

On Education Front, a Bipartisan Lesson; Clinton Praised for Backing Standards by Michigan's GOP Governor

By John F. Harris
Washington Post Staff Writer

LANSING, Mich., March 6 -- With prospects for bipartisanship growing ever more tenuous in Washington, President Clinton traveled to Michigan today for a lavish embrace from this state's Republican chief executive.

John Engler, one of his party's most prominent governors and on other occasions a tough Clinton critic, praised Clinton's call for national educational standards. "Michigan accepts your challenge," he told the president. Engler said the state will begin testing fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math to ensure that they are meeting the voluntary standards Clinton extolled in last month's State of the Union address.

The alliance between Clinton and Engler, however unlikely at first blush, has a certain logic. Both men have aligned themselves with issues such as overhauling welfare and imposing more rigorous academic and disciplinary standards on students.

Education is historically a local issue, but aides say this suits Clinton fine. He hopes to define himself increasingly in the second term by offering rhetorical leadership on non-Washington issues. And on this particular day, with congressional Republicans tormenting him over the Democratic fund-raising issue, he was only too happy to absent himself physically from the capital.

Traveling back to Washington on Air Force One this afternoon, Clinton declined to address fund-raising questions, including Wednesday's revelation that a top aide to first lady

Hillary Rodham Clinton accepted a \$50,000 check for the Democratic National Committee, which some experts say may be a violation of law. He said he would take the questions at a Friday afternoon news conference.

But he said the furor is not hurting his mood -- "I am doing great" -- and disputed suggestions that it is eclipsing his other actions. "I thought my message got through just fine," he said of his speech to the state legislators. "They got it."

Clinton's remarks sometimes took on a lecturing tone. He said the national testing he has endorsed would be voluntary, but that he is counting on the power of embarrassment to goad states into new policies. "I want to create a climate in which no one can say no," he said, "in which it is voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids the chance to do this."

The Education Department will develop the reading and math tests over the next two years, and Engler pledged that Michigan students will take it. But Clinton warned that people should not be sentimental when some students fail.

"If they don't do very well at first," Clinton said, "it's probably more our fault than theirs. And a lot of it is because when we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

That line got a standing ovation, his best applause line of the day. But lawmakers were more subdued on several occasions when Clinton's remarks took

an esoteric flight.

Emphasizing the importance of good child care early in life, the president asserted that children living with "two parents, even if they both work, that have reasonably good educations" will experience "700,000 positive interactions" in their first four years -- or about 500 a day -- leading to better brain development. But "a single parent with low self-esteem" and poor parenting skills will give a child only "150,000 positive interactions."

Clinton, who has joked that he may run for school board upon leaving the presidency, plunged into similar detail explaining why young people in many other countries do better in math: "In Germany or Singapore, students learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth every year. Typically in the United States, we learn over 30 or 35 subjects in a superficial way."

Clinton today said he is directing the National Science Foundation to work with the Education Department to study ways to improve U.S. math performance.

Engler traveled to Lansing aboard Air Force One with Clinton. In his campaign for educational standards, Clinton is planning to speak frequently to state legislatures. Last month, he traveled to Annapolis to address the Maryland General Assembly, and next week he will go to Raleigh to speak to North Carolina legislators.

@CAPTION: President Clinton is welcomed by state Rep. Nick Ciaramitaro to a joint session of the Michigan state legislature, where he spoke about education. Between the two is Gov. John Engler (R). ■

Clinton brings his fight for education to Lansing

The president tells the Legislature to set aside politics to get the job done.

By Mark Hombeck
and Kenneth Cole
The Detroit News

LANSING — President Clinton cajoled Michigan lawmakers Thursday to leave politics at the schoolhouse door and demand tough education reforms.

"Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work," said Clinton, turning up the pressure for standardized school exams. "Today, our national security depends upon our ability to develop the capacities of all our people, so politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

Clinton's address was the first speech by a sitting president to the Michigan Legislature since Teddy Roosevelt in 1907. It was part of his national campaign to persuade all 50 states to establish a common set of performance standards and tests that measure students' ability to compete in the world.

"Some of our children won't do very well at first," he conceded. "Sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

The president's 45-minute address repeated points made throughout his re-election campaign last year and focused almost exclusively on his education agenda: classroom standards, expanded national testing and charter schools, and free public

education through the first two years of college.

While in Lansing, he announced that Michigan will receive \$8.6 million from the federal government to buy school computers and train teachers how to use them in the classroom.

Republican Gov. John Engler, who rode with Clinton aboard Air Force One from Washington, D.C., to Michigan, warmly greeted Clinton after the president entered the House chamber to loud applause and offered an exaggerated bow to Engler's wife, Michelle.

"Your visit is a significant event because we are focused on a significant challenge: improving the education of all our children," Engler said.

The governor, who made Bob Dole's short list of possible vice-presidential candidates last year, endorsed Clinton's call for education standards and testing.

"Michigan accepts your challenge," Engler declared. He later told reporters: "I thought it was a tremendous speech."

Clinton's one-day trip did little to deflect attention from his mounting fund-raising troubles, coming on the heels of the revelation that Hillary Rodham Clinton's top aide accepted a campaign check from a donor in the White House. Aides wondered privately why Maggie Williams didn't simply send the donor to the Democratic National Committee.

When asked aboard Air Force One about the fund-raising problem, Clinton answered reporters by saying, "Tomorrow." He has a news conference scheduled for today.

"I'm doing great," he said and added he doesn't feel his message was obscured by the controversies surrounding him. "I thought my message got through fine,

They got it," the president said.

Michigan leaders of both political parties agreed with Clinton's call for expanded national testing of reading in fourth grade and math in eighth grade. But they interpreted his comments on charter schools very differently.

Republicans said Clinton was urging legislators to lift the limit on charter schools, currently at 100. The state Senate on Wednesday voted to do just that.

"The president has given all of us the opportunity for more charter schools, more and bolder choices for kids and parents," said state school board member Clark Durant, R-Grosse Pointe, who said

he'll introduce a resolution at the next board meeting to strike the cap.

What the president actually was saying, said Democrats, was that charter schools — public schools that have additional curriculum freedom — must be closely monitored before the limit is eased.

Many Democratic leaders have been reluctant to embrace charter schools, fearing they will undermine traditional public education.

"He talked about accountability for charter schools," said state school board President Kathleen Straus, D-Detroit. "We can't create more until we're sure the ones we have are doing the job they're supposed to do. And some of them aren't doing so well on state tests."

Clinton is asking Congress to double startup money for charter schools to \$100 million next year so there can be 3,000 of the alternative, independent public schools by the turn of the century. Michigan, which has 77 charter schools serving 12,000 students, already has applied for \$24 million of the federal cash.

Engler said Clinton's backing of charter schools would make it hard for Democratic lawmakers to continue to oppose GOP efforts to remove the limit on the number of charter schools in Michigan.

"What's their argument? The president's wrong on that, too?" he said.

Republicans and Democrats also had different interpretations of Clinton's call for tougher standards.

Republicans said it means local communities should demand more of their schools. But Democrats interpreted Clinton's remarks as support for state-required core classes, which they support.

House Democrats expect to pass a mandated core curriculum as soon as next week.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

The highlights

In his address, the president called for:

- Expanding national testing to all students in fourth grade (reading) and eighth grade (math).

- Doubling spending on charter schools to \$100 million, creating 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

- Offering free public education to students through two years of community college.

- Connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000.

Clinton is a big hit

State legislators applaud his call for academic standards

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF
AND TRACY VAN MOORLEHEM
Free Press Staff Writers

A1/6

LANSING — President Bill Clinton on Thursday urged lawmakers to put aside political differences to make schools better by demanding higher academic standards.

In a speech enthusiastically applauded by the Legislature in a joint session at the Capitol, Clinton sought to make education a high-profile issue that will not only be his hallmark, but overshadow a political landscape dominated by campaign-finance scandals led by Clinton's use of the White House to allegedly reward big donors.

He heavily promoted national testing for fourth- and eighth-graders. He repeated his call for 3,000 charter schools nationwide, more federal funds to keep schools open later and giving parents more choice of where to send their children to school.

He said government has a duty to raise expectations of schools, and also of welfare recipients, who he said should work but also get more government help in finding jobs.

"Every state must put political differences aside, work in a bipartisan fashion, test our children in the same rigorous way," Clinton said, twice adding a line from his State of the Union address: "Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

Clinton said if some students struggle at first, it shouldn't result in lowering test standards.

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time," he said.

That line brought the only standing ovation of the speech from those assembled to hear the first presidential address to the Legislature in 90 years.

"Everybody got on their feet because in their heart of hearts, that's correct," said House Minority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville. Sikkema praised the speech as a special event that could bring both parties together to improve schools.

Former Gov. James Blanchard said Clinton wants to be the president who improved education as the nation heads into the 21st Century.

"I know this guy. He's not content with being president," Blanchard said. "He wants to be governor of America as well. He was governor of Michigan for a day" and Gov. John Engler "was lieutenant governor for a day."

Clinton also made several key statements about welfare.

He called for giving tax credits of up to 50 percent of a welfare recipi-

ent's salary, up to \$10,000 a year, for businesses that hire them.

He also said he will push to repeal a portion of the reforms he signed last year that denies aid to legal immigrants.

"This is a great nation of immigrants," he said. "I think this is unworthy of us and I'm going to try to change it."

His speech prompted "as big a love-fest as you'll see around here for a long time," said House Floor Leader Pat Gagliardi, D-Drummond Island. "Some of the Republicans tried to tell me he sounded like a Republican. I told them they're sounding more and more Democratic."

Even Rep. Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak, who'd snarled earlier in the week about the Clinton visit, saying how how much she disliked him, stood and applauded and said afterward, "I do not disagree at all."

Engler, who was among a dozen or so Michigan officials who flew from Washington, D.C., with Clinton aboard Air Force One, called the 45-minute address "a tremendous speech" that endorsed many of Engler's own ideas, including charter schools and broader use of the National Assessment of Education Progress test, which Clinton promoted.

But amid the talk of cooperation, partisan political differences erupted after Clinton posed for photos and flew back to Washington. Democrats and Republicans used portions of the speech to point fingers at one another.

■ Sikkema, Engler and other Republicans challenged House Democrats not to oppose lifting the cap on charter schools allowed in Michigan — a limit Democrats have called necessary to avoid opening shoddy schools. In his speech, Clinton said charter schools should stay open only if they do a good job.

"What's the argument, the president's wrong, too?" Engler said, adding that Clinton's speech would make it harder for Democrats to oppose unlimited charter schools in Michigan.

Democrats said charter schools should have strict standards before they're allowed to proliferate — standards they said the president surely would agree with.

■ Democrats said Clinton's speech proves the need for a mandated core curriculum. Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alto, said if that ever comes to the Senate, "it's dead on arrival."

Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, a leading GOP voice for public schools, said: "For Michigan, this was a Republican speech. Michigan Democrats are more liberal and union-oriented than in other states."

