Valley. And only 1 percent of Harper's students who took the standardized proficiency test last year exceeded the state average in reading. Thirty-seven percent of Nequa Valley 10th-graders did.

Most telling of all, instructional and operating expenditures per pupil are nearly \$2,300 more at Nequa Valley than at Harper High, according to school officials.

The inequity in funding here is typical of imbalances across the country that have contributed to wide gaps in the quality of education between city and suburban schools. The annual per pupil expenditure in some suburban schools exceeds \$15,000, Jackson said, while many city school districts spend less than \$5,000 per student.

Jackson said the gap in education between city and suburban schools is wider than before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954 overturning separate but ostensibly equal schooling and the integration of Central High School in Little Rock in 1957.

As Sarah Monahan, 18, a Nequa Valley junior, searched in vain for chemistry equipment and dissecting tables at Harper's science class lab, the reality of what inner-city students face began to sink in. She looked even more uneasy when Harper science teacher David Finke gamely told the students, "We make do with what we have by making supplies out of simple materials. You don't necessarily need a gas line in the lab to

learn about science."

"We have so much more. It's not fair," Monahan said. When asked why she thought her school was so much better equipped, she replied, "Well, in the suburbs, the parents just have more money. The kids are just more privileged, I guess."

Jackson said administrators at Harper High have tried hard to make their school more attractive with fresh paint, new lockers and other cosmetic improvements within a limited capital budget. But, he said, "You can't paint a new lab or a decent band room, and you can't paint decent textbooks and computers that work."

He was critical of federal and state education policy which, he said, favors "faddish" solutions such as school vouchers to send some students to private schools, or charter schools operated with public funds.

State Rep. Monique Davis (D), who joined the tour, said she would call for a special session of the state legislature to debate the issue of inequities in school funding. "It's unfair for some kids to start out in such a competitive world with such an obvious disadvantage. We've got to change the way we fund education."

Before the end of their long day of rude awakenings, the students were talking earnestly about starting a student exchange program, and some Nequa Valley music students said they wanted to share their band room and some of their equipment with the Harper students.

Jackson said he was touched by the interaction between the students that he saw and overheard along the way. But looking out a school bus window at boarded-up slum dwellings as the group drove through Englewood, Jackson said wearily, "There's no doubt in my mind that this area has been redlined for capital... and when you cut off capital, it affects everything."

The Washington Post
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1999

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A Kindergarten Crowd

47 Share Classroom in Prince George's

By DAVID NAKAMURA
Washington Post Staff Writer

Teacher Michelle Mayfield wonders each day how to best fit her students into her classroom at Flintstone Elementary School so they have enough space to learn comfortably.

On the plus side, kindergartners tend to be very small. On the down side, she has 47 of them.

Here they were yesterday morning crammed in the 38-by-25-foot room: groups of six seated at seven tables and five more at individual desks, fidgeting in their 47 tiny seats as Mayfield tried to teach them to use, of all things, 47 pairs of miniature hunt-nosed scissors.

"Before you get your scissors," Mayfield began, "I want you to practice..."

But she was cut off by a chorus of chatter: "I want blue ones." "I want green ones." "I want pink."

She tried again but was interrupted: "Can I wash my hands, Miss Mayfield?"

"This is ridiculous," Mayfield said later. "They can't learn with that many. On the first day, one girl had to go home sick because she wasn't used to all the people."

Crowded classrooms are a problem in schools throughout the Washington region, but on this day, in this Oxon Hill classroom, the conditions had reached near overload.

Not that officials weren't concerned. School board members got an earful from angry Flintstone parents at a board meeting Thursday night. But the issue is a complicated one in Prince George's. Although the county is building 13 to 26 new schools in the next six years, County Executive Wayne K. Curry (D) is-

sued a moratorium on buying any more \$35,000 trailers so that all construction funds can be devoted to the new buildings.

So, officials say, they are scrambling to move some of the system's 420 trailers from less crowded to more crowded schools. It's a stopgap measure that is complicated by the fact that 40,000 of the district's 133,000 students switched schools this year because of boundary changes or other reasons.

"We basically try to rank schools from the most overcrowded to the least," said Bill Greene, the system's director of pupil accounting. "We worked all summer on it because when we take away the [trailers] from a school, that means forever."

But the school system's planning of how long has been criticized for not being accurate enough in its estimates of school enrollment. Mayfield said she was expecting 35 kindergartners, but

46 showed up on the first day. Another student arrived yesterday.

"Imagine having to take attendance 46 times or having to figure out which of the 46 children needs to buy a lunch," Kathy Fouts, another Flintstone teacher, told the school board Thursday night, as parents held signs that read "46." "Maybe you want to be a substitute in there for a day?"

Darrell King, whose daughter K'Linn is in the class, said "It's ridiculous. There's no way they can teach 46 children at the same time. They must be overwhelmed."

Flintstone has a building capacity of 506 and a current enrollment of 683. Four trailers behind the building accommodate some of the overflow, but officials had to convert the music room and the computer lab to classrooms.

Complicating matters is that Flintstone is a magnet school with a Montessori program, whose classes are capped at 25 students.

Officials say relief is on the way.

Two trailers are due at Flintstone on Monday, said Tony Liberatore, supervisor of support services. A second kindergarten teacher is helping Mayfield and will be able to take over a class of her own when the trailer arrives.

"The trailers probably will come from somewhere else that needs them," said school board Chairman Alvin Thornton (Suitland). "It's a painful thing, but at some point, we have to stop talking about it as a school here or a classroom there, and use it as a point to talk in terms of a systemic issue."

Until help arrives, Mayfield will do what she can. After a bit of prodding yesterday, her students raised their scissors in the air, and 47 voices said in unison: "Open, close. Open, close."

Mayfield exhaled a big sigh, and paused to pick up a piece of brown construction paper. She started to speak again, but it was too late.

"I want blue." "I want green." "I want..."

The Washington Post
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1999

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The New York Times
Sunday, September 12, 1999

Denver Teachers Accept Plan Linking Pay to Performance

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER -- The city's teachers union has approved a two-year pilot program -- the first of its kind in the nation -- to tie teachers' pay raises to how well students do on tests.

"It's an experiment, and I think it's worth the experiment," said Laurie Bourg, a fourth-grade teacher who voted for the pact.

The program, proposed by the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, will involve only a small group of volunteers at first. At the end of the two years, a decision will be made on whether to expand the program to all teachers.

"The teachers of Denver have decided to give it a try," said Becky Wissink, union vice president. She would not give totals from Friday's vote.

"From teachers' perspective, the real value of this pilot is that they can be involved from the ground up in the design, implementation and evaluation of the study," said teachers union president Andrea Giunta.

The next step is the appointment of a design team that will create and oversee the study.

Many teachers are now asking how classroom performance can be measured, especially when so many variables are out of their control.

"I was in the printing business for 15 years, and you can't run schools like a business," said Roxanne Rhodes, a high school social studies teacher. "If I bought paper in my printing business and it wasn't up to quality, we could send it back. You can't do that with students."

