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001. fax	Christy to Shirley re: phone number [partial] (1 page)	04/15/1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

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FOLDER TITLE:

Teachers College Speech [1]

2013-0124-S

rc1069

RESTRICTION CODES

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

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

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

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

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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To Chirky

From Shirley

I think this is much better - I did some line editing - still needs tightening, but we're getting there!
Hope you can read this



THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF SPEECHWRITING

Fax (202) 456-5709

Tel (202) 456-2777

TO:

Shirley

FAX:

PHONE

FROM:

Chirky

Comments

I'll be home - so please fax
your thoughts to

PG/10/6

[001]

I'd love even some feedback
though if you have the energy -

Date:

Number of Pages (including cover):

I went over some of the
W memo - but have
not incorporated the
suggestions here -
mean Chirky

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
 "RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION: A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND POSSIBILITIES"
 COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
 NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
 APRIL 19, 1999

Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just and fair world for our children; and for your friendship. It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. I want to thank President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of his ^{teachers} ~~teachers~~ into dedicated individuals who will make a real difference in the lives -- and aspirations -- of their students. I also want to thank Jill Iscol and her husband Ken for sponsoring this new lecture series here at the College. ^{you + your}

A little over a hundred years ago, when a ^{group} ~~number~~ of far-sighted college presidents, bishops and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College -- the world around them was in upheaval. Our country was in the throws of transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from the countryside and immigrants from around the world. It was time -- your founders had decided -- to start educating a new breed of teachers to meet the educational needs of this unprecedented new influx of people, cultures, and experiences into an urban setting.

That same pioneering spirit and commitment to meet the needs of a changing world lives on ~~in all that you do here at Columbia's Teacher's College. It lives on~~ when you help teachers educate an increasingly diverse student population; when you instill the spirit of social justice as part of your educational framework; when you pioneer new teaching strategies to meet the needs of urban and minority students -- and when you send teachers into the world whose most important mission is to help every student to follow his or her highest aspirations.

When so many higher education institutions have closed their schools of education -- or treated them like a forgotten step child -- Columbia's Teacher's College has been a leader in its field -- and maintained the highest standards.

Today -- 100 years after your founding -- we still recognize some fundamental truths. That there is nothing more important than a good education. Nothing else offers our children or ourselves the chance for a better future. And nothing so limits an individual's ^{possibilities} ~~dreams~~ -- and denies the nation the talents it needs -- when that education is ^{a dream} ~~in some way~~ denied.

^{while the importance of education has not changed in the last century,} Yet we also face challenges and opportunities unimagined 100 years ago. We live in a world of possibilities -- a time of unparalleled growth and prosperity ~~that offers every citizen the chance to live up to his or her god-given potential.~~ Yet we recognize that this age of possibility is directly tied to how well educated and skilled we are in this new global age, and that students of today need new skills and knowledge if they are to take advantage of the extraordinary ^{the} opportunities that are before them.

seems redundant

Our public school system holds out ^{the} that promise that everyone has a chance to ^{achieve their} lift ^{god-given} themselves up. That here in the most diverse and multi-cultural nation in the world, we have a system that offers opportunity to all -- and no one is turned away. It's a goal admired and emulated around the world. I've spoken with people in Northern Ireland, for example, who believe passionately that a unified education system is absolutely critical to building a unified, tolerant, and peaceful society. That is the great promise of our nation's public education system and the reason it serves as the very bedrock of our free ~~and~~ democracy society. ---

Yet we all also know that too many of our children are unable to reap the benefits of the opportunities and challenges before them. Too many of our children attend schools ~~every day~~ that are understaffed; overcrowded; and falling down. The dreams of too many of our young people are going unfulfilled -- because no one expects them to succeed or accomplish something in their lives. And in too many schools and communities, the ^{achievement} gaps of knowledge and ~~achievement~~ are widening between rich and poor, between black and white, between those who can navigate their way up the information superhighway, and those who are being left far behind.

Indeed, as we move into the 21st century, we see that the learning gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap -- with college educated Americans now making 76% more than Americans who simply hold a high school diploma.

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century that we end those disparities in opportunity -- and instead make a world-class education the birthright of every citizen. It's up to all of us to must make sure that public education in this country continues to be -- in the words of your former professor, John Dewey, America's "great equalizer."

I've heard that the mantra at public school #1 here in Manhattan are the words: "All children can learn... No exceptions... No excuses." Today, I'd like to talk about far we've come to making that simple statement a reality in the the classrooms of America, and in the lives of our children. And I believe, and I hope you do, that we have a great deal to be proud of. But I also want to talk about how much has yet to be done -- and what we can all do together to fulfill the promise of the next generation.

^{first} ^{acutely} I became aware of how many of our children were falling through the cracks when I worked with Marion Wright Edeleman at the Children's Defense fund in the early 1970s. We wanted to find out why millions of school-aged children were not coming to school. I knocked on hundreds of doors that year -- talking to parents about why their children weren't in school. That experience convinced me -- as never before -- that our schools must do more than serve the best and the brightest. We must be equally committed to fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of of the disabled; the disadvantaged; the ones who need extra help just to stay even.

^{A decade later, it became clear to America that the challenges we saw in individual schools were widespread.} We saw how much work was ahead of us when ^{we learned} ~~A Nation at Risk~~ was published in 1983, and revealed that our once unchallenged leadership in education was being eroded "by a tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." Only half of our high school graduates were going to college. Academic achievement was plummeting -- the drop out rate was rising. Compared to other industrialized nations, the US ranked at the bottom. Perhaps

Add other int'l ex - maybe one where opportunity is denied as a means of oppression

no longer

new diff.

We learned that the reasons too often were that the school had declined to offer the children in these homes - who were often disabled - what they needed to learn.

with the publication

most troubling -- the report showed a growing chasm between a scientific and technological elite — and an ill informed citizenry.

A Nation at Risk sparked a national soul searching — and in response, people at the federal, state, and local level began rolling up their sleeves, and looking for solutions. In Arkansas, my husband, then Governor, asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas's educational system. I began traveling across the state -- listening and talking to teachers and parents about the challenges they faced. ~~It was on~~ ^{On} these trips ~~that~~ I saw first hand the disparities between many of our public schools -- particularly those in rural areas. Many didn't have libraries; or art programs. And students tended to meet the low expectations they were offered.

So we began to talk about the need for greater accountability for student achievement. About raising teaching standards. We began to form alliances with businesses to improve our public schools. And introduced new programs that encouraged parents to become much more involved in the education of their children. But most of all -- we realized that if we did not change the approach to education; if we didn't upgrade the standards that were expected of every school — and every teacher — and every child — then we would never see the progress we wanted to see in this one small part of America.

As governor of Arkansas, my husband began to invite student academic stars to come to the Governor's Mansion. Banquets were always being held to honor the athletic stars. We wanted to honor the stars of science and math and history. I'll never forget talking to one young high school graduate who told us with great pride that he wanted to be a doctor. But when I asked where he was going to college, he admitted he couldn't get in. His rural high school hadn't prepared him adequately. I remember so clearly thinking to myself: here's a young man who worked hard; stayed out of trouble; and whose family did all they could for him. But his local school didn't know what the standards were that would enable this young man to fulfill his ambitions. And it was then ~~we~~ ^{Bill + I} both decided that no matter where you are born in a state, or what state you were born in — you should be held to high standards. And your school should be held accountable for those standards. ^{have the opportunity to achieve a rigorous curriculum.}

^{And pushing for those standards became of my husband's top priorities.} But for that to happen, we recognized at the state level that we needed national standards. ^{high achievement}

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Williamsburg, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. Then governor Clinton-co-chaired that effort with the President.

When Bill Clinton was elected President -- he set to work with another former governor, Dick Riley, to support national goals -- and help schools and communities meet them. Over the past six years ~~we~~ ^{we}'ve worked hard to raise student academic achievement; improve teacher quality; involve more parents; and bring the technology of the 21st century into the classroom. We've also sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that schools -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling them to

reach that raised bar of excellence.

So what have we accomplished since the *Nation at Risk* was published 15 years ago? Have we raised our standards and expectations? Are we giving all of America's students -- regardless of where they live -- a world-class education? Are we helping those who are lagging behind to catch up? Like any dynamic progress -- we've made significant progress. But many of our goals remained unrealized.

Here's the good news. Achievement levels of our high school students ^{on the rise} are ~~climbing back~~ up. SAT scores -- which in '83 were in a virtual free fall -- are once again heading in the right direction -- with the largest gains in math ~~and science~~. Fewer students are dropping out. Raised expectations have resulted in higher college enrollment. In 1983 -- half of America's students enrolled in college. Today, two thirds are reaching that goal. And slowly but surely, students in our poorest schools are making gains, and the gap between those living in poverty and those in more prosperous neighborhoods is finally narrowing in some states and districts.

Here's the mixed news. The international ^{in math + science} standing for America's 4th graders is now comparing favorably to our counterparts overseas. But our 8th and 12th graders do not fare as well. Our literacy rate ~~is also not~~ what we want it to be -- with average reading scores not significantly higher. Clearly -- we still have a long way to go.

Perhaps the best news of all is that today -- we have much more experience and information about what works. We know that yes -- every child can learn, and that schools in even the poorest neighborhoods can become world class schools.

I've visited schools across the country that prove what can be accomplished when dedicated teachers, parents, and communities join forces, and turn failing schools into models of success. I've visited Chicago's Du Sable high school -- where it wasn't unusual to find more students hanging out in the hallways than in class. Where only about half the students showed up on any given day. Where achievement scores were some of the lowest in the nation. But the principal of that school laid down a new law of discipline. Wired the school for the Internet, and created a "culture of reading." Teachers volunteered in after school and summer schools, ^{programs} and everyone learned a new vocabulary word a day. People told me that even the security guards would quiz the kids. ~~Leaders like Chicago's Mayor Daley are imposing strict new standards of accountability; putting low performing schools on probation; and reconstituting the worst ones.~~

^{And these efforts paid off -- today DuSable is . . .} Just recently, I visited the Lab School in Chelsea. The girl who introduced me was a proud star on her basketball team -- and she wore -- like all of her fellow students -- a T-shirt that read: "Dare to compete." That day, we were honoring pioneers in women's sports. But to me, that T-shirt represented the spirit that embraced the entire school -- where dedicated teachers, a rigorous curriculum, and an engaged community were helping students were learning how to successfully compete in the 21st century.

I've also heard how schools like PS 154 in Harlem and PS 1 on the lower East Side -- were drifting; where student achievement -- and student aspirations were low, and teachers felt

isolated. But now they've turned around -- because of a new level of communication between teachers and parents; because of more demanding curricula; new arts and music classes; and higher accountability for success. I've heard that at PS 154 -- there's a big sign hanging at the entrance stating: "Only positive attitudes beyond this point." I wish I could hang that sign in every school in the nation.

As all of you know so well -- there are no cookie cutter formulas to create a successful school. We also know there are no magic bullets. It takes an infinite amount of energy and determination to give our children the tools they need to thrive in the 21st century, ~~and to lead fulfilling and productive lives.~~ But if we are to reach our goal of ensuring every student a world-class education, then we must draw on the lessons we've learned over the past decade -- and build on them for the future.

Perhaps the greatest of those lessons is that we must never, ever give up on our public school system. Even as we recognize the challenges we still face -- we must recognize as well its enormous strengths and benefits to our children, and to the prosperity of our nation.

We can't allow ourselves -- for example -- to be pulled off track by false debates -- particularly about vouchers, which claim to be the real solutions to improving public education, and fixing failing schools. At a time when ~~more than we ever~~ we should be devoting more resources, attention and intelligence to improving our public schools -- some want to drain off these resources and give them only to a few -- making it even more difficult for public schools to improve.

Vouchers also divide communities at a time when one of our greatest challenges as a nation is to pull communities together across racial and economic lines. And we've learned that ~~the voucher system~~ simply ~~does~~ not deliver. I've read recent studies that show that when you look at the voucher systems that have been implemented -- in Cleveland and elsewhere -- there's no evidence that students do significantly better. It just hasn't worked.

I'm heartened by recent polls showing that support for vouchers has declined sharply over the past few years -- particularly when ~~they~~^{people} learn that voucher programs reduce funding for public schools. Overwhelmingly — Americans want to fix their public schools — not abandon them.