The speech seemed to offer something for just about everyone. It was upbeat, holding the 400 lawmakers, lobbyists, judges and other dignitaries rapt.

Clinton dwelled on the significance of the last presidential visit to the Capitol in 1907, when President Theodore Roosevelt came by train to an effusive welcome. Now as then, Clinton said, the nation is in a time of peace and prosperity that beckons for new ideas rather than complacency.

Clinton devoted a good portion of his speech to promoting national tests to measure fourth-graders' reading ability and eighth-graders' math skills.

While most Michigan educators applauded voluntary national standards, some questioned the need for additional testing.

"I have three children. Do I need them to take a national test to see if they can read? No. Any observant parent already knows that," said Gary Wolfram, a Republican member of the State Board of Education.

Wolfram said Clinton's 10-point education plan sounds reasonable, but is a recipe for growing federal intrusion.

But Kathleen Straus, president of the state board, said voluntary standards are harmless. "We are one country," she said. "The standards are voluntary, and if we don't like what's going on, we can do something about it."

Even if politicians can leave politics "at the schoolhouse door," that doesn't mean national testing will improve education, some educators said.

Robert West, a testing consultant for the Macomb Intermediate School District, said there has been no research into whether Michigan's own statewide tests "can predict a student's success on the job or in college."

Gingrich Defends GOP Agenda

By LAWRENCE L. KNUTSON

Associated Press Writer Friday, March 7, 1997 3:36 am EST

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Pumping out a rapid-fire stream of ideas, House Speaker Newt Gingrich proposed a new partnership between Congress and state legislators to speed the shift of power from Washington to the states.

Gingrich also suggested Thursday that after an angry and painful two years, Congress was adjusting to Republican control and becoming more civil.

"I do think we're getting to a little better environment right now," said Gingrich, who was reprimanded by Congress in January for ethical misconduct.

In a 75-minute speech before a meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures, Gingrich spun out his thoughts about drug addiction, the alleged arrogance of federal bureaucrats, the state of education, and moving people from welfare to work.

But he said even his own enthusiasm for conservative change has realistic

limits.

"It took about 60 years to centralize power in this country so it will take a fairly long time to decentralize," he said.

Proposing "a general partnership" with state legislatures, Gingrich said a first step should be for states to review all of the mandates imposed on them by the federal government with the aim of "repealing those which made no sense."

Legislatures can also help, he suggested, by issuing reports on "the three most arrogant federal bureaucracies" in an effort to stamp out what he called "bureaucratic bullying."

Among a rush of ideas, Gingrich offered these:

--Put every welfare office in the country on a computerized bulletin board to match welfare recipients with jobs.

--Use inexpensive computer technology to enable medical specialists to observe patients in remote areas and offer care as part of a plan to reshape the delivery of health care at lower costs.

--Stress an approach of "diagnostic wellness" so that the effects of a disease

like diabetes -- blindness, loss of feet, heart disease -- could be prevented before they occur, saving billions of dollars in needless medical expenses.

--Industry should be told to improve the quality of water and air and be held to it by monitoring. The present system of federal regulatory standards and lawsuits should be discarded.

--Rather than emphasizing putting computers in every classroom "we need to be emphasizing putting the classroom in the computer." The computer "needs to go home" in the form of inexpensive black and white computers available to every child.

--If a student is certified as educated by a high school and then is found to need remedial education at an institution of higher learning, "charge the costs to the school that certified them."

--The war on drugs must be won through imposing harsh sentences on drug dealers, television airing free anti-drug commercials, and "rehabilitating every current drug addict." ■

Richmond Times-Dispatch A2 FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1997

Clinton pushes test uniformity

National standards his aim

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING, Mich. — President Clinton turned up the pressure for standardized school exams yesterday with a promise to create a climate in which "no one can say no" to testing the nation's schoolchildren.

Addressing state lawmakers as the guest of Republican Gov. John Engler, the president also called for a bipartisan approach to education reform in Michigan and Washington.

"We have to forge a new partnership for a new time," the president declared.

Clinton's one-day trip did little to deflect attention from his mounting fund-raising troubles, coming on the heels of the disclosure that Hillary Rodham Clinton's top aide accepted a campaign check from a donor in the White House.

When asked aboard Air Force One about the fund-raising problem, Clinton answered reporters by saying he has a news conference scheduled for today at which he will deal with questions.

Engler, a rising star on the national GOP scene for his welfare and anti-tax initiatives, warmly greeted Clinton after the president entered the House chamber to loud

applause and offered an exaggerated bow to Engler's wife, Michelle.

Clinton wants states to establish one set of performance standards and tests that measure students' ability to compete in the world. He wants to focus on fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math.

Apprehensive that mandatory testing would cause a political uproar, Clinton decided last year to use the influence of his office to urge voluntary compliance. He pressed that message yesterday.

Speaking to critics who worry that the poorest and slowest of students would be held back by standardized testing, Clinton said: "Sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them, and we are selling their future right down the drain every day."

Clinton repeatedly thumped his fist on the lectern. He said, "Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work."

Clinton was the first president in 90 years to address Michigan lawmakers. Theodore Roosevelt appeared before the legislature in 1907. Clinton reiterated his belief that the nation is in a moment of transition that compares to Roosevelt's time.

The Michigan legislature is split: The House is controlled by Democrats, the Senate by Republicans.

Bill Clinton's Excellent Adventure II

Striding into the state House, confidently pulling himself through the crowd by a vigorous series of handshakes that left other officials trailing behind, a bouyant President Bill Clinton leapt onto the state House Speaker's rostrum yesterday to address the Michigan Legislature. After short introductions and some brief remarks by Gov. John Engler, Mr. Clinton, speaking from only a few notes, stood before the microphone and boldly told the nation — well, what did he say?

He clearly liked the renovations made to the capitol building. And he delivered a not-terribly-informative summary of the education initiatives he presented during his State of the Union address in February. Aside from this, the speech seemed like a pleasant, but eerie lull in the stream of new campaign fund-raising scandals that dog the president almost daily.

Consider, for instance, what President Clinton didn't do.

An increasingly high-profile dispute over charter schools (alternative, less bureaucratic public schools) is simmering between Gov. Engler and Lansing Democrats, who claim the governor's charter school views are fundamentally different from those of the president. Mr. Engler, with good reason, has challenged this, but it appeared the president might use his speech to back the Democrats and put Gov. Engler in his place.

Fueling the fire Wednesday, the Republican-dominated state Senate passed a bill that would remove the current cap on the number of charter schools in school districts where 2,000 or more students qualify for the federal school lunch program. (Not a single Democrat voted for it.) Also on Wednesday, in an improbable confluence of events, oral arguments were heard before the state Supreme Court on Michigan's controversial, original charter school law, which lower courts have ruled unconstitutional.

The stage was set, and stepping into the breach, the president said ... nothing new. "He gave his Maryland speech," one Lansing insider told us, referring to the president's address to that state Legislature on Feb. 10. "I sat reading it along with him."

Perhaps we should be thankful the president painted by the numbers. Gov. Engler, presumably, can claim victory by default. And Mr. Clinton might have proposed new federal education programs similar to the plans he discussed for national exams, national standards and increased teacher certification.

These ideas are problematic at best. Gov. Engler's difficulties in getting students to take state exams, the battle over adopting a state core curriculum and many politicians' desire to decrease teacher certification requirements are clear evidence of how difficult command-and-control reform can be. Federal initiatives are likely to be even more contentious than in-state battles.

How Mr. Clinton would deal with this, he did not disclose.

Yesterday's New York Times presented two front page stories on new political fund-raising scandals, one involving the first lady. Mr. Clinton, in contrast, ensured Lansing politicians some photo-ops and himself some nice headlines by saying his piece — and not much else. Perhaps not much else needed to be said.

DETROIT FREE PRESS MAR 07 1997

TEACHER CLINTON

12/10

President makes important points on schools, tests

The substance of President Bill Clinton's speech to the Legislature Thursday was a yawner: a rehash of his education initiatives, with some juvenile-justice and welfare talk sprinkled in. Yet he did well in expressing what may be his most motivational message: "We can do this."

The president has great skill at making his listeners feel included in, and even warmed by, his rhetoric. That talent shows to its maximum effect when he is making a nonpartisan plea, as with his repeated urging to state lawmakers to have politics stop at the schoolhouse door. Infusing his talk, too, was a core optimism that he believes everyone can succeed.

Mr. Clinton's delivery was so low-key that some of his best points weren't good fodder for TV news clips. He likened schools to army units, with leadership that can be taught and trained to build troops that — no matter where they are based or what their specialty — meet a standard the

country can rely on in wartime. Similarly, he said, schoolchildren can be led to "succeed and triumph in the modern world."

He extended his confident, inclusive tone to student testing, stressing that having a high test score means nothing if no one can meet basic standards, and that having a low score is irrelevant if everyone can get over the standards bar. And he noted, comfortingly, that Americans may have to live with initially dreary results, as has been the case with Michigan's new High School Proficiency Test.

Mr. Clinton's support for nationwide pupil testing ought to help reinvigorate the case for testing here. He was speaking about state governors and lawmakers, but he could just as well have been addressing parents and school administrators when he said of test-taking: "I want to create a climate in which no one can say 'no.' ... It's voluntary, but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids a chance to do this."

Shortly thereafter, he delivered his biggest applause line: "By expecting less of them, we are selling their future right down the drain."

That combination of high expectations and an underlying belief in everyone's ability to succeed is a big part of what the president communicated so well in what was essentially a pep talk to Michigan's lawmakers. If his address was not history-making, it brought home an important theme in an important way.



WILFREDO LEE/Associated Press

President Clinton acknowledges the joint session of the Legislature while Gov. Engler applauds.

Michigan officials offer ideas on Clinton speech

LANSING, Mich. (AP) - President Clinton brings his campaign for school standards to Michigan Thursday, having already picked up some bipartisan support for the idea in advance.

Gov. John Engler and state schools chief Arthur Ellis said Wednesday they back Clinton's proposal to expand the country's national testing program.

"I'm hoping (the testing) will start next year," Engler said while in Washington.

The president has proposed using the National Assessment of Education Progress to test students in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math to make sure students master key skills.

Those tests now are given only in a random sample of school districts, rather than to all students. Engler said inserting the national questions into the existing Michigan Educational Assessment Program test would let Michigan see how its students stack up against the rest of the nation.

"When you give your state-only test, everybody is above average. When you ask how they're doing individually, everybody is doing great," Engler said.

The Clinton administration gave the state a pat on the back in return.

Michigan students improved 12 points on its 8th grade math scores compared to 1990 on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress tests. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said Michigan, North Carolina and Texas improved the most.

"They get my most improved player award. This is a big achievement," Riley said in a statement released by Engler's office.

Adding to the bipartisan flavor, Engler planned to return from Washington with Clinton aboard Air Force One.

