

LEVEL 1 - 124 OF 345 STORIES

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The Herald (Glasgow)

January 7, 1997

SECTION: Pg. 16

LENGTH: 2014 words

HEADLINE: underachievement

BYLINE: Brian Boyd

BODY:

THE year just gone saw a consensus emerge on the most pressing problem facing Scottish **schools** - underachievement. Two major reports, **Achievement for All** by Her Majesty's Inspectorate and **Improving Achievement in Scottish Schools** by the Secretary of State's Task Force have analysed the issues and pinpointed some of the causes. All the major political parties have committed themselves to deal with it, albeit in differing ways. Now, as we enter 1997, and the run -up to the General Election, it is time to look for solutions.

But why is achievement such a vital issue, and how are we to measure it? Is raising standards in **schools** simply a matter of **improving** results in **tests** and examinations? Or should we be trying to create an ethos where every child can succeed, and not just academically?

If, as New Labour's document proclaims, every child is special, then should not the aim of education be to focus on a wide range of talents, valuing them equally? And can **schools** really be blamed for underachievement, when the biggest barrier to educational success - poverty - with its related problems of limited aspirations, low self-esteem and disaffection, remains unaddressed?

All the evidence of the last 30 years suggests Scottish schools are good and that teachers are highly professional and committed. So, what are the arguments for concentrating on raising educational achievement still further and what are their implications for Scottish education in 1997 and beyond?

If Britain wishes to remain competitive into the new Millennium, faced with the challenge from the tiger economies of the Pacific Rim, then educational standards have to rise. We are falling behind, so this arguments runs, on a whole host of measured outcomes, from performance through mathematics to the proportion of the workforce who receive training to an advanced level.

Schooling is seen as utilitarian, as preparing the young people for the labour market. Whatever the targets, they usually have a vocational element. The question is: should we see schools merely as a preparation for work, and achievement as means to the end of economic competitiveness? Is the concentration on economic growth and league tables the one which is likely to lead to a society which maximises the talents of all of its members? What is to happen to those members, in school or in the workplace, who are unable to compete?



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The Eighties was the decade of thrusting upward mobility, of the cult of the individual, of managerialism. But the challenge facing many Western nations into the twenty-first century may well be that of social discord, where a lack of cohesion and the emergence of an "underclass" threatens stability in our cities. In global terms, the gap between rich and poor and the responsibilities the former owes to the latter may threaten world stability. In the UK, it is becoming clear that achievement in our schools is becoming more divided on social class lines.

Therefore, there might be a strong argument for trying to create an educational system which seeks to reduce divisions, which takes positive action to support disadvantaged groups, and which resists attempts to select and separate pupils from one another at an earlier and earlier age.

The social consequences of underachievement are too cataclysmic to contemplate and we need to halt the downward spiral which leads to "the disadvantaged, the disaffected and the disappeared". Initiatives such as Study Support, pioneered by Strathclyde Regions and taken up by the Prince's Trust, have succeeded in raising aspirations and achievement in disadvantaged areas. Education has a moral dimension. It has to be inclusive, offering to all the possibility of success, leaving none out.

If schools are to continue to be seen as the major plank in any strategy for combating underachievement, how then can we measure how effective individual schools are in maximising the performance of their pupils? The "market" philosophy would suggest that competition, allied to parental choice, is the key to **school improvement**. Effective **schools** will flourish while "failing" schools will close.

If the creation of grant-maintained schools, able to select pupils by attainment, leads to the emerge of a Ridings school, so be it. Schools need to compete, and the most accessible criteria for measuring their success is examination results!

But this runs counter to the research evidence over three decades which has shown that the most influential factors in determining educational success are family background, the socio-economic nature of the catchment area, and the proportion of middle-class to working-class pupils in the school. Competition on the basis of raw results is meaningless as a measure of the value added by any given school to the success of its pupils. Indeed, as recent research from the Centre of Educational Sociology shows, it is an acknowledged strength of the Scottish system that there is very little difference in the effectiveness of schools, whether they are in the peripheral housing estates or in leafy suburbs, when factors such as poverty are controlled for. Crude league table comparisons result in winners and losers. We need to make all our schools "winners".

While the professionals and politicians deliberate about schools, the voice of the child is rarely heard. The Children's Act has yet to make an impact on schools in Scotland, but it is based on the principle that every child has the right to have her/his educational potential fulfilled. Recent research carried out on behalf of the NUT in England and Wales, *Schools Speak for Themselves*, has confirmed some of the early findings of the Scottish **Improving School Effectiveness** project, namely, that pupils have strong and perceptive views on



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what makes a good teacher or a good school.

They have rarely had a voice in the system, no doubt a remnant of the old Scottish adage that "little children should be seen and not heard". This needs to change, and we need to listen more if we are to combat underachievement.

To the credit of Scottish schools, "celebrating achievement" has become a feature and praise has come to be recognised as a motivator for learners. This philosophy challenges the assumption that intelligence is fixed, that some have it while others don't. It is a dangerously seductive argument, yet it has been challenged by others who argue that all humans are capable of learning of a high order if we have high expectations of them.

Across Scotland, many schools and pre-five centres, are promoting an "ethos of achievement", and projects such as the Scottish Initiative on Attendance, Absence and Achievement are highlighting good practice and disseminating it.

This year will see a general election. Irrespective of which party wins, decisions will have to be made about the role of the new Scottish Qualifications Agency and the implementation of the Higher Still programme. It could yet be an initiative too far for a beleaguered profession. And what of five-14, Scotland's National Curriculum? It is not yet in place, and it has done little to address the problem of discontinuity and underachievement in secondary one and two. Will it wither on the vine in secondary schools and become, effectively, five-12?

We have a tendency in Scotland to look at slices of the school system in isolation. What we need now is a long, hard look at the whole process from 0-18+ and to ask the question "What is education for?" before we make more changes.

If educational change is to lead to progress, we need:

- 1 A review of where we are nationally, where we want to get to and what we need to do to get there;

- 1 Early intervention, at the pre-five and early primary stage to provide the basis for future success and create a positive regard for learning through life;

- 1 A voice for children in school decision-making;

- 1 No premature selection and no closing off of options for young people;

- 1 Provision of staff development which builds on initial teacher training and lasts throughout the professional life of teachers;

- 1 An education system which is valued, funded and supported by politicians and parents alike;

- 1 Concerted efforts to eradicate poverty and to reach consensus on a set of values which educators can share.

Dr Boyd is associate director of the Quality in Education centre, Strathclyde University.



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THE HARTFORD COURANT

January 7, 1997 Tuesday, 3 ENFIELD NORTH CENTRAL
Correction Appended

SECTION: TOWN NEWS; Pg. B1

LENGTH: 571 words

HEADLINE: OFFICIALS PLEASED WITH EAST WINDSOR MASTERY TEST SCORES

BYLINE: SHERMAN TARR; Courant Correspondent

DATELINE: EAST WINDSOR --

BODY:

School officials are pleased with the improvement they see in the Connecticut Mastery Test scores of 315 fourth-, sixth- and eighth-graders.

The percentage of students who met or surpassed state goals on the reading, writing and math portions of the test taken in September mostly increased compared to 1995 results. Also, the scores of the sixth- graders and eighth-graders held steady or were higher than their scores two years ago as fourth- and sixth-graders. Finally, many students just missed reaching the state goals, which school officials view as a favorable trend.

"These results really encouraged us that we're making progress," School Superintendent Philip I. Morton said Monday.

He noted that teachers have developed questions for classroom tests similar to those asked on the mastery tests and that teachers also have been trained on how the state tests are scored. East Windsor Intermediate School Principal Frank Olah said these steps have given his fourth- and sixth-grade teachers "a better understanding of what the state is looking for."

Board of education member JoAnne Holigan said she was pleased "with an upward trend" in the tests, especially in the eighth-grade writing scores. These showed 64 percent of 96 students at or above the state writing goal -- a score the state defines as achieving excellence -- compared to 36 percent in 1995 and 47 percent when those students took the tests as sixth- graders. She attributed the gains to a seventh-grade English course begun last year, which puts a greater emphasis on writing.

But Holigan, board liaison to the district's curriculum council, wondered if the change may have come at the expense of lower reading scores.

Director of Instruction Marion H. Martinez said the most dramatic positive test results were among students who just missed the state goals.

For instance, Martinez noted that in math, 55 percent of 118 fourth- graders were at or above the state goal, but eight students were within four points of



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the goal. In writing, 45 percent achieved excellence, while 24 students missed by one point; in reading, 50 percent met or exceeded the state goal while 13 students were within five points of it.

Educators warn that standardized tests, such as the mastery test, are a limited measure of what students have learned. They say other criteria are graduation rates, participation in extracurricular activities, rates of college admissions and levels of enrollment in rigorous academic courses.

* The chart shows the percentage of East Windsor students scoring in each of three categories in reading, writing and mathematics on the newly revised 1994 Connecticut Mastery Test.

Reading Writing Math

Grade 4

Excellence 50% 45% 55%

Proficient 28 41 32

Intervention 22 14 12

Grade 6

Excellence 48 35 43

Proficient 32 41 43

Intervention 20 25 13

Grade 8

Excellence 65 64 40

Proficient 29 29 55

Intervention 5 5 6

The Hartford Courant

CORRECTION:

Correction published January 8, 1997.

A chart with a story about Connecticut Mastery Test scores in East Windsor showed the 1996 test scores. The year was listed incorrectly on the chart, which ran on Page B1 Tuesday.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 8, 1997



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Copyright 1997 Capital City Press
The Advocate (Baton Rouge, La.)

January 8, 1997 Wednesday METRO EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 15A

LENGTH: 446 words

HEADLINE: 3 **schools** recognized in Tangipahoa Parish

BYLINE: CINDY CAMP

DATELINE: AMITE

BODY:

AMITE - Three Tangipahoa Parish public **schools** honored by the state Department of Education for achieving three or more years of **improved** scores on standardized **tests** received additional recognition from parish **school** officials Tuesday night.

Amite Elementary, Southeastern Louisiana University Lab **School** of Hammond and Martha Vinyard **School** of Ponchatoula received commendations from state Education Superintendent Cecil J. Picard for scholastic growth and achievement in the state's Louisiana Education Assessment Program, or LEAP, **testing** program.

SLU Lab was recognized by Tangipahoa Superintendent Virgil Allen for maintaining a 95 percent attainment rate for the last three years of **testing**, earning the **school** the Scholastic Achievement Award, as presented by the state.

"SLU Lab is our powerhouse school," Allen said of the school, situated on the campus of Southeastern Louisiana University.