But if we are committed to fixing them -- and making America a level playing field for our children -- then we must begin by raising our expectations for our students -- and for our children. Parents have a vital role to play in challenging their children to reach for the stars. But so do schools and teachers. Imagine what it would be like if you were an 8th grader, and had decided you wanted to go to college, and be a computer programmer -- or a doctor. But you were told there was no more room in the algebra class -- or the AP class in biology was not even being offered in your school. Every child has talents; every child can contribute. We have to make sure they receive not only the encouragement -- but the opportunities -- to fulfill their promise.

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college material
or

that you weren't ~~that~~ taking ~~any~~ ^{any} lead b
~~has a~~ ^{right} Diploma

Regents diploma

I've heard that high expectations just got a boost here in New York -- when you did away with the general diploma -- and committed city schools to give every child the chance to ~~pass the~~ *earn* more rigorous Regency exam. I want to applaud Rick Mills and others for demonstrating his confidence not only in New York's schools -- but in the capabilities of your students.

While cities and states across the country are doing the hard work of creating new achievement standards, the Clinton Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. Goals 2000 funds have helped states go from pushing for standards to implementing them -- to make them part of every teacher's lesson plan. To get us to the next stage, President Clinton will soon send to Congress a significant revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It's based on a comprehensive ~~three-part~~ *three* strategy: targeting increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early ~~years~~ *years* of schooling; improving teacher quality; and promoting real accountability for results. But we don't need to wait for this legislation to pass. There is much we can do today that will make real difference in the lives of all of our children.

First, we know from experience that all children learn better when they get more attention. So we must commit ourselves to reducing class size. Who hasn't been in classroom where even the most talented teacher is struggling to maintain order -- let alone teach -- a rambunctious group of 35 or 40 children. A recent 5-year study of Milwaukee confirms the importance of having smaller classes. It showed that schools having a 17-1 student teacher ratio outperformed students not only the regular public schools but those who received scholarships through voucher system. Reports like this one and so many others are why the President is fighting so hard to hire 100,000 teachers -- so that we can lower class size in the early grades.

Second, we must continue to focus on teacher quality. Placing a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom is the single most important thing we can do to ensure our children succeed. But it also means we have to look harder at teacher preparation. And do more on ~~teacher in-service training~~.

professional development for existing teachers (Teachers don't like "training")
diff.

Teachers' colleges obviously play a unique role in this effort -- and this one is a national model. Unlike many top universities which have closed their schools of education, or treated them as second class citizens, Teacher's College at Columbia has maintained high standards -- and sees its mission as engaging research on the central issues facing education -- while preparing the next generation of education leaders. You recognize that setting demanding standards for students, and raising the bar for the content being taught in their classes -- will be an ~~exercise~~ *exercise* in frustration if teacher's don't have the skills and knowledge to teach to those higher standards.

Of course, as we strive to ensure that every child has a high quality teacher -- and to hold schools and states accountable for making it happen -- we have to encourage them to stay in the profession. We can't give new teachers the toughest assignments -- and then leave them to sink or swim. One solution could be to have seasoned teachers serve as mentors to new recruits. Another is to pay teachers what they're worth -- something this nation has never done. We must also do a better job of matching teachers to classrooms -- to keep teachers teaching in their field of

This repeats p. 1

expertise. And we must support professional development for all educators -- experienced and new -- not one shot workshops, but sustained, high quality learning opportunities.

Nor we can we ignore the growing pressures that are building up here in New York and around the country -- as the demand for higher standards for teacher certification comes up against the growing crisis of teacher shortages. As President Levine argued so persuasively on the pages of the *New York Times* a few weeks ago -- we must take steps now -- in recruitment and training -- that will enable us to hold the bar of excellence high -- while at the same time reducing class size.

Third, we must expand preschool and early childhood education. Ensuring our our children -- particularly those at risk -- come to school ready to learn is a top priority. And we know that preparation for learning begins early -- in the first three years of life. Science now confirms what we've always believed all along: that time sharing a favorite book or talking with a child -- or even a newborn -- helps the baby's brain to grow -- and prepares him or her for a lifetime of reading and learning. I'm pleased that the President the President has proposed making a \$3 billion investment in the Early Learning Fund -- so that the language and literacy skills so critical to success in school can be learned long before a child steps into the classroom.

Fourth, we must ensure every student can read independently by the end of 3rd grade. For all of you who have worked with and studied children, you know that if a child is not ready well by ~~8~~ ^{eight} or nine, it's going to be very difficult for that child to ever catch up. ^{is} And today, 40% of our children ^{diff} can't read independently by the end of the 3rd grade. That's why we need every elementary school teacher to be schooled in the latest research -- given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist -- and supported by parents and ~~other~~ ^{skt} volunteers in the classroom.

Fifth, we must expand the opportunities for those who are behind to get ahead -- through summer schools programs; and demanding after school programs that not only provide opportunities for sports and the arts, but which focus as well on gaining ground on their academics as well. Again, we can't just set the bar higher. We must be willing to spend the extra time, and effort and resources it will always take to help children catch up. [And I'm pleased that in the President's new budget -- he's calling for a tripling of the funding for summer school and after school programs -- to keep a million children learning.] [✓]

And finally we must continue to expand choice and accountability in public education. Charter schools and magnet schools are some of the ways we can foster innovation in the system, and challenge children in different ways. By giving these schools greater flexibility and freedom, they can experiment with new approaches -- and still be held accountable for making sure their students are making the grade. I've been in and out of charter schools around the country -- and while some are struggling -- I've seen the dramatic differences some of them are making in the lives -- and opportunities -- of their students. ^{rest pretty much gone}

I want to mention one further step that I believe has everything to do with enabling every ^{could cut}

child to learn and succeed. We must get the arts back into our schools. We know that a lot of a kid's education — mine included — didn't just happen during academic classes; but when a music teacher was introducing us to opera; or the art teacher was trying to teach us how to draw. These positive outlets for expression can help children find their own hidden talents — and even more importantly, believe in themselves.

So yes, there is much that schools are doing every day to ~~expand the~~ ^{secure} ~~....~~ of our children's ^{future}. But we can't ask our schools to be held accountable for the progress we want -- whether it's more qualified teachers; higher standards; expanded after school programs; or a more effective reading program -- if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well.

We will see that progress when all parents believe in the importance of education, and support their schools and teachers -- and most importantly, their children. Whenever I walk into a school, I can tell how successfully children are learning by the number of parents who are volunteering in classrooms and after school programs. But we must also reach out to those parents who didn't have successful school experiences themselves -- and empower them with more information and choices to get involved in their child's education.

Parents are also critical in to the broader mission of holding schools accountable for progress. They are often the ones making their voices heard in parent teacher associations and school board meetings, and in the legislatures, as they work as partners to improve their children's schools and opportunities. But I've also seen -- in extreme cases -- when parents have literally taken the situation into their own hands.

Could cut

I think of the charter school in San Fernando Valley outside Los Angeles - in a neighborhood where drug deals were literally taking place on school property. A crack house was across the street. Parents and community members got fed up — and banded together to form a charter school. They drove out the drug dealers. They closed down the crack houses. They've also changed the culture of learning inside the classroom. More parents are involved; there are computers in every room. Kids are wearing uniforms. And the result? Expectations are soaring, as is student achievement.

We will see that progress when communities work in partnership with their schools, and are engaged in helping children on their journey to adulthood. The most successful schools I've seen are the product of many hands — when everyone from the local police officer to the retired teacher to the local business is helping to create the conditions for learning and success. Again and again, we see the most at risk students flourish when college students and others volunteer their time to tutor and mentor those who are falling behind. But every child -- even the most able students -- needs the presence of a caring adult.

We will see that progress when businesses understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. I saw what was possible in Arkansas when a major corporation took that responsibility to heart — and helped turn around some of the most underachieving schools. And I've seen that impact duplicated in countless public private partnerships -- with businesses donating everything from computers to teacher training to tutors

to on the job experiences to college scholarships. The private sector can -- and must -- also play a broader role in prodding schools in their communities to set goals and provide benchmarks against which to measure progress.

[what's at stake -- democracy; justice; unleashing the enormous potential;]

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
“RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION: A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND
POSSIBILITIES”

COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

APRIL 19, 1999

Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just world for our children; and for your friendship. I also want to thank both you and Ken for sponsoring this innovative new lecture series. It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. We are indebted to President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of his students into dedicated teachers who will make a real difference in the lives of their students. I also want to recognize the creative vision of Peter Cookson -- whose Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation brings the best minds to bear on the challenges of teaching today.

Contributions of Teacher's College

A little over a hundred years ago, when a group of far-sighted college presidents, bishops and and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College -- the world was in upheaval. Our country was in the throws of transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from the countryside and immigrants from around the world.

It was time -- your founders had decided -- to start educating a new breed of teachers to meet the educational needs of this unprecedented new influx of people, cultures, and experiences.

That same pioneering ^{spirit} and commitment to meet the needs of a changing world lives on in all that you do here at Columbia's Teacher's College; every time you give teachers the skills to spark the imagination of a child; every time you instill the spirit of social justice as part of your educational framework; and everytime you pioneer new strategies to better reach the students of today. At a time when so many higher education institutions have closed their schools of education -- or down graded their importance -- Columbia's Teacher's College has maintained the highest standards of excellence.

[Whether it was teaching early childhood education -- before it became conventional wisdom to look at the importance of those early years; or researching new ways of teaching urban and minority students -- you've expanded our knowledge about what it takes to create a world-class teacher.

You've also used your resources and talents to be instruments of change and progress in the New York city schools -- initiating writing projects; helping to establish professional development schools; and mentoring first year teachers, so they stay on in the toughest schools. Your work to get the arts back into the city's public schools has helped transform lives in hundreds of schools. And today, thanks to a collaboration between Teacher's College and the city schools -- 9th and 10th graders at the Heritage School are now benefitting from a dynamic new curriculum infused with the arts and culture. I salute the leadership and faculty of Teacher's College.

II. Importance of Public Education

We've all here today because as all Americans, we still believe that nothing offers our children or ourselves the chance for a better future than a good education. ~~And nothing so limits an individuals's dreams — and denies the nation the talents it needs — when that education is in some way beyond reach.~~ In this era of almost limitless possibilities -- our public school system holds out the promise that here, in the most diverse and multi-cultural nation in the world -- everyone has a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

I've spoken with people in strife-torn countries like Northern Ireland, who believe that a unified education system like ours is absolutely critical to building a tolerant, ~~and~~ peaceful and just society. And that is our mission. Every day, as children learn the skills of the future, and the values we hold in common, our democracy is strengthened.

b. Those values are threatened by unequal access

Yet those values are threatened when many of our children are unable to reap the benefits of the opportunities around them. When too many of America's children attend schools that are understaffed; overcrowded; and falling down. When too many dreams go unfulfilled -- not because a child lacks ability -- but because no one expects him or her to accomplish something, or succeed.

Today, more than four decades after the Supreme court ended segregation in America's schools, the color of your skin can still determine the quality of your education. ~~[Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at the level of most 13-year old white students.]~~

Today, the vast majority of white students graduate from high school, compared to a third of Hispanics. Today, a third of white Americans are college graduates. Blacks graduate half that many.]

[Not surprisingly, the learning gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap. As my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. College educated Americans are now making 76% more than those who simply hold a high school diploma. The terrible costs of not getting a quality education -- in lower quality of life and lowered expectations -- are increasing every day.]

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century to find ways of unleashing the vast potential of all our people, by making a world-class education the birthright of every citizen. It's up to all of us to must make sure that education truly does become -- in the words of John Dewey, America's "great equalizer."

Over the years, I've heard many variations on the goals we have set for ourselves at the brink of this new century. But I like the simple mantra at public school #1 here in Manhattan. It states: "All children can learn... No exceptions... No excuses."

Today, I'd like to talk about what we must do together to fulfill the great promise of the next generation.