Engler spokesman John Truscott said Clinton's focus on standardized testing will help Michigan efforts to improve schools.

"The president coming to talk about it will just keep that ball rolling," he said.

Meanwhile, many in the audience will be listening more for echoes of their own ideas than for details of Clinton's proposals.

Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint, e-mailed the president to urge him to tout an experiment in Flint that has raised test scores by limiting to 17 the number of students in classrooms in grades kindergarten through three.

"I have told him that this is the way we ought to go in terms of reforming our public school systems, to make sure these kids can get a good chance, a good start," he said.

Rep. Jim Agee, D-Muskegon, will be listening for support for his idea of reinstituting core curriculum standards for Michigan schools.

Michigan had set in place a requirement that districts follow standards of what should be taught in key academic areas at each grade, but Republicans repealed that.

Unlike Conroy, Agee also said he hopes the president will use the speech to talk about his vision for charter schools.

Charter school advocates in Michigan have pushed for an unlimited number of charter schools independent of traditional school districts, he said.

"I just don't believe that's what Bill Clinton believes at all," Agee said.

More...

State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus would like to hear the president talk about adequate resources for schools.

And the Detroit Democrat would not mind at all if he brought up her proposal for full-day, full-service schools. She proposed having schools stay open longer to offer day-care, tutoring and quality after-school activities to keep youth from joining gangs and getting involved with drugs and sex.

"That probably is asking for too much, but something along those lines would be a nice touch," she said.

Something similar to that idea is included in Clinton's "Call for Action for American Education in the 21st Century" under his proposal for safe schools.

"We should also keep schools open later as safe havens from gangs and drugs, expanding educational opportunities for young people in the afternoons, weekends and summers and providing peace of mind for working parents," his proposal said.

The proposal also said that Clinton's budget includes a new initiative to provide additional safe havens and extended learning opportunities for children and their families at schools around the country.

Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, said the focus on education is more important than the specifics of what the president says.

"Any time the president of the United States is here talking about a topic, that topic becomes important. That in and of itself is positive because of the attention (to education)," he said.

Besides lawmakers, about 150 invited guests will listen to the president in the House chamber.

It is the first visit to the Michigan Legislature by a sitting president since Theodore Roosevelt spoke to lawmakers on May 31, 1907, according to Jerry Lawler, executive director of the Michigan Capitol Committee.

He said preparations included a speeded-up spring housecleaning of the Capitol and grounds.

DETROIT NEWS MAR

6 1997

Engler serves as escort for Clinton's visit to Michigan

By Carol Stevens
Detroit News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Gov. John Engler caught a ride on Air Force One today and is escorting President Clinton to Lansing.

The entire Michigan congressional delegation and former Gov. James Blanchard also are invited to travel with the president, who addresses a joint session of the Michigan Legislature about his proposals to reform the nation's educational system.

Engler was in the nation's capital this week for a series of private meetings and to give a speech about

Michigan's success cutting state taxes and reforming welfare.

Engler said "it happened to work out," that he was able to catch a ride back to Michigan with Clinton.

"We'll have a chance to chat some," he said.

Engler has been a frequent critic of the administration and joked Wednesday about recent revelations that Clinton allowed generous campaign donors to spend the night in the White House.

"We said, 'If you want a check, you have to work,'" Engler said, describing Michigan's welfare reform program to the National Association of Business Economists. "That's a sharp contrast to what's going on in the White House with the Lincoln bedroom."

But the governor told reporters he was "absolutely" happy that Clinton had decided to speak to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature today, the first president to

do so since Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. The address is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. in the House of Representatives' chamber of the State Capitol.

Engler has been supportive of Clinton's blueprint for improving education. He has offered to make Michigan the first state to take Clinton up on a proposal to implement national tests for fourth and eighth grade students.

"I'm hoping it would start next year," said Engler. "It won't take much federal money. But we will need the federal government's help in test development."

Clinton takes education proposals to Michigan

By SONYA ROSS

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - While Congress picks apart his education proposals, President Clinton is pitching the plan on friendlier turf: Michigan, where the governor has volunteered to experiment with uniform testing standards.

Clinton was addressing the Michigan legislature in Lansing today, the second in his series of presidential appearances before state lawmakers to promote his education and welfare proposals. The first was in Annapolis, Md., last month.

While in Michigan, the president will appeal for all states to establish one set of performance standards, particularly those for fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Wednesday. The administration says that national standards will help show which students have mastered the basics.

"He'll try to persuade them, and presumably the governor as well, that we do need standards," McCurry said. "We wanted to go to a place where the argument can be made in a more bipartisan setting."

Michigan Gov. John Engler, a Republican, said Wednesday he supports Clinton's plan for a national standard. He and Arthur Ellis, state superintendent of public instruction, offered their state as a testing ground for a National Assessment of Educational Progress exam, and Engler said he wants testing to begin next year.

Clinton has said he wants to make education the No. 1 priority of his second term.

His program would make families earning less than \$100,000 annually eligible for a \$1,500 tax credit for each student's first year in college. They would be eligible for a second year if the student maintains a B average and avoids a drug conviction. The proposal also offers a phased-in \$10,000 tax deduction for college tuition or job-training costs.

In addition, the president is seeking a 20 percent increase in education spending to introduce such changes as pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, reading tutors for third-graders and computer Internet linkage for all public schools.

The plan is under fire on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers say it would erode states' power to run their schools.

"We remain suspect of any efforts which attempt to centralize power and decision-making in Washington, D.C.," said Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Republican Conference.

Reps. Charles Rangel of New York and Pete Stark of California, two senior Democrats on the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, said Wednesday that Clinton's tax breaks are too heavily geared toward middle-class and wealthy families.

"The tax credit and deduction do not help the lower-income students who are most in need of a federal boost to ensure they become educated members of our society," Stark said.

The testing plan has drawn criticism from Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson, a Republican, who complained that Clinton's package means the federal government will ultimately dictate state standards.

Engler, however, said states need a more accurate way of measuring what students know.

"When you ask how they're doing individually, everybody is doing great," Engler said. "You have 50 states that are regularly above average on their own tests."

Clinton's schools proposal touted

Riley makes pitch; GOP is skeptical

By Susan Ferrechio
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton's education initiatives, including a proposal to offer \$1,500 scholarships to students who earn at least a B-minus average in college, face an uphill battle in the Republican-led Congress, where lawmakers likely will discard some of them altogether.

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley yesterday made the first official pitch to Congress for some of the \$51 billion in education initiatives touted by the president, including the America's Hope Scholarship, which would give a \$1,500 tax credit to college students who complete one year of school with a B-minus grade average or better.

That plan, and others, struck out before the House Education and the Workforce Committee, which met to hear Mr. Clinton's plan.

"What is a B average at Princeton University in relation to a community college?" said Rep. Bill Goodling, Pennsylvania Republican and chairman of the committee. "Would this encourage 'dumbing down' the B so everyone can get this money?"

Mr. Riley testified for more than three hours before the committee, proposing a \$39 billion budget for the department in 1998, a 34 percent increase in funding, and promoting Mr. Clinton's plan to make education a top priority in his second term.

Among the president's new initiatives is a plan to develop national tests in reading and mathematics, spend \$5 billion on school

construction, and enlist 1 million volunteers to help children learn to read. The entire package, including a plan to expand the Head Start and Pell Grant programs, amounts to an unprecedented 20 percent increase in spending.

"The American people have put education at the top of their agenda," Mr. Riley told the com-

"Strong and effective schools and accessible postsecondary education are critically important."

— Education Secretary
Richard W. Riley

mittee. "Strong and effective schools and accessible postsecondary education are critically important both for individuals and for the strength of America's economy and democracy."

While Republicans have warmed up to the notion of spending more money on schools, they were skeptical of new initiatives with hefty price tags or that call for more federal involvement in state and local government.

The GOP education agenda calls for more parental involvement, basic academics and redirecting money now spent on the bureaucracy into the classroom.

Mr. Goodling, a former teacher and school superintendent, criticized the president's plan to spend \$5 billion over the next four years on school construction and repair. Mr. Riley testified that the money would serve as an incentive for local school districts to start repairing crumbling schools and build additional classrooms to relieve overcrowding.

Mr. Goodling, however, said he is opposed to the federal government's spending money on local school construction. He said he might be willing to support the construction plan "as a bargaining tool" with the president if it is exempted from that law.

Committee members also questioned Mr. Clinton's proposal to test fourth-grade students in reading and eighth-grade students in mathematics. The standardized tests would be voluntary and would aim to give teachers and parents a better grasp of how students are performing on the basics.

"My sense is, there is just a lot of confusion about this and we need to define it better," said Michael N. Castle, Delaware Republican. "It's senseless to go through standards and assessments unless you know what you're going to do about [the results]."

SCHOOLMATES *A 10*

Clinton, Engler join forces for better education

Gov. John Engler and President Bill Clinton, for today anyway, stand side by side as the odd couple of politics. With their dramatically different styles and outlooks, they nonetheless share some of the same ideological space on education.

The governor probably hopes the president, in his speech to the Legislature, will stay within that shared space: a belief in pupil testing to help maintain accountability and to ensure that every child receives an excellent education, the use of charter schools to give parents options and to serve as a prod for continual improvement in the public school system.

Particularly in the area of standards and testing, Gov. Engler needs all the public-relations help he can get. In some Michigan districts, high school students and their parents have openly rebelled over state proficiency tests, which are only in their second year. Without acknowledging the flaws that fomented rebellion, the governor swept ahead and suggested that poor scores on those tests should be the basis for state takeovers of schools.

President Clinton has the eloquence to make the case more persuasively for standards and tests. And despite the governor's blunt tactics, Michigan's recent history provides the president with a solid

illustration of how compilation and publication of test scores by school and district have given educators new focus, raised expectations among parents and voters, and prompted extra help for students who need it. Children *have* benefited.

Public education remains the backbone of America's strength, and must be a priority at every level of government. But the tiers of government need to define their roles carefully; when they flail away at each other — as Gov. Engler has done with his takeover proposals and his executive orders removing some powers from the State Board of Education — they become counterproductive. Michigan citizens now spend more time expressing apprehension about the governor's political agenda than discussing how to keep the school improvement process moving.

Mr. Clinton can draw lessons there, too, making clearer distinctions than the governor has about leadership of, support for and interference in a system that, at least in Michigan, has a strong tradition of local control. These two politicians may not work as harmoniously on other issues (the governor undoubtedly has given the president an earful on environmental regulation, for example), but on education they actually may help each other — and all of America's schoolchildren.



Critics say state students face too many exams

Public is confused; administrators dread the penalties for low scores.

By Mark Hombeck

Detroit News Lansing Bureau

First there was MEAP. Then along came HSPT. Now, there's NAEP. And don't forget the old SAT and ACT.

This isn't some bubbling pot of alphabet gumbo; they're acronyms for standardized tests given each year to public school students in Michigan.