In Denver and many other districts around the country, teachers automatically get raises based on length of service.

Some districts around the country have offered merit increases or bonuses, but they base the decision on schoolwide achievement or factors such as a teacher's work outside the classroom.

The Denver program, in contrast, would reward teachers for how well the children do in their individual classrooms.

The participants in the pilot program would get bonuses, rather than raises. However, if the program is enacted permanently, the teachers whose students do well will be rewarded with actual salary increases.

Their pay would not be docked if their students didn't measure up.

"This program is truly different. It's not a bonus. If it's enacted in two years, it changes where you are in the salary schedule based on student achievement," said Kathleen Lyons, a spokeswoman for the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union with 2.4 million members.

Starting teachers in Denver make \$30,000. The top salary, which requires a doctorate, is \$60,362.

About 450 of the district's 4,300 teachers in 12 elementary and three middle schools would volunteer for the pilot program. Teachers who want to volunteer must get the support of their principal and 85 percent of the other teachers in their school.

The volunteers would be divided into three groups, which would

measure student performance differently. One would use students' scores of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Another would use scores on a standardized test created in the district. The third would somehow test how much students improve after their teachers have taken classes to enhance their skills.

Over the past year, Denver schools reported higher test scores among white students. But minority scores lag behind, and the 67,000-student district is under pressure from the federal government to reduce the gap between whites and minorities.

Last spring, five of 11 grades failed to meet the reading average on the Iowa Tests. Five years ago, not one grade level was above the average.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1999Two Views on How to Get
Johnny to Read and Think

School began this week for most students, and so has another round of debate over how it should be run.

So The New York Times posed a question to two education gurus: How can schools produce educated students?

Howard Gardner, a Harvard professor and the author of the new book "The Disciplined Mind: What All Students Should Understand" (Simon & Schuster), Gardner argues that critical thinking and analytical skills in various disciplines should be the backbone of any educational approach, and that these do not depend on studying a particular subject matter or using a core curriculum. Gardner, who is perhaps most well-known for his theory of multiple intelligence, which posits a broader kind definition of intelligence than can be measured by IQ scores, proposes a focus on a limited number of subjects. Such case studies -- like the theory of evolution, Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" and the Holocaust -- would teach students how to think, respectively, like a scientist, and artist or a historian.

E.D. Hirsch Jr., the author of "Cultural Literacy," (Houghton-Mifflin, 1987), is a professor of education and humanities at the University of Virginia and president of the Core Knowledge Foundation. Hirsch, whose book "The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them" was published by Anchor in paperback last month, argues that to function well in society, people need a vocabulary of common information, of -- facts, stories and skills that make up a shared literacy. His approach is being used in some of New York City's newest charter schools. He argues that the progressive tradition in education, which Gardner represents, has miserably failed students, particularly disadvantaged ones, and that a school combining drills and practice where needed with a demanding core curriculum will continue to produce the most successes.

Toward Good Thinking
On Essential Questions

By HOWARD GARDNER

As one concerned with precollege education, I'm gratified by the attention paid to this topic over the last two decades. At the same time I have to signal my uneasiness that so much of the discussion centers on means: should we have charters, vouchers, teachers' unions, national tests etc. I think it is essential that we step back, at least periodically, and ask about the ends or aims of education. My own answer can be stated succinctly. A dozen or more years of education should yield students who can think well about the essential questions of human life: who are we, where do we come from, what's the world made of, what have humans achieved and what can we achieve, how does one lead a good life? Many people, institutions and experiences can contribute to formulating these questions and the answers. The distinct contribution of formal education is to equip students with the ways of thinking, the scholarly disciplines, that have been constructed over the years to allow individuals to think well and deeply about these questions and some viable answers.

In speaking of disciplines, I have something specific in mind. Disciplines did not always exist; they are human-created methods and structures for approaching long-standing puzzles. Historians evaluate documents and testimony to reconstruct plausible accounts of past events. Scientists generate hypotheses about how the world works, collect data relevant to those hypotheses, analyze

the data objectively and then revise or endorse the original hypotheses or theories. The arts are also disciplines: they involve clear procedures for production (how does one write a fugue, stage a ballet, render a portrait) and for interpreting the productions of others. For those inclined to dismiss the disciplines, imagine a world without such mental furniture.

By a convenient pun, the attainment of disciplines requires discipline. This is because our natural, common-sense ways of making sense of the world are non- or even anti-disciplinary. Only through years of asking questions and following well-honed strategies can we replace common-sense accounts (e.g., human beings have always existed, the best portraits are photographs) with more nuanced and grounded disciplinary accounts.

The disciplines are arguably the most important human inventions of the last two millennia. Yet their importance tends to be obscured, especially in the rhetoric-filled discourse of education. Instead, we hear a lot about facts, skills, tests and subject matter. None of these terms should be dismissed, but they attain fresh significance when they are considered in a disciplinary context.

First, skills. I know no one who opposes the acquisition of basic skills: reading, writing, calculation. One cannot even enter the disciplinary worlds unless one has mastered the three R's. Basic skills are the means for acquiring the disciplines, just as the disciplines (and ultimately interdisciplinary amalgams) provide the means for thinking well about important issues.

Next, facts. You cannot think well about a topic or question unless you have information, data, facts. However, that information should be acquired not for its own sake but as a means of finding a better answer to a consequential question. Facts can only be well used if they relate to one another in a meaningful way; otherwise, to use Alfred North Whitehead's term, they are simply "inert knowledge." Facts need the connective tissue of disciplines, or they are undisciplined, rote information.

Subject matter is typically collapsed with disciplines, but it is important to honor a distinction. One can have lots of facts in a subject without having any disciplinary understanding. Too often a person is considered a master because she or he has taken a certain number of courses, often called Carnegie units. A person understands to the extent that he or she can apply knowledge appropriately in a new situation. Only an individual in possession of disciplinary moves can do this.

Which brings us to tests, or assessments. There may be some who oppose assessments, but I am not in their ranks. Not in the least! At the same time, I reject as inadequate most of the short-answer instruments currently being adopted at the state level. These instruments may probe factual or subject-matter knowledge, but they typically fall short of probing disciplinary mastery and understanding. In life no one presents us with four choices, the last of which reads "none of the above."

I favor instruments that actually determine whether a person can think in a disciplined way. So rather than ask students to name nine Civil War battles, I would ask them to assess two historical accounts based on the same primary documents (or create their own). Rather than asking students to recall a chemical formula, I would provide them with data from an experiment and ask them to extract the regularities (and perhaps indicate which other data need to be collected next). Rather than asking students to memorize authors or lines from a poem, I would ask them to edit or complete an unfinished poem.