III. Progress to Improve Public Education

a. HRC involvement

It's easy to see how far we've come when we look back at where we were. I first became acutely aware of how many of our children were falling through the cracks when I worked with Marion Wright Edeleman at the Children's Defense fund in the early 1970s. We wanted to find out why millions of school-aged children were not coming to school. And as Jill said, I knocked on hundreds of doors that year -- talking to parents about why their children weren't in school. That experience convinced me -- as never before -- that our schools had to be as committed to fulfilling the dreams of the disadvantaged and disabled as we were to serving the best and the brightest.

b. A Nation at Risk

With the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, it became clear to America that the challenges we saw in individual schools were widespread.

We were told that our once unchallenged leadership in education was being eroded "by a tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." Only half of our high school graduates were going to college. Academic achievement was plummeting -- and the drop out rate was rising. Compared to other industrialized nations, the US ranked at the bottom. Also troubling -- there was a growing chasm between a scientific and technological elite -- and an ill informed citizenry.

e. State Efforts (Arkansas)

A Nation at Risk sparked a national soul searching -- and in response, people at the federal, state, and local level began rolling up their sleeves, and looking for solutions. *I had a chance to first the effort* In Arkansas, my husband, then *we* Governor, *of Arkansas* asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas's educational system. I began traveling across the state -- listening and talking to teachers and parents about the challenges they faced. *I saw first hand the challenges many of our schools were facing -- particularly those in rural areas.*

So we began to talk about the need for greater accountability for student achievement. We started to form alliances with businesses to improve our public schools, and encouraged parents to become much more involved in the education of their children. But most of all -- we realized that if we didn't upgrade standards that were expected of every school — and every teacher — and every child — then we would never see the progress we wanted to see.

[I'll never forget talking to one young high school graduate -- ranked second in his class -- who told me with great pride that he wanted to be a doctor. But when I asked where he was going to college, he admitted he couldn't get in anywhere. His high school simply hadn't prepared him adequately. I remember thinking to myself: here's a young man who worked hard; stayed out of trouble; and whose family did all they could for him. But his local school didn't know what the standards were that would enable him to fulfill his ambitions. And it was then that Bill and I decided that no matter where you lived, you should have the chance to complete a rigorous curriculum that prepares you for whatever you plan to do in life.] Pushing for high standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.]

D. Charlottesville Summit

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Charlottesville, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. Then Governor Clinton co-chaired that effort. And when he was elected President -- Bill set to work with another former governor, Dick Riley, to support national goals -- and help schools, teachers, and students meet them.

E. Goals 2000/ESEA

Among the President's proudest achievements in the first term were Goals 2000 and the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. Goals 2000 -- for the first time -- required states to set academic standards and develop assessments aligned to those standards. ESEA's Title I built on this requirement -- by mandating that states use these standards for disadvantaged students -- thus ending the practice of setting lower expectations for low-income students. ~~ESEA also launched the President's initiative to establish 3,000 charter schools -- and permitted high-poverty schools to combine their funds and use them to improve the entire school.~~

*Goals 2000 and
reauthorized
Education
Act*

Both Goals 2000 and ESEA held schools accountable for results. Title I now requires states to set annual goals for each school and district [relating to the number of students who must reach academic standards]; to report progress for each school; and to intervene in schools that fail to make adequate progress.

Taken together -- these two reforms have fundamentally changed the federal role in elementary and secondary education to support the development and implementation of high academic standards for all children. In the past -- our system had too often supported and encouraged a two-tiered system that had low expectations for poor children -- and held them to lower academic standards. Over the past six years, we've been working hard to end that unequal and unjust system -- and we've begun to see the fruits of our labor.

~~IV. Where are we as a result of these efforts?~~

~~Over the past six years -- we've worked hard to raise student academic achievement; improve teacher quality; involve more parents; and bring the technology of the 21st-century into the classroom.~~

We've ~~also~~ sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that schools -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling students to reach that raised bar of excellence.

These reforms have sparked a burst of state and local reform activity -- important innovations that are improving the educational progress of our children. ~~The rapid development of statewide academic standards is unprecedented in the United States, and~~ awareness of the need to change practices to support standards is strong across states, districts and schools. Federal efforts -- ESEA and Goals 2000 -- have been a major force in supporting and stimulating state-based reform. Forty-eight states have set new, more challenging academic standards, and most states are working to develop or adopt new assessments aligned with those standards.

And as a result of hard work at the federal, state and local level -- and perhaps most of all as a result of our dedicated teachers -- schools are improving and our students are doing better. A few weeks ago, we released new data that tells us that our nation's reading scores are up for the first time in all three grades levels -- 4th, 8th and 12th.

Our achievement scores are up for math and science. SAT scores — which in '83 were in a virtual free fall — are once again heading in the right direction — with the largest gains in math. For the first time in history, SAT and ACT scores have increased each year for the past five years.

What have we learned?

~~The key lesson that we've learned from Goals 2000, ESEA and related state and local reform initiatives are that~~ standards-based education reform works. A recent study of education reform in North Carolina and Texas -- the two states with the best track record of improving achievement generally and closing achievement gaps between minority and white students -- shows us the ingredients of success -- particularly for disadvantaged students: sustained, statewide approaches of raising academic standards, providing schools with the flexibility they need, targeting resources for extra help to low-performing students and schools, and holding schools accountable for results.

[Other studies have shown that states and school districts, like Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago, that have adopted similar approaches have shown significant gains in reading and math.]

A recent study by GAO shows how Goals 2000 funds are being used to support a broad range of education activities at the state and local levels -- including local education reform, professional development, and the development of education standards and assessments. Many state officials reported that Goals 2000 has been a significant factor in promoting their education reform efforts.

[HRC's visits to NYC schools -- most recently the Lab School in Chelsea, where T-shirt read "Dare to compete."]

[I've heard how schools here in New York are replacing low expectations with high achievement -- because parents are pitching in; new classes are being held in art and music; and there's a new spirit of accountability for success. I've heard that at PS 154 -- there's a big sign hanging in the entrance hall stating: "Only positive attitudes beyond this point." I wish I could hang that sign in every school in the nation.]

Because of the success of the effort --

We know that every child can learn when given the attention he or she deserves, and that schools in even the poorest neighborhoods can become world class schools.

But we surely have a long way to go [see 5]

Our challenge is to push reform so it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

What we must do: ESEA's three-part strategy:

for the future

How do we help fulfill the promise of every student? The President has laid out a bold strategy -- through a major revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) -- which is designed to take us to the next step of accountability and higher standards. It's based on a comprehensive three-part strategy: ⁽²⁾first, to target increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling. ⁽¹⁾Second, to improve teacher quality. And third, to promote real accountability for results.

A. IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

John Sanford, the late superintendent of Seattle Schools has said: "The victory is in the classroom." That victory is only assured when a talented and dedicated teacher is in each classroom. America's teachers are America's future -- and none of the things we've talked about so far -- ~~about higher expectations and student achievement~~ -- will be accomplished if we don't make teaching a first class profession.

How we recruit, prepare, and retain good teachers must be the central strategy for improving our schools.

1. Higher Standards

The vast majority of teachers are dedicated professionals who are preparing their students well for the challenges ahead. But nothing undermines the profession of teaching more -- or hurts our children's chances more -- than a poorly prepared teacher who doesn't have the knowledge or tools they need to succeed. Too many teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation -- with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers not even holding a minor in their main teaching field.

First, we must hold teachers to the same standards we hold for our children.

**** State Licensing must be based on demonstrated performance, knowledge of subject matter, ^{and} teaching skills -- and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offer an excellent benchmark.**

**** School districts must end the practice of using emergency certification to fill classrooms.**

How can we expect results when more than 30 percent of newly hired teachers are entering without full certification -- and over 11 percent have no license at all?

What we're doing about it

The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to phase out out-of-field assignments and emergency certification. It will also ask states to adopt performance examinations for all new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate both subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. And we will provide resources to help them achieve these goals.

Some may say we can't meet our needs to hire up to two million new teachers over ten years -- and still achieve these goals for teacher quality. I say we can -- if we do more to improve the teacher profession, and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.

2. Recruitment/attraction

Colleges of education are one of the best sources for top quality candidates -- as is proved every day here at Teacher's college. But unfortunately, too few teacher preparation programs hold themselves to the high standards of this institution. Universities must be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce in these educational programs -- and if they can't measure up, these programs should be closed. ~~Universities must stop thinking of their colleges of education as poor stepchildren, and instead, devote the same attention and resources to them as they do to programs that prepare doctors and lawyers.~~

We must do more to attract talented people to the profession of teaching -- and do more to enable mid-career entrants to get the training they need to translate their subject matter and life experiences into a teaching career.

**** The Administration is planning to expand the President's Troops to Teachers initiative to reach mid-career professionals from other field.**

**** I'm pleased Teacher's College has a teaching program for Peace Corps volunteers to get a degree and teach in schools -- if they commit to two years.**

**** The Administration is also providing loan forgiveness to students who agree to teach in high-poverty schools.**

**** Some school districts and universities are working together to create middle and high school programs that expose young people to the teaching profession. ~~South Carolina's teacher cadet programs gives academically talented high school juniors and seniors supervised experiences teaching young children -- and the opportunity to study education with school and university faculty.~~**

We need more programs like these to make sure we raise standards -- and don't exacerbate the looming teacher shortage.

3. Retention

Once we've attracted the best individuals into teaching -- we must do more to retain them. It makes no sense to take someone who has made the commitment to teach -- and who has spent years preparing themselves with every intention of making teaching their life's work -- and then just drop them into a classroom to sink or swim.

It's no wonder that one out of five new teachers leaves after three years. We must stop giving the most difficult teaching assignments to the teachers with the least experience -- ~~standing logic on its head~~. This might make sense if our goal was to reward seniority whatever the cost - but not if our goal is to give the children who most need the help to receive the best possible teachers. **School boards, administrators and teacher unions must work together to make sure that the best interests of students are the top priority.**

There have been
Strategies to give ~~new~~ ^{all} teachers the extra support they need:

** peer assistance programs, like the one here in New York, ~~that~~ ^{show the way} allow high performing teachers to work with new ones;

** ~~school districts should allow time for team planning.~~ ^{if built into the school day,} Unlike ^{we do} doctors and lawyers, who routinely confer with colleagues, teachers are ^{would give teachers the opp to conf w/ the admin,} often cut off from their co-workers. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40% say it improves their teaching "a lot" -- and another third say it "moderately." Yet this practice remains the exception -- not the rule.

Too many teachers are isolated in the classroom.

more to next page

4. Professional Development

All teachers should have the opportunity to receive ongoing professional development. But unfortunately -- the most common forms of these activities continue to be those that are least beneficial -- the “one shot” workshops that last a day -- and have little relevance to teachers’ work in the classroom. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future found that the biggest impediment to improving teaching was lack of access to the kind of knowledge and skills teachers need to help students succeed.

A serious program of sustained development -- based on research that works and is relevant to teacher’s classroom needs -- ought to be in place in every school district. Teachers need help to keep up to date in their subject, to learn proven teaching methods; to understand how to adjust their curriculum in response to state and local standards; and to response to new challenges in the modern classroom. ~~They also need more help with technology, and teaching children from diverse cultures; with disabilities; and with limited English proficiency.~~

In response to the letter

What the Administration is doing to help

**** The 1994 re-authorization act included a greater focus on research-based principles of professional development -- and the Department of Education funds research and other efforts to improve the practice of teaching. But more needs to be done. That's why the**

President has proposed ^{a \$1.2 b fund} increasing funding that can be used for professional development -- as an important part of the ESEA proposal.

including peer support and other team-based activities
Other Administration initiatives include

**** Reducing class size -- particularly in the elementary grades -- is a major goal of the Clinton Administration. And we are pleased that Congress made a down payment toward the goal of 100,000 new teachers last year. Over and over, we see how smaller class size is good for students.**

A recent 5-year study of Milwaukee schools confirms that schools having a 17-1 student teacher ratio outperformed not only students in the public schools but those who received vouchers to go outside the system. Small class size is also good for teachers -- who know the limits of one human being teaching to a class of 25, 30 or even 40 young children.