Allen said SLU Lab, which teaches students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade, consistently scores high on standardized tests and strives to present students with broad academic opportunities.

"We're just glad to have you and Southeastern Lab in our parish," Allen said in presenting the award to the school's faculty and administration.

Amite Elementary and Vinyard School were recognized under the state's Scholastic Growth Award program.

The award honors **schools** that consistently achieve **improved test** scores for a minimum of a three-year period.

Amite Elementary was honored for showing **improvement** for the last four **testing** years, 1992-1996, while Vinyard's award recognized that **school's** continued **improvement** during the last three years.



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In his letter to Allen announcing the award winners from Tangipahoa Parish, Picard noted, "These schools are to be commended for furthering the academic achievement of their students and in so doing, reducing the need for remediation. "

In other action during Tuesday night's School Board meeting, the board:

Elected Jake Bailey to serve as School Board president during 1997. Bailey has served on the Tangipahoa Parish School Board since the 1970s. Elected to serve with Bailey as the board's vice president this year was Rev. Jimmy Richardson.

Recognized outgoing board president Donnie Williams for a successful 1996 term. Williams was presented with a plaque of recognition and congratulated by Allen and the board.

Decided to hold regular board meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Tangipahoa Parish School System office in Amite. This has been the regular meeting place and time for the board for several years.

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January 19, 1997, Sunday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 1362 words

HEADLINE: Lake View cultivates rich crop School district reaps academic bounty

BYLINE: CYNTHIA HOWELL, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

BODY:

CORRECTION 012297

Fifth-graders in the West Side School District in Cleburne County scored at the 45th percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test. Seventh graders scored at the 53rd percentile, and 10th-graders scored at the 51st percentile. Fifth graders in the West Side district in Johnson County scored at the 32nd percentile and 10th-graders at the 43rd percentile. Incorrect test scores were reported for the two districts in Sunday's paper.

Also, the Turrell School District showed improvement on the test in one of the three grades tested. The name of the district was garbled in the test score article Sunday.

The Lake View School District was by far the star pupil in efforts this year to raise student achievement levels in some of the state's poorest-performing districts.

Lake View's fifth-graders had a composite score at the 81st percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test, far above the 50th percentile, the national average, and way above the 20th percentile, where the town's fifth-graders scored last year.

Some of Arkansas' other academically troubled districts also took some steps forward this year even though they didn't leap as far as Lake View did.

All but four of the 20 districts on the state's list of academically troubled districts reported gains this year on the Stanford Achievement Test, ninth edition, as compared to last year, when students took the eighth edition of the exam. Twelve of the 20 districts either held their own or improved in at least two of the three grades tested at a time when overall state averages on the test declined.

Frank Anthony, assistant director for technical assistance in the Arkansas Department of Education, is continuing to analyze the test results in the 20 districts. In March, Anthony must report whether each district progress



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satisfactorily. But he said last week that he believes his study will show that some of the districts did improve. That progress occurred even though the districts were not formally notified until last July of their status as academically distressed or as borderline distressed.

Students took the test in mid-September. The early test date didn't give the districts much time to work with the students. Because of the short time to implement **school improvement** plans, Anthony said, the most he could really hope for this year is that district test scores would hold steady.

Lawmakers in 1995 enacted legislation requiring the Education Department to identify troubled districts and help them improve. Districts that don't improve over the course of three years can be taken over by the state and their superintendents and school boards replaced.

The state Board of Education decided earlier this year that school districts where 50 percent or more of the students scored below the 25th percentile on the exam during its past three administrations should be categorized academically distressed.

Thirteen such districts were identified last summer. Seven more districts are being given state assistance this year because 40 to 49 percent of their students fell into the bottom quarter.

Statewide, 27 percent of fifth-graders scored below the 25th percentile this year while 19 percent scored above the 75th percentile. In the seventh-grade, 23 percent scored below the 25th percentile and 19 percent scored above the 75th. And in the 10th grade, 22 percent scored below the 22nd percentile, and 16 percent scored above the 75th percentile.

Department officials have been in almost weekly contact with the academically distressed districts since last summer. They have met with local district educators and talked at community forums. And they have sponsored seminars on such subjects as planning **school improvement**, analyzing test data and evaluating staff.

Four of the 20 troubled districts held steady or reported increases in their complete battery scores in all three tested grades this year. They were Carthage and Lake View, which are distressed districts, and Hermitage and Hughes, which are on the state's watch-care list.

Another four of the distressed districts held steady or declined at all three grades: Altheimer Unified, Helena-West Helena, Humnoke and Marvell.

Cotton Plant, Elaine, Parkin, Saratoga and Waldo, all distressed districts, and Eudora, Holly Grove and Lee County, all watch-care districts, raised their complete battery scores at two of the three grades tested. The distressed districts of McNeil and Crawfordsville **improved** their average complete battery scores at one grade. TuWalterrell and Dermott, watch-care districts, did likewise.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 20, 1997



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Copyright 1997 Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

January 19, 1997, Sunday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 676 words

HEADLINE: Lake View cultivates rich crop School district reaps academic bounty

BYLINE: CYNTHIA HOWELL, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

BODY:

The Lake View School District was by far the star pupil in efforts this year to raise student achievement levels in some of the state's poorest-performing districts.

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Frank Anthony, assistant director for technical assistance in the Arkansas Department of Education, is continuing to analyze the test results in the 20 districts. In March, Anthony must report whether each district progress satisfactorily. But he said last week that he believes his study will show that some of the districts did improve. That progress occurred even though the districts were not formally notified until last July of their status as academically distressed or as borderline distressed.

Students took the test in mid-September. The early test date didn't give the districts much time to work with the students. Because of the short time to implement school improvement plans, Anthony said, the most he could really hope for this year is that district test scores would hold steady.

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Thirteen such districts were identified last summer. Seven more districts are being given state assistance this year because 40 to 49 percent of their students fell into the bottom quarter.

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Another four of the distressed districts held steady or declined at all three grades: Altheimer Unified, Helena-West Helena, Humnoke and Marvell.

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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Copyright 1997 Star Tribune
Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

February 4, 1997, Metro Edition

SECTION: News; Pg. 2B

LENGTH: 1496 words

HEADLINE: St. Paul students' scores improving;
'93, '96 test results show much room for growth

BYLINE: Maureen M. Smith; Staff Writer

BODY:

Students in St. Paul have shown increased scores on achievement tests over the past four years, showing higher levels of improvement than at the average national level, officials said Monday.

Although many students are still earning scores that fall below national averages, fewer are falling into lower ranks and more are performing at higher levels, according to data released at a St. Paul school board meeting Monday night. The data compared test score results from 1993 and 1996.

"We're doing things right," said Superintendent Curman Gaines. He said that he was excited by the students' rate of growth, but that there is still more work to be done.

But test scores at several schools, particularly those with high numbers of children from low-income families, were well below average. The Metropolitan Achievement Tests, seventh edition (MAT7), were given to nearly all students in grades two to 12 in fall 1996 and will be administered again in spring to measure improvement.

An achievement gap between white and minority students, often cited by educators, is determined more by socioeconomic status, said Irene McAfee, testing specialist at St. Paul schools. Such factors as family mobility, fluency in English and race can play a part, as well. But more children of color than white children come from poor families.

"In every racial group analyzed, poor students score lower," she said during a presentation to board members. But the good news is that each racial group analyzed also showed a growth in test scores over time, she said. "Our students are making more progress faster than other students in the nation."

The most marked improvements were: The number of students earning very low reading scores decreased from 37 to 32 percent, and the number of students earning high math scores increased from 22 to 27 percent, McAfee said.

But schools with high percentages of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch still have more students scoring below national averages on reading and math portions of the tests.



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At the new Arlington High School, for example, four out of five students scored below national averages in math and reading. About three in five students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. But teachers try to equip kids with essential skills, said Principal Bill Dunn. That can mean more help, smaller classes or special teaching methods, most of which cost more money, he said.

"There's a whole controversy out there about trying to tie low tests scores to free and reduced lunch or ethnicity," Dunn said. " . . . I'm not sure the argument should be where kids come from. If our kids have low skills, we've got to find a way to improve those skills. It costs more to educate a city kid with some of these backgrounds than it [does] to educate a kid in greater Minnesota."

Scores were highest at Capitol Hill, a grade one through eight school that has entrance exams. About one in five students come from low-income families, and about 6 percent speak limited English, said Principal Mary Dybvig.

Although most students there are already high achievers, the school also assigns much homework and has high attendance rates and strong parental involvement, factors that help children succeed academically, Dybvig said. Students who enroll at the school tend to stay there, reducing mobility.

"There are high expectations for the students, sometimes heavy homework projects and activities, and parents are able and willing to be involved with their children's learning," Dybvig said.

Last year, the school district began an accountability program at 10 schools to boost student achievement test scores. Schools that do not show improvement could be reorganized with new staff. But the improving scores across the district seemed hopeful, officials said Monday night.

"What we have here is very good news," said Mary Thornton Phillips, school board chairwoman. "We know we're moving in the right direction."

School-by-school look at St. Paul scores

St. Paul student test scores have improved over the past four years, but individual school results varied widely. This chart shows the percentage of students at each school who recieved reading and math scores above the national averages on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, seventh edition (MAT7), given in fall 1996. Average scores tend to be lower at schools with a high percentage of children eligible for free or reduced lunch. Last year, the district launched an accountability program to boost scores at 10 schools (marked with and x).

Elementary



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School Name Percent eligible Percent of students
for free or that scored above

reduced lunch national average in:

Reading Math

Adams Spanish Imm. 31 57 63 .

Am. Indian (Mounds Pk) 85 21 30 .

Ames 85 25 31 .

Battle Creek 63 43 48 .

Benjamin Mays 71 23 24. .

Capitol Hill 19 89 89 .

Chelsea Heights 40 57 64 .

x Cherokee Heights 82 26 31 .

x Como Park 79 19 32 .

x Daytons Bluff 90 15 21. .

East Consolidated 95 13 22 .

Eastern Heights 55 39 43 .

EXPO for Excellence 45 49 55 .

Farnsworth 64 42 55 .

Franklin 85 28 33.

Frost Lake 59 41 59.

x Galtier 61 32 45.

Groveland 38 55 61.

x Hancock 68 35 37.

Hayden Heights 63 37 46.