Every educational philosophy reflects a certain knowledge base and a certain value system. My educational regimen builds on findings from cognitive science. These findings indicate that, when young, individuals develop intuitive theories that are very powerful and difficult to eradicate. While some are on the mark, most are remote from the disciplines. Only a concerted effort over years to establish disciplinary ways of thinking can eradicate or educate the

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unschooled mind. My own belief is that this goal is best achieved by focusing in depth on certain important topics; not only does one come to understand those topics well, but in the process one gains incipient mastery for what it is like to use the methods of a discipline.

This incipient mastery can be built upon for the rest of one's life. I am idealistic enough to believe that once individuals have genuinely understood a theory like evolution, a historical period like the Holocaust, a work of art like "The Marriage of Figaro," they will insist on commensurate understanding of other topics in the future.

Pursuing this line of reasoning, I find myself out of sympathy with a preordained canon. One can acquire disciplinary ways of thinking from a variety of topics, and it simply does not matter that much which ones happen to be used. It is more important, in my view, to use examples that are valued by the community and that come alive for students than to insist that everyone read the same play or master the same theorem or learn the same topics in science. I don't care that much if one can name the planets; one can always request that information from a Palm Pilot. I care mightily that half of the American population (and perhaps some of our recent Presidents) can't distinguish astronomical from astrological ways of thinking and that two-thirds of Americans don't see the disciplinary difference between evolutionary and creationist accounts of the origins of human beings.

In putting forth these views, I find myself at odds with much of the program put forth by E.D. Hirsch Jr. Perhaps it is possible to reconcile our work to some extent -- for example, by emphasizing his "Core Knowledge" in early grades and my disciplinary focus for the later grades. I have admiration for his democratic vision, his belief in public education and his sponsoring of programs in our schools. Still I think it is valuable to put forth these quite different educational visions: one focusing on questions and on ways of thinking, the other on factual answers and on shared knowledge. The value is in part epistemological, different views of the mind's use; in part cultural, different views of an educated society.

Finding the Answers In Drills and Rigor

By E.D. HIRSCH Jr.

The most interesting debate about American education concerns why the United States has not fulfilled the egalitarian aims of schooling as well as other democracies have. The main cause of inequality in American schools, I have argued, has been the dominance of the progressive-education tradition, which has seriously misconceived itself as the guardian of social progress and democratic ideals. I hope Howard Gardner is right that my work poses a threat to the assumptions of the progressivist tradition.

If we are lucky, the end of the 1990s will mark the end of spurious connections between educational ideas and political affiliations. During the last two decades, when Democrats have controlled a school board, the district has tended to favor the whole-language method of teaching reading, to encourage the use of calculators for "math understanding" (instead of memorizing the multiplication table) and to disparage multiple-choice tests, all positions connected with progressive education but not logically with the platform of the Democratic Party.

By contrast, when a majority of school-board members have been Republican, the district has tended to favor the explicit teaching of phonics, the memorization of the multiplication table and the use of standardized tests, positions properly associated with educational conservatism but not necessarily with political conservatism. On the contrary, political conservatism, understood as the preservation of the social status quo, is best achieved by progressive educational methods.

There have been recent signs that the politics of education is belatedly becoming more sophisticated. As long ago as the 1930s, Antonio Gramsci, a brilliant Communist opponent of Mussolini, denounced the new "progressive" ideas that were being introduced into Italy from the United States. He argued that social justice required educational conservatism because only if the poor worked hard in school to accumulate the "intellectual baggage" of the rich could they earn money and wield the levers of power. Gramsci, the Communist, serving on a modern American school board, might surprise fellow board members by voting with Republicans.

So might James S. Coleman. Progressive methods failed disadvantaged students, he concluded after a decade of inquiries into the implications of his famous 1966 report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity." What people remember about his 1966 report is that schools appear to count for little in determining educational achievement, whereas family background matters a great deal. This statistical fact upset many people, including Coleman, because it dashes the democratic hope of giving all students an equal chance by simply putting rich and poor together in the same common school. If the common school does not in fact reduce the advantages of wealth and privilege, then the premises of democratic education must be re-examined.

After the Coleman report, one had a choice of two positions: one could become an advocate of compensatory education to narrow the achievement gap between groups, or one could adopt the determinist view that the schools can do little to rectify the ills of the wider society. The determinist position, which excuses the schools for failing to reduce the test-score gap between groups, is widely held in the American educational world. But after further research, Coleman adopted the compensatory position.

Published in the '80s, that research showed that most Roman Catholic schools were better at achieving equity than most public schools. Catholic schools followed a rich and demanding curriculum, required a lot of drill and practice, and expected every child to reach minimal goals in each subject during the year. As a result disadvantaged children prospered academically, as did their advantaged peers, and the schools narrowed the gap between races and social classes.

This deeper inquiry of Coleman's started a controversy almost as fierce as the one surrounding his 1966 report. It was seen as an attack on public schools, but, as Coleman unanswerably pointed out, his findings were not limited to Catholic schools; the very same democratic results were being achieved by the few public schools that defied progressivist doctrine. Consistent with that finding is the fact that recent improvements in equity have been achieved only by school reforms that use conservative methods like drill and practice (e.g., the Success for All program at Johns Hopkins) and a demanding curriculum (e.g., the "Core Knowledge" series of books).

After so many practical failures, few educational experts overtly label themselves progressivists, but one can detect de facto progressivists by certain distinctive traits. First, there is their belief that knowledge and skill will be gained incidentally from intensive study of a few subjects. This incidental method claims, against all evidence, to achieve greater depth, as if there were a simple trade-off between depth and breadth. A claim is made under various labels and slogans such as "the project method" and "less is more" that exposure to a few complex experiences will cause understanding to occur naturally, an idea that first gained currency during the Romantic movement.

The persistent attractions of this "natural" method may possibly be explained by the vestigial Romanticism of American culture, but as Lisa Delpit observes in her book "Other People's Children," the progressivist mode of teaching has consistently failed to benefit African-American children (and many advantaged children as well).

Another mark of progressivism (and another vestige of the Romantic movement) is its criticism of an "overemphasis" on language. Emerson said: "We are shut up in schools and college

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recitation rooms for 10 or 15 years and come out at last with a bellyful of words and do not know a thing." But as Ms. Delpit points out, these antivocal ideas have done the most harm to the most disadvantaged students. Their greatest deficits are in vocabulary and the conventions of literate language; they make up math deficits much more readily than language deficits.

Keith Stanovich and his colleagues have shown that a score on a standardized reading test in first grade is the best predictor of 11th-grade academic achievement, a shocking indictment of present-day schools and a powerful illustration of the accuracy of standardized tests and of the centrality of verbal training for determining life chances.

Disparagement of objective tests is a third way to detect progressivists. Their hostility to tests is not surprising, given that progressive methods fail to improve test scores. Yet standardized reading tests are among the most valid and reliable assessments that exist and among the most important instruments for measuring excellence and fairness in education. To take a reading test, a student has to perform the very skill being assessed. These tests, even in their much-maligned multiple-choice forms, are highly correlated with each other and with real-world reading skills.