**** The Administration supports the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- established in 1987 to create a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet higher standards. So far -- not enough states have created incentives for teachers to undergo this rigorous assessment -- and not enough teachers have come forward to participate. But we are moving in the right direction -- getting serious about teacher quality at every level.**

Paying teachers what they're worth

And finally, I strongly believe that experienced, high quality teachers are the most important resources this nation has in ensuring that we remain the nation of opportunity for all. But too often, we fail these teachers just as we fail many idealistic new teachers. Experienced teachers ought to be paid what they are worth -- or we risk losing them to other, better paid professionals. This is a particular challenge for school districts in low income communities -- and I challenge state leaders to find ways to help those poorer school districts get the resources they need to retain their best teachers. **As we raise standards, we ought to raise salaries as well.**

B. TARGETING INCREASED INVESTMENTS TO DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Just as the shortage of high quality teachers is most acute in schools serving predominately low-income and minority children, other resources are similarly limited when it comes to the children who are most in need.

Early Learning

This disparity begins before birth, when a mother's access to prenatal care can make the difference between a healthy baby and one who will suffer lifelong disabilities. We know that even in the first years of life, reading to and talking to a child literally stimulates the brain to learn and grow.

[Our White House Conference on Early Development and Learning gave the leading experts in the field of early childhood development the opportunity to explain their discoveries and to put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families. I have worked with the President to develop a proposal for an Early Learning Fund to help more families put this research into practice, particularly those with the least resources.

[This is also the premise behind the Prescription for Reading Partnership, which I helped launch two years ago to bring together publishers, booksellers, pediatricians, and citizens so that health care professionals can “prescribe” reading to parents. We're now serving more than 780,000 children in 47 states.]

Early childhood development programs are also critical to ensure that every child comes to school ready to learn. For over three decades, Head Start has provided low-income preschool children with comprehensive development services to make sure they don't begin school already behind. I've pushed for ^{federal support for home visiting and for} increased funding for Head Start for many years, and I am pleased that under this President, Head Start dollars have more than doubled. Many states have provided additional funding for early childhood education, and we are well on the way to what ought to be our goal: providing every child the opportunity to receive high quality early childhood education to help them become “school ready.”

But we need to do more, particularly in the area of quality. We know, for example, that in order for children to be on track to read well, they should come to school having a strong base of cognitive skills.

Children need background knowledge, and a love of books. We're not talking about sitting preschool-age children at desks in rows and forcing them to memorize the alphabet. Much of what they need to know can be learned if they are read to, and talked do. I propose that the early childhood and education communities work together to develop appropriate education standards for Head Start and other preschool programs and to make related training widely available to early childhood teachers.

Reading

We put great emphasis on reading because it is the foundation of almost every other subject. Failure to read is the overwhelming reason that children are retained, assigned to special education, or given long-term remedial services. ~~Although overall reading performance has been more or less unchanged since 1972,~~ 40 percent of all nine-year-olds score below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test. There is also a continuing gap between white students and African-American and Hispanic students. [White 69 percent of African-American and 64 percent of Hispanic students scored below the basic level in 1994, only 31 percent of white fourth graders did].

To close the gap, we need to change the way we teach reading in many classrooms. Every elementary school teacher should be schooled in the latest research, given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist, and have the support of parents and other tutors. The President has laid down a daunting challenge: every child reading independently by the end of third grade. It will take the work of all of us to meet it.

[Title I

The ESEA reauthorization will extend, expand, and improve Title I -- which has been so beneficial for disadvantaged children, including a disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic students. Historically, Title I has been the single largest source of Federal funding targeted to raising the achievement levels of students in high-poverty schools and helping to close the achievement gap between these children and their more advantaged peers. The 1994 reauthorization required states to develop content and performance standards in reading and math, and improved the targeting of resources. It also expanded school-wide programs, and strengthened parental involvement.

These changes are having an impact, but we are not anywhere near where we need to be. Therefore, the President's reauthorization proposal continues to hold at-risk children in high-poverty schools to the same high standards expected of other children -- but goes even further, with additional resources for the lowest achieving schools, increased authority for school-wide programs, and phasing out the use of teacher aides as instructors in Title I schools. Consistent with the National Academy of Sciences recommendations, the legislation proposes the use of diagnostic assessments in the first grade to ensure the early identification of children with reading difficulties.]



Mathematics

Like reading, mathematics is a foundation for many other subjects, particularly science and technology. But here too, we find significant gaps among whites and African American and Hispanic students. Too often, only students thought to be "good at math" or "college material" are given the chance to take higher level mathematics classes, ~~and a disproportionate number of children who are offered less rigorous~~ *and many of these students are* ~~mathematics courses and poorer quality instruction~~ are African American or Hispanic.

Many young people will be effectively denied the opportunity to go on to college and to enter many careers unless teachers, counselors, and school administrators hold higher expectations for all students in the area of mathematics achievement, eliminate "general math" in the curriculum, and provide the additional supports some students will need to succeed in higher level mathematics.

~~C. PROMOTING REAL ACCOUNTABILITY~~

If we are committed to level the playing field for our children -- then we must raise our expectations for all students -- regardless of their race or background. I've heard that high expectations recently got a boost here in New York -- when you did away with the general diploma -- and committed city schools to give every child the chance to earn the more rigorous Regent's diploma. I applaud all of you for demonstrating confidence not only in New York's schools -- but in your students.

While ^{the new York} cities ~~and states across the country~~ are working hard to raise expectations and create higher achievement standards, the ~~Clinton~~ Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. ~~Goals~~ ^{We've} ~~2000 has~~ helped states go from pushing for standards to implementing them -- to make them part of every teacher's lesson plan.

Now, we need to take accountability to the next level:

The President's agenda on accountability ~~all included a~~ *proposal to give*

**** Annual School Report Cards.** The President has proposed requiring annual report cards, easily understood by and widely distributed to parents and the public, for each school, school district, and the state. We must empower parents with more information and more choices. In too many communities, it's easier to get information on the quality of the local restaurant than on the quality of local schools. We owe it to our parents and our children -- every school district should issue report cards on every school.

Tough interventions. The President's ESEA proposal will require states to identify the schools with the lowest achievement levels and least improvement and take corrective action to turn them around. These corrective actions, based on a careful assessment of each school's needs, would include steps such as intensive teacher training, support to improve school discipline, and the implementation of proven approaches to school reform.

If these actions do not raise student achievement within two years, the proposal would require states to ^{do more} ~~take additional corrective actions~~, such as permitting students to attend other public schools; reconstituting the school -- by fairly evaluating the staff and making staff changes as appropriate; or closing the school and reopening it as a charter school or with an entirely new staff.

Nineteen states currently take similar actions to help improve low-performing schools, and experience demonstrates that when these interventions are carefully implemented and accompanied by the resources to support change, schools improve and student achievement increases. The President's FY 2000 budget contains \$200 million to help states begin taking these steps immediately.

I've visited schools across the country that prove what can be accomplished when dedicated teachers, parents, and communities join forces, and turn failing schools into models of success. Chicago's Du Sable high school -- where ^{for years} only about half the students used to ^{show up} on any given day, and achievement scores were some of the lowest in the nation.

But the principal of that school laid down a new law of discipline, wired the school for the Internet, and created a “culture of reading.” Teachers volunteered in after school and summer schools; and everyone learned a new vocabulary word a day. Even the security guards would quiz the kids. As a result -- Du Sable high school is turning around.

End social promotion. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can’t read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material. ~~But we can’t just hold students back because the system fails them.~~

Many people worry that the policy of ending social promotion will hurt children of color unfairly, arguing that children who are retained in grade are more likely to drop out of school and face other challenges. But these critics miss the point. The goal of ending social promotion is to hold schools accountable for giving children the extra help they will need to succeed.

This extra help is reflected in the administration's class size reduction initiative, the Reading Excellence Act, and the 21st Century Learning Centers after school initiative, which the President has proposed to ^{very} dramatically expand. Instead of using this new policy as an excuse to toss aside children having difficulty learning, schools will be expected to take aggressive action to help all students make promotion standards on time, even if this means providing afterschool and summer school programs.

We can't afford to allow 10 or 15 percent of young adults graduate from high school without being able to balance a checkbook or write a letter. These are the students who are hurt by the current practice, and they are the ones with the most to gain from the proposed policy.

~~Give parents more information, and more choices.~~ Giving parents more choices in selecting their public schools also strengthens accountability. Charter schools and magnet schools are some of the ways we can foster innovation in the system, and challenge children in different ways. By giving these schools greater flexibility and freedom, they can experiment with new approaches -- and still be held accountable for making sure their students are making the grade.

When the President first came into office -- there was just one independent public charter school in America. Now there are now 1100. And the President is proposing funding that assure that early in the next century -- there will be 3,000.

I've visited charter and magnet schools around the country -- and while some are struggling -- I've seen the dramatic differences others are making in the lives -- and opportunities -- of their students. [San Fernando Valley charter school story.]

^{also} We can learn from examples like East Harlem -- the first public school choice system in the country. That district, that ^{is ranked last in the city} faces so many ^{where it} challenges, adopted public school choice over 20 years ago. ~~And a recent evaluation of East Harlem by researchers at the State University of New York tells us important things: first the district nearly doubled the overall number of schools and created many small schools as alternatives to the traditional neighborhood schools.~~ ^{as a result,} Second and most important -- both reading and math scores have gone up in all schools -- ^{and the district is seeing better test scores in NY state} ~~both the neighborhood schools and the new alternative ones~~ -- contrary to fears that a choice system would create a district in which some were favored over others.

[Although the improvement has leveled off or declined slightly in the late 1980s, the district is still performing better on reading and math tests than schools in the rest of the city with similar concentrations of families living in poverty -- all for a school district that was ranked last in New York City in 1974.]

Vouchers

At a time when we are clearly moving forward — with greater accountability; higher standards; and greater public schools choice -- we can't allow ourselves to be pulled off track by false debates -- particularly by those who claim that vouchers are the real solutions to improving public education, and fixing failing schools. At a time when we should be devoting more resources, attention and intelligence to improving our public schools -- some want to drain off valuable resources for a few -- making it even more difficult for public schools to improve. Vouchers divide communities at a time when one of our greatest challenges as a nation is to pull communities together across racial and economic lines.

We've also learned that the voucher system simply does not deliver. I've read recent studies that show that when you look at the voucher systems that have been implemented there's no evidence that students do significantly better. It just hasn't worked. **We need to fix our public schools -- not abandon them.**

~~VI. Everyone has a stake, everyone has a role.~~

Schools by themselves can't ensure that every child is given a world-class education. We can't ask them to be held accountable for the progress we want if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well. We need a true partnership.

We need parents who believe in the importance of education, and support their schools and teachers -- and most importantly, their children. ~~All of our public efforts pale beside the power of every parent to make a difference.~~

We need communities to work in partnership with their schools, and be engaged in helping children thrive. ~~We've seen what can be accomplished when everyone from the local police officer to the retired teacher makes a commitment to creating conditions for success.~~

And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. I've seen the ~~impact on a school's learning environment as a result of public/private partnerships~~ -- when local businesses contribute everything from school-to work experiences and college scholarships to computer labs and volunteer mentors. They can also be a powerful force in holding schools accountable for high standards and student achievement.

VII. Conclusion

When this nation was first founded, it was a radical idea that education could ever become a public matter. That mothers and fathers should care about children in households beyond their own. Yet some of America's visionary leaders argued that public education was inherent in our commitment to democracy and justice. That an informed citizenry was required to survive and prosper, and that every American had a stake in the learning of every child.

Surely, they were right. Let us never take for granted that lesson of history, that America's miracle of public education is not only vital to our future prosperity -- but a cornerstone of our democracy.

The interdependent world of tomorrow requires constantly expanding knowledge at its base -- not just its elite. Failure to spread that knowledge not only perpetuates injustice -- but injures our common potential for growth. America's greatest markets for future opportunity lie right here at home -- in our cities; in our rural communities; in our aging suburbs. Their hope -- and our hope -- begins with a constantly revitalizing system of public education in America.

Make no mistake. The maintenance and reform of public education is more urgent than ever for America. It will require imagination and daring; commitment and experimentation; and yes, money. But standing here today -- at this remarkable institution of teaching and learning -- I am convinced that the best days of America -- and America's public schools -- are before us. We can do no less for our children, and we can do no less for the future of our great country.

I.

[Columbia Teachers' college hasn't been closely linked w/ NYC schools in the past, but have closer relationship now on some issues-- several professors now work with the local union on literacy and writing skills projects and on performance assessments.]