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Highland Park 70 34 38.
Highwood Hills 63 40 48.
Homecroft 70 33 45.
Horace Mann 33 61 65.
J.J. Hill 37 55 64.
Jackson 83 40 54.
Linwood 55 35 36.
Longfellow 70 37 47.
Maxfield 77 37 43.
Mississippi 58 42 43.
Monroe 71 34 36.
Museum Magnet 53 47 56.
Nokomis 36 54 57.
North End 84 21 27.
Open 63 49 45.
Parkway 81 22 34.
Phalen Lake 80 23 38.
x Prosperity Heights 77 24 41.
Randolph Heights 53 47 51.
x Riverfront Primary 80 34 39.
Riverview (Pangea) 68 27 41.
Roosevelt (Pangea) 85 23 29.
x Saturn 80 29 31.
Sheridan 72 24 33.
St. Anthony Park 51 53 57.
Webster 55 43 45.
Wrld Cultures (Mds Pk) 72 30 45.

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Secondary

School Percent eligible Percent of students

for free or that scored above

reduced lunch national average in:

Reading Math

x Battle Creek Mid Sch. 72 30 34.

Cleveland Middle School 85 22 28.

Expo Middle 74 24 24.

Hazel Park Mid Scho 63 32 38.

x Highland Park J.H. 67 31 35.

Humboldt Jr. 74 24 26.

Murray J.H. 52 46 49.

Ramsey J.H. 34 68 71.

Washington J.H. 76 27 34.

Arlington Sr. High 61 18 23.

Central S.H. 30 62 67.

Como Park S.H. 55 32 38.

Harding S.H. 50 29 40.

Highland Park S.H. 44 39 42.

Humboldt Sr. & Jr. 65 19 25.

Johnson S. H. 52 25 37.

Source: St. Paul Public Schools



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GRAPHIC: Chart

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 6, 1997



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The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, FL)

February 6, 1997 Thursday, Georgia Edition

SECTION: METRO; Pg. B-1

LENGTH: 518 words

HEADLINE: Elementary problem: Absences

BYLINE: James Salzer, Times-Union staff writer

BODY:

ATLANTA -- Georgia third-graders showed significant **improvement** in math and reading on national **tests** last year, but a new report also suggests the state's 1,134 public elementary **schools** have the same problem as the high **schools**: chronic absenteeism.

A report by the Council for **School** Performance showed the number of students missing 10 or more days of elementary **school** last year rose from 24 percent to 27 percent.

The report comes a week before the state board is expected to consider a mandatory attendance requirement for **schools**.

The state-sponsored council came out with its annual report card on elementary schools yesterday. It released a report on high schools and middle schools last month.

The report showed 74 percent of elementary schools had a higher percentage of their third-graders scoring above the national average on the reading section of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills last year.

Half of Georgia's third-graders scored above the national average on the test -- up eight percentage points from 1994-95.

The Iowa tests are the ones most commonly used for state-by-state comparisons.

On the Iowa Test in math, 57 percent of third-graders scored above the national average, up from 53 percent during the 1994-95 school year. Sixty-one percent of elementary **schools** **improved** their performance on the **test**.

'If we can sustain this level of **improvement** over the next 10 or so years, we will have made significant progress in education in Georgia,' said Gary Henry, director of the council and the Applied Research Center at Georgia State University.

Georgia fifth-graders did not show the same level of **improvement** on Iowa **tests**, scoring nearly the same in the 1995-96 school year as 1994-95, the report said.



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The biggest concern raised by the council was the absentee rate. More than one in four students missed at least 10 days of school last year.

The report showed a wide variation in chronic absenteeism.

For instance:

At Williams Heights Elementary School in Ware County, just 6.2 percent of students missed 10 or more days of school, the report said. At Ruskin Elementary in Ware County, 53.7 percent missed 10 or more days.

In Chatham County, Bartow Elementary, White Bluff Elementary and Smith Elementary each reported 3 percent or fewer students missing 10 days. Garrison, Bloomingdale, Islands and Port Wentworth elementary schools had at least 30 percent of their children miss at least 10 days, the report said.

As the council noted last month, the problem isn't getting any better once children advance into higher grades.

About 39 percent of Georgia high school students missed 10 or more days during the 1995-96 school year, up 1 percent from the previous year.

In some high schools, more than half of the students missed two weeks or more of school.

A study in the fall by the council showed schools with high rates of absenteeism performed poorly on standardized tests.

The state Board of Education will hold a public hearing next week on plans to limit the number of days children can skip classes and still receive credit.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 07, 1997



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Copyright 1997 The Richmond Times Dispatch
The Richmond Times Dispatch

March 28, 1997, Friday, CITY EDITION

SECTION: AREA/STATE, Pg. B-1

LENGTH: 1072 words

HEADLINE: **SCHOOLS IMPROVE IN HALF OF INDICATORS;**
COLONIAL BEACH 'LITERACY PASSPORT' GAINS SET PACE

BYLINE: Pamela Stallsmith; Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

BODY:

Colonial Beach has made the biggest gain in the percentage of sixth-grade pupils who pass the Literacy Passport Test on the first try, while Lancaster County has shown the biggest drop.

The results in the Northern Neck town showed a 113 percent increase in the percentage of pupils passing in the 1995-1996 school year over those passing in the 1990-91 year, according to the state Department of Education's 1997 Outcome Accountability Project, which was released yesterday.

In Lancaster, the percentage of pupils passing plummeted from 71 percent to 39 percent.

The yearly report reviews the progress of the state's school divisions and looks at such indicators as the literacy passport, the number of advanced diplomas awarded and the types of courses students take.

Of the 46 indicators considered, Virginia's schools improved on about half, or 22, from the 1994-95 to the 1995-96 school years. Other criteria showed little change. Since the 1990-91 year, state schools have seen improvements in 31 indicators.

State schools have seen a slight drop, from 72 percent to 70 percent, in the first-time passing rates of the Literacy Passport Test since 1990-91. Officials hope new academic standards will bolster those scores.

State Board President Michelle Easton called the 2 percentage point dip 'very discouraging,' though she noted that scores last year rose 4 percentage points above the year before.

Of the report's results overall, she said, 'We have to look at our successes and celebrate them, and look at areas where we're not improving and work harder in those areas.'

Richard L. La Pointe, state superintendent of public instruction, pointed to these highlights from the 1990-91 to 1995-96 school years:

* A 12 percentage point increase in the number of pupils taking Algebra 1



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before grade 9.

- * An 8 percentage point gain in the number of students receiving advanced studies diplomas; the number of minority students earning the diploma jumped 7 percent.

- * A 6 percentage point increase in the number of students taking advanced placement and college level courses, and an 8 percent increase in the number of students scoring a 3 or higher on the College Board Advanced Placement tests.

- * A steady increase in attendance, with a 6 percentage point increase in the number of students absent 10 days or less a year from school.

Even though statewide passing rates for the Literacy Passport Test aren't improving overall, scores in some school districts have soared.

Sixth-graders must eventually pass all three parts of the statewide Literacy Passport Test to be promoted to ninth grade and participate in sports. They keep taking the tests until they pass.

Sixty-eight percent of Colonial Beach's sixth-graders cleared all three tests on the first try last year, compared with 32 percent five years earlier. School officials were not available for comment.

The percentage in Lancaster County has fallen from 71 in 1990-91 to 39 last year, which school officials attribute to varying abilities of pupils.

Lancaster, a school division with about 1,600 students in the tip of the Northern Neck, dropped 13 percentage points from 1994-95 to 1995-96.

"It's ironic, too, because last year we thought we had done a lot of extra preparation activity leading up to the test, and the scores just did not go up," said Superintendent Randolph H. Latimore Sr.

Three school divisions in the greater Richmond metro area are among the 10 that have seen their first time passing rate plunge the most: Charles City County, Prince George County and Colonial Heights. Two counties are among the top improvers -- Dinwiddie and New Kent.

"Individually, our percentages are good, but when you look at the results of those who passed all three of the tests the first time, our scores have dropped," said Suzanne Richardson, director of special services for Prince George schools. "I cannot really give you an explanation for it. We have worked with students on individual tests."

The passing rate had fallen in New Kent the previous year, and school officials wanted to stop that downward trend.

"I was not happy about that, and neither were the middle school administration or teachers," said Superintendent J. Roy Geiger II. "They worked very hard to revamp their program of instruction."

Highland County, the state's smallest school division with 375 students, made the second highest gain in passing rates during the past six years. School officials attribute that to the county's homogeneity and a strong sense of



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community.

The county of 2,500, located in the Allegheny Mountains on the West Virginia line, saw 97 percent of its sixth-graders passing the test on the first try last year, putting it in the state's top 10 for the second year in a row.

"We take very seriously our challenge to prepare students to pass the Literacy Passport Test," said Superintendent Donald Ford. "We give considerable credit to two groups: the students themselves, who understand the importance of doing well, and their parents; and secondly the teachers, who do a marvelous job of preparing the students."

Across the state on the North Carolina line, Greenville County school officials made it a goal last year to increase their passing rate, which had sunk to 40 percent, an 11 percentage point drop from the previous year.

"We did not feel that the scores were reflective of what the students were actually learning," said Superintendent Philip Worrell.

School officials realized their immediate goal of exceeding the regional average and now want to beat the state average, Worrell said.

"Eventually our goal is to have everybody pass the first time," he said.

In Buckingham County, the goal is to increase the passing rate, which has consistently ranked among the state's lowest. The scores have fluctuated some.

"It's hard to say why (scores) fell," said Superintendent James T. Coonan, who came to the Southside County from New York two years ago. "There are folks who've been here a long time who don't know why it fell or why it went up."

School officials are trying some new programs, such as bringing in community members to teach optional classes on Saturday.

"I've talked to all the sixth-grade classes," Coonan said. "I'm trying not to make them crazy or nervous about it, but to make them aware that it's an important test."

GRAPHIC: CHART

LOAD-DATE: March 29, 1997



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May 12, 1997 Monday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: COMMENTARY; Pg. 12; ZONE: N; Voice of the people (letter).

LENGTH: 318 words

HEADLINE: BETTER GRADES

BYLINE: Gery Chico, President, Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees.

DATELINE: CHICAGO

BODY:

As the members of the Illinois General Assembly struggle to develop a new funding system for education, there are calls for accountability and results coming from legislators, business groups and individuals..

The advocates for better performance should be aware of the results that have already been achieved in the Chicago Public Schools. Recent news reports have highlighted the sizable **improvement** in high **school test** scores.

Less attention has been given to another important milestone in the **school** system's **improvement**: a second upgrade in the Chicago Public Schools' bond rating by all three major bond-rating agencies. Standard & Poor's raised its rating from BBB to A-minus. Moody's upgraded the school district from Baa to Baal, while Fitch increased its rating from BBB to BBB-plus.