Competence in reading (that is in comprehension) is central to academic achievement and to participation in economic and political life. High school graduates who read well enough to get into top colleges know about 100,000 words, which means an average learning rate of more than 15 new words a day, an astonishing number attainable only by wide reading and by psychological mechanisms that are only beginning to be understood.

A broad vocabulary is an index to broad knowledge, and broad knowledge, extended over time, is the key to depth of knowledge and to a general ability to learn new things.

Since the late '60s it has been known that high literacy entails prior background knowledge over many different domains. Within a given literate culture, the most literacy-enhancing background knowledge can be identified and taught to all students. Theory predicts that teaching such a high-octane curriculum will raise everyone's reading and learning levels and narrow the achievement gap between social groups. This prediction has now been confirmed by independent researchers.

Teaching a curriculum that produces high literacy for all is a potent way of fostering the egalitarian goal of democratic education. But before we can advance toward that goal on a broad front, many progressivist ideas will have to be discarded.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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January 4, 2000

MR. PRESIDENT:

We sent these to Jack Lew when they arrived, but I thought you might like to see them as well.

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Sean Maloney *SM*

*put
away*

Bruce

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- I'd like a physical fitness
- incentive for my last yr - W.P. no longer
- scattered -
- construction in the works
- what about other??



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1-8-00

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

December 21, 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

My entire Department and I appreciate the opportunity of meeting with you regarding several unresolved education issues.

Enclosed are three memos regarding matters on which you requested additional information. The fourth is on a subject we did not discuss but that we think is of critical and timely importance – the matter of school leadership, or “the principal.”

Memo 1 suggests options regarding school construction.

Memo 2 explains SEOGs, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, which higher education leaders put at a very high priority of \$100 million funding, along with Pell increases.

Memo 3 describes an initiative regarding a national emphasis on physical education. (A recommendation similar to this is in our proposed ESEA reauthorization.)

Memo 4 describes a new proposal regarding principals, which I understand is being strongly considered by your White House staff. With the pressure now building regarding high-stakes testing on the state level and the advance of the standards movement, it is our belief that “school leadership” must be addressed by you in this budget and in your State of the Union message.

Thanks for your strong support of education in America.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick", is written over the typed name.

Richard W. Riley

Cc: Bruce Reed

Spending-Side School Construction Proposal, FY 2001

A new 2001 proposal should be based on the spending-side bill that you proposed in 1997 and be complementary to a tax-side proposal. That bill embodied principles that the Administration continues to embrace: leveraging limited federal resources to help states and localities get the job done; targeting funds to areas with the most need, particularly cities; incorporating enough flexibility to mesh with the different ways in which states and localities finance construction; providing incentives that are consistent with current appropriations for small schools and technology and in areas like energy efficiency, safety, lighting, environmental benefit, and schools as the centers of communities.

Key features:

- In order to continue to address the over \$100 billion of documented need for school renovation and new construction, the proposal should allocate at least \$1 to \$1.5 billion a year to states and localities. With these resources, the federal government can become a significant partner and further stimulate the efforts of states and local governments to address the urgent needs of their schools.
- As a way of bringing the states along, we should require a state match. Given current state surpluses, this match could be as high as a 1:1 match or 100 percent.
- The 1997 bill included a 50 percent set-aside for the 100 school districts that had the largest numbers of children living in poverty. We would recommend lowering this to 35 percent, approximately the same amount that these districts would get using the Title I formula and similar to what the Senate Democrats have included in their bills.
- In order to address the various ways that states and localities finance school construction, we need to develop a proposal that is flexible enough to fit within the states' current efforts, either through bonding, pay-as-you go systems or direct appropriations. But, at the same time, the proposal has to address a particular national purpose and respond to greatest need. A targeted grant with matching funds could be directed toward a particular focus, like environmental quality or health and safety, or could be directed to communities that do not have the ability to pass the necessary referenda or float bonds.
- The bill should provide incentives for states and school districts to address smaller learning environments, schools as centers of communities, helping close the digital divide, and improving infrastructure to encourage energy efficiency, environmental quality, air quality, or health and safety. These incentives could be included in any of the options that follow.

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants

The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) program provides need-based grant aid, in addition to Pell grants, to eligible undergraduate students to help reduce financial barriers to a college education.

Funding is awarded to qualifying post-secondary institutions under a statutory formula. Nearly 3,800 post-secondary institutions receive funds under the SEOG program. Participating institutions are required by statute to contribute at least 25 percent of SEOG award amounts. In other words, the institution provides one dollar for every three Federal dollars.

Currently, more than 1 million students are served by this program. Students qualify for grants of up to \$4,000 by demonstrating financial need. First priority is given to students with "exceptional need" who are Pell grant recipients when a Pell grant does not cover the cost of college.

An additional \$100 million will serve 140,000 more students through this program.

Options:

1. The first option would focus on what we think of as well-designed schools. We could use, as a starting point, the FIE Schools as Centers of Community proposal that we put forward for FY2000 for \$10 million. However, we would need to create a much larger "incentive" grant program where the federal government would act as a partner with states and localities to encourage school districts to design, build, and renovate schools that are smaller, healthier, more energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and open later and longer as family learning and community technology centers. Schools that serve the entire community need to be multi-purpose and multi-generational -- built so that they help all parts of the community overcome the digital divide.
2. The second option would target funds to communities that are unlikely to be able to make use of the tax-side assistance. A proposal could target communities with low credit ratings but this could penalize communities that have improved their financial practices and improved their bond ratings. We should instead target funds on communities that have the very highest rates of child poverty. These would be, for starters, the types of "forgotten communities" that you visited last summer -- Mississippi Delta, Indian reservations, Rio Grande Valley, Appalachia, etc.
3. A third option would capitalize a State revolving loan funds for school construction. This is a concept that the Federal Government has pursued in other areas such as transportation and water quality. Basically, the Department would make grants to states for them to set up loan banks. We would probably want to require the states to provide a match. The states would then make loans to LEAs and later make more loans from the repayments.

An Initiative to Promote Healthy Habits And Physical Fitness

Findings

- The major health problems facing the United States today are preventable and attributable to a few types of behaviors, including those that lead to injuries (accidents and violence), drug and alcohol abuse (including tobacco use), poor nutrition, and insufficient physical activity. These interrelated behaviors contribute to poor health, as well as poor educational and social outcomes.

Purposes

- A national awareness program to help children and youth, including those with disabilities, understand what they can do to be fit and stay healthy (with very visible co-spokespersons – for example, Michael Jordan and Mia Hamm, and popular disabled athlete, Bill Demby).
- Grant program to support demonstration projects promoting lifelong physical activity and health awareness for students through school – community and business partnerships.
- Identifying and showcasing exemplary physical education and fitness programs that promote lifelong healthy habits, provide opportunities for students to connect to school and after-school and summer programs.