They make schools accountable for what they are or are not teaching, advocates say. They help parents and educators pinpoint shortcomings and gauge how their school is doing, compared to others in the district and state.

Still, standardized tests have drawbacks. Among them: Tests take up classroom time that critics say should be spent on instruction.

President Clinton planned to visit Lansing today, calling for expansion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests so states can see how their students stack up against children in other states and, eventually, other nations.

Gov. John Engler has pledged support.

A strong believer in testing, he wants to use High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) results to see which failing districts might need state takeover.

Originally designed as a tool for zeroing in on where students and courses need shoring up, the exams are now used as a basis for praising or condemning schools, determining whether students get seals of approval on diplomas and even how much tax money a district gets.

Some school systems, fearful that low scores will tarnish their image or cost money, have encouraged parents to pull children out of state tests.

"Standardized testing is a favorite among policymakers because it's a great way to force change when the results on these tests aren't what they should be," said Ed Roebor, director of student assessment for the Council of Chief State School Officers, based in Washington.

"There's probably more testing going on than is necessary, and it's confusing the public. The results of one test say Michigan students are above average; another says only one-third meet state standards; another puts the state in the middle of the pack."

"The public says, 'What's going on? Are we good or not?'"

The testing onslaught isn't likely to end any time soon. Educators are philosophical.

"There has to be evaluation of what everybody does," said Northville middle school teacher Dwight Sieggreen, recently named national science teacher of the year by a group of his peers.

"Politicians in the state and the nation have decided this is what they want to use to judge whether students and teachers are doing their jobs, so we may as well get used to it."

Administrators, teachers and parents interviewed by The Detroit News generally agree on four basic points:

■ Standard tests are necessary. Published scores make schools accountable and let parents see how local schools measure up.

■ Results can identify curriculum strengths and weaknesses.

"We need accountability. We need to know kids are learning something as they go through school," said Penny Shanks, president of the PTA at Saahabaw Middle School in Clarkston.

"We have to make sure kids have the skills they need when they graduate so they can compete in the 21st century."

Added C. Philip Kearney, University of Michigan education professor: "I've always been of the per-

suasion that a good set of standards and measurement of those standards is a pretty good thing."

Engler spokesman John Truscott said standardized tests are an effective way to measure "what we're getting for our \$11-billion investment."

■ Testing is beginning to eat up too much classroom time.

"There are an awful lot of tests," said program director Jonathan Swift of Livonia Public Schools, who supports a limited number of standardized exams. "In terms of the total curriculum, we're losing a minimum of two weeks."

Engler and others have called for the NAEP tests to be rolled in to state exams, saving time.

■ The stakes are too high. School districts should not be subject to

state aid penalties or become potential targets for state takeover based on the results of one or two tests.

"The tests are designed to be diagnostic, to help children learn what they don't know," said state school board President Kathleen Straus, D-Detroit.

"They've turned in to accountability tests, which is OK, but we shouldn't be putting all our eggs in one basket."

The high stakes prompted many parents to sign waivers excusing their children from taking the high school proficiency exam this year in Birmingham, Monroe and Muskegon Heights, said Blanche Fraser, superintendent of the Mt. Clemens Community School District.

"These test have less to do these days with giving us a prescription to help Johnny and Tonesha where they're weak," Fraser said. "They're now a scorecard among school districts. In that vein, we've lost the true value of the tests."

Educators and parents especially were critical of the high school exam. The proficiency test is used simply to determine whether high school graduates get an endorsement seal on diplomas. Parents get no feedback on where the student is falling short.

"We get general scores back. We don't know what needs to be strengthened," said Shanks, the PTA parent from Clarkston.

■ State tests have, in practice, set up the mandatory state-wide curriculum in Michigan that lawmakers and the State Board of Education said they didn't want.

Local districts, mindful of what low scores can mean, make sure they cover what will be tested on the state-wide exams. This is called "teaching to the test."

"These tests provide a way to have a state-mandated curriculum without actually passing one into law," said Roebor of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Added Erick Aisup, principal of North Middle School in Macomb's County L'Anse Creuse Schools: "Our teachers are teaching toward the skills that are tested on the MEAP. We're integrating a lot of MEAP stuff into our curriculum."

State Sen. Dar. DeGrow, R-Port Huron, a leading school expert in the Senate, said policymakers expect an emphasis on basics.

"We're testing basic subjects everybody should know," DeGrow said. "This isn't exotic material. We don't expect kids to know Spanish by the fifth grade."

"If teaching to the test means we're teaching kids in math how to multiply and divide by 12, my question is: What's the problem?"

DETROIT FREE PRESS MAR 07 1997

Exam-linking not so easy, expert says

BY PEGGY WALSH-SARNECKI
Free Press Education Writer

Gov. John Engler wants a national education test to be combined with Michigan's homegrown tests as early as next year, but a testing expert says that may not be as easy as it sounds.

Shari Shakrani, a former curriculum director for the Michigan Department of Education who now runs the National Assessment of Education Progress test in Washington, said the NAEP and Michigan tests are designed differently.

Engler's spokesman John Truscott believes the differences can be worked out.

"We haven't figured out all of the details, but the governor is looking for something that would be a representative comparison to all the states," Truscott said this week. "He wants something that can be compared. It may not be all the questions, but it will be something that can be compared."

The biggest difference between the two tests is the samples, Shakrani said this week.

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests compare students to their peers.

Reading and math tests are given in fourth and seventh grades, and science and writing in fifth and eighth grades.

All of the tests contain the same questions.

The NAEP is given to a representative sampling of students in various grades in 48 states and territories, including Michigan.

Results are used to compare states to states. The test does not assess individual students' progress.

Not every student gets the same set of questions, and some NAEP questions are more difficult than others.

Shakrani said Engler's idea would

THE EXAMS

NAEP: The Michigan Educational Assessment Program is given to fourth-, fifth-, seventh- and eighth-graders in public schools and participating private schools. It tests basic skills in reading, math, science and writing. Scores provide a snapshot of a student's progress and are used for state schools' accreditation.

NAEP: Michigan is among 48 states and territories that participate in the National Assessment of Education Progress, developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Testing is done in math, science, reading, writing, geography, history, civics, economics, arts and foreign languages. Results compare states to states and to the nation.

TIMSS: The Third International Mathematics and Science Study test samples 500,000 students, including 40,000 U.S. students, in fourth, eighth and 12th grades in 41 countries. Developed by a Netherlands-based group, the program is supported in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education.

By Peggy Walsh-Sarnecki

work if the NAEP is modified so it measures all fourth- and eighth-graders as individuals, instead of producing a state average. For example, all students would probably have to be asked the same questions.

Shakrani said the NAEP tests probably are more difficult than the MEAPs.

On the NAEP, students must provide an answer and a reason for the answer, and do in-depth problem solving. MEAPs are multiple-choice tests and are not as difficult, he said.

"It's not easy," Shakrani said of the NAEP. "We're trying to determine what percent of the students reach the basic levels and what percent reach the proficient level."

Engler also wants to use the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, as President Bill Clinton suggested in his 10-point education agenda, but there may not be time to include it in next year's MEAPs.

Truscott said.

"TIMSS we're definitely looking to implement. Whether we can do both, I don't know," Truscott said.

Clinton's education agenda proposes that all fourth-graders take the NAEP reading test and eighth-graders, the TIMSS math test. TIMSS is given in 41 countries.

DETROIT FREE PRESS

Judge blocks BA education plan

Gov. John Engler's plan to revamp education administration in Michigan was blocked Thursday by a circuit judge.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Carolyn Steff issued a preliminary injunction blocking an executive order due to take effect next week.

She refused to block a second executive order, scheduled to take effect July 1, but said if the full case is not decided by then the motion can be renewed.

Engler in December issued two executive orders transferring to the state superintendent of public instruction many duties that have been carried out by the State Board of Education.

The ruling came in response to a lawsuit filed by the four Democratic members of the board.

They challenged Engler's power to pull away many of the board's powers.

"It was the one we really needed," said Board President Kathleen Straus of Detroit, referring to Steff's blocking of the first order.

Fellow board member Barbara Robert Mason of Lansing said, "I'm very pleased by the judge's decision." By the Associated Press

Michigan goes to school

*Mich:
good trip!
Susan M.*

Clinton pushes state to lead nation
in movement to improve education

By Greg T. Borowitz
Lansing State Journal

With history as a backdrop, President Clinton delivered an urgent lesson plan on education and cooperation Thursday to a rapt group of state officials and lawmakers.

In his speech at the Capitol, Clinton pushed a long list of proposals, from volunteers to help children read to tax credits to pay for college, but won the most applause for a simple message about standards.

He told the packed audience, filled with lawmakers, dignitaries and a few well-connected lobbyists, that all students must do better on tests that measure their progress — and adults must expect it from them.

"This will not be easy," Clinton said. "If they don't do very well at first, it's probably more our fault than theirs."

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less out of them," he said. "And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

Those lines, toward the end of his 43-minute speech, earned Clinton a standing ovation. They also highlighted his common-ground approach — one that left both Republicans and Democrats satisfied.

"Bill Clinton has always been very progressive when it comes to education, both as a governor and as president," said Rep. Frank Fitzgerald, R-Grand Ledge. "Many of the ideas he has long held are ones that we as a party have supported in this state."

The day had a bipartisan feel from the start.

Clinton arrived in Lansing for his fifth visit in five years with Republican Gov. John Engler — and most of the state's congressional delegation — following him down the steps of Air Force One.

House Speaker Curtis Hertel and Lansing Mayor David Hollister, both Democrats, were part of the airport welcoming party, along with a giddy mix of schoolchildren.

All had praise for at least part of Clinton's plan, which includes a push for more charter schools, tougher testing standards and more computers in the classroom.

"I think he was here to celebrate what we have in common, not to highlight differences," said former Gov. James Blanchard, a Democrat and longtime Clinton friend who traveled here with the president.

"This was supposed to be a bipartisan trip, not a partisan rally."

The speech to a joint session of the Legislature was the first by a president since Republican Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. Clinton made a camera-popping entrance to the house chambers, with lawmakers and others snapping pictures and grasping for handshakes while those in the gallery above jockeyed for a better view.

The speech was Clinton's second to a state legislature pushing the education goals he outlined during the 1996 campaign and in his recent State of the Union address.



Special pullout section inside

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■ President Clinton vows teen columnist at airport.
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■ Crowd outside Capitol have different reasons for coming.
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■ Excerpts from the address to the Legislature.
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■ Students use speech as springboard for debate on education.
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■ Clinton visit notebook.
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Welcoming wave: President Clinton waves to the gallery in the House chambers Thursday before addressing a joint session of the Legislature. Flanking him are House Majority Leader Curtis Hertel (left) and Senate Minority Leader John Cherry (right).

Clinton: Both parties like speech

Continued FROM 1A

The first was last month in Maryland.