II. Importance of public education

III. Nation at Risk

State efforts

Summit in Williamsburg

ESEA and Goals 2000

[In the main we got what we asked for, only we were more tough on low-performing schools, and House Dems slowed that down, though they are now pushing this kind of accountability.)

And amongst (our/ the President's proudest achievements) in the first term was Goals 2000 and the Improving America's Schools Act, the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. The principle of both these Acts overhauled federal elementary and secondary education programs by insisting that every state set challenging academic standards that all students are expected to reach. Goals 2000 required states to set academic standards for all students and develop assessments aligned to those standards. Title I of ESEA built on this requirement by mandating that states use these standards for disadvantaged students, thus ending the practice of setting lower expectations for low-income students.

ESEA also provided schools, school districts and states with the flexibility to determine how best to educate students to meet high standards. ESEA reduced regulations, paperwork, and reporting requirements; launched the President's initiative to establish 3,000 charter schools; and permitted high-poverty schools (with 50% or more students eligible for Title I) to combine funds from separate streams and use them to improve the whole school.

And both pieces of legislation held schools accountable for the results they achieve. Title I now requires states to set annual goals for each school and district relating to the number of students who must reach academic standards; to report progress annually for each school (disaggregating data by demographic subgroup); and to intervene in schools that fail to make adequate progress.

IV. Lessons learned:

These reforms have sparked considerable state and local reform activity -- important innovations that are improving the educational progress of our children.

And, last week, we released new data that tells us that our nation's reading scores are up for the first time in all three grades levels -- 4th, 8th and 12th; we're making slow, but steady progress.

Our achievement scores are up for math and science. SAT scores — which in '83 were in a virtual free fall — are once again heading in the right direction — with the largest gains in math and science.

The Clinton Administration's first efforts in improving elementary and secondary education - Goals 2000 and ESEA, fundamentally changed the Federal role in elementary and secondary education to support the development and implementation of high academic standards for all children. In the past, our system had too often supported and encouraged a two-tiered system that had low expectations for poor children and held poor and educationally disadvantaged children to lower academic standards.

There is still work to be done though to take these activities to the next level -- to ensure that goals in the state house are translated into the classroom. The key lessons that we've learned from Goals 2000, ESEA and related state and local reform initiatives are:

Standards-based education reform works. A recent study of education reform in North Carolina and Texas -- the two states with the best track record of improving achievement generally and closing achievement gaps between minority and white students -- shows that sustained, statewide approaches of raising academic standards, providing schools with the flexibility they need, targeting resources for extra help to low-performing students and schools, and holding schools accountable for results produces real results, particularly for disadvantaged students. Other studies have shown that states and school districts, like Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago, that have adopted similar approaches have shown significant gains in reading and math. We know what we've been doing works -- states that are doing things that goals 2000 pushed for are making big gains, can't attribute that to Goals 2000. Our challenge ahead is to push reform so that it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

Recent study by GAO shows how important Goals 2000 has been to the education reform effort: The report noted that GAO funds are being used to support a broad range of education activities at the state and local levels; districts have used Goals 2000 funds to pay for a range of education reform initiatives, including: local education reform, professional development, the development of education standards and assessments, and many state officials reported that Goals 2000 has been a significant factor in promoting their education reform efforts, and in several cases, was catalyst for some aspect of the state's education reform movement, and state and local officials said that Goal 2000 funding provided valuable assistance and that, without this funding, some reform efforts would not have been accomplished so quickly if at all.

Reform is headed in the right direction, but states are still in the process of implementing reforms. States have adopted policies affecting standard-based education reform, but these policies do not go far enough. Forty-eight states have set new, more challenging academic standards, and most states are working to develop or adopt new assessments aligned with the standards. The rapid development of statewide academic standards is unprecedented in the United States, and

awareness of the need to change practice to support standards is strong across states, districts and schools. Federal efforts -- ESEA and Goals 2000 -- have been a major force in supporting and stimulating state-based reform. However, implementing standards driven reform at the school and classroom level is more difficult -- and the next challenge in education.

V. The next phase reform:

Now we must take them to the next level to ensure the whole school responds to standards-based reform. We have put forward a bold vision on the future of education reform that will take accountability to the next level:

a. Accountability - getting the standards in the classroom up to the standards in the state house:

While states are setting standards, we need to do more to make sure that our schools implement these standards based reforms in the classrooms. And we need greater accountability for performance: [Fewer states, however, have adopted accountability systems along with the standards. Only 25 states provide for financial intervention in low-performing schools, as required by Title 1. In addition, only 17 states provide extra help, such as summer school or tutoring, for students who do not meet the standards, and only five states require students to demonstrate they have met the standards as a condition for promotion.]

An agenda around accountability:

Annual school report cards: The President has proposed requiring annual report cards, easily understood by and widely distributed to parents and the public, for each school, school district and the state. And now we're building -- continuing to promote high standards for all students, strengthening the emphasis on accountability for results by calling for school report cards so everyone knows what the results are. We must empower parents, with more information and more choices. In too many communities, it's easier to get information on the quality of the local restaurants than on the quality of the local schools. Every school district should issue report cards on every school.

Tough interventions in low-performing schools: The President has proposed significantly strengthening the accountability requirements in Title 1 so as to require and adequately fund immediate and significant state and local intervention in the lowest performing schools. The President's proposal [which strengthens the current accountability provisions in Title 1 relating to low-performing schools] would require the immediate public identification of and intervention in the lowest performing schools in each state (i.e., schools with very low levels of achievement that have made little or no improvement over the previous three years. The proposal would set aside 2.5% of Title 1 funds to support aggressive intervention in these schools, including an external assessment of each school's needs and implementation of needed improvements (such as addressing school safety and security needs, providing better teacher training, acquiring up-to date textbooks, technology and curriculum materials, and extending learning time to help students catch up academically). All states and school districts must turn around their worst-performing schools -- or shut them down. (Applause.) That's the policy established in North Carolina by Governor Jim

Hunt. North Carolina made the biggest gains in test scores in the nation last year. Our budget includes \$200 million to help states turn around their own failing schools.

We must also end the practice of social promotion. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can't read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material. But we can't just hold students back because the system fails them. We must make schools accountable to give their students what they need to succeed to meet the standards, through smaller class size and more attention to kids. We must make sure our schools and school systems do right by our kids -- that is the most basic accountability issue. And they need our help, so the President has tripling the funding for summer school and after-school programs, to keep a million children learning.

Teachers

(Idea: do connection btwn standards and teacher quality, then do professional development, then mid career transition, then class-size, then pay)

We must ensure teachers have capacity to make standards come alive in classroom. (Some ode to teachers): We have a lot to do here, because so many teachers are being called on to teach out of field, etc. This won't work to get our kids up to speed:

Now we should face some facts, we have a ways to go:

Governor Hunt's National Commission on Teaching and America's Future has underscored the difficulty of recruiting and retaining talented and well-prepared teachers, especially in schools with the most disadvantaged students. About 50,000 teachers each year enter the profession with emergency or substandard licenses. Nearly one quarter of secondary teachers lack even a minor in their main teaching field, and in schools with the highest minority enrollment, students have less than a 50% chance of having a math or science teacher with a license and degree in the field. On average, 22% of new teachers leave the field within three years, and in urban areas, 30-50% leave within five years. Paraprofessionals are widely and increasingly used to provide instruction to low-achieving students in Title 1 schools, with as many as 20% of Title 1 instructional aides providing instruction without a teacher's supervision. By one estimate, instructional aides account for roughly half (67,000) of the entire Title 1 instructional workforce, and Title I aides are being hired at twice the rate of Title 1 certified teachers.

The President has proposed a dramatic expansion of professional development -- Mike is it \$200 million? -- to support high quality, sustained professional development programs -- programs that allow teachers to work together as colleagues, to support them in finding solutions to challenges they face in their school -- to work on curriculum related to high standards Professional development (support efforts for teachers to work collectively -- Pres. Proposed \$200 million). But obviously we need to have qualified teachers in classroom -- initiatives to get more qualified teachers in classroom -- from Troops to teachers (litany stuff)
Troops to Teachers --

Talk about class size: 1) smaller class size w/ well prepared work, esp. w/ disadvantaged kids, get most benefit from it - 2) we know that it's not easy to get well-prepared for teachers -- can use some of money to recruit and train teachers -- it's not just a matter of getting bodies into the classroom and we're doing something about recruitment and teacher.

All over country, there are a lot of people who haven't met state standards, many places are finding it hard to attract qualified teachers into the teaching profession, many -- but one step would be paying what they're worth. Other things: (safe places for kids -- a little joke about safe place to park wouldn't be bad idea) But at a time of unbridled economic optimism, we need to increase resources to the schools and pay teachers what their worth.

Targeting increased investments to disadvantaged children. Ending social promotion and building up kids.

Targeting increased investments to disadvantaged children

Just as the shortage of high quality teachers is most acute in schools serving predominately low-income and minority children, other resources are similarly limited when it comes to the children who are most in need.

This disparity begins before birth – when a mother’s access to prenatal care can make the difference between a healthy baby and one who will suffer lifelong disabilities. We know that even in the first years of life, reading to and talking to a child literally stimulates the brain to learn and grow.

Our White House Conference on Early Development and Learning gave the leading experts in the field of early childhood development the opportunity to explain their discoveries and to put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families. I have worked with the President to develop a proposal for an Early Learning Fund to help more families put this research into practice, particularly those with the least resources. This is also the premise behind the Prescription for Reading Partnership, which I launched two years ago to bring together publishers, booksellers, pediatricians, and other dedicated citizens so that health care professionals can “prescribe” reading to parents. We’re now serving more than 780,000 children in 47 states.

Early childhood development programs are also critical to ensure that every child comes to school ready to learn. For over three decades, Head Start has provided low-income preschool children with comprehensive development services to make sure they don’t begin school already behind. I’ve pushed for increased funding for Head Start for many years, and I am pleased that under President Clinton, Head Start dollars have more than doubled. Many states have provided additional funding for early childhood education, and we are well on the way to what ought to be our goal: providing every child the opportunity to receive high quality early childhood education to help them become “school ready.”

But we need to do more, particularly in the area of quality. We know, for example, that in order for children to be on track to read well, they should come to school having a strong base of cognitive skills related to print, background knowledge, and a love of books. We’re not talking about sitting preschool-age children at desks in rows and forcing them to memorize the alphabet. Much of what they need to know can be learned if they are read to, and if they have language rich experiences. I propose that the early childhood and education communities work together to develop developmentally appropriate education standards for Head Start and other preschool programs and to make related training widely available to early childhood teachers.

We put great emphasis on reading because it is the foundation of almost every other subject. Reading failure is the overwhelming reason that children are retained, assigned to special education, or given long-term remedial services. Although overall reading performance has been more or less unchanged since 1972, 40 percent of all nine-year-olds score below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress

(NAEP) reading test. There is a continuing gap between white students and African-American and Hispanic students. While 69 percent of African-American and 64 percent of Hispanic students scored below the basic level in 1994, only 31 percent of white fourth graders did.

To close the gap, we need to change the way we teach reading in many classrooms. Every elementary school teacher should be schooled in the latest research – given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist, and have the support of parents and other tutors. The President has laid down a daunting challenge: every child reading independently by the end of third grade. It will take the work of all of us to meet it.

The ESEA reauthorization will extend, expand, and improve another critical program for disadvantaged children, including a disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic students: Title I. Historically, Title I has been the single largest source of Federal funding targeted to raising the achievement levels of students in high-poverty schools and helping to close the achievement gap between these children and their more advantaged peers. The 1994 reauthorization required states to develop content and performance standards in reading and math, and improved the targeting of resources. It also expanded school-wide programs, and strengthened parental involvement.

These changes are having an impact, but we are not anywhere near where we need to be. Therefore, the President's reauthorization proposal continues the important features of the 1994 legislation – holding at-risk children in high-poverty schools to the same high standards expected of other children – but goes even further, with additional resources for the lowest achieving schools, increased authority for school-wide programs, and phasing out the use of teacher aides as instructors in Title I schools. Importantly, consistent with the National Academy of Sciences recommendations, the legislation proposes the use of diagnostic assessments in the first grade to ensure the early identification of children with reading difficulties.