A \$40 Million Program

The Secretary would be authorized to make grants or enter into contracts or agreements with national, state and local school-community-business partnerships, state and local educational agencies, other federal agencies, institutions of higher education, and public and private nonprofit agencies or organizations for the purpose of:

- Developing and conducting a national campaign, including advertisements, to promote physical fitness and healthy habits for children and youth. (\$5 million)
- Establishing demonstration sites (200-400 sites), including the training of school personnel, on how to provide quality programs to promote lifelong physical activity and healthy habits among children and adolescents. (\$20 million)
- Evaluating and highlighting best practices to expand existing state and local coordinated school health programs to promote health habits among children and adolescents. (\$3 million)
- Providing technical assistance and materials to all interested school-community-business partnership to organize, expand and develop physical fitness and health awareness programs in schools throughout America. (\$12 million)

Principals for the 21st Century Proposal

The nation faces a growing and critical shortage of principals that has largely gone unnoticed. Over 80% of practicing principals have 20 or more years of experience. Many of these seasoned principals will begin leaving the profession in large numbers in the next five years creating a "leadership void," precisely at a time when the standards movement is just beginning to take hold in the classroom. This comes at a time when 50% of all school districts are already reporting a shortage of "qualified" candidates. Women and minority members also remain under-represented in this demanding profession.

Our efforts to increase "accountability" and raise student achievement will flounder or even fail unless we recruit, encourage, and support a new generation of principals who are deeply committed to raising standards. Research shows that what principals do on a daily basis makes a difference in how much and how well students learn. The success of the standards movement is largely dependent upon good teaching and the principals who are willing to encourage and support teachers in the effort to raise achievement levels. Developing the leadership skills of this small, highly-skilled group of professionals (60,000) can leverage and have high impact on the 2 million teachers who will be entering our nation's classrooms in the next ten years.

\$50 million program

This is why we propose a \$10 million competitive grant incentive program to encourage districts or states to design principal "leadership" academies that would recruit, prepare, induct, and provide ongoing support for principals as instructional leaders. We propose that \$40 million be used for the implementation of effective models of leadership academies.

November 9, 1999

Mr. Eli Broad
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
SunAmerica Inc.
One SunAmerica Center
Century City
Los Angeles, California 90067-6022

Dear Eli:

I was delighted by your decision to donate \$100 million to our nation's urban school systems, and I salute you for your generosity and dedication to improving young lives.

Our nation faces no task more important than ensuring that every child -- without regard to race or station in life -- has access to a world-class education and learns the skills necessary to prosper. You can take pride in knowing that your gift holds the potential to positively influence the lives of thousands of young people across our country, and I commend you for undertaking this worthwhile endeavor.

I'm also very pleased that the Broad Foundation is working with my staff on school leadership issues, and I hope that your commitment to addressing these challenges will serve as an inspiring example to others.

Hillary and I hope you are well, and we send our best.

Sincerely,

BILL

BC/CKS/DDA/SH/DWB/pfs-emu-lynn-ddj
(10.broad.e)

(Corres. #7027724)

cc: John Wertman, 97 OEOB

cc: ~~Andy Rotherham, 218 OEOB~~

cc: DWB/SPM, 94 OEOB

Xeroxed copy of personally signed original to NH through Sean Maloney

CLEAR THRU SEAN MALONEY

PRESIDENT TO SIGN

November 9, 1999

PERSONAL

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gates
Post Office Box 5000
Medina, Washington 98039

Dear Melinda and Bill:

I was delighted to learn that you have established the Gates Millennium Scholars Program to provide higher education financial assistance to underprivileged minority students. I applaud your generosity and commitment to such a worthwhile endeavor.

Our nation faces no task more important than ensuring that every child -- without regard to race or station in life -- has access to a world-class education and learns the skills necessary to prosper. The Millennium Scholars program holds the promise of significantly improving the chances of success for thousands of young people across our country.

Hillary and I send our best wishes to you both.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

BC/CKS/DDA/SH/DWB/DWB/pfs-emu-lynn-ddj
(Corres. #7027719)
(10.gates.b)

cc: John Wertman, 97 OEOB
cc: Andy Rotherham, 218 OEOB
cc: DWB/SPM, 94 OEOB

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PRESIDENT TO SIGN

FEB 16 '00 11:11AM DOE/OFC OF SECRETARY

P.1/5



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO:

Bruce Reed / Karin Kullman / A. Rothman
The White House

PHONE:

FACSIMILE:

456 - 2878

FROM:

LESLIE T. THORNTON
CHIEF OF STAFF

202-401-2098 (fax)

202-401-3000 (phone)

PAGE (S) TO FOLLOW:

4

MESSAGE:

cc: Scheduling request for the PresidentCONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

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600 INDEPENDENCE AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-0100

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

FEB 16 '00 11:12AM DOE/OFC OF SECRETARY

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 14, 2000

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurgood Marshall, Jr.
Assistant to the President
and Cabinet Secretary

FROM: Leslie T. Thornton
Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Scheduling request for photo opportunity with the President, Rose Garden ceremony, and presidential town meeting

Attached is a scheduling request for:

- a photo opportunity with the President for the state teachers of the year;
- a Rose Garden ceremony at which the President would present the National Teacher of the Year to the American people; and
- a town meeting, which the President would moderate, about the administration's education legacy and the future of education.

The events could be held anytime May 8-12, but preferably May 9, 10, or 11.

We appreciate your review of this request. If you have any questions, please contact me at 401-3001.

We would appreciate your response by March 31.

Attachment

cc: Bruce Reed ✓
Ellen Lovell
Mickey Ibarra

FEB 16 '00 11:12AM DOE/OFC OF SECRETARY

P.3/5

Schedule Proposal

Date _____

ACCEPT_____
REGRET_____
PENDING

TO: Stephanie Streett
Assistant to the President and
Director of Presidential Scheduling

FROM: Thurgood Marshall, Jr.
Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary

REQUEST: A photo opportunity with the President for the state teachers of the year; a Rose Garden ceremony at which the President would present the National Teacher of the Year to the American people; and a town meeting, which the President would moderate, about the administration's education legacy and the future of education

PURPOSE: To honor and celebrate the teaching profession through the recognition of its most exemplary practitioners

To showcase the administration's legacy in education and to provide an opportunity for the President to lead a discussion about the future of education with some of the nation's best teachers

BACKGROUND: The National Teacher of the Year program is the oldest and most prestigious awards program for teaching. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Teacher of the Year program. The theme of the anniversary is "50 Years of Making a Difference ... 50 Years of Shaping the Future."

For the past five years, the White House has invited all of the state teachers of the year to meet the President for a photo opportunity and a Rose Garden ceremony. To commemorate the 50th anniversary, all living, former national teachers of the year will also be in attendance.

Rarely is there such an assemblage of nationally recognized teachers. A town meeting with the teachers following the Rose Garden ceremony would allow the President to call attention to his education legacy and to talk with the teachers about the future of education.