"There is no Democratic way or Republican way," Clinton said. "There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading, math is math. Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

That may not happen immediately in Michigan, where even as education is at the top of everyone's agenda, there are disagreements on just what approach to take.

The GOP, led by Engler, has pushed for more choice for parents and creating independent charter schools. Democrats, who control the House, have resisted, saying charter schools siphon money from traditional public schools and should have clearer standards and safeguards.

In the House, Democrats are pushing a return to a state-mandated curriculum for public schools — something Republicans removed during the last session, arguing that local control was more important.

Little of that was mentioned Thursday, however, as Hertel and Engler sat behind Clinton — one on each side — both beaming throughout the speech.

Before Clinton spoke, Engler stressed that Michigan is ready to be the first state to use national test questions to see how its students measure up. He also highlighted the state's 79 charter schools — two ar-



GREG DeRUITER/Lansing State Journal

as where he and Clinton appear to be in sync.

"No challenge confronting our state or the nation is more urgent," said Engler, also greeted by applause.

In the midst of awe-struck references to the power of the Internet and the early-years growth of a newborn's brain, Clinton sketched out his own plan.

At the center: standards.

"It doesn't matter if your child makes the highest grade in the class if nobody gets over the standards bar," he said. "And it doesn't matter if your child makes the lowest grade in the class if everybody gets over the standards bar."

Among Clinton's proposals:

■ Childhood literacy. With the

help of volunteers, every student should be able to read by the third grade.

■ More charter schools. He wants to double federal startup money and have 3,000 nationwide by 2000.

■ College affordability. Tax credits and an increase in grant money would send more students to college.

■ Computers. Every classroom and library should be connected to the Internet.

While here, Clinton announced an \$8.6 million grant aimed at boosting technology in Michigan schools that have large numbers of low-income students.

In his speech, Clinton told of finding four books to help his daughter,

Therese Breuninger (left), Cindy Allen and Margie Moore clap as President Clinton waves to them from his car Thursday. The three are Legislative Services Bureau workers.

Chelsea, with a research paper, only to discover she already had found eight articles on the Internet.

"This is an incredible thing," he said. "If we make this available to all children, it will change in a breathtaking way what people can become, what our children can imagine themselves becoming."

The president worked in several references to Roosevelt, comparing the challenges of his time — when cars and electricity were new — to today, as the country faces a new century while enjoying peace and prosperity.

"This is a rare time," Clinton said.

While the presidential visit was less rare for Lansing than most cities its size, a growing crowd of more than 100 gathered on the north side of the Capitol just to watch the motorcade leave.

Some waited for nearly two hours in the cold.

"It's exciting," said Leslie Cimadevilla, a Cooley Law School student who waited with a pocket camera and a hat pulled over her ears.

Linda Rademacher of St. Johns waited during her lunch hour, hood pulled tight over her earmuffs.

"I guess I kind of agree with most of his policies," she said. "To me, he seems like a very likeable person. Lately, though, it seems like they're trying to find some fault with him."

Staff writer Chris Andrews contributed to the story.

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IN OUR OPINION

TEACHER CLINTON

President makes important points on schools, tests

The substance of President Bill Clinton's speech to the Legislature Thursday was a yawner: a rehash of his education initiatives, with some juvenile-justice and welfare talk sprinkled in. Yet he did well in expressing what may be his most motivational message: "We can do this."

The president has great skill at making his listeners feel included in, and even warmed by, his rhetoric. That talent shows to its maximum effect when he is making a nonpartisan plea, as with his repeated urging to state lawmakers to have politics stop at the schoolhouse door. Infusing his talk, too, was a core optimism that he believes everyone can succeed.

Mr. Clinton's delivery was so low-key that some of his best points weren't good fodder for TV news clips. He likened schools to army units, with leadership that can be taught and trained to build troops that — no matter where they are based or what their specialty — meet a standard the

country can rely on in wartime. Similarly, he said, schoolchildren can be led to "succeed and triumph in the modern world."

He extended his confident, inclusive tone to student testing, stressing that having a high test score means nothing if no one can meet basic standards, and that having a low score is irrelevant if everyone can get over the standards bar. And he noted, comfortingly, that Americans may have to live with initially dreary results, as has been the case with Michigan's new High School Proficiency Test.

Mr. Clinton's support for nationwide pupil testing ought to help reinvigorate the case for testing here. He was speaking about state governors and lawmakers, but he could just as well have been addressing parents and school administrators when he said of test-taking: "I want to create a climate in which no one can say 'no.' ... It's voluntary, but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids a chance to do this."

Shortly thereafter, he delivered his biggest applause line: "By expecting less of them, we are selling their future right down the drain."

That combination of high expectations and an underlying belief in everyone's ability to succeed is a big part of what the president communicated so well in what was essentially a pep talk to Michigan's lawmakers. If his address was not history-making, it brought home an important theme in an important way.



WILFREDO LEE/Associated Press

President Clinton acknowledges the joint session of the Legislature while Gov. Engler applauds.

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Our Opinions

'Rare time' Clinton visit could be an education catalyst

Part history and part history lesson, President Clinton's address Thursday to lawmakers was a seminal moment in Michigan's ongoing education debate.

As for Clinton's grander reform plans, they face an uncertain congressional future. His call for national testing standards needs to be thoroughly weighed against the needs and self-rule of individual states.

Yet the president's insistence on basic education reform rings true. Clinton sternly challenged the "dumbing down" syndrome in some schools, saying children are handed no favors by expecting too little of them.

"We are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it," Clinton said.

Clinton's challenge spoke most directly to parents and educators rather than to lawmakers and Congress.

High standards. High expectations. A high degree of accountability. Those were the president's words, touching on the essence of education reform.

Higher standards and expectations mean a collective willingness to discard old notions, to do more and do better. They mean we will expect more from students, teachers, parents, schools, and the entire supportive community.

Clinton recalled the last time a sitting president addressed the state Legislature — Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. He compared Roosevelt's presidency to this, a period of relative national tranquility but also an era poised for change.

"This is a rare time," said the president, reflecting on other presidencies plagued by civil war, world war or depression.

Rare peace and prosperity are easily overlooked in a cynical age. That shouldn't be so. Michigan should accept the president's challenge as a personal one, and make Thursday's presidential visit not a historical footnote but a watershed for Michigan education.



Bipartisan truce nice while it lasts

Talk about a love-in. It was as if Air Force One, Bill Clinton at the controls, had made a low pass over the Capitol on Thursday, drenching it with ... well, some form of high-powered tranquilizer spray.

Oh, sure, it wore off after awhile.

But while the prez was in town ... well, it was as if civility, collegiality and galloping bipartisanship had suddenly seized all the hot-bloods and ideologues who normally infest the Capitol and turned them all into cherubs ... or maybe political eunuchs.

Gov. John Engler, who flew from Washington with the president and welcomed him warmly in front of the joint legislative session, beamed, smiled, nodded and applauded all through the president's 45-minute speech (about education and welfare reform) and, afterward, told reporters it was "tremendous."

Former Gov. Jim Blanchard, who'd flown in on the same plane (He and Engler chatted amiably aboard but didn't sit together. "It's a big plane," Blanchard deadpanned.) labeled the speech superb and said it outlined an essentially bipartisan agenda. "There is absolutely no reason for Democrats or Republicans not to agree on it," he said.

And state Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, seemed to summarize the prevailing legislative reaction when he said later: "I feel very comfortable with the president's speech — all of it!"

And so it went for the three hours or so the president was inside the Capitol.

Oh, sure, not everything was perfect.

Immediately following the speech, national press types accompanying the president engaged in a venomous, 15-minute give-and-take with Clinton spokesman Mike McCurry over the latest revelations of White House/Democratic Party fund-raising hanky-panky.

But that was away from the House floor where warmth and camaraderie were still the rage.

And, yes, state Sen. Jim Berryman, D-Adrian, an announced 1998 candidate for governor, engaged in what he later termed a "personal protest" against Engler and legislative Republicans (but not, he emphasized, against Clinton) and watched the speech on television in the near-empty Senate chamber.

He accused the GOPers of hypocrisy for claiming to embrace Clinton's education reform agenda while, he charged, turning their backs on such reform in Michigan.

Also, there were quiet groans from some Democrats, who complained about Clinton's praise for Engler and Engler-style charter school reforms. And, of course, there were similar groans from some Republicans who thought Engler, instead of welcoming the president, should have told him to get lost.

Still ...

Well, look. This was — as has been well-publicized — the first address by a sitting president to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature in 90 years. It was an event, a SPECTACLE! And not many of us are likely to be around the next time.

So, why not behave ... at least for a few hours, eh?

Footnotes

THE ETERNAL GENERAL: Engler brought down the house, when he referred to Theodore Roosevelt's address to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature in 1907. Then, pointing to Michigan's venerable attorney general, Frank Kelley (35 years in office and counting), remarked: "Attorney General Kelley tells me it was quite an occasion."

(Note: House GOP leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, later told reporters that Kelley had predicted Engler might use such a line.)

Reaction to Clinton's education agenda split along partisan lines

By Chris Andrews
Lansing State Journal

Republicans and Democrats seemed to hear two different speeches from President Clinton on Thursday — and both gave him rave reviews.

Republicans hailed Clinton's education address to the Legislature as unbridled support for their efforts to expand the number of charter schools in Michigan. Democrats fiercely oppose that effort, saying the existing charter schools aren't held accountable.

"Face it, Bill Clinton's for charter schools, the National Education Association is, John Engler and the

Senate Republicans are for charter schools for Michigan's future," said Sen. Bill Schuette, R-Midland.

"Michigan Democrats are out of sync with our president, their party's leader.

Democrats, on the other hand, latched

on to Clinton's call for strong standards, which they translated into a pitch for a mandated core curriculum. House Democrats are pushing to restore a mandate repealed by Republicans in the last session.

"He pointed out very clearly that educational reform is more than a one-dimensional challenge," said Senate Minority Leader John Cherry, D-Cllo. "The president said we need to be committed to basic curriculum, and yet the Republicans have backed away from it."

Clinton's address — the second to a state legislature since his State of the Union message in January — is part of a campaign to place improving schools at the top of the national agenda.

In broad terms, he wants all 8-year-olds to be able to read independently, all 12-year-olds to be able to log onto the Internet, all 18-year-olds to be able to attend college and all adults to commit themselves to lifelong learning.

His 10-point "call to action" includes such things as more reading tutors, national testing and upgraded technology.

Although Clinton declared that "politics should stop at the classroom door," it was immediately apparent that there are sharp partisan differences in the Michigan Legislature.

After the speech, Republican leaders held a news conference to highlight the areas where they agreed with Clinton, focusing primarily on charter schools and national testing.

Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus challenged Democrats to take up a bill increasing the number of charters immediately.

But U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, said Clinton's and Engler's positions on school issues aren't as close as they seem.

"The words sound the same, the actions have been very different," she said. Clinton, for instance, emphasized lifelong learning, while Engler cut adult education spending.