These upgrades follow last year's, the first change since the school system's financial crisis in 1979. They represent the judgment of the rating agencies that the Chicago Public Schools has put its house in order. Interestingly, these ratings are based only partly on financial factors. The rating agencies also look at how well we are improving education. They see us getting better on both fronts.

The reasons for the ratings increases are summarized in the statement from one rating agency: "Standard & Poor's believes that the board has restored the school system to fiscal health and developed a credible financial plan to assure stability. . . ." Now that the board has a lower risk profile, Standard & Poor's expects the school system to build on its record of educational and financial accomplishment."

As a result of the changed ratings, we can expect to save several millions of dollars in our bond sales, through lower interest rates and lower insurance costs. These savings will go directly into repairing school buildings and building badly needed additional classrooms.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 12, 1997



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LEVEL 1 - 7 OF 345 STORIES

Copyright 1997 The Seattle Times Company
The Seattle Times

May 30, 1997, Friday Final Edition

SECTION: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. B2

LENGTH: 647 words

HEADLINE: SEATTLE SCHOOL TEST SCORES IMPROVE FOR ALL GROUPS -- WHITE, MINORITY STUDENTS SHOWED SIMILAR INCREASES

BYLINE: DICK LILLY; SEATTLE TIMES STAFF REPORTER

BODY:

Test scores for Seattle Public Schools students have moved up on all three districtwide tests given this year.

Scores released yesterday for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) showed gains of one to three points in all areas tested - reading, language arts and math - at all grade levels. The tests were given last month.

"We now have three indicators that what we are doing is working," said schools Superintendent John Stanford.

The announcement follows news earlier this week that Seattle students in the third, fifth, eighth and 11th grades also improved their writing ability, as measured by a writing sample scored by outside consultants.

Seattle students in the fourth, eighth and 11th grades also made across-the-board gains on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) for the second year in a row, pulling out of a slump dating to the early 1990s. The test is required by the state.

The scores released yesterday cheered school officials because ethnic-minority students made gains equal to or greater than white students. Nevertheless, most minority youngsters continued to score five to 10 points below national averages for all students while white students, for the most part, remained 10 to 15 points above national averages.

Closing the gap in academic achievement between minority and white children is one of the district's major goals.

The scores for low-income children and children with limited English proficiency also increased, though they remained significantly behind the scores for children from middle-class and English-speaking homes, respectively.

Schools will send students' scores home to parents next week, said Dorothy Dubia, district spokeswoman.

The Seattle School District switched from the California Achievement Test (CAT) to the ITBS last year, so there's no data on long-term trends. Few



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The Seattle Times, May 30, 1997

suburban districts use the ITBS, though on other standardized tests, such as the CTBS given statewide in the fall, suburban schools generally score from a few to as many as 30 points higher than city schools. Scores generally rise with income levels in school districts throughout the metropolitan area.

In the ITBS, 50 is an average score and a score of 55, for example means that 54 out of 100 students scored lower and 45 scored higher.

Average ITBS Scores and Year-to-year Changes

Reading Language Math 1996 1997 Change 1996 1997 Change 1996 1997 Change. High school students:.. 50 53 +3 49 51 +2 51 53 +2

Middle school students (grades 6,7 and 8):.. 50 51 +1 52 53 +1 50 51 +1

Elementary school students 50 52 +2 51 52 +1 51 53 +2

African American high school students # 38 40 +2 38 39 +1 37 39 +2

Asian high school students # 44 45 +1 47 48 +1 54 56 +2

Chicano/Latino high school students # 43 46 +3 42 45 +3 43 45 +2

Native American high school students # 59 59 0 52 53 +1 51 52 +1

White high school students # 63 65 +2 58 59 +1 59 60 +1

Low income high school students (eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)#. 36 39 +3 38 40 +2 43 45 +2

High school students with limited English proficiency # 19 20 +1 24 27 +3 39 41 +2

The scores for high school students in these categories are representative of the scores of middle and elementary school students. Source: Seattle School District.

GRAPHIC: CHART; SEATTLE TIMES: AVERAGE ITBS SCORES AND YEAR-TO-YEAR CHANGES (SEE CHART AT THE END OF TEXT)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 31, 1997



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Business First-Columbus

April 4, 1997

SECTION: Vol 13; No 32; pg 21

LENGTH: 737 words

HEADLINE: National **testing** gets optional OK

BYLINE: Ellison Stind

DATELINE: Columbus; OH; US; North Central

BODY:

The voluntary national **tests** in **reading and math** that President Clinton is proposing for **fourth** and eight **graders** could have implications not only for students, but for the business world as well.

The debate continues as to the importance of these **tests**.

Richard Stoff, president of the Ohio Business Roundtable, an organization comprised principally of CEOs from Fortune 500 companies around Ohio, says these **tests** are necessary in part because of the larger national economic implications.

"This (issue of higher academic standards) is very real for the business community, educators and public leaders. We talk about global competitiveness in the abstract, but the reality is the competition we're seeing in the international marketplace and the global economy isn't really a battle between countries in the abstract, but a battle of classrooms," Stoff says.

Stoff cites the recent results of the third international **math** and science study which **tested** 500,000 **eighth grade** students around the world. American students scored below average in **math**, and barely average in science.

"The countries that don't lead are not only going to be economically disadvantaged, we're going to become economically irrelevant. The president's initiative for national **tests** and national standards is right on target. It is unequivocally the highest priority for the roundtable," Stoff says.

John Goff, superintendent of public instruction of Ohio, says he is supportive of the **tests** as long as they are optional for each state.

"We see there is a possibility of value here, but somehow it has got to be meshed within the state's own systems...and there has to be flexibility for states to either agree or not agree to participate depending on how it impacts their particular situation," Goff says.



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Goff says he thinks the reason the **tests** have been proposed is to serve as a benchmark. "People are trying to come up with a way to get a better **reading** on how American children are doing among the states as well as international comparisons...The question is how to put something in place that is not overly burdensome to the states," he says.

Can voluntary **tests** actually provide benchmarks if all states do not intend to conduct them?

"We have to encourage states to use it," says Stoff. "If you have a large enough sample size, then you can establish clear benchmarks."

Goff says there are some real issues to contend with if these **tests** are made mandatory. He says Ohio already has a **fourth grade** proficiency **test** in five subject areas and an **eighth grade** graduation **test** in five subject areas. "What do I do with the **fourth grade reading test**? Do I use the national one that might be developed to replace the one we have, do we try to mix them? How do we approach this"

He says if these **tests** are implemented, there would need to be some serious discussion as to what to do with them in Ohio. He says giving the **tests** as separate from the already established **tests** is "not a very popular idea for school people right now. (School districts) are concerned with how much time assessment takes away from teaching time."

Lyn Robertson, chair of the education department at Denison University, says she does not think the **tests** are going to solve the problems that schools already have.

"I think we need more funding for schools, better and equal facilities. It's so easy to correlate high **test** scores with affluence and low **test** scores with poverty--there's such a clear connection."

Robertson says roadblocks are constantly being put in teachers' ways that makes it difficult for them to teach. She cites the roadblocks as consisting of not having enough materials, having too many students in one class and having class time shortened arbitrarily and frequently.

"These things are fundamental. We spend millions on **testing** already--why not spend it on materials and more in-service work for teachers so they can come in with fresh ideas and new approaches?"

Stoff says national **testing** is part of the "integrative whole" of education standards. "It's not a question of either/ or," he says. "I am not unsympathetic to educators and others who say 'Gee, we have limited resource and can't afford to spend (money) on a **test** if we don't have pencils,' but we need to create an educational system in this state...so we can get it all done."

The issue of national **testing** is still being discussed in Congress.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Copyright 1997 The Washington Post
The Washington Post

March 15, 1997, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. A22.

LENGTH: 506 words

HEADLINE: Solid Facts in Virginia

BODY:

UNHAPPY THOUGH state education leaders might be to hear it, the Virginia public schools have lately been providing a vivid demonstration of an argument President Clinton likes to make on the stump about educational standards. Standards, the president keeps saying, are needed because individual kids, and whole schools too, will rise to the occasion if they have high and specific goals to aim for. More important, if they're in trouble, they will make progress over time only with the help of specific measurements to tell them how they and others are doing.

The Virginia schools, meanwhile, have been making something of a national hit, as Jay Mathews reports, with a strict and rather old-fashioned history curriculum that requires kids to learn long lists of specific things about American history, including quite a bit about Virginia. Despite these unfashionable qualities, other jurisdictions across the country have snapped them up with gusto. The connection? Only that, like explicit standards generally in schools that have tried them, the Virginia history standards get plaudits for letting both teachers and students know exactly what is required -- thus removing, for teachers in particular, the burden of guesswork as to what the kids know already and what sort of material will serve them best in the future.

As for the presumed loss of creativity and of the opportunity to develop analytic skills -- much beloved of textbook writers and educational theorists -- those using the fact-rich, date-rich curriculum report that knowing more facts turns out to make analysis more interesting. This is a sharper-edged variant of the argument for standards in general, which tends to be made obliquely because it runs against conventional wisdom: namely, that kids thrive on a certain amount of educational rigor and are bored silly without it.

Localities have, of course, backed off specific curriculums partly to avoid the intense culture-war arguments over what specifics to include. The president's proposal is explicitly confined to **reading and math** standards for the same reason. Some conservative governors, Virginia Gov. George Allen prominently included, have criticized as intrusive "big government" the Clinton proposal that the Education Department provide funding and development for national **reading and math tests** at the **fourth-, eighth- and 12th-grade** levels -- to be modeled on the existing National Assessment of Educational Progress, available now but given only to sample populations.