The Public Agenda Foundation's extensive research on the public's attitude toward education found that Americans trust and believe teachers

FEB 16 '00 11:12AM DOE/OFC OF SECRETARY

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over all others when it comes to education issues. Over 6 to 12 months, these award-winning teachers give 20 to 30 speeches to community and education groups in their states. The Department of Education will maintain contact with the teachers through the National Teacher Forum, an electronic network, and regular correspondence.

The Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic, Inc., sponsor the National Teacher of the Year program.

PREVIOUS**PARTICIPATION:**

During the past 49 years of the program, the National Teacher of the Year has been introduced to the nation by the President and honored at the White House. Since 1995, the White House has invited the state teachers of the year to the Rose Garden ceremony honoring the National Teacher of the Year.

On the 50th anniversary of the program and with all living, former national teachers of the year present, the President would have an even greater opportunity to focus on the importance of good teaching.

DATE AND TIME: Anytime May 8-12, 2000, but preferably Tuesday, May 9; Wednesday, May 10; or Thursday, May 11

DURATION: Approximately three hours, including a photo opportunity for the state teachers of the year with the President, the Rose Garden ceremony, and the town meeting.

LOCATION: The White House

PARTICIPANTS: The 2000 National Teacher of the Year, state teachers of the year, previous national teachers of the year, dignitaries and members of the Congressional delegation from the National Teacher of the Year's home state, and sponsors of the National Teacher of the Year program. Lists will be provided.

**OUTLINE OF
EVENTS:**

A photo opportunity for the state teachers of the year with the President

Brief remarks from the President, Secretary Riley, and the 2000 National Teacher of the Year in the Rose Garden

A nationally televised town meeting with the President, Secretary Riley, and a panel of national teachers of the year (The state teachers of the year and other national teachers of the year would participate as the audience.)

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REMARKS**REQUESTED:**

Brief remarks in the Rose Garden and during the town meeting
If desired, the Department of Education would prepare the remarks.

MEDIA**COVERAGE:**

Full coverage by electronic and print media
There would be a request that C-SPAN carry the town meeting live. The Department of Education would coordinate with the hometown media for the state teachers of the year.

RECOMMENDED**BY:**

Richard W. Riley, Secretary of Education

CONTACT:

Kris Balderston, Cabinet Affairs, 456-2572

Billy Glunz, Cabinet Affairs, 456-2572

Leslie T. Thornton
Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
telephone: 401-3001; fax: 401-2098

Andy Finch or Lynda Edwards
Office of the Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs
U. S. Department of Education
telephone: 401-1524

Mary Beth Blegen
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
telephone: 205-8659; fax: 401-0596

February 4, 2000

Mr. Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban league
120 Wall Street
New York, New York 10005

Dear Hugh:

Thank you for your kind letter and the position paper on reforming urban schools. I'm sorry I was not able to respond sooner. I appreciate learning your thoughts on how to increase student achievement in urban schools, and I have forwarded your correspondence to my staff in the Domestic Policy Council for review.

As you know, I have made strengthening public education a top priority throughout my Administration. The appropriations bill that I signed last November doubles spending for after-school and summer school programs, continues us on a path to hire 100,000 high quality teachers to reduce class sizes in the early grades, and provides funds to localities to assist their lowest performing schools. I firmly believe that one of our nation's most important tasks is to provide every child -- without regard to race, geography, or station in life -- a world-class education.

As we continue our efforts to give all children the high-quality education they deserve, I look forward to working with you. Best wishes.

Sincerely, **BILL CLINTON**

BC/CKS/DA/DC/pw-bws-lynn (Corres. #7038537)
(12.price.h)

cc: Kendra Brooks, 217 w/inc

000208



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402496

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October 13, 1999

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

It was good to see you at the National Education Summit. Your speech was extraordinarily moving and smack on target. Thanks so very much for the warm acknowledgment, which I've proudly shared with leaders of our Urban League movement.

As you may know from subsequent briefings, the Summit was both thought provoking and constructive. It moved the dialogue about achievement beyond a focus on higher standards per se, to a much-needed discussion of how to help youngsters meet those standards.

At the Summit, I presented some ideas about how to hoist the achievement levels of urban children by concentrating henceforth on creating successful schools instead of attempting to reform school systems. In essence, I said it was time to:

1. Assert no-nonsense state leadership and responsibility;
2. "Charterize" all urban schools;
3. Professionalize the teaching profession; and
4. Transform the role of school superintendents from operations to accreditation.

Enclosed is a National Urban League position paper that presents these points in greater detail, beginning on page 6. In the paper, I also call for real-world academic standards and challenge the wisdom of school vouchers.

President William J. Clinton
October 13, 1999
Page Two

In calling for aggressive state leadership, I by no means intend to minimize the critically important role of the federal government in stimulating and financing the change that must occur. In fact, the current debate over the disposition of the federal budget surplus provides an historic opportunity for your administration to move the ball way downfield for youngsters who've been left behind. I trust you will continue to challenge Congress to seize this opportunity – and not squander it.

I hope that the enclosed position paper is helpful to you and members of your administration as you consider the most appropriate federal, state and local strategies for raising the achievement levels of urban children. Thank you for your consideration – and your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Hugh B. Price". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Hugh B. Price
President

Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban League
October 12, 1999

**The Aim of Urban School Reform:
Successful Schools, Not "Systemic" Reform**

The saga of public education played out on both sides of the Hudson River the other day. At the IBM Conference in the Palisades, the nation's self-proclaimed education governors and corporate leaders convened to take stock of the education accountability movement and map plans for improving the caliber of public schools.

Given the recent obsession of politicians and policymakers with ending social promotion and imposing tough standards, the dialogue at IBM was refreshingly candid and constructive. The joint declaration issued to close the conference focused, finally, on what it will take to boost achievement and hoist children over the higher bars for graduation.

Yet to the East, the City of Yonkers was roiled by a rancorous school strike. At issue was a instructionally-sound proposal by the new Superintendent to devote more classroom time per day to fewer core subjects. The local Federation of Teachers cried foul; the school board called their bluff; and the union walk-out was on. So the grown-ups in charge of the school district made a sorry mess of a solid idea that principals and teachers probably could have sorted out rather easily in their respective schools.

Even so, these developments on either side of the Palisades represent progress. Until then, tough love was about the only remedy for low achievement that impatient politicians and anxious school administrators could come up with. End social promotion, they proclaimed. Send the laggards to summer school and hold them back if they still cannot cut it academically.

These tough love measures, increasingly in vogue across the country, are too timid structurally and off target pedagogically. Ending social promotion alone won't educate all youngsters to their fullest potential. America's most vulnerable children – in low-income urban and rural communities – will bear the brunt of this educationally bankrupt policy because, as things stand now, they'll be left behind by the millions.

Thus for the sake of public education and, above all, for the sake of the children, what's urgently needed is a radical reform that structures public education so that its sole *raison d'être* is student success.

Successful schools produce successful pupils. Not a smattering superstars per building, mind you, but the bulk of the student body. After a generation of research and experimentation, examples abound of urban and rural schools that serve low-income youngsters quite admirably, with some even outperforming their more affluent suburban counterparts.