State Rep. Laura Baird, D-Okeemos, said she believed Clinton succeeded in contrasting his position with Engler's.

"I think they have very different approaches. I think Clinton's strategy is more inclusive and bringing people along, rather than the kind of confrontational, in-your-face style we see in Michigan," she said.

Former Gov. James Blanchard, a friend of Clinton's since both were Democratic governors in the 1980s, said the president sought to be intentionally bipartisan.

"He wants to make sure the campaign for better education is bipartisan," Blanchard said. "I think he underscored that quite effectively by praising Michigan and inviting Gov. Engler to fly with us back here."

Lansing Mayor David Hollister, who has created his own blue-ribbon commission to study education in Lansing, said Clinton laid out his agenda effectively.

"I thought it was inspirational, I thought it was sincere," he said. "He's got so much empathy, he just takes off."

East Lansing Schools Superintendent Daniel Keck, invited to sit on the House floor with state Sen. Dianne Byrum, D-Onondaga, said he was encouraged by the president's positive and upbeat challenge to educators.

"I wish our legislators would take a little lesson from what was said this morning," he said. "I think when someone comes into town and takes a very positive leadership approach to restructuring, it shows it will get us a lot farther than the blame game."

Staff writers Greg J. Borowski and Mark Mayes contributed to this report.

"He's got so much empathy, he just takes off."

David Hollister
Lansing mayor

Meeting the president makes kids' wait worthwhile

By Todd Schatz
Lansing State Journal

To those aboard Air Force One, Carlos Cosey must have looked like the perfect welcome for President Clinton.

The 9-year-old bundled in a black coat flashed a toothy grin and a yellow cardboard sign that read, "We love you Mr. President," as Clinton's plane taxied across the runway Thursday morning at Capital City Airport.

Minutes later, Cosey and nine other local students found themselves face-to-face with the leader of the free world.

"I'll remember it forever," said Cosey, a student at Mid-Michigan Public School Academy in Lansing.

Lansing.

Same for the other students, who earned the chance to meet Clinton by writing essays and letters to the Lansing State Journal. U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow made the arrangements with the White House.

The group — ranging in age from 9 to 17 and representing 10 local schools — arrived at the airport about 9:15 a.m.

They spent about an hour watching Secret Service agents, reporters and police prepare for the visit before a White House staffer ushered them onto the runway to await Air Force One.

Darrell Crockett, a 9-year-old from El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz Academy in Lansing, pulled his



ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal

coat over his head and its sleeves over his hands to ward off the cold.

When Clinton emerged from the plane, he greeted local officials, in-

cluding Mayor David Hollister, and headed straight for the students, who were stationed near the presidential limousine.

Souvenir

smile: Carlos Cosey, a third-grader at Mid-Michigan Public School Academy, gets an autograph from Clinton.

"Thanks for waiting for me," Clinton said, his smiling face beet red from the frigid air.

The president spent about five minutes with the students, who were accompanied by Diane Spicer, a Grand River Elementary School fourth-grade teacher. He shook hands, collected gifts, signed autographs and posed for group pictures.

Katelyn Christensen and Ashley Thomas, both 9 years old, gave Clinton a notebook filled with some of the more than 700 letters written to the president by Lansing-area students.

A few more smiles, a few final waves and the president ducked

Please see KIDS, 8A



Kids: Visit was worth the wait

Continued FROM 1A

into the limo for the trip to the state Capitol to address lawmakers.

"It exceeded my expectations," said Brian Ngo, a 17-year-old senior from Holt High School. "It's a great experience to shake his hand and talk to him."

"When you see him on TV, you don't see him as a real person."

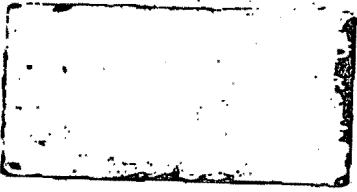
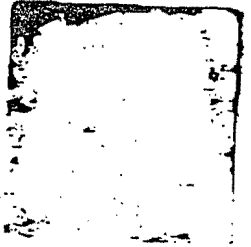
Ngo wasn't the only student who saw a new side of the president.

"I didn't expect him to be so enthusiastic," said Emma Tai, a 12-year-old from MacDonald Middle School in East Lansing. "I'm going to go back to school and all my friends will say, 'Oh, you're so lucky.'"

Tai said Clinton was taller in person than on television.

Meeting the president cleared up a different misconception for Cosey, who included a drawing of Clinton with his letter. The next time Cosey sets out to capture the president's image on paper, he'll use a different color crayon.

"His gray hair surprised me, I thought it was brown," he said with a smile.



1997-03-07 10:47 FROM 1

Crowd gathers for presidential glimpse

3-7-97
By Betsy J. Minor
Lansing State Journal

From abortion protests to the Hokey Pokey, the scene outside Michigan's Capitol Thursday was anything but ho hum.

A crowd of about 300 huddled there — most hoping for a glimpse of the silver-haired southerner in from the nation's capital. A few others merely wanted to make a point.

Each had their own reason for skipping school, work and other obligations to be part of Lansing's own presidential drama.

Larry and Linda Cummins of DeWitt were certain that if President Clinton was going to meet the town's folk, he would seek out those close to him.

So they bundled up for the 26-degree day and traipsed out onto the Capitol's snow-dusted lawn — holding a large flag from Arkansas. They figured the mostly red banner might earn them a handshake.

"We thought the president could use a friendly face," Linda Cummins said, gripping the flag bought at an old Arkansas gas station a few years back.

Larry Cummins grew up in Paragould, Ark. So Clinton is a hometown hero for him: "My mother voted for him when he was just a boy — for governor."

Across the way, a group of fifth-graders from Holland brainstormed ways to beat the biting wind chill.

"You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around. That's what it's all about," they sang, jumping in unison. The kids trekked to town from Holland's Vanderbilt Charter School to let President Clinton know they love the way they learn.

"We get more schooling, less recess," Peter Szymczak said. "That's a good thing. We're learning about justice and virtues."

If he had the chance — which he didn't — Szymczak said he would tell the president charter schools are the best.

"He should support them all that he can," he said.

Jim Pouillon of Owosso also had a message. His 4-by-5-foot sign, bearing a gruesome photo of a mangled fetus, told everyone he's against abortion.

Pouillon, a member of Operation

Lifesaver, said the picture triggered some negative response from the dozen or so schoolteachers there with their classes for the morning.

"They said it was offensive," he said. "I told them it offends me too, that's why it should be illegal."

"Our president is in favor of this. The blood of innocent babies is on his hands."

A black stretch limousine pulled up to the Capitol's north entrance and the cluster of people shifted, cramming into a taped off area hoping to see Clinton.

Joy Wallace of Lansing was first in line. She leaned against a light post and beamed at the black vehicles that lined up in the driveway.

"I have a flower for you," she said, holding out a single purple iris, carefully wrapped in clear cellophane.

The card attached read: "Thanks for all you do."

"He's doing a good job as our leader and our president," she said. "I just want him to know that."

But the president never came into view, let alone close enough to accept Wallace's gift.



DAVID OLDS/Lansing State Journal

Motorcade greeting: Morgan Goossen (left), a fourth-grader at the West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science in Walker, waves as Clinton's motorcade passes. The academy is a charter school, a concept pushed by Clinton and Gov. John Engler.

CLINTON VISIT: LESSON FOR LEGISLATORS

Lansing State Journal 3-7-97

A tall man, a friendly smile and an autograph



BOUG ELBINGER for the Lansing State Journal

At last: Leslie Andrews, 13, an eighth-grader at Kinawa Middle School, shakes the president's hand Thursday. Leslie, daughter of State Journal political editor Chris Andrews, reported from Clinton's 21st Century Express train trip through Michigan in August, but didn't meet Clinton until Thursday.

"I was hoping to meet the president — and Chelsea, but she wasn't on the train.

"I made a little button that said, 'It's my birthday, and I want to see the PRESIDENT' as a hint.

"Someone told me he would come by, but instead he listened to the first lady's speech. By the time it was over, we had arrived in East Lansing.

"Maybe next time." — Aug. 28, 1996

I finally got to meet President Clinton on Thursday, exactly six months and one week after my first try.

It was my 13th birthday last August, and my dad and I were riding on the 21st Century Express train with Clinton as he campaigned across Michigan to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. He was going to come and shake my hand, but at the last minute his plans changed.

This time, however, I wasn't going to let him miss me. I, along with

other local students who wrote "Dear Mr. President" letters to the State Journal, met President Clinton at Capital City Airport on Thursday.

A huge plane labeled "The United States of America" landed on the runway, and many political figures emptied out. Among them were Debbie Stabenow, Gov. John Engler and President Clinton. Clinton walked off Air Force One and into the line the 10 of us formed.

He walked around shaking everyone's hands and calling us by our first names.

That was a totally unexpected gesture to most of us. When it was my turn, I was both nervous and excited.

In a tiny voice, I said "Can I have your autograph?" to the tall man with a friendly smile. "Yeah, in just a minute," he replied.

Then, we got a group picture with Clinton, each of us edging as close to him as possible.

Next, we huddled into a group



Leslie Andrews

Teen columnist

fighting the photographers to get closer to the center where Clinton was signing autographs.

I wanted Clinton to sign the article I wrote about my train trip with him.

I pushed my article above heads and Clinton took it while looking at my face.

To my surprise, he stopped and read the article while many were waiting out in the freezing cold for their turn.

I was shocked again when he wrote "Leslie — This is a fine arti-

cle. Congratulations. Bill Clinton 3/6/97," rather than what he wrote on most people's: "President Bill Clinton 3/6/97."

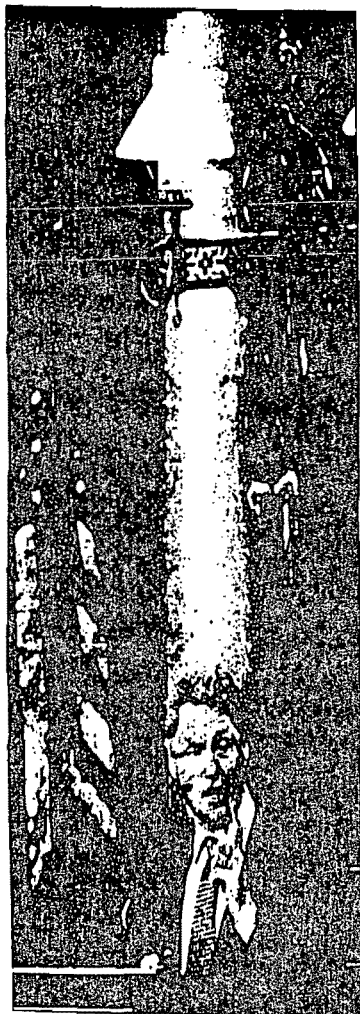
Then, as he was leaving, he said "Bye Leslie, bye Carlos..." in such a familiar and casual way that you'd have thought we had been longtime friends.