Virginia, till recently, also refused the small amounts of federal education money tied to the president's Goals 2000 initiatives. National **tests**, officials



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The Washington Post, March 15, 1997

have said, would not be mandatory, but would be available to any school or state that wants to measure where it is in relation to others. The experience with Virginia's own history standards suggests that optional but rigorous standards could do well anyway -- not because they are intrusive or coercive, but simply because they are attractive.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 15, 1997

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Las Vegas Review-Journal (Las Vegas, NV)

March 4, 1997 Tuesday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: D; Pg. 4D

LENGTH: 721 words

HEADLINE: Clinton on right track with schools

BYLINE: James Champy

BODY:

Can America remain a powerful nation if it continues to offer its children the longest vacations and shortest school calendars of any industrialized country in the world? Can America remain a powerful nation if its children spend less than half as much time on academic subjects as children in France, Germany and Japan? Can America remain a powerful nation if its children are unable to read to acceptable grade levels? How much longer are we going to kid ourselves? Our nation's public school system needs fixing. Not quick fixes but fundamental bedrock changes. In his second and final inaugural address, which reportedly went through 12 drafts, President Clinton expressed an ambition that American education, like America itself, should become the envy of the world. In some respects we already are — our medical schools, our top colleges and schools devoted to technology like MIT and Cal Tech are accepted standards of preeminence. But President Clinton was referring to our public schools K through 12. While there are exceptions, our public schools, especially in lower income areas, are falling short if not falling apart. That explains why so many business leaders and their corporations are getting involved; our companies cannot compete if their work forces have inferior educations. Clinton's proposals include a combination of new twists and old ideas: standard reading tests for all fourth graders; standard math tests for all eighth graders; more funding for Headstart, the early childhood development program; more federal aid for local schools; tax credits and tax deductions for college tuition; and lower interest rates on student loans. The proposals have fairly wide political appeal. Clinton, who closely watches the polls, knows that parents are increasingly fed up. But what needs to be addressed is not so much what we teach our children as how we teach them. There is certainly recognition of this in government. In applauding Clinton's message, one congressman declared that his state had become a "knowledge-based economy" and that an investment in education would further its competitiveness. Clinton proclaimed that every 12-year-old should be able to plug into the Internet. Vice President Al Gore, who is the front-runner for his party's presidential nomination in 2000, is a techie and has constantly and quietly emphasized the role of technology in schools. Yes, computer literacy is becoming more important. It has become a basic skill requirement as the workplace is increasingly automated. But there is even more going on in the workplace, which requires an even more radical change in education. When students graduate and enter the work force they will find a much different world than the world of just 30 years ago. First, workers are being given more decision-making power earlier in their careers. One big reason: Customers don't want to wait for problems to be solved through some



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command-and-control hierarchy. Second, work is becoming more collaborative _ teams solve problems and deliver services. Collaboration means being able to pull your weight. Thirdly, and this connects to the first two factors, there is less supervision around to make sure people make the right decisions. Autonomy requires people who can cope with freedom. Next, let's teach them more about developing team skills. So much of school has to do with individual achievement. We should also teach children about values in a rigorous, inspiring way _ because values beget conscience. Students of conscience will do the right thing when no one is looking. And with the time left over let's teach the late 20th century interpretation of John Donne's famous line, "No man is an island." I'm not talking social studies here. I'm talking about teaching children how their Nikes come into being and why BMWs are made in South Carolina. It means teaching the meaning of interdependence in a global economy. We're all in this together, and the more our kids understand this, the better off they'll be.

Jim Champy is chairman of consulting for Perot Systems Corp., and author of "Reengineering the Corporation." Write to Jim Champy at Tribune Media Services, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1500, Chicago, Ill. 60611, or e-mail him at JimChampyps.net

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch

April 28, 1997, Monday, FIVE STAR LIFT EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. 01A

LENGTH: 782 words

HEADLINE: STUDENTS BRACE FOR STATE-REQUIRED **TESTS**: SOLVING **MATH** PROBLEMS BY THE NUMBERS

BYLINE: Carolyn Bower; Of The Post-Dispatch Staff

BODY:

Ten-year-old Anthony Roberts has **read** and reread **math** problems to prepare for the new Missouri **math tests** that 130,000 students around the state will take in the next three weeks.

"I've been studying real hard, but I'm really nervous," said Anthony, a **fourth-grader** at Nathaniel Hawthorne School in University City.

Students in 344 of the state's 525 public school districts will take the **tests** between today and May 16. The **tests**, optional for districts this year, will be given to students in **grades** four, eight and 10. The **math tests** will be required next spring for all public school students in those **grades**.

The **math test** is the first of a series of **tests** in communication arts, science, social studies, health and physical education and fine arts that will be introduced in the next four years in schools. The **tests** will replace the multiple-choice Missouri Mastery and Achievement **Tests**. The new **tests** include not only traditional multiple-choice questions but also questions that require students to show how they solved problems and to write how they arrived at solutions.

Illinois officials are finalizing state academic standards and plan to redesign the **test** system there in the next 2 1/2 years to become more performance based and with more classroom-based assessment, said Kim Knauer, a spokeswoman for the state school board.

Missouri's **tests** come at a time when President Bill Clinton has put voluntary national **tests** at the top of his second-term agenda. Clinton wants to assess the **reading skill** of **fourth-graders** and the **math** knowledge of **eighth-graders**.

Missouri officials have said that they hope the new state **tests** will encourage teachers to help students demonstrate knowledge through solving problems, writing and analyzing information. Many teachers already do that.

Linda Thompson, Anthony's teacher, has the students work a **math** problem each day. She also assigns a **math** problem for homework. Thompson gets some of the problems from a booklet called Preparation for Performance Assessment in Mathematics. She uses a textbook called Mathematics Plus.



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"My goal for the **fourth-graders** is not so much blowing **test** scores out of the water but to help them improve their problem-solving skills and prepare for fifth **grade** and sixth **grade**," she said. "The **test** is a blip on the landscape as far as I'm concerned."

One problem mentions that Marvin lives at 2153 South Street, and his friend, Joe, lives on the same street. Joe's house number has the same digits as Marvin's but in a different order. Joe's house number is more than 4,000. It is an even number. The digit in the tens place is larger than the digit in the hundreds place. What is Joe's house number?

Thompson helped her students look for clues and work the problem step by step, as she wrote the answers on a chalkboard. Anthony and Zachary Pectol, 9, pointed out that the numbers for Marvin's address are in a different order or mixed up for Joe's address. Tyler Johnson said the digit in the thousands place has to be 5 for Joe's house number because it is more than 4,000.

Classmates responded with a basketball hoop-dunking chorus of "Yes," and then applause when students tell Thompson Joe's full address: 5132.

Thompson, who has taught for seven years, has attended workshops and trains other teachers in teaching students to solve **math** problems. She said the new approach integrates the best of two worlds: problem solving, and writing with the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

In her class of 29, including 16 boys, a few are natural problem solvers, and a few others can figure out the answers. Many students find problem solving difficult.

"The important thing is trying and believing you can do it," Thompson said. "Everybody, teachers and students, is expected to do more. The end result is a better-rounded child."

The new **tests** are a byproduct of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. The act required the development of new academic standards, guidelines for using them in classrooms and a new statewide **testing** plan. Missouri educators aim to raise standards for what students should know and be able to do, said Orlo Shroyer, assistant commissioner for instruction with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in comments distributed to teachers around the state.

Anthony said he expects the **test** to be hard. But, he added, "I'm going to try hard and do my best."

Anthony's classmate, Daniel Strickland, had this advice for **test**-takers: "Just don't worry about it. Go with the flow."

Another **fourth-grader** in Thompson's class, Tyler Johnson, added, "It will all be over soon."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, GRAPHIC, (1) Graphic Illustration - Which is true of Missouri's new school **testing** plan?

A. The **math** version will be required by next spring.



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St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 28, 1997

- B. It will require that students show how they solved problems.
 C. It is a byproduct of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993.
 D. All of the above.

(2) Graphic Chart - Rolling Out The New Tests
 Schedule For New Missouri Tests

Subject	Voluntary	Required	Grades
Math	1997	1998	4, 8, 10
Communication arts	1998	1999	3, 7, 11
Science	1998	1999	3, 7, 10
Social Studies	1999	2000	4, 8, 11
Health/PE		2000	TBA
Fine Arts		2000	TBA

(3) Color Photo - Zachary Pectol, a **fourth-grader** at Nathaniel Hawthorne School in University City, works a mathematics problem on the board. Some 130,000 students in Missouri will take **math tests** in the next three weeks.

(4) Post-Dispatch Graphic Chart - New Math Tests

Some questions require students to show how they solved problems and to write about it. Above is an example of a **fourth grade** question. (Graphic Chart and illustration appeared above this outline in the paper

Jane wanted to find out which school subjects her friends liked best. She asked 10 of her friends to fill in a form like this one to show their favorite subject.

Here is what Jane found.

	Dion	Ben	Angie	Lucy	Kim	Nina	Kyle	Mario	Liz
Reading	x			x				x	x
Science				x			x	x	
Math		x	x		x		x	x	x
Social Studies				x		x			

5) Graphic Illustration - (Sample test: Questions listed below appear on the sample test illustration)

Use what Jane learned about her friends' favorite subjects to make a graph that shows how many of Jane's friends like each subject.

Write a paragraph to explain what your graph shows.

Which one of Jane's friends likes the most subjects?

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: April 28, 1997



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LEVEL 1 - 3 OF 264 STORIES

Copyright 1997 The Hearst Corporation
The Times Union (Albany, NY)

May 28, 1997, Wednesday, ONE STAR EDITION

SECTION: MAIN, Pg. A6

LENGTH: 1245 words

HEADLINE: Clinton's education reform is long on goals but short on funding

BYLINE: ELSA C. ARNETT Knight-Ridder

HIGHLIGHT:

There's no financial incentive for schools to take part in program

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- President Clinton says that tough nationwide standards will make America's students smarter. But there are a couple of things he doesn't say: His plan would cost money, and he isn't offering any.

"It's not enough to just throw standards at schools and expect them to implement them on their own. We need training for virtually all school staffers," said Karen Anderson, research director at the National School Boards Association. "What we're really talking about here is a new approach to disseminating knowledge."

Creating national standards for public schools is the centerpiece of Clinton's Goals 2000 program, which would set benchmarks in reading and mathematics for every child in the nation.

While polls show that many parents and educators like the idea of tough standards, it clashes with the longstanding tradition of local control over public education. The 15,000 school boards in the United States, which set their own rules about what students learn, won't readily give up that autonomy.

And Clinton is giving them no financial incentive to do so. Schools are being encouraged to pay for curriculum changes by shifting the federal money they already receive. But schools won't get a penny of additional federal money if they participate in the voluntary program, and they won't lose any money if they don't.

"We hope states will take it upon themselves to meet these standards," said Rick Miller, a U.S. Education Department spokesman. He said that once parents and local school districts understood the President's plan, they would see that it helps them achieve their prime goal: a better education for their kids.

School districts that sign on will find that it takes a lot of work. That's because any system of national standards will require nationwide tests to measure how students are doing. Most schools would be forced to revamp their teaching methods and materials so that students would be trained to meet the specific needs of the tests.



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The Times-Union, May 28, 1997

For example, mathematics classes in the United States are often criticized for covering too many topics, too superficially. Raising U.S. test scores would probably require schools to adopt the models of countries in which students master fewer **math** topics, but in greater depth.