Research by Linda Darling-Hammond and others demonstrates that urban minority children can achieve roughly on par with more affluent students -- provided the quality of education they receive is of comparable quality.

Yet try as big-city school boards and administrators might, few if any urban districts can honestly claim that they educate the vast majority of kids remotely up to their potential. Pick a report card -- *Education Week's* annual *Quality Counts* volume or any other objective measure -- and the best that a mere handful of urban districts can claim is modest increases in test scores. The pace and scope of progress is unacceptable and the reform prescriptions in vogue these days are too feeble for the task ahead.

Real-World Standards

Since the education standards movement is driving school reform these days, let's start there. The rush to impose rigorous standards begs the question of where they should be pegged. It was startling to hear several governors at the National Education Summit confess that in their haste to get tough, their states probably had given less thought than they should have to the actual content of the standards.

In my view, the standards students are expected to meet should be pegged to the proficiencies that real people need to succeed in the real world. They shouldn't be mirror images of the admissions standards for selective universities.

It isn't anti-intellectual to acknowledge the reality that most Americans never obtain college degrees. By their late 20s, nearly two-thirds still lack BA or AA degrees. One third never even start college. What's the point of placing the bar for graduation so high that it denies high school diplomas to conscientious youngsters who nevertheless aren't college bound? Why write off future truck drivers, deliverymen, short order cooks, chefs, train conductors, newsstand operators, construction workers and artisans as unworthy of diplomas?

Kate Maloy of the University of Pittsburgh puts it best:

"The purpose of every school, whatever its setting or resources, is to educate children for what lies ahead of them —further education for some, jobs for most, citizenship, somewhere, for all."

That is why the standards imposed by states should not be designed by academicians alone. States and school districts should assign this chore to a task force of thoughtful representatives of such sectors as business (big and small), organized labor, higher education and community organizations.

Among their many challenges, the drafters must wrestle with the contentious issue of deciding exactly what knowledge and skills should be assessed. For instance, why ask students to recite minutia and display skills that most mortals will never use as adults — or that easily can be discovered using modern technology? In other words, need we require that students recite the capitals of Texas and Utah, much less East Timor?

As I reflect on my own professional career and life experience, it strikes me that six clusters of competence are critically important. I hasten to add that these insights aren't novel. In my judgment, the following proficiencies are relevant regardless of one's station in life.

- Literacy — workable command of reading, writing and speaking in English
- Mathematics — command of the basic computational skills required in the workplace and everyday adult life
- Reasoning and critical thinking — capacity to ferret out information, find answers and solve problems
- Science — appreciation of the nature and uncertainties of the scientific inquiry
- Citizenship — understanding of the primary historical, cultural, demographic, political and economic forces and values that have shaped this country. Appreciation of America's relationship to the rest of the world, as well as the major forces shaping the other hemispheres.
- Technological literacy

This educational platform should be placed beneath every youngster. Beyond these basic proficiencies, the remaining courses that students choose should be shaped by their aspirations and ability. Those headed straight for the

labor force may opt to specialize in certain workplace skills suited to their interests, while college-bound students could elect more advanced academic courses that equip them for higher education.

Unless and until the public schools demonstrate convincingly that they instill these proficiencies in the vast majority of students, all other subjects that consume class time should be deemed secondary and jettisoned if need be.

The Folly of Vouchers

Low-income and minority parents who are fed up with lousy public schools find vouchers increasingly alluring. Their impatience is perfectly understandable. Parents cannot be faulted for seeking the best for their children.

Nevertheless, vouchers and their first cousin, education savings accounts, serve so few students that they're less an option for kids than a prod for public schools – at least at this juncture.

According to Kim Metcalf and Polly Tait, who co-authored a recent article on vouchers in *Phi Delta Kappan*, there's no question that parents of youngsters receiving vouchers are pleased to have a choice of public or nonpublic schools. In effect, vouchers subsidize the escape of motivated parents from the public schools.

Even so, vouchers do not necessarily improve the academic achievement of children who use them. The evidence on this critically important point is mixed. It is unclear that pupils with vouchers perform better than they would have had they remained in public school.

Equally troubling, non-public schools enjoy decisive advantages over public schools. By law, public schools must admit all comers. Non-public schools can be choosy. Public schools are severely constrained in meting out discipline; non-public schools are considerably less restrained. Public schools cannot suspend or expel with impunity; non-public schools can.

Above all, given the fact that concern over achievement provides the main impetus for vouchers, public schools must report their results; non-public schools do not.

How ironic, then, that in name of education accountability, vouchers and education savings accounts would shift precious public resources to non-public schools that are completely unaccountable to taxpayers for their academic results. Advocates of vouchers argue that competition is healthy for public schools. But the rules of competition are rigged against them. So trumpeting vouchers as the answer to what ails public education is both dangerous and specious.

The Goal: Successful Schools, Not "Systemic" Reform

Declaring that vouchers are unfair isn't tantamount to saying that the performance of urban public schools is satisfactory. The paramount issue facing educators and policymakers is how to boost the academic performance of urban youngsters, especially minority children who chronically lag behind, without dismantling public education in the process.

All of the ferment, the pressure and the reforms focused on urban education are starting to pay off. Some school districts report encouraging gains in reading and math scores. This is important because it helps restore public confidence in urban schools.

But let's be clear. Modest gains in test scores help politically. But inching ahead won't prepare our children adequately for the unforgiving world that awaits them after graduation from high school.

After a generation of urban school reform, it can be said with certainty that there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of high performing schools serving poor and minority youngsters all across the country. This spring the Education Trust, a highly respected research and advocacy organization, released a revealing survey of several hundred high performing schools around the country that serve minority and low income children. Many of them even outshine suburban schools on state tests.

These stellar schools share certain attributes, among them:

- These schools use high academic standards to design their courses, assess their students and evaluate their teachers;
- They devote lots more time than the typical school to reading and math instruction, even if that means lengthening the school day;
- They invest heavily in professional development so that their faculty stay on top of their game and focus on teaching methods that help their students meet tough academic standards;
- These highly successful schools monitor their students closely and intervene quickly if they falter. They don't dawdle during the school year and then impose massive doses of summer school after the students fall way behind;
- They get parents involved, not just with staging bake sales but with helping their children to do better in school and meet the standards; and

- They place the onus for improvement mainly on the educators, where it belongs.

The evidence is clear that principals and teachers know how to create schools that enable low-income and minority youngsters to achieve at very high levels. In other words, educators know how to create successful urban schools. But no one has figured out how to create successful urban school systems.

So it is time to stop trying to reform public school "systems." I say we concentrate instead on creating successful public schools throughout the system.

According to the legendary educator Anthony Alvarado, the sole focus of the educational enterprise should be student learning. Everything else, he argues, is "details." "A typical educational system is so top-heavy with details that learning can suffocate under the tonnage."