Like reading, mathematics is a foundation for many other subjects, particularly science and technology. But here too, we find significant gaps among whites and African American and Hispanic students. Too often, only students thought to be "good at math" or "college material" are given the chance to take higher level mathematics classes, and a disproportionate number of children who are offered less rigorous mathematics courses and poorer quality instruction are African American or Hispanic. Children will not learn what they are not taught. Many young people will be effectively denied the opportunity to go on to college and to enter many careers unless teachers, counselors, and school administrators hold higher expectations for all students in the area of mathematics achievement, eliminate "general math" in the curriculum, and provide the additional supports some students will need to succeed in higher level mathematics.

Finally, as we push for higher standards in every school and every subject, we must also make sure that those who don't succeed in meeting them get the extra help they need. The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to end social promotion – the practice of promoting students from grade to grade regardless of whether

they have mastered the appropriate material and are academically prepared to do the work at the next level. Students who are promoted without regard to their achievement fall even further behind their classmates, and are more likely to lack basic skills upon graduating from high school.

Many people worry that this policy will hurt children of color unfairly, arguing that children who are retained in grade are more likely to drop out of school and face other challenges. But these critics miss the point – the goal of ending social promotion is to hold schools accountable for giving children the extra help they will need to succeed.

This extra help is reflected in the administration's class size reduction initiative, the Reading Excellence Act, and the 21st Century Learning Centers after school initiative, which the President has proposed to expand. Instead of using this new policy as an excuse to toss aside children having difficulty learning, schools will be expected to take aggressive action to help all students make promotion standards on time, even if this means providing afterschool and summer school programs and other additional resources must be made available. We can't afford to allow 10 or 15 percent of young adults graduate from high school without being able to balance a checkbook or write a letter. These are the students who are hurt by current practice, and they are the students with the most to gain from the proposed policy.

[Neera – I think LEP belongs here but I don't know enough to write about it coherently – can you fill in?]

REVISED

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
"RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION: A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND
POSSIBILITIES"
COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
APRIL 19, 1999

Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just world for our children; and for your friendship. I also want to thank both you and Ken for sponsoring this innovative new lecture series. It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. We are indebted to President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of his teachers into dedicated individuals who will make a real difference in the lives of their students. I also want to recognize the creative vision of Peter Cookson -- whose Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation brings the best minds in the field to bear on the challenges of teaching today.

A little over a hundred years ago, when a group of far-sighted college presidents, bishops and and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College -- the world was in upheaval. Our country was in the throws of transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from the countryside and immigrants from around the world. It was time -- your founders had decided -- to start educating a new breed of teachers to meet the educational needs of this unprecedented new influx of people, cultures, and experiences.

That same pioneering spirit and commitment to meet the needs of a changing world lives on in all that you do here at Columbia's Teacher's College; every time you give teachers the skills to spark the imagination of a child; every time you instill the spirit of social justice as part of your educational framework; and everytime you pioneer new strategies to better reach urban and minority students. At a time when so many higher education institutions have closed their

schools of education -- or treated them like forgotten step children -- Columbia's Teacher's College has maintained the highest standards of excellence -- and been an international leader in its field.

Today -- 100 years after your founding -- the country is in the midst of another extraordinary revolution -- as we move into the knowledge and technology based global economy of the 21st century. One again, you are pioneering new strategies to teach the skills of the future. But some fundamental truths remain. As Americans, we still believe there is nothing more important than a good education. Nothing else offers our children or ourselves the chance for a better future. And nothing so limits an individuals's dreams -- and denies the nation the talents it needs -- when that education is in some way beyond reach.

In this era of almost limitless possibilities -- our public school system holds out the promise that here, in the most diverse and multi-cultural nation in the world -- everyone has a chance to live up to their God-given potential. It's a goal admired and emulated around the world.

I've spoken with people in strife-torn countries like Northern Ireland, who believe passionately that a unified education system like ours is absolutely critical to building a tolerant, and peaceful and just society. And that is our mission. Every day, as children in classrooms everywhere learn the skills of the future, and the values we hold in common, our democracy is strengthened.

Yet those values are threatened when many of our children are unable to reap the benefits of the opportunities around them. When too many of America's children attend schools that are understaffed; overcrowded; and falling down. When too many dreams go unfulfilled -- not because a child lacks ability -- but because no one expects him or her to accomplish something, or succeed. When the gap continues to grow between those who can navigate their way on the information superhighway and learn the skills of the future -- and those who are being left far behind.

When the color of your skin can still determine the quality of your education. Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at the level of most 13-year old white students. Today, the vast majority of white students graduate from high school, compared to a third of Hispanics Today, a third of

white Americans are college graduates. Blacks graduate half that many.

Not surprisingly, the learning gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap. As my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. College educated Americans are now making 76% more than those who simply hold a high school diploma. The terrible costs of not getting a quality education -- in lower quality of life and lowered expectations -- are increasing every day.

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century to find ways of unleashing the vast potential of all our people, by making a world-class education the birthright of every citizen. It's up to all of us to must make sure that education truly does become -- in the words of John Dewey, America's "great equalizer."

Over the years, I've heard many variations on the goals we have set for ourselves at the brink of this new century. But I like the simple mantra at public school #1 here in Manhattan. It states: "All children can learn... No exceptions... No excuses." Today, I'd like to talk about the remarkable progress we've made in making that statement a reality in the classrooms of America, and in the lives of our children. I believe, and I hope you do, that we have a great deal to be proud of. But I also want to talk about what we must still do together to fulfill the promise of the next generation.

It's easier to see how far we've come when we look back at where we were. I first became acutely aware of how many of our children were falling through the cracks when I worked with Marion Wright Edeleman at the Children's Defense fund in the early 1970s. We wanted to find out why millions of school-aged children were not coming to school. And as Jill said, I knocked on hundreds of doors that year -- talking to parents about why their children weren't in school. That experience convinced me -- as never before -- that our schools had to be as committed to fulfilling the dreams of the disadvantaged and disabled as we were to serving the best and the brightest.

A decade later, with the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, it became clear to America that the challenges we saw in individual schools were widespread. We were told that our once unchallenged leadership in education was being eroded "by a tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and

a people." Only half of our high school graduates were going to college. Academic achievement was plummeting -- and the drop out rate was rising. Compared to other industrialized nations, the US ranked at the bottom. Perhaps most troubling -- the report showed a growing chasm between a scientific and technological elite — and an ill informed citizenry.

A Nation at Risk sparked a national soul searching — and in response, people at the federal, state, and local level began rolling up their sleeves, and looking for solutions. In Arkansas, my husband, then Governor, asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas's educational system. I began traveling across the state -- listening and talking to teachers and parents about the challenges they faced. It was on these trips that I saw first hand the challenges many of our schools were facing -- particularly those in rural areas. Educational resources were sorely lacking, and students tended to meet the low expectations they were offered.

So we began to talk about the need for greater accountability for student achievement, and about raising teaching standards. We started to form alliances with businesses to improve our public schools, and introduced new programs that encouraged parents to become much more involved in the education of their children. But most of all -- we realized that if we did not change the approach to education; if we didn't upgrade the standards that were expected of every school — and every teacher — and every child — then we would never see the progress we wanted to see in this one small part of America.

I'll never forget talking to one young high school graduate -- ranked second in his class -- who told me with great pride that he wanted to be a doctor. But when I asked where he was going to college, he admitted he couldn't get in anywhere. His high school simply hadn't prepared him adequately. I remember thinking to myself: here's a young man who worked hard; stayed out of trouble; and whose family did all they could for him. But his local school didn't know what the standards were that would enable him to fulfill his ambitions. And it was then that both me and my husband decided that no matter where you are born in a state, or what state you were born in — you should be held to high standards, and high expectations. Pushing for high achievement standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Williamsburg, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. Then governor Clinton-co-chaired that effort with the President. And when Bill Clinton was elected President -- he set to work with another former governor, Dick Riley, to support national goals -- and help schools, teachers, and students meet them.

Over the past six years -- we've worked hard to raise student academic achievement; improve teacher quality; involve more parents; and bring the technology of the 21st century into the classroom. We've also sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that schools -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling students to reach that raised bar of excellence.

So what have we accomplished since the *Nation at Risk* was published 15 years ago? Are our children improving academically? Have we raised our standards and expectations? Are we giving all of America's students -- regardless of where they live -- a world-class education? Like any dynamic reform process -- we see significant progress, and goals that remain unrealized. But with 90% of America's students in public school, and our country enjoying unparalleled growth and prosperity, we know we're moving in the right direction..

Thanks to dedicated educators and leaders like those of you here today, achievement levels of our high school students are climbing back up. SAT scores -- which in '83 were in a virtual free fall -- are once again heading in the right direction -- with the largest gains in math and science. And just a few months ago, new data shows we've made small but significant gains in reading. Today, fewer students are dropping out, and raised expectations have resulted in higher college enrollment. In 1983 -- half of America's students enrolled in college. Today, two thirds are reaching that goal. Across the country, students in our poorest schools are making gains, and in some communities, the gap between those living in poverty and those in more prosperous neighborhoods is finally narrowing. One of our greatest success stories: thanks to tax credits, Pell grants, and HOPE scholarships, we have finally opened the doors of college to all Americans.

But serious challenges remain, particularly with our youngest and oldest citizens. While the international standing for America's 4th graders is now comparing favorably to our counterparts overseas, our 8th and 12th graders do not fare as well. Our adult illiteracy rate remains unacceptably high. And reading scores -- while improving -- are not anywhere near where we want them to be.

We have a long way to go -- but we also have under our belts much more experience and information about what really works. We know that yes -- every child can learn when given the attention he or she deserves, and that yes, schools in even the poorest neighborhoods can become world class schools.

I've visited schools across the country that prove what can be accomplished when dedicated teachers, parents, and communities join forces, and turn failing schools into models of success. I've visited Chicago's Du Sable high school -- where only about half the students showed up on any given day, and achievement scores were some of the lowest in the nation. But the principal of that school laid down a new law of discipline, wired the school for the Internet, and created a "culture of reading." Teachers volunteered in after school and summer schools; and everyone learned a new vocabulary word a day. Even the security guards would quiz the kids. And as a result of these innovations -- schools like Du Sable are turning around.

Here in New York, I recently visited the Lab School in Chelsea. The girl who introduced me was a proud star on her basketball team -- and she like all of her fellow students that day, she wore a T-shirt that read: "Dare to compete." That day, we were honoring pioneers in women's sports. But to me, that T-shirt represented the spirit that embraced the entire school -- where dedicated teachers, a rigorous curriculum, and an engaged community were helping students learn how to successfully compete in the 21st century.

I've also heard how schools from Harlem to the lower East Side are replacing low expectations with high achievement -- because parents are pitching in; new classes are being held in art and music; and there's a new spirit of accountability for success. I understand that at PS 154 -- there's a big sign hanging in the entrance hall stating: "Only positive attitudes beyond this point." I wish I could hang that sign in every school in the nation.

At a time when we are clearly moving forward — we can't allow ourselves to be pulled off track by false debates -- particularly by those who claim that vouchers are the real solutions to improving public education, and fixing failing schools. At a time when we should be devoting more resources, attention and intelligence to improving our public schools -- some want to drain off valuable resources and give them only to a few -- making it even more difficult for public schools to improve. Vouchers divide communities at a time when one of our greatest challenges as a nation is to pull communities together across racial and economic lines.

And we've learned that the voucher system simply does not deliver. I've read recent studies that show that when you look at the voucher systems that have been implemented there's no evidence that students do significantly better. It just hasn't worked. We need to fix our public schools -- not abandon them.

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't give students and teachers greater public school choice. Charter schools and magnet schools are some of the ways we can foster innovation in the system, and challenge children in different ways. By giving these schools greater flexibility and freedom, they can experiment with new approaches -- and still be held accountable for making sure their students are making the grade. I've visited charter and magnet schools around the country -- and while some are struggling -- I've seen the dramatic differences others are making in the lives -- and opportunities -- of their students.

If we are committed to level the playing field for our children -- then we must raise our expectations for all students. If there's anything we've learned — it's that they will always meet the challenge. I've heard that high expectations recently got a boost here in New York -- when you did away with the general diploma -- and committed city schools to give every child the chance to earn the more rigorous Regent's diploma. I applaud all of you for demonstrating confidence not only in New York's schools -- but in your students.