The differences between American teaching styles and those in other countries were highlighted in a 1996 study by the National Center for Education Statistics, which compared the way American and Japanese **eighth-grade math** teachers approach a lesson.

In Japan, the teacher poses a complex, thought-provoking problem. The students struggle with the problem, and various students present ideas or solutions. The class discusses the ideas, the teacher summarizes the class' conclusions, and then students practice similar problems.

In the United States, the teacher first instructs students on a concept or skill, then solves example problems with the class. Then students practice on their own while the teacher assists individual students.

Lois Peak, the author of the study, said U.S. classes focus on teaching students how to do something, such as solving a certain kind of problem or using a standard formula, while the Japanese classes concentrate on fostering mathematical thinking, such as exploring, developing and understanding concepts, or discovering multiple solutions to the same problems.

This difference is illustrated by the way a concept like the Pythagorean theorem is taught. In the United States, teachers typically tell their students: 'We find the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle by using the formula $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.'

In Japan, students would generally try to derive the formula, prove it, and discuss it in some detail.

While it's not yet clear what will be expected from new U.S. standards, some U.S. reformers apparently hope to transplant the Japanese techniques for teaching **math** into American classrooms.

A transition would be easier in affluent neighborhoods, where teachers often have ongoing training programs and can swiftly order materials to accompany their new curricula.

It would be hardest in schools in low-income neighborhoods, which are already strapped for money to train teachers and buy new textbooks, calculators and microscopes.

A few states already have an idea of what it takes to change their standards. In 1991, Maryland began giving new statewide tests in **reading**, writing, language usage, **math**, science and social studies to third, fifth and **eighth graders**.

Public schools were given a year to develop a curriculum that was more focused and emphasized in-depth mastery of concepts.

Scores on average have improved, but some schools in low-income communities

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The Times Union, May 28, 1997

such as Baltimore have consistently performed poorly on the **tests**. As a result, the state legislature recently voted to pump \$ 254 million to Baltimore's schools over five years, with a chunk of the money earmarked for teacher training and other methods to boost **test** scores.

Generally, **Clinton** has said all **fourth-graders** should be able to read independently and show they can comprehend a variety of literature. Every **eighth-grader** should have mastered arithmetic and have studied algebra and some geometry.

The U.S. Education Department focused on those **grades** because research shows that students who can't read English well by the end of third **grade** are more likely to drop out. Similarly, students who meet the **eighth-grade** benchmarks have the foundation to take **math** and science courses in high school to prepare for college and high-skills jobs.

To ensure that students are meeting those targets, the administration is creating a 90-minute **math test** for **eighth graders** and a 90-minute **reading test** for **fourth graders**. About 80 percent of the two exams will be multiple choice, and the remaining 20 percent will require students to produce their own responses.

The U.S. Education Department will spend \$ 22 million to develop the **tests** -- \$ 10 million this year and \$ 12 million next year, and estimates it will cost between \$ 10 and \$ 12 per student to administer the **test**. The federal government will pay the cost of administering the **tests** the first year, which is expected to be 1999.

The new **tests** will be largely modeled on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) **tests**, which are now given to a limited sample of students in 43 states.

The NAEP **test** must be modified because it measures only overall state achievement. The new exams are intended to give parents and teachers a score for each child.

So far, most states aren't going along. Only five have decided to administer the **fourth- and eighth-grade tests** -- Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Massachusetts and West Virginia.

The **Clinton** administration hopes more will follow, because right now, according to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study issued by the Education Department in November, **eighth-grade** American students scored below the international average of 41 countries participating in the study.

The content taught in U.S. **eighth-grade** mathematics classrooms is at a seventh-grade level in comparison to other countries, the study said.

In science, U.S. **eighth-graders** score about the international average of the 41 countries in the study. American students did well in earth science, life science and environmental issues, and performed about average in chemistry and physics.

LOAD-DATE: May 30, 1997

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LEVEL 1 - 4 OF 264 STORIES

Copyright 1997 Telegraph Herald
 Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

May 27, 1997, Tuesday

SECTION: Opinion; Pg. a 4

LENGTH: 908 words

HEADLINE: Dubuque schools ahead of Clinton's curve

BYLINE: Mac McClure

BODY:

Piddling: President's goals for schools no challenge locally

Bill Clinton's second term recently passed the 100-day mark. This measure is usually applied to a president's first term, but in this instance President Clinton's call for a "national crusade" for educational standards invites review.

Here is a quick look at "President Clinton's 10-point challenge for American education" as printed in the TH following his State of the Union speech. Following each point is a comparison, when possible, with what's happening in education right here in Dubuque. Our schools may not be typical, but they usefully represent one community's honest effort to meet its obligations to its children.

1. Set national standards, with national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math.

In Dubuque and probably in most of our nation's schools, Clinton's standards are far below our present expectations.

Moreover, educators here and across the nation who really wish to assess student progress are skeptical of the standardized testing Clinton seems to call for.

Re: Bill's first idea - not good.

2. Make sure there's a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom.

Throughout the land, including Dubuque, many teachers already meet these criteria. When they don't, they go on teaching anyway. Why not? It's a good, secure job. If the president wants a good teacher in every classroom, the hard question is, what's to be done with the ones already there? Can't fire them.

Re: Bill's second idea - not workable.

3. Teach every student to read well by the end of the third grade.

This is a new standard? Most schools, including Dubuque's private and public



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Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA) May 27, 1997, Tuesday

schools, routinely expect better, earlier results. This "goal" denigrates current efforts nationwide. By the way, what does "well" mean in "read well?"

Re: Bill's third idea - substandard.

4. Expand Head Start and challenge parents to get involved early in their children's learning.

No one will argue with more money for a program with proven value, except taxpayers and already active parents. As for involving inactive parents: How? Pay them? Order them to school? **Grade** them? Inspire them by **reading** to some kids on TV?

Re: Bill's **fourth** idea - Head Start's a winner; parents do what they do.

5. Expand choice and accountability in public education.

Choice and accountability are abundant in Dubuque and elsewhere. Some even home-school their kids. Given existing laws, how this truly challenges any local community is incomprehensible, and especially so with Dubuque - an example of what any town can do if it wishes.

Re: Bill's fifth idea - it's already happening.

6. Make sure schools are safe, disciplined and drug-free, and instill American values.

The passage of new laws encouraging discipline and the identification of drug activity and provisions for security is commonly prevented in Dubuque and elsewhere both by existing laws and by individual rights activists. Saying "just do it" ("assure" it) won't suffice as a response to those who fear possible limits to freedom and privacy. Regarding values, whose shall we "instill?" Bill's and Hillary's?

Re: Bill's sixth idea - blowing smoke.

7. Modernize school buildings and help support school construction.

In Dubuque this is a major effort. We are working hard to put together a workable plan for affording what we need. Nationwide, the problem might be worse. Does that make local construction a federal need?

Re: Bill's seventh idea - federal school construction bureaucracy in sight.

8. Make the first two years of college as universal as high school.

Everyone goes to college now who wants to do so. What's the gain with this notion? Why must we replace "high school graduate" with "junior college graduate?" Are we giving up on doing our job in 12 years? Dubuque and other Iowa schools are building a technology base to prepare people to do, not to prepare for two more years of learning how.

Re: Bill's **eighth** idea - more is not always better.



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9. Help adults improve their education and skills by turning the many federal training programs into a simple skill grant.

Sounds great. Replace focused bureaucracies with ones that just spread money around. In Dubuque and elsewhere, we see excellent training programs that fit actual opportunities. Seems like these programs work.

Re: Bill's ninth idea - it ain't really broke; don't fix it.

10. Connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000.

Nationwide this might be novel. In Iowa the governor saw this need coming years ago. If Iowa's right on this one, President Clinton must be too.

Re: Bill's 10th idea - you're late, but welcome to the bandwagon.

Overall, President Clinton offers very little substantive challenge. Dubuque is ahead of him, as are hundreds of thousands of school districts nationwide. The many effective schools should themselves be inspirational to other, laggard schools.

He presents us with piddling goals - yes, "piddling," as in trivial and paltry - goals that are in most cases as unreachable and unworkable as they are (as always) high-sounding.

In Dubuque and across the nation, real people in real communities are taking their children by the hand and looking ahead and working to overcome obstacles.

That, Mr. President, is education.

McClure, a former teacher, works as a security guard at the University of Dubuque and writes.

LOAD-DATE: May 27, 1997



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LEVEL 1 - 38 OF 264 STORIES

Copyright 1997 The Indianapolis Newspapers, Inc.
THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

April 22, 1997 Tuesday CITY FINAL EDITION

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. A08

LENGTH: 572 words

HEADLINE: National standards

BODY:

President Clinton continues his push for state legislatures and school districts to adopt national standards and performance testing for fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math.

Standards are a good idea; federal government involvement is not.

Clinton's latest comments came at a memorial service for Albert Shanker, who championed the idea of national standards during more than 20 years as president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Shanker died in February.

Clinton and Shanker first worked together on the subject in 1989 when they attended an education summit convened by President George Bush. Then the head of the National Governors Association, Clinton emerged with what many considered an ideal plan: "world class standards. "

The first attempt to create such standards, however, was a dismal failure. When a national center released its plan for voluntary history standards in 1994, the public was appalled.

Ninety-nine U.S senators voted to reject the proposal, which would have had students learning more about the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy than George Washington, more about American Indian Speckled Snake than Thomas Edison.

Clinton vows to model the standards after those of the respected National Assessment of Educational Progress, but says they will have to be overhauled. The U.S. Department of Education intends to award contracts worth about \$ 9 million to groups outside the government to rework the tests. If the contractors so desire, their final product can differ greatly from the NAEP model. There's the rub.

To calm that concern, Clinton notes that reading and math, as opposed to history, are straightforward subjects whose standards won't cause dissension among educators.



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Yes, $2 + 2$ should equal 4. But many schools have a "whole language" approach to **reading** and writing while others focus on phonics. Some accept "approximate spelling" and some use rote memorization and drill techniques. Even **math** is vulnerable to fashionable change.

In 1989, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics assailed "a long-standing preoccupation with computation and other traditional skills" that make students "passive receivers of rules and procedures rather than active participants in creating knowledge." Some parents blame NCTM standards for declining **math** literacy.