The thrust of federal, state and local education policy from this day forward should be to remove the tonnage so that educators can practice their profession and children can realize their academic potential. And so that both meet the legitimate expectation of society that students graduate with certain critically important proficiencies that equip them for self-reliance and citizenship.

Here then is the National Urban League's reform agenda aimed at transforming all urban schools into high performing schools:

1. Assert no-nonsense state leadership – and responsibility

Conventional wisdom holds that public education is a local responsibility. But the reality is that the quality of school graduates is a compelling societal concern that justifies aggressive leadership by states and by the federal government.

In the agricultural era, youngsters tended to live where they were reared. But contemporary children often grow up in one town, only to live and work elsewhere. Employers and society at large have the overriding stake in the caliber of education delivered by every school. America's very civility and competitiveness depend on it.

In recent years, states have stepped up to the plate to impose loftier standards and high stakes tests. Having set the bar, states now bear the primary moral, financial and, I'm convinced, legal responsibility for seeing to it that all children have a fair chance to clear it.

No longer should poor and minority children be held hostage to communities with low tax bases, weak commitments to quality education, and skinflint taxpayers who oppose providing adequate support for local schools. No

longer should the children be crippled by school districts riddled with unqualified teachers, insufficient books and antiquated schools. Having imposed high standards on all children, the states must step in and guarantee high quality education for every child.

2. "Charterize" all urban schools

Urban schools should be liberated from the stifling central school district bureaucracy and given the latitude to operate the way independent secular schools do. Under the scenario I propose, each school would be overseen by a governing board comprised, say, of local business and community leaders, educators and alumni who view student success as its paramount mission. The boards should be self-perpetuating so that they are spared the potential turmoil and unpredictability of elections.

Each school would be run by a principal, or headmaster, hired by the board. The principal would serve at the pleasure of the board, subject to due process. The principal in turn would assemble the faculty, who would serve at the pleasure of the principal and board, subject again to due process.

The local school district superintendent would grant each school a revocable contract – or charter – to operate for ten to fifteen years. The school would be accountable for seeing that, say, 75 percent of its students meet the state's real-world proficiency standards.

If the school meets this standard, it retains its charter, which can be renewed. If the pass rate falls below this threshold, the school would be placed on a watch list and required to come up with an improvement plan.

If after a reasonable period it fails to boost its performance, then the charter can be revoked. In effect, this means that the governing board and faculty responsible for operating the educational enterprise in that building can be dismissed and replaced with a new team. If need be, the facility itself can be shuttered temporarily or even permanently.

Given the public nature of the school, pupils should be chosen via a mix of self-selection (application) and lottery. This will prevent the creation of what are perceived as "loser" schools that are filled with students who weren't chosen by some other school.

The state would allocate an annual amount to each school based on its enrollment. The allocation formula should be sufficiently generous to guarantee small classes, modern facilities and equipment, sufficient supplies, and abundant high quality professional development.

The state education agency can negotiate purchase agreements with vendors of textbooks, food and supplies so that individual schools get an advantageous price. The states would also assume responsibility for ensuring that individual schools are properly sized and furnished. And for guaranteeing that there is no disparity -- in resources, teacher quality or physical plant -- between urban, suburban and rural communities.

Once each school's allocation is set, the actual utilization should be left entirely to the board and professional staff of each school. In other words, schools should be accountable for how many students they graduate, not for how many gallons of paint they purchase.

3. Professionalize the teaching profession

Given the projected shortage of principals and teachers, plus the need to increase teacher quality in urban and rural schools serving low-income children, the compensation offered education must be improved dramatically in order to create a strong demand for these jobs.

This can be done by increasing salaries to levels comparable with other professions and by offering attractive inducements like generous student loan write-offs for graduates who enter the profession. Why not offer young people with masters' degrees the same initial salaries as young MBAs, attorneys and engineers? Since most urban and rural districts are strapped financially, the federal and state governments should take the lead in financing the economic incentives needed to attract stronger educators to these school districts.

These special incentives should only be available to educators with masters' degrees who are certified by the state and who sign up to teach for at least five-to-ten years in low-income communities. If they leave the profession early, the loan relief would cease.

The critically important quid pro quo for paying educators like real professionals is that they in turn must relinquish those contract-based protections that other professionals do not enjoy. I speak of tenure, seniority, overtime, guaranteed class size, length of class periods and other provisions that severely impede the ability of principals to run their schools in the best of children.

If governors and state legislators truly believe their assertion that states are the engines of school improvement these days, they should muster the political courage to grant individual school boards and principals the discretion they need to run their schools.

Unions should be allowed to bargain district-wide, indeed state-wide, over salaries and fringe benefits. But, subject to appropriate oversight by their boards, principals should make all personnel decisions, such as whom to hire and for

how long, as well as the standards for measuring staff performance and the consequences if they fall short.

It isn't realistic politically to expect school districts to redefine the scope of union agreements this radically. So it's up to governors and state legislators who profess to care about children to override existing agreements and impose these conditions.

4. The 21st century superintendent -- accreditation, not operation

Local school boards and central administrators operate their school systems today. As such they represent a major source of the "tonnage" that cripples the schools.

Rare is the school board -- elected or appointed -- that would be considered an asset to the educational process from the perspective of poor and minority children. Superintendents come and go so quickly that they seldom leave a lasting mark, much less a favorable one. Just below the surface, the central school bureaucracies rule -- and stultify.

So what is the solution? The oversight of public schools needs to be professionalized and depoliticized. To cite Anthony Alvarado again, his experience indicates that urban youngsters can learn at high levels. But, as he cautions, "It takes time, continuity, concentration of focus."

Revolving door school superintendents, ongoing rhetorical battles between mayors and superintendents, mayoral use of fiscal support to hold school boards hostage -- all contribute chaos and confusion, instead of continuity and concentration, to the educational enterprise. Our children and our community are the victims.

The role of the local school superintendent should be converted from operations to accreditation. In other words, the school superintendent should be responsible for awarding -- and revoking -- the charters and reporting to the public on whether the individual schools meet their targets.

If they do, the superintendent can extend the charter. If they fall short, the superintendent can monitor the school's remediation plan, revoke the charter if need be, and award it to a new educational team.

Given the state's dominant role in ensuring education quality, the local school superintendents should be appointed by and ultimately accountable to the state education agency. The superintendent in turn can be assisted by a local board of advisors, chosen by the superintendent and drawn from such sectors as parents, business, organized labor, the religious community, higher education and community organizations.

The National Urban League's school reform agenda is premised on what we know can work – individual public schools that are given the wherewithal and room to succeed. Our agenda parts company with the failed efforts to reform urban school systems.

When the clock strikes midnight this New Year's Eve, the policymakers, administrators, educators and unions that share responsibility for public schools had better leave all those excuses – and all that bureaucratic tonnage – in the litter baskets along with the noisemakers.

It will be a new millennium for humankind. If urban public education is to survive in the 21st century, it'd better be a new day for urban children.