Lastly, as we walked over into the press area, reporters swarmed around us trying to get the scoop on what the president was like. The way Clinton left me feeling was that if he could, he'd go to every single person in the United States and talk to them individually.

He seemed like he loved the public. He also treated everyone like his friends.

I have come to the conclusion that we have a great man leading our nation into the 21st century.

Leslie Andrews, 13, is an eighth-grader at Kinawa Middle School in Okemos. She is the daughter of State Journal political editor Chris Andrews.



GREG DEWITTER/Lansing State Journal

Presidential point: President Clinton stresses a point during his 43-minute speech.

Classroom looks to Clinton

³⁻⁷⁻⁹⁷
Speech is jumping-off point for seventh-grade debate on education

By Mark Hayes
Lansing State Journal

EAST LANSING — MacDonald Middle School seventh-graders made two points clear after tuning in to President Clinton's Lansing address.

His plan to give every student Internet access by 2000 is a hands-down winner.

And watching the speech on television definitely beats math class.

"We need to know what he's talking about, too," said Shawn Farzam, 13, a seventh-grader. "We're the future and not just the adults."

Clinton aimed his education address — a call to action for tougher classroom standards and improved college access — at legislators during a rare Capitol appearance by a president.

The president didn't manage to sneak in a stop at a local school despite invitations by the Lansing schools superintendent and the mayor. But MacDonald teacher Jack Johnson made sure his students got a chance to see and hear the president live.

He interrupted the regular day to give students a current events lesson via television.

"The president speaking in town today is not something you can eliminate from their perspective," said Johnson, who makes the news a daily part of class for his students.



BRUCE POLLACK/Lansing State Journal

Government fans: Cara Davidson (left) and Ashley Guerrant (right) watch President Clinton's address with their classmates at East Lansing's MacDonald Middle School.

"This is what's going on today. They're interested and they have opinions."

One topic that generates some of meeting challenging standards.

But Malcolm Hardy, 12, said tests the strongest opinions among students is school uniforms. President Clinton supports the idea, but students were disappointed he didn't touch on the issue during his address.

Uniforms are unpopular with most MacDonald students, and Diana Hosler, 12, wanted to hear from

the president just how hard he's going to push the issue.

"No one's going to be able to express who they are," she said.

National tests, which Clinton did mention, also appear a tough sell on students. The president wants all fourth- and eighth-graders to take national tests to ensure they're aren't the answer.

"It seems like they're testing your brain on this one test, which really doesn't tell you anything," he said.

Johnson said his students often are frustrated that so much empha-

"They're interested and they have opinions."

Jack Johnson
MacDonald Middle School
teacher

sis is placed on the Michigan Education Assessment Program test, the state's standardized assessment of math, reading, science and writing skills.

Students also take personally the recent criticism of public schools and talk about the state taking over failing school districts, he said. Johnson was glad to see Clinton focusing on giving educators and students more tools to achieve higher standards.

"I like Clinton's positive approach," he said. "He's encouraging. He's setting goals. There are other politicians who are more confrontational."

Clinton may have come to push his educational plan, but just his presence could pay dividends if it inspires parents and volunteers to get involved, he said.

"I think just him coming here to speak lets the public know it's important," Johnson said.

And, while students didn't get to see Clinton's speech in person, they still were excited he came to town.

"I think it's good that he's worried about our education," Hosler said.

CLINTON VISIT: LESSON FOR LEGISLATORS



GREG DeRUITER/Lansing State Journal

Capitol welcome: President Clinton shakes hands with Gabriel Cropsey, 13, (left) of DeWitt and Meghan Urisko, 9, of Grosse Pointe Park. The two were among student guests invited by lawmakers to hear the speech.

Associated Press

President Clinton's education proposals, and quotes from his speech Thursday before the Michigan Legislature to highlight them:

■ Set national standards with national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math, and hold schools accountable for poor scores.

"I want to create a climate in which no one can say no, in which it's voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids the chance to do this."

■ Set standards for teachers and help 100,000 master teachers achieve national certification.

"We have to make sure that we do everything we can to help our classroom teachers be the best they can be."

■ Recruit 1 million volunteer tutors to help children read independently by the end of the 3rd grade.

"I want every child to be able to do this and say, here's this book and I can read this all by myself."

Clinton speech excerpts

■ Expand Head Start to cover more disadvantaged children and encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.

"An enormous percentage of the capacity of the brain to absorb information to operate is developed in the first four years. This has enormous consequences for the way we become."

■ Double funding to start charter schools so there will be 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

"Ultimately, what we want to do is to prove that we have a model here that can be used everywhere else. It is simply not true that if you have a few public schools that all the rest of them can't be good; if some of them are good that they all can't be good."

■ Make schools safer, drug-free and more disciplined with school uniforms, character education.

"The communities that are reversing that trend, that had juvenile crime going down, are the places that make sure that all those kids have something posi-

tive to say yes to, even as they're being told to say no to the wrong things."

■ Modernize schools with \$5 billion for repairs or replacement.

"When there's a terrible problem and people are doing their own work, if we can, by a prudent and limited investment, lower the cost of that so that more people can afford to do more construction and repair, I think we should."

■ Give tax credits for college tuition costs.

"We ought to make the 13th and 14th years of education just as universal by the year 2000 as a high school education is today. We have to do this."

■ Provide skill grants to help eligible workers get education and training.

"They can find out for themselves what they need to do to improve their education. We don't need all that stuff in the middle of them, between them and the money. Send them the money, let them get the education."

Money alone opposed as fix for U.S. schools

BY MIKE TOBIN
States News Service

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Peter Hoekstra has spent the past few months going to schools in Detroit, East Harlem and South-Central Los Angeles, where he's seen hardworking teachers in old schools trying to break the cycle of crime and violence that plagues their neighborhoods.

But the problems those schools face won't be solved with more federal money or involvement, the Holland Republican said in a recent interview.

A little more than a month after President Bill Clinton declared education to be the priority of his second term and asked Congress to deliver an extra \$51 billion for education, Hoekstra is racing to make himself the GOP's most vocal thorn in the president's side on the issue.

As a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee and chairman of that group's Oversight and Investigations subcommittee, Hoekstra is responsible for making sure government money isn't wasted on frivolous school programs that don't yield results.

And he doesn't see much to like in the president's multibillion-dollar call for developing national tests, connecting all schools to the Internet and making two years of college standard.

"Education is in crisis. It's not an issue of money and it's not an issue of public versus private," Hoekstra said. "We need to focus on what is working and what is not working before we pump a bunch of money into the system."

Exploring what works and what doesn't is the focus of "Education at a Crossroads," a program that brought Hoekstra to Detroit two weeks ago to visit Natali Talibah, a former private school that's now an Afrocentric charter school, and three Cornerstone schools that were established by a

consortium of churches to offer a nondenominational value-oriented curriculum.

"They are committed to getting done what needs to be done. It was a wonderful experience," Hoekstra said. "The teachers there are wonderful."

Hoekstra's visit to Detroit was one in a series of congressional hearings held in the toughest neighborhoods of Los Angeles, Chicago and New York, where members of Congress look at "the good, the bad and the ugly" of education, Hoekstra said. Among the ugliest aspects of public education, he said, are too many federal education programs.

"Before we resort to creating new programs and increasing spending, we should look at the more than 760 education programs that the federal government already has, located in 39 different agencies and spending more than \$120 billion a year," he said. "Before we do that, I believe proposing new federal programs is premature and foolhardy."

Not everybody agrees. Robert Chase, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, has embraced Clinton's proposals. Chase and others believe more money is needed to modernize schools and give more students access to higher education.

But Chase said he's willing to work with those who accuse schools of squandering federal money.

"If people think there's wasteful spending in public education, tell us where it is," Chase said. "If it is there, we too would like to make sure it is corrected."

Hoekstra said schools are swamped by paperwork and are forced to spend time and money hunting and applying for grants. Then they spend more time proving they are complying with requirements.

Hoekstra uses Clinton's call for a million more reading tutors as an example of what's wrong with the president's approach. He wonders why students can't read or write without tutors after being in school for more than seven hours a day.

"What are they doing in school all day?" Hoekstra asked.



Peter
Hoekstra

Engler seeks to link MEAP to U.S. tests

3-7-97
BY PEGGY WALSH-SARNECKI
Free Press Education Writer

Gov. John Engler wants a national education test to be combined with Michigan's homegrown tests as early as next year, but a testing expert says that may not be as easy as it sounds.

Sharif Shakrani, a former curriculum director for the Michigan Department of Education who now runs the National Assessment of Education Progress test in Washington, said the NAEP and Michigan tests are designed differently.

Engler's spokesman John Truscott believes the differences can be worked out.

"We haven't figured out all of the details, but the governor is looking for something that would be a representative comparison to all the states," Truscott said this week. "He wants something that can be compared. It may not be all the questions, but it will be something that can be compared."

The biggest difference between the two tests is the samples, Shakrani said this week.

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests compare students to their peers. Reading and math tests are given in fourth and seventh grades, and science and writing in fifth and eighth grades.

All of the tests contain the same questions.

The NAEP is given to a representative sampling of students in various grades in 48 states and territories, including Michigan.

Results are used to compare states to states. The test does not assess individual students' progress.

Not every student gets the same set of questions, and some NAEP questions are more difficult than others.

Shakrani said Engler's idea would work if the NAEP is modified so it measures all fourth- and eighth-graders as individuals, instead of producing a state average. For example, all students would probably have to be asked the same questions.

Shakrani said the NAEP tests probably are more difficult than the MEAPs.

On the NAEP, students must provide an answer and a reason for the answer, and do in-depth problem solving. MEAPs are multiple-choice tests and are not as difficult, he said.

"It's not easy," Shakrani said of the NAEP. "We're trying to determine what percent of the students reach the basic levels and what percent

THE EXAMS

MEAP: The Michigan Educational Assessment Program is given to fourth-, fifth-, seventh- and eighth-graders in public schools and participating private schools. It tests basic skills in reading, math, science and writing. Scores provide a snapshot of a student's progress and are used for state schools' accreditation.

NAEP: Michigan is among 48 states and territories that participate in the National Assessment of Education Progress, developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Testing is done in math, science, reading, writing, geography, history, civics, economics, arts and foreign languages. Results compare states to states and to the nation.

TIMSS: The Third International Mathematics and Science Study test samples 500,000 students, including 40,000 U.S. students, in fourth, eighth and 12th grades in 41 countries. Developed by a Netherlands-based group, the program is supported in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education.
By Peggy Walsh-Sarnecki

reach the proficient level."

Engler also wants to use the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, as President Bill Clinton suggested in his 10-point education agenda, but there may not be time to include it in next year's MEAPs, Truscott said.

"TIMSS we're definitely looking to implement. Whether we can do both, I don't know," Truscott said.

Clinton's education agenda proposes that all fourth-graders take the NAEP reading test and eighth-graders, the TIMSS math test. TIMSS is given in 41 countries.