While cities and states across the country are doing the hard work of creating new achievement standards, the Clinton Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. Goals 2000 funds have helped states go from pushing for standards to implementing them -- to make them part of every teacher's lesson plan. To get us to the next stage, President Clinton will soon send

teachers what they're worth -- something this nation has never done. We must also do a better job of matching teachers to classroom -- to keep teachers teaching in their field of expertise. And we must support professional development for all educators -- experienced and new -- not in one shot workshops, but sustained, high quality learning opportunities.

As you know so well -- this nation needs two million new teachers over the next ten years. We must do everything to attract our most promising young people to consider teaching as a career. I know that the Columbia's Teacher's College will be at the forefront of that effort.

Third, we must make sure all children come to school ready to learn -- by expanding preschool and early childhood education. We know that preparation for learning begins early -- in the earliest years of life. Science now confirms what we've always known instinctively: that time sharing a favorite book or talking with a child -- or even a newborn -- helps the brain to grow, and prepares him or her for a lifetime of reading and learning. I'm pleased that the President the President has proposed making a \$3 billion investment in the Early Learning Fund -- so that the language and literacy skills so critical to success in school can be learned long before a child steps into the classroom.

Ensuring children come to school ready to learn will help boost our fourth goal -- to make sure every student can read independently by the end of 3rd grade. For all of you who have worked with and studied children, you know that if a child is not reading well by eight or nine, it's going to be very difficult for that child to ever catch up. Yet today, 40% of our children's can't read independently by that time. That's why we need every elementary school teacher to be schooled in the latest research -- given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist -- and be supported by parents and other volunteer tutors. The President has laid down a daunting challenge. It will take the work of all of us to meet it.

And finally, as we push for higher standards in every school -- we must also make sure that those who can't succeed in meeting them get the extra help they need. So we must expand summer schools and demanding after school programs that not only provide opportunities for sports and the arts, but which focus as well on helping students gain ground on their academics. Again, we can't just set the bar higher. We must be willing to spend the extra time, effort, and resources it

will take to help children catch up. And I'm pleased that in the President's new budget — he's calling for a tripling of the funding for summer school and after school programs — to keep a million children learning.

Schools by themselves can't ensure that every child is given a world-class education. We can't ask them to be held accountable for the progress we want -- whether it's more qualified teachers; higher standards; expanded after school programs; or a more effective reading program -- if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well. We need a true partnership.

We need parents who believe in the importance of education, and support their schools and teachers -- and most importantly, their children. All of our public efforts pale beside the power of every parent to make a difference.

We need communities who work in partnership with their schools, and are engaged in helping children on their journey to adulthood. I've seen what can be accomplished when everyone from the local police officer to the retired teacher to the owner of the local market makes a commitment to create conditions for learning and success.

And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. I've seen the impact on a school's learning environment when local businesses contribute everything from school-to work experiences and college scholarships to computer labs and volunteer mentors.

[Conclusion: what's at stake -- What we do today to educate all of America's children will define the destiny of this nation for decades to come. democracy; justice; unleashing potential; civil society; etc.]

To: *Smiley*
703-548-6374
Fr. *Willa*

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS

Accountability for Results

In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton will announce a package of accountability measures designed to hold students, teachers, and schools to high standards, and to ensure that school districts and states provide students with a high quality education. These proposals will help to lift student achievement in every public school and close the achievement gap by giving special attention to disadvantaged students in low-performing schools.

The President's plan marks a sea change in national education policy -- for the first time holding states and school districts accountable for progress and rewarding them for results. While insisting that states and local governments retain primary responsibility for education, President Clinton will call on Congress to make sure federal dollars support what works and not what doesn't. His proposal emphasizes reforms that a growing number of states, cities, and schools across the nation are implementing and that are producing clear results.

Specifically, the President will announce that he will send Congress legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to ensure that schools end social promotion; teachers are qualified to teach the subjects they are assigned; states turn around their lowest-performing schools; parents get annual report cards on school performance; and schools institute effective discipline policies.

Accountability for Results: End Social Promotion

The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to end social promotion -- the practice of promoting students from grade to grade regardless of whether they have mastered the appropriate material and are academically prepared to do the work at the next level. Students who are promoted without regard to their achievement fall even further behind their classmates, and are more likely to lack basic skills upon graduating from high school.

To ensure that this requirement helps more students succeed, rather than simply increasing the number held back, states and school districts would have to show how they will help students meet promotion standards on time by (1) strengthening learning opportunities in the classroom with clear standards, small classes with well-prepared teachers, high quality professional development, and use of proven instructional practices; (2) identifying students who need help at the earliest possible moment; (3) providing extended learning time, including after-school and summer school for students who need extra help; and (4) developing an effective remedial plan, with intensive intervention, for students who still do not meet the standards, so they can get back on track in their schooling.

In 1996 President Clinton challenged every state and school district to adopt policies to end social promotion and require students to pass high school graduation exams. Twenty six states now have high school exit exams, and last year four states adopted policies to stop promoting unprepared students from grade to grade. A growing number of urban school districts, including Boston, Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington D.C. are adopting similar policies. In Chicago, which three years ago ended the practice of social promotion in a way that gives students who need it substantial extended learning time, citywide math and reading scores have gone up every year, with the largest gains among the most disadvantaged students. President Clinton's FY 2000 budget proposes to triple federal funding for after-school and summer school programs (from \$200 million to \$600 million) to help schools ending social promotion give students the extra help they need to succeed.

Accountability for Results: Turn Around Low Performing Schools

The President's ESEA proposal will require states to identify the schools with the lowest achievement levels and least improvement and take corrective action to turn them around. These corrective actions, based on a careful assessment of each school's needs, would include steps such as intensive teacher training, support to improve school discipline, and the implementation of proven approaches to school reform. If these actions do not result in improved student achievement within two years, the proposal would require states to take additional corrective actions, such as permitting students to attend other public schools; reconstituting the school, by fairly evaluating the staff and making staff changes as appropriate; or closing the school and reopening it as a charter school or with an entirely new staff. Nineteen states currently take similar actions to help improve low-performing schools, and experience demonstrates that when these interventions are carefully implemented and accompanied by the resources to support change, schools improve and student achievement increases. The President's FY 2000 budget contains \$200 million to help states begin taking these steps immediately.

Accountability for Results: Put Qualified Teachers in the Classroom

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, one of the most important factors in improving student achievement is the knowledge and skills teachers bring to the classroom. Yet every year, approximately 50,000 individuals teach on "emergency"-certificates, which means they do not meet the standards the state has set for certification. In addition, numerous teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation, with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers lacking even a minor in their main teaching field. Students in schools with the highest concentrations of poverty -- those who often need the most help from the best teachers -- are most likely to be in classrooms with teachers who are not fully qualified: for example, in schools with the highest minority enrollment, students have a less than 50 percent chance of having a math or science teacher with a license and degree in the field.

The President's ESEA proposal will require states to adopt performance examinations for all new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate both subject-matter knowledge and teaching expertise. The proposal also will require states and school districts to phase out, over five years, the use of teachers with emergency certificates and the practice of assigning teachers to subjects for which they lack adequate preparation. To support these new teacher quality standards, the proposal will provide resources to help states strengthen teacher certification standards, test new teachers, provide training to current teachers, and give incentives to recruit more highly qualified teachers.

Accountability for Results: Issue School Report Cards

The President's ESEA proposal will require states to distribute to all parents annual report cards for each school and school district, as well as the state as a whole. The report cards will include information on student achievement, teacher professional qualifications, class size, school safety, and other factors that will help parents to judge the performance of the schools. Where appropriate, the report cards also will show the academic achievement of ethnic and racial subgroups, to ensure accountability for helping all students achieve. Thirty-six states currently publish or require local school districts to publish school report cards, and five additional states will begin the practice in the next two years. A recent report by Public Agenda, however, shows that only 31 percent of parents had seen these report cards. The President's ESEA proposal will help ensure that all parents in all states have access to the information they need to evaluate the quality of their schools and identify the areas in which improvement is needed.

Accountability for Results: Adopt Discipline Policies

Schools must be a place of learning. President Clinton already has challenged states, communities, and schools to take a number of steps to restore order and safety, such as adopting school uniforms, enforcing truancy laws,

and imposing curfews. But in some schools, the breakdown of classroom discipline remains one of the biggest obstacles to learning and one of the greatest concerns for teachers, students, and parents alike. The President's proposal will require states and school districts to adopt discipline policies to make sure students have the chance to learn and teachers have the chance to teach.

A National Effort to Reduce Class Size in the Early Grades

In his 1998 State of the Union address, President Clinton proposed to help local school schools hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers in order to reduce class size in grades 1-3 to a national average of 18, and make sure that every child gets a solid foundation in the basics. Studies show that smaller classes help teachers provide more personal attention to students and spend less time on discipline; this helps students to learn more and get a stronger foundation in the basic skills. In these studies, minority and disadvantaged students showed the largest achievement gains. Last year, Congress provided a down payment on the President's seven year, \$12.4 billion proposal by appropriating \$1.2 billion to help local communities hire about 30,000 teachers. Now Congress must finish the job by providing the next installment of funds for local schools to continue progress toward hiring 100,000 new teachers over seven years.

Modern School Buildings to Improve Student Learning

For students to learn, schools must be well-equipped and be able to accommodate smaller class sizes. In 1998, the American Society of Civil Engineers said that school buildings represent the nation's most pressing infrastructure need. To address this critical need, President Clinton is proposing federal tax credits as incentives to help states and school districts to build and renovate public schools. Half of the bond authority will be allocated to the 100 school districts with the largest number of low-income children, and the other half will be allocated to the states.

Recruiting Outstanding New Teachers for Our Nation's Public Schools

With more than 2 million teachers to be hired in the next ten years to accommodate record student enrollments and an aging teaching force, the nation must not only recruit an adequate *number* of teachers, but ensure a *quality* teaching force through effective teacher recruitment and preparation. The President's budget will contain a series of new initiatives and funding increases to help recruit well prepared individuals to teach where they are needed the most, in high poverty urban and rural communities. In particular, the President's FY 2000 budget will increase funding for his teacher recruitment effort enacted in last year's Higher Education Act — to \$35 million from \$7.5 million — to recruit 7,000 outstanding new teachers into high need public schools by giving them scholarships in exchange for a commitment to teach. The President will announce other initiatives to improve teacher quality at an event later in the week.

A talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom

What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn. Therefore, recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers must be the central strategy for improving our schools.

This can't happen unless we get serious about teacher quality. I believe that the vast majority of teachers are dedicated professionals who serve their students well. But nothing undermines the profession of teaching more – or hurts our children's chances more – than those poorly prepared teachers who find themselves in classroom without the knowledge or tools they need to succeed.

We ought to hold teachers to the same high standards we want for our children. State licensing ought to be based on demonstrated performance, subject matter knowledge, and teaching skill – the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offer an excellent benchmark. School districts should have the goal of ending the too common practice of using emergency certification to fill classrooms – more than 30 percent of newly hired teachers are entering without full certification and over 11 percent have no license at all. Finally, too many teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation, with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers lacking even a minor in their main teaching field.

The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to phase out out-of-field assignments and emergency certification ~~over five years~~. The proposal also will ask states to adopt performance examinations for all new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate both subject-matter knowledge and teaching expertise, and will provide resources to help them achieve these goals.

Some may say that we can't simultaneously meet our needs for up to two million new teachers over 10 years and still achieve these goals for teacher quality. I believe we can, if we do more to improve the profession of teacher and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.

Colleges of education are one of the best sources for top quality candidates. ~~The best colleges of education, like Teacher's Colleges, work closely with the community, which gives their students the opportunity for clinical experiences and gives local schools access to the latest research and other resources of the university.~~ But unfortunately, too few teacher preparation programs hold themselves to the high standards of a Teacher's College. Universities should be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce and if they can't measure up, inadequate schools should be closed. Universities must stop thinking of their colleges of education as poor stepchildren and instead, devote the same attention and resources to them as they do to programs that prepare doctors and lawyers.