Chester E. Finn Jr., a senior fellow at the Indianapolis-based Hudson Institute, says the existing NAEP **tests** are good enough to be adopted nationally and there is "no need to go through the agonies of creating new ones." A flaw in the Clinton plan, he adds, is that it would be under the U.S. Department of Education, thus inviting "bureaucratic finagling, interest-group pandering and political manipulation." The venture must be made truly independent of government, Finn concludes.

Certainly national standards would enable parents and communities to compare their students with others throughout the nation. Further, they would encourage more uniform curricula, which could boost student achievement considering the transiency of the American public and the high turnover in public schools today.

But adoption of them must be voluntary, lest the federal government take over yet another power it's not authorized to exert. And the fine print of the standards should be read carefully before any of us sign on to them.

LOAD-DATE: April 23, 1997



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LEVEL 1 - 50 OF 264 STORIES

Copyright 1997 Southeastern Newspapers Corporation
The Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle

April 3, 1997, Thursday, GEORGIA & CAROLINA EDITIONS

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A2

LENGTH: 666 words

HEADLINE: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CEOS, EDUCATOR
SUPPORT **TESTING**

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

President **Clinton** claimed new momentum Wednesday in his push for national **education** standards and **testing** by enlisting 240 high-tech executives and a top California school official to lobby for the program.

At an East Room roundtable of parents, teachers and business leaders, Mr. **Clinton** said the endorsements by Silicon Valley executives and Delaine Eastin, California's elected superintendent of public schools, amounted to "powerful new momentum to the crusade for national **education** standards."

With California's participation, Mr. **Clinton** said, fully 20 percent of the nation's schoolchildren would be enrolled in his program of voluntary performance standards and **testing** - for **fourth-graders** in **reading** and **eighth-graders** in **math**.

Wyoming

Heaven's Gate church

considers name change

CASPER -

A church that chose its name from a Bible verse is considering changing it because it's the same phrase used by the cult whose members committed mass suicide.

Heaven's Gate Ministries has no connection to the Heaven's Gate cult, whose 39 members killed themselves last week in the belief they would be transported to a UFO, said the Rev. Robert Gilmore.

The Pentecostal church, founded in 1978, chose its name from a statement by Jacob: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

New York



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City cracks down on bar
where actresses cavort

NEW YORK -

Hey, Julia Roberts - get down off that bar! And Drew Barrymore - don't shake your booty like that!

City officials have put a halt to hoofing at Hogs & Heifers, a downtown honky-tonk known for its collection of celebrity bras donated by visitors such as Ms. Roberts, Ms. Barrymore and Darryl Hannah.

Those stars and other patrons have been known to mount the Hogs & Heifers bar in spontaneous bursts of late-night dancing. But it turns out a Prohibition-era ordinance requires a cabaret license for such footloose activity.

I N B R I E F

JURY DEADLOCKS:

SPOKANE, Wash. - A federal jury deadlocked Wednesday on charges that three white separatists carried out bombings and bank robberies in the Spokane area, but convicted them of lesser charges carrying up to 35 years in prison. The jury was unable to reach a verdict on eight counts related to three bombings and two bank robberies last year but convicted the Idaho men of charges involving an Oct. 8 trip to Portland, Ore.

ALBRIGHT ONE-HOPS IT:

BALTIMORE - It wasn't much of a pitch, but the rookie right-hander isn't accustomed to such duty. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright opened the 1997 Baltimore Orioles season Wednesday by tossing a 30-foot one-hopper to Orioles catcher Chris Hoiles. "I think I'll keep my day job," Ms. Albright said.

COMPANIES WIN LICENSES:

WASHINGTON - Two companies, bidding more than \$ 173 million, won licenses Wednesday to provide a new CD-quality radio service that can be heard anywhere in the country. Similar to cable television, the service is likely to be offered on a pay-to-listen basis. Satellite CD Radio Inc. of Washington and American Mobile Radio Corp. of Reston, Va., won in the Federal Communications Commission auction.

15TH AMENDMENT OK'D:

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Just after the Civil War, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed that no one could be denied the right to vote because of their "race, color or previous condition of servitude." Only 127 years later, Tennessee on Wednesday became the last state to formally agree. The amendment has been the law of the land since 1870.

JACKSON CASE DISMISSED:

CHICAGO - Prosecutors dropped a disorderly conduct charge against the Rev.



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The Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle, April 3, 1997

Jesse Jackson for blocking a construction site during a protest. He was arrested Feb. 10 while protesting the firing of a black-owned company that had been hired to do excavation work for the Museum of Science and Industry. He spent the night in jail. The state requested the charge be dismissed.

- Edited from wire reports

by Glynn Moore

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 6, 1997

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LEVEL 1 - 138 OF 264 STORIES

Copyright 1997 Denver Publishing Company
Rocky Mountain News

February 13, 1997, Thursday

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Ed. F; Pg. 52A

LENGTH: 440 words

HEADLINE: Raise the academic bar

BODY:

On the same day President Clinton was arguing for national education standards before the Maryland General Assembly, a nonprofit research group released a survey that gave credence to his position. Half of high school students, the Public Agenda survey reported, believed they were being insufficiently challenged by their teachers.

Those students, of course, aren't the only ones. For instance, Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers has been quoted as saying, 'Very few American pupils are performing anywhere near where they could be performing.' Despite more stringent requirements in many states since the 1983 condemnation of public education in a national report, The Nation at Risk, American students still rank low in certain subjects compared with their peers in other industrialized countries.

That's one of the chief points of the president and others advocating new voluntary national standards. While they want uniformity of content material in schools across the land, they also believe those schools should demand more from students than is now common. They are right, of course. If you don't expect much, you won't get much. The very brightest young people will be cheated of a chance to fulfill their potential and children in the underclass will be cheated of a chance to escape their circumstances.

As Clinton recognizes, standards don't mean anything if you have no means of measuring whether people are living up to them. He wants to start by testing reading for all fourth-graders and math for all eighth-graders. One instrument for that is at hand, the National Assessment for Educational Progress, a test that has earned credibility as a strong indicator of student knowledge.

Yet none of this should be dictated by the federal government. It's fine for President Clinton to proselytize on the issue as he did in his State of the Union message and before Maryland's legislature this week. It would not be fine for him to try to enforce his druthers. Education is and should remain in the hands of the states and localities. But there are many ways in which states and other entities can work to accomplish these goals short of a federal mandate. Although their lives would thus become harder, the Public Agenda survey shows even many students are cheering for reform.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: February 15, 1997



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LEVEL 1 - 139 OF 264 STORIES

Copyright 1997 Roll Call Associates
Roll Call

February 13, 1997

SECTION: Pennsylvania Avenue

LENGTH: 1147 words

HEADLINE: Clinton's Thinking Big, Not 'Timid,' With Education

BYLINE: By Morton M. Kondracke

BODY:

Despite grouching from the left and right that President Clinton's second-term agenda is too "micro," he actually is tackling big problems. And the public seems to appreciate that.

Public polls show Clinton's approval ratings above 60 percent, the highest levels of his presidency, and sources say Clinton pollster Mark Penn's private surveys show that two-thirds of the public is satisfied that Clinton is "working on the major problems" facing society.

Possibly because Republican officeholders are muting their criticisms during the post-election era of bipartisanship in Washington, it's been left to the commentating classes to bombard Clinton with brickbats.

On ABC's "This Week," for instance, liberal columnist Clarence Page declared that Clinton's State of the Union message was "very poll-driven," indicating that "the President is running for small-town mayor."

Conservative George Will charged that Clinton "doesn't want to do anything. He wants to be something. He wants the Marine Band. He wants the Secret Service. He could care less what happens."

And non-denominational grenade-thrower Sam Donaldson chimed in that Clinton's budget was "timid...filled with gimmicks" and "it's not going to solve any problems at all."

Elsewhere, President George Bush's budget director, Richard Darman, claimed that Clinton's program showed a lack of courage; New Republic editor Michael Kelly said that it was loaded with "micro-pork"; and in the Weekly Standard, Andrew Ferguson declared that while Clinton's words are Kennedyesque, "his proposals are fitted for a deputy county commissioner" in Arkansas.

It's just baloney. There is no bigger challenge facing the country today than equipping citizens to compete in a technologized world economy, and that is what Clinton is all about.

In an era when deficit reduction is nearly a universally accepted priority, it's not possible for any president to do big things the way Franklin Roosevelt or Lyndon Johnson did. It's not even desirable. So Clinton is trying, as he said

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in his speech in Annapolis on Monday, to use government "to create the conditions and give people the tools to solve their problems and make the most of their own lives."

Clinton's education initiatives are designed, after 20 years of talk about school reform, to create a set of national **reading and math** standards and have kids **tested** to see if they and their schools are performing as they should.

If the goal was small-town stuff, conservatives like John Sununu of CNN's "Crossfire" would not be complaining - wrongly - "that **Clinton** intends to "take over" the nation's public schools.

Opposition goes both ways. For years, the education establishment - "teachers' unions, school boards, and **testing** and textbook companies - "has used its influence with liberals in Congress to resist national comparison **tests** that might hold individual schools and teachers accountable for student performance. **Clinton's** plan will break that lock.

Even so, he is not proposing mandatory national **tests** or even conditioning federal dollars on states' adoption of national standards and **testing**.

White House aides say that **Clinton** purposely decided to exhort rather than try to require local acceptance of the standards in order to avoid "a dumb debate over alleged federal takeover" of the schools.

States will be free to accept or reject the National Assessment of Educational Progress for **fourth-grade reading** proficiency and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study for **eighth graders**, but **Clinton** intends to mobilize business groups and parents to see that they get accepted.

If **Clinton** can finally undo the awful facts that 40 percent of US **fourth-graders** can't meet NAEP standards and that **eight-graders** are below the world average in **math**, that won't be "micro." It'll be big.

Clinton's critics also are wrong to say that his agenda is strictly "poll-driven." It's true that polls list education as the top item on voters' minds, but **Clinton** has had a lot to do with putting it there. He's no Billy-come-lately to the issue: He's been working on it ever since he was governor of Arkansas.

To be sure, there are points to debate in **Clinton's** agenda. In deference to the teachers' unions, **Clinton** is unwilling even to experiment with scholarships to send poor children to private schools - "a fault that Republicans should correct as Congress considers his proposals.

Also, probably 70 percent of **Clinton's** education spending is devoted to higher education, where the US stars, compared with primary and secondary education, where it lags badly.

Administration defenders say, along with conservatives, that money isn't the major K-12 problem, standards are. But it's also a fact that the average teacher in the US makes only \$26,000 a year, compared with \$71,000 for lawyers, according to Education Week.