State of Michigan



Executive Office

JOHN ENGLER

Governor

Governor's State Government Affairs Division

Manny Lentine, Director; Stephanie Comai-Page, Deputy Director

DATE: 3/3/97 TIME: _____ # OF PAGES 9
(Including cover sheet)

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MESSAGE:

Let me know if there is anything
we can do to make the President's visit
successful for all.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN ENGLER
GOVERNOR

February 14, 1997

Letters to the Editor
The Detroit News
615 West Lafayette Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48231

To the Editor:

In his State of the Union message, President Clinton said: "Every state should give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children. Their right to choose will foster competition and innovation that can make public schools better."

I agree with President Clinton. School choice is good -- good for students, parents and teachers. I also agree with the President that dramatically expanding charter school options is the right thing to do to help all schools get better. The President was right on target when he said that "politics must stop at the schoolhouse door." We must all stand together to help our children learn.

That is why I was so dismayed to see politics featured front and center in the February 4, 1997 article entitled "Michigan may get \$24 million for charter schools." Unfortunately, State Representative James Agee incorrectly asserts that my view of charter schools conflicts with the President's. In fact, I have personally discussed this issue with the President. Additionally, I recently attended a White House meeting between the National Governors' Association, the President and U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley. We discussed how charter schools and competition have had a positive impact on the traditional school system.

Even the National Education Association -- America's largest teacher's union -- has endorsed charter schools, saying that "... well-designed and implemented charter schools can open new vistas for public school practitioners and bring greater parental and community support to the school site." To show its commitment to these new public schools, the NEA will be spending \$1.5 million to start five charter schools nationwide.

Both President Clinton and I have called for the creation of more charter schools. Specifically, the President plans spending \$51 million of federal funds this year and \$100 million next year. To help foster the creation of more charter schools in Michigan, I have notified the President that our state is ready to help meet his challenge of creating 3,000 new charter schools by the year 2000.

The Detroit News

Page 2

February 14, 1997

What will this new infusion of resources mean to Michigan? It will mean more high quality public school choices for parents and students. Let's take a quick look at the choices innovative charter schools are already providing:

- The mission of the Nataka Talibah Schoolhouse in Detroit is to educate the "whole child" by encouraging academic, social-emotional and physical development.
- The Michigan Health Academy, a collaborative effort of Henry Ford Health System and Oakwood Healthcare System, exemplifies employer involvement by overseeing the design, development and ongoing operation of high school that combines classroom and real-life clinical experience on a daily basis.
- The West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science is located on an organic farm to help kids learn about agriculture and farm operation.

As a result of these innovative programs, a broader student population is being served and traditional districts are taking note. For example, the Lansing School District is now working with the Edison Project to explore options for creating an alternative school similar to Edison's Mid-Michigan Public School Academy. Lansing's deputy superintendent was quoted as stating that the proposed partnership is an effort by the city school district to "out-charter the charter schools" by offering more choices to parents and students.

I do not view charter schools as the only solution to public education challenges, but they can be the right answer for some. The vast majority of our students will continue to attend traditional public schools.

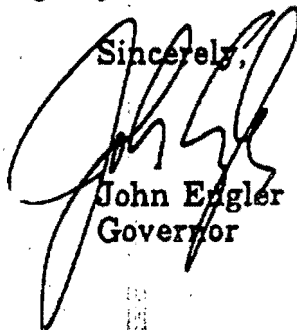
Certainly, there is room in Michigan for more charter public schools. In fact, less than one percent (about 12,000) of Michigan's K-12 pupils attend the 77 charter schools already operating in our state. We expect 105 charter schools will open by next year with more than 20,000 students in attendance. With President Clinton's strong support, we will take an even bigger step forward to help our children learn and give teachers the freedom and flexibility to do what they do best -- teach and inspire.

Nothing is more important to the future of families than the quality of our children's education. Our public schools provide the ladder from poverty to prosperity and make equal opportunity possible. I urge everyone who cares about Michigan's future to put politics aside and stand up for our children.

The Detroit News
Page 3
February 14, 1997

Charter public schools mean more children will have a choice and a chance to succeed, and that helps Michigan public education lead the way.

Sincerely,



John Engler
Governor

JE/pm



MICHIGAN PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY FACT SHEET

CURRENT STATUS--1/24/97

Authorizers

Universities	NMU, CMU, GVSU, SVSU, EMU, and Oakland U. FSU to authorize for Fall 1997
ISDs	Wayne, Bay-Arenac, Midland, Saginaw, Washtenaw and St. Clair
Local Districts	Detroit and Wyoming

PSAs Operating/Enrollment Comparisons

	<u>'95-'96</u>	<u>'96-'97</u>	<u>Projections</u> <u>'97-'98</u>
PSAs Operating	43	77	105
PSA Enrollment	5230	12,343	20,000

1996-97 Pupil Enrollment Levels

Public School Enrollment	1,648,050	
Traditional K-12 Schools	1,635,707	
Public School Academies	12,343	(0.75% of total K-12)
Home School Enrollment	2,980	
Non-Public School Enrollment	191,663	

PSA Creation

Percent of PSAs that are <i>new</i> start-ups	79%
Percent of PSAs converting from <i>private to public</i>	21%

Racial-Ethnic Distribution

	<u>PSAs</u>	<u>Traditional Public Schools</u>
Caucasian	47%	78%
Children of Color	53%	22%

School Size

Average size of Michigan PSAs	164
Largest PSA	691
Smallest PSA	12

(over)



Greatest Number of PSAs by County

Wayne	19 schools
Kent	10 schools
Ingham/Oakland	5 schools

PSA Student Academic Origin

- 75% from public schools
(9257 pupils or .57% of the traditional K-12 enrollment)
- 9% from non-public schools
(1111 pupils or .07% of the traditional K-12 enrollment)
- 15% enrolled in kindergarten
(1851 pupils or .11% of the traditional K-12 enrollment)
- 1% from home schools
(123 pupils or .008% of the traditional K-12 enrollment)

Conversion Schools (private to public school academy status)

16 PSAs are conversion schools which serve a total of 1,862 students, 764 of which were private school pupils during the prior academic year (41%).

6.2% of the total PSA pupils were enrolled in conversion schools and were private school pupils during the prior academic year. Of the 1,648,050 pupils enrolled in public schools, 0.05% are enrolled in conversion schools and were private school pupils during the prior academic year.

Michigan spends \$7.9 billion per year on pupil foundation allowances. \$9.5 million are allocated to conversion schools, with approximately \$4.4 million supporting students in conversion schools and formerly enrolled in private school. This equates to 0.056% of total state foundation allowance dollars.

National

1st charter school is located in Minnesota, opened in 1991.

25 states plus the District of Columbia have charter legislation.

Of the first 8 states to pass charter school legislation, 4 Democratic governors and 4 Republican governors.

63% of students attending charter schools are minority-group members.

Michigan has the third highest number of operational PSAs.

(Top 4: California-116, Arizona-114, Michigan-77, Colorado-32)



KEY PRINCIPLES OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN

- Charter schools are public schools and governmental bodies. Statutorily, they are known as public school academies (PSAs).
- "Charter School" is a generic name for a new type of autonomous public school that operates pursuant to a charter agreement. A charter is, in effect, a performance-based contract that contains specific and measurable performance standards.
- As governmental bodies, charter schools are subject to all of the same laws, such as freedom of information and open meetings, which govern all governmental bodies in Michigan. As public schools, charter schools must comply with the provisions of the school code.
- Charter schools are organized structurally as non-profit corporations.
- Charter schools receive their public status directly from one of four types of public education boards; local school district boards, intermediate district boards, community college boards, and public university boards. Charter schools cannot be authorized by any other type of public entity or any private entity in Michigan.
- Any group can form a charter school, so long as it obtains recognition from one of the four types of public boards that can authorize the schools, and meets state and federal constitutional provisions regarding establishment of religion.
- Every charter school must have a school board, chosen in a manner prescribed by the authorizer. Those who are employees of the board may not serve on the board.
- Once authorized, a charter school is an independent public school district.
- Charter schools must employ certified teachers, but the charter school may design its own educational program (subject to approval by the authorizer).
- Charter schools establish their own basis for evaluation (again subject to agreement by the authorizer). This evaluation must minimally include the Michigan Education Assessment Program test.

(over)



- Authorizing bodies are required to monitor charter schools for compliance with their charter contracts. If a charter school is consistently failing to live up to its charter, the authorizing body is obligated to revoke the charter.
- The charter school's "district", i.e. the residential base from which students may apply to enroll in the school, is at least as large as the "district" of the authorizer, but may be larger. If authorized by a public university, a charter school's enrollment district is the entire state of Michigan.
- Charter schools must have an open enrollment policy. Charter schools may not use aptitude or achievement testing to select its students. If charter schools receive more applicants than it has places, they must use a random process to admit students. The schools may give preference to siblings of enrolled students.
- The state provides to charter schools a state aid grant amount for each enrolled student in regular attendance. The amount equals the lesser of the pupil allowance in the local school district in which the charter school is physically located or \$5,808, which is the maximum a charter may receive for 1996-97. Charter schools may not charge tuition.
- Charter schools receive other state and federal education funds that flow to public school districts, such as compensatory education funds.
- Charter schools do not have direct taxing and bonding authority as do local school districts.
- Charter schools may raise funds from contributions, but do not have a tax base and are not allocated a budget by a taxing body. Their funds come from enrollments.
- State public universities may authorize a total of 100 charter schools in 1997. They are limited to a maximum of 125 in 1998 and 150 in 1999. ISDs and local districts have no limits on the number of charters they may authorize.
- Enrollment in the charter school is currently counted twice a year, and state payments to the school are made in nine equal monthly installments from October through June of each school year.
- Charter schools may offer more than the state minimum requirements (for hours and days of instruction), but not less.
- Charter schools are subject to the oversight of their authorizers and the State Board of Education.



MICHIGAN

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND CHOICE: THE ELITIST MYTH REFUTED

FACTS:

- Most wealthy students are already attending the schools they want. Choice students tend to be the students with less successful experiences in traditional public schools. The records show that they come from more disadvantaged backgrounds and start with below average skills.
- Michigan charter schools serve more than twice the percentage of black students-53% percent in 1996-as traditional public schools.
- Most charter schools are serving inner-city children in disadvantaged communities. Detroiters created ten of Michigan's first 44 charter schools.
- A 1996 report from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that the disadvantaged gain most from increased school choice. The heaviest users of choice had incomes of \$15,000 or less. The next largest group was \$15,000 to \$30,000. Black parents used choice 21% more than whites.
- Because charter schools are free and open to any Michigan child, everyone who applies has an equal chance of getting in based on random lottery. Choice lets students and parents pick their school without letting schools pick their students.
- Of the first and second graders Lansing's Sankofa Schule charter school received from the Lansing Public Schools, 85% could not read. One year later, 100% of the students were able to read.