Beyond education, Congress needs to force **Clinton** to keep narrowing the



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deficit gradually over the next five years instead of back-loading the budget-balancing process. And it needs to make him means-**test** entitlements.

Republicans can't - and won't - ignore the ethical shadow hanging over **Clinton** that may yet make his second term a nightmare. But consider how differently the country judges its two major ethically challenged public figures.

Clinton is viewed favorably by 61 percent of adults, according to the Los Angeles Times poll, while only 22 percent approve of House Speaker Newt Gingrich's (R-Ga) performance. Why? Mainly it's because **Clinton** has an agenda that the public supports.

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LEVEL 1 - 143 OF 264 STORIES

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Sacramento Bee

February 12, 1997, METRO FINAL

SECTION: EDITORIALS; Pg. B6

LENGTH: 1094 words

HEADLINE: SCHOOL STANDARDS, DEJA VU

BYLINE: Peter Schrag, Contributing Editor

DATELINE: COMMENTARY

BODY:

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S call last week for national standards for public schools, and for national tests in reading and math, couldn't have been better timed. With the economy on an upswing, unemployment fairly low and hardly another major crisis on the immediate horizon, the nation is in a positive mood about upgrading schools. For more than a decade, we have heard about how our student achievement lags behind Singapore and Taiwan and all sorts of other nations.

Clinton, who polls the nation every time he turns around, knew the nation's feelings on all that, of course. Yet in the case of education, it's also a message that comes comfortably to a former governor who made his mark as a leader in school reform long before he ran for president.

For the same reason, however, last week's call for national standards also looked like deja vu all over again. School standards was the core of President Bush's education agenda and, in the form of Goals 2000: The Educate America Act, which was passed by Congress in 1994, became the core of Clinton's education program as well. The idea was that the federal government would commission respected groups of scholars in various fields to write standards that the states could voluntarily adopt. Or they could pick some other set of standards, or write their own. Goals 2000 would provide money for implementation.

But between 1989, when Bush started the process, and late 1994, when things came apart, the push for national standards was riven with political and ideological controversy.

IN SOME of the federally commissioned curriculum projects, the standards idea was captured by the education establishment and by various cadres of political correctness. In some instances (and in some places), conservatives sensed a devious government plot to capture the minds and hearts of children for secular humanism, Darwin, un-American history, gay rights and other subversive purposes. In some states, as in the battle over the CLAS test in California, it was a little of both. In fall 1994, Lynne Cheney, who, as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, had commissioned the development of national history standards, led the attack on them when they were finally produced.

Because of such fights and the suspicion they raised, Gov. Pete Wilson for



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months even refused to take Goals 2000 money. There were no political strings attached to the Goals money, but there was enough suspicion among the screwball right about what the feds were planning to do that Wilson, trying to keep his right flank protected, turned the money down.

So now, in a way, Clinton is trying to start the process all over again. In his State of the Union address last week, he emphasized that he was talking about national -- not federal -- standards. (Maybe this time the paranoid right will think the standards will be brought by the stork.)

But in the end, the devil here, as in so many other things, is not in the label but in the details. Three years ago, the Goals legislation got bogged down in endless controversies, and while a watery bill was finally passed, there's plenty left to fight about: Who will write the standards? What test will be used? What group or groups, how chosen, will certify the tests and standards? Should the government provide additional help for schools or students who are not making the grade?

The last time around, there was even a hefty fight, brought by the left, about whether standards should be implemented at all before school resources were equalized enough so that all students had an equal "opportunity to learn." That demand was finally beaten off, and it may not return again. But a lot of other things no doubt will: How high should the bar be set in those fourth-grade reading tests and those eighth-grade math tests? What about non-native English-speakers, and ebonics and self-esteem?

THE POLLS all show strong support for higher standards, and for the moment Americans may even mean it. But the history of our various attempts to set such standards -- particularly if they are to have consequences -- is shot through (on the one side) with our ambivalence about giving everyone a second chance, about not destroying children's self-esteem, about giving credit for effort (by teachers and students) and about -- at all costs -- avoiding anything that smacks of bias.

On the other side, in the meantime, there are all those people who don't want any higher authority setting local school standards, who think the teaching of things such as evolution is an improper intrusion on religious liberty (or, worse, an attack on truth itself) and whose idea of a basic education does not extend to any difficult questions or issues whatever. It would be nice if this time we could achieve some real standards, but the battle is far from over.

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SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A01

LENGTH: 1299 words

HEADLINE: Clinton School Talk Wows an Assembly; He Pushes National Standards In Historic Visit to Annapolis

BYLINE: Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

President Clinton carried his campaign for national **reading and math** standards to Annapolis yesterday, assuring members of the Maryland General Assembly in a historic visit that he's not trying to usurp local control of schools.

Making his case in detail, and often with passion, Clinton confronted what has long been the major obstacle to enacting a voluntary, national plan of standards and **testing**: the notion that it would amount to a "federal power grab," as the president put it in his 54-minute speech.

He said such criticism was nonsense. "From Maryland to Michigan to Montana, **reading is reading, and math is math,**" Clinton said. "No school board is in charge of algebra, and no state legislature can enact the law of physics."

That line was one of many that drew boisterous applause from Maryland legislators and other guests crowding the ornate House of Delegates chamber for a special joint session of the General Assembly. Dignitaries as diverse as George Washington and Woodrow Wilson have visited the State House, but it was the first time an incumbent president had addressed the Maryland legislature.

One of only six states where Democrats control both the governorship and the legislature, Maryland embraced Clinton warmly, and he responded in kind. The president lavished praise on many of the state's education initiatives, including a plan by Gov. Parris N. Glendening to give free college tuition to middle-income students who maintain a B average.

But Clinton devoted much of his speech to his call for national education standards in **math and reading**. Maryland has taken a lead in standardized **testing**, requiring students to take a battery of "performance **tests**" in **grades** three, five and eight. Some state officials worry they won't reach the goal of having 70 percent of all students pass the **tests** by 2000.

Maryland education leaders say the **tests** will spur schools to teach better. But some parents complain that schools concentrate too narrowly on the **tests**, and teachers unions say teachers are wrongly blamed for poor student performances.



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After his speech, **Clinton** lingered to greet senators and delegates in the House lounge. Then, in an unscheduled jaunt that surprised his own staff, he spent two hours shopping along Annapolis's historic Maryland Avenue before ducking into Little Campus, a favorite legislative restaurant, for a bowl of seafood chowder with Glendening and other politicians. [Details on Page B3.]

"It was a fun day," said Glendening, some of whose education bills now before the assembly mirror **Clinton's** ideas. "Most importantly, it was a good day for the state." It underscored "how we are out front leading the nation," he said. "I was pleased at how forcefully he spoke out in favor of our program."

In years past, Glendening had distanced himself from **Clinton**, even endorsing his rival Paul E. Tsongas in the 1992 Maryland Democratic primary. But yesterday, the governor was by the side of the more politically popular president almost from the moment his helicopter landed at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Annapolis was among the first stops in **Clinton's** plan to barnstorm the country in behalf of programs he outlined in last week's State of the Union address, particularly his \$ 51 billion grab bag of proposals to revitalize education. Yesterday's speech emphasized his call for national standards and tests by which to measure students, schools and states.

Clinton and others have steered clear of saying there should be sanctions for schools that fail to meet such standards. But many governors, conservative groups and others fear that any scenario of national standards could erode local control of education, an American tradition.

At an education summit last year in New York state, the nation's governors avoided any mention of national standards despite **Clinton's** pitch for them. **Clinton** hopes to overcome such concerns this year, in part by focusing his calls for standards in two areas in which educators say they may be able to unite critics: reading for fourth-graders and math for eighth-graders. The U.S. Department of Education is supporting the development of tests to measure how students in those grades measure up to existing, widely accepted standards, **Clinton** said.

"Keep in mind, we don't want Johnny to make a better score than Mary on this test," **Clinton** said, explaining his approach. "We want 100 percent of our kids to pass this test. And then, when a lot of them don't, we don't want to give them an F. We want to give them a hand up."

Clinton elicited laughter with an analogy to military training: "Think how silly it would be if [in] every place in America where we do basic training, they said: 'Well, you know, Louisiana is a long way from Georgia. We couldn't possibly have uniform standards for basic training in the military. Just sort of come up with whatever you think is good, and we'll hope it works the next time we're in the Persian Gulf.' "

Although **Clinton's** crusade may face a stiff challenge nationwide, his standards plan drew praise from Maryland lawmakers and educators. State Board of Education officials said they plan to incorporate the national tests the president talked about into their own program.



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"I like the idea," said state School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick. "For our children, when they enter the 21st century, their competition will not be local. It will not be state. It will not be national. It will be international, [and] we need strong national standards" to help them compete.

Virginia officials had a different view. "If Maryland wants to sign onto national standards, that's Maryland's option," said Ken Stroupe, spokesman for Republican Gov. George Allen. "Virginia took the lead ahead of Maryland, ahead of the federal government in establishing high academic standards. . . . Our feeling is that states ought to have the option to make that decision within each state. Just don't force it on the states."

During his speech, Clinton had kind words for several of Glendening's education initiatives, including plans to link all schools to the Internet and efforts by Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (D) to develop character education programs. He hailed Maryland as the only state to require high school students to perform community service.

The president offered particular praise for the free-tuition program Glendening is patterning after Georgia's so-called HOPE scholarship program. Although some legislators have said the state can't afford the plan, Clinton seemed to suggest that the state can't afford not to pursue it. In Maryland, it would be limited to families with incomes of \$ 60,000 or less.

"There is no better expenditure of our money," Clinton said. "It will raise the per capita income of this state more quickly. It will get over inequalities in income groups more quickly, and it will bring people together for a stronger future more quickly than anything else."

Some legislative leaders were quick to offer caveats. House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. (D-Allegany), who introduced Clinton, noted that Georgia paid for its plan with a new state lottery. "There is no parallel there between us and Georgia," he said in an interview. "We have a lottery whose money is already being spent."

Clinton devoted the last quarter of his speech to an appeal to state and business leaders to find jobs for people leaving welfare. "This is a serious, stiff challenge," said Clinton, who then quoted country music star Chet Atkins in noting that state governments have asked for more authority over welfare programs: "You got to be careful what you ask for in life; you might get it."

Staff writers David Montgomery, Ellen Nakashima and Terry M. Neal contributed to this report.

GRAPHIC: Photo, robert a. reeder, Maryland House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. joins the General Assembly in applauding Clinton. Clinton addresses a special joint session of the General Assembly in the packed House of Delegates chamber. It was the first time an incumbent president had addressed the Maryland legislature.

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