We should be more creative about attracting talented people to the profession of teaching, and do more to enable mid-career entrants to learn the pedagogy they need to translate

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their subject-matter knowledge and life experience into a teaching career. For example, the administration is planning to expand the President's Troops to Teachers initiative to reach mid-career professionals from other fields. Financial incentives can make college and teacher preparation more affordable, such as the President's initiative to provide loan forgiveness to students who agree to teach in high-poverty schools. Some school districts and universities are even working together to create middle and high school programs that expose young people to the teaching profession— for example, South Carolina's Teacher Cadet Program gives academically talented high school juniors and seniors supervised experiences teaching younger children and to study education with school and university faculty. We need more programs like these to make sure that as we raise standards, we don't exacerbate the looming teacher shortage.

Once we have attracted individuals into teaching, we must do more to retain them. It makes no sense to take a person who has made the commitment to teach, who has spent years preparing with every intention of making it their life's work, and then just drop them in a classroom to sink or swim. It's no wonder that one out of five new teachers leaves after three years – and in urban classrooms, the number is one out of two. One reason is that too often, the most difficult teaching assignments are going to the teachers with the least experience. This might make sense if our goal was to reward seniority whatever the cost, but not if our goal is to give the children who most need help receive the best teachers. School Boards, administrators, and teacher unions must work together to make sure that the best interests of students are not subordinated to other factors.

Another way to help new teachers and those who need extra support succeed is the implementation of peer assistance programs that allow high-performing teachers to others. School districts should allow time for team planning, to reduce the isolation of the profession. Unlike doctors and lawyers, who routinely confer with colleagues, teachers are cut off from their coworkers. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40 percent say it improves their teaching "a lot," and another third say it improves their teaching "moderately." But it remains an uncommon practice.

All teachers should have the opportunity to receive ongoing professional development, but unfortunately, the most common forms of professional development activities continues to be those that are least beneficial – the "one-shot" workshops that last a day and carry little relevance to teachers' work in the classroom. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that the biggest impediment to improving teaching was the lack of access to the kinds of knowledge and skills teachers need to help students succeed.

A serious program of sustained profession development, based on research about what works, and relevant to the teacher's classroom needs ought to be in place in every school district – to keep teachers up to date in their subject, to learn proven teaching methods, to understand how to adjust their curriculum in response to state and local standards, and to respond to the new challenges of the modern classroom (technology, teaching children from diverse cultures, teaching children with disabilities, and helping limited English proficient students.

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The Clinton administration has supported these efforts in many ways. The 1994 reauthorization included a greater focus on research-based principles of professional development and the Department of Education supports research and other efforts to improve the practice of teaching. But we need to do more. That is why the President has proposed increasing funding that can be used for professional development and making it an important part of the ESEA proposal.

Reducing class size, particularly in the elementary grades, is a major goal of the Clinton Administration, and we were pleased that Congress agreed to make a down payment toward the goal of 100,000 new teachers last year. Of course, smaller class size is good for students – for example, a recent five-year study of Milwaukee schools confirms that schools having a 17 to 1 student teacher ratio outperformed students not only in the public schools but those who received vouchers to go outside. But small class size is also good for teachers, who know the limits of one human being teaching a class of 25, 30 or even 40 young children.

Finally, I strongly believe that experienced, high quality teachers are the most important resource this nation has in ensuring that we remain the nation of opportunity for all. But too often we fail these teachers just as we fail many idealistic new teachers. Experienced teachers ought to be paid what they are worth or we risk losing them to other better-paid professions. This is a particular challenge for school districts in low-income communities – I challenge state leaders to find ways to help poorer school districts have the resources to retain their best teachers, and school districts with resources to reward those teachers who deserve extra compensation. As we raise standards, we ought to raise salaries as well.

Dick Riley has proposed a three-stage system that merits support. First, a new teacher would be granted an initial license for up to three years after passing written exam. During this trial period, schools would offer new teachers annual contracts and counsel out those individuals who don't belong in a school. Second, he proposes the creation of a professional license, with higher standards than the initial license and involving peer review. The third stage would be the voluntary advanced license, which already exists through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, established in 1987. So far, not enough states have created incentives for teachers to undergo this rigorous assessment, and not enough teachers have come forward to participate. But we are moving in the right direction – getting serious about teacher quality at every level

A talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom

What teachers ^{able to} know and ^{can} do is the most important influence on what students learn, ^{and} recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers ^{must be} the central strategy for improving our schools. ^{Therefore}

How do we make this happen?

^{I believe that the vast majority of teachers are dedicated professionals who serve their children well. But}
First, we need to get serious about teacher quality. Nothing undermines the profession of teaching more -- or hurts our children's chances more -- than poorly prepared teachers. We ought to hold teachers to the same high standards we want for our children. State licensing ought to be based on demonstrated performance, subject matter knowledge, and teaching skill -- not ^{what is it now based on}. School districts should have the goal of ending the too common practice of using emergency certification to fill classrooms -- more than 30 percent of newly hired teachers are entering without full certification and over 11 percent have no license at all. ^{In addition,} too many teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation, with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers lacking even a minor in their main teaching field. [The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to phase out out-of-field assignments and emergency certification over five years. The proposal also will ask states to adopt performance examinations for all new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate both subject-matter knowledge and teaching expertise, and will provide resources to help them achieve these goals.]

^{Some may say that we can't simultaneously meet our needs for up to 2 million new teachers over a year and still achieve these goals for teacher quality. I believe we can, if we look at two things -- strengthen our colleges and create new strategies to bring talented people into the profession mid-career.}
~~Colleges of education ought to be one of the best sources for top quality candidates, but unfortunately, too few schools hold themselves to the high standards of a Teacher's College. Universities should be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce and if they can't measure up, inadequate schools should be closed. The best colleges of education, like Teacher's College, work closely with the community, which gives their students the opportunity for clinical experiences and gives local schools access to the latest research and other resources of the university. ~~Universities must stop thinking of their college as a "career school" and instead devote the attention and resources to preparing teachers as they do pre-law or pre-med doctors and lawyers.~~~~
We should be more creative about attracting talented people to the profession of teaching, and do more to enable mid-career entrants to learn the pedagogy they need to translate their subject-matter knowledge and life experience into a teaching career. For example, the President's Troops to Teachers initiative [does what?]. Financial incentives can make college and teacher preparation more affordable [Clinton initiative]. Some school districts and universities are working together to create middle and high school programs that expose young people to the teaching profession [does Teacher's College do this?] -- for example, South Carolina's Teacher Cadet Program gives academically talented high school juniors and seniors supervised experiences teaching younger children and to study education with school and university faculty. We need more programs like this to make sure that as we raise standards, we don't exacerbate the looming 2 million teacher shortage. ^{There}

Once we have attracted individuals -- whatever their age -- to teaching profession, we must do more to retain them. It makes no sense to take a person who has made the commitment to teach, who has spent years preparing with every intention of making it their life's work, and then just drop them in a classroom, ^{too often not in the field of their subject matter expertise}, and tell them to sink or swim. It's no wonder that one out of five new teachers leaves after three years -- and in urban classrooms, the number is one out of two. (One reason is that too often, the most difficult teaching assignments are going to the teachers with the least experience. This might make sense if our goal was to reward seniority whatever the cost, but not if our goal is to give the children who most need help receive the best teachers. ^{School boards and administrators can make sure this doesn't happen if they work together to do what's best for the child.}

^{One way to help new teachers and those who need extra support to succeed is to organize peer assistance programs, allowing high-performing teachers to serve as mentors. Another is to allow time for team planning, to reduce the isolation of the profession. Unlike doctors and lawyers, who routinely confer with colleagues, teachers are cut off from their colleagues in the classroom. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40 percent say it improves their teaching "a lot," and another third say it improves their teaching "moderately." But it remains an uncommon practice.}

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beneficial – the “one-shot” workshops that last a day and carry little relevance to teachers’ work in the classroom. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future found that the biggest impediment to improving teaching was the lack of access to the kinds of knowledge and skills teachers need to help students succeed. A serious program of sustained profession development, based on research about what works, and relevant to the teacher’s classroom needs ought to be in place in every school district – to keep teachers up to date in their subject, to learn proven teaching methods, to understand how to adjust their curriculum in response to state and local standards, and to respond to the new challenges of the modern classroom (technology, teaching children from diverse cultures, teaching children with disabilities, and helping limited English proficient students.) The Clinton administration has supported these efforts in many ways. The 1994 reauthorization included a greater focus on research-based principles of professional development. But we need to do more, and that is why the President has proposed increasing funding that can be used for professional development and making it an important part of the ESEA proposal.

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Experienced, high quality teachers are the most important resource this nation has in ensuring that we remain the nation of opportunity for all. But too often we fail these teachers just as we fail those idealistic ~~new teachers who lack support~~. Experienced teachers ought to be paid what they are worth. (more) The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has created standards that should be benchmark for accomplished teaching. The Board, which was established in 1987, operates a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet high standards. But the Board can only impact teacher quality if states and school districts create incentives for teachers to take the rigorous exam, as more than 20 states have done.

Finally, I strongly believe that
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mark to teachers
I support his idea of a career ladder.
And at the top of the ladder ought not be a transfer out of the classroom into an admin job, but a well paid position as master-teacher, a resource to every teacher in the school and a valued asset of the entire community.

TO: Mrs. Clinton

FROM: Neera Tanden

RE: Materials for Columbia Teachers' College speech

DATE: April 17, 1999

Attached are a number of the materials you requested from Shirley. We will provide you with additional materials tomorrow.

Attached are:

- Secretary Riley's most recent State of Education speech
- The President's policy on ending social promotion, as well as the rest of his education agenda as outlined in the State of the Union
- Recent articles on Chicago's policy to end social promotion
- Materials and articles on Master Teachers
- Some materials on mid-career transitions to teaching (more to come tomorrow)
- The President's recent statements on vouchers
- Information on Rochester's school reforms
- A recent article describing evaluations of East Harlem's school choice proposal
- Some information on Columbia Teacher's College's connections to New York City's public schools

TO: Mrs. Clinton

FROM: MaryEllen McGuire

RE: Materials for Columbia Teachers' College Speech

DATE: April 17, 1999

Attached are some of the materials you requested from Shirley. You will be provided with additional materials tomorrow.

Attached are:

- Materials on innovative research at Teachers College
- Materials on Teachers College/ New York Schools Partnerships
- List of Catalogued First Lady New York Education Events with Briefs
- Master List of Catalogued First Lady Education Events

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
"RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION: A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND POSSIBILITIES"
COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
APRIL 19, 1999

Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just and fair world for our children; and for your friendship. I also want to thank both you and Ken and the Iscol Foundation for sponsoring this new lecture series. ~~It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. We are indebted to President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of his teachers into dedicated individuals who will make a real difference in the lives -- and aspirations -- of their students.~~ ^{It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. We are indebted to President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of ~~his teachers~~ ^{his students} into dedicated individuals who will make a real difference in the lives -- and aspirations -- of their students. ~~teachers~~}

A little over a hundred years ago, when a group of far-sighted college presidents, bishops ~~and~~ and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College -- the world was in upheaval. Our country was in the throws of transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from the countryside and immigrants from around the world. It was time -- your founders had decided -- to start educating a new breed of teachers to meet the educational needs of this unprecedented new influx of people, cultures, and experiences.

That same pioneering spirit and commitment to meet the needs of a changing world lives on ~~in all that you do~~ here at Columbia's Teacher's College; when you give teachers the skills to ~~educate~~ ^{teach} an increasingly diverse student population; when you instill the spirit of social justice as part of your educational framework; when you pioneer new teaching strategies to meet the needs of urban and minority students. At a time when so many higher education institutions have closed their schools of education -- or treated them like forgotten step children -- Columbia's Teacher's College has maintained the highest standards of excellence -- and been an international leader in its field.

Today -- 100 years after your founding -- the country is in the midst of another extraordinary revolution -- as we move into the knowledge and technology based global economy of the 21st century. Yet we still recognize some fundamental truths. That there is nothing more important than a good education. Nothing else offers our children or ourselves the chance for a better future. And nothing so limits an individuals's ~~dreams~~ ^{possibilities} -- and denies the nation the talents it needs -- when that education is ~~in some way beyond reach.~~ ^{a dream denied}

In the era of almost limitless possibilities -- our public school system holds out the promise that here, in the most diverse and multi-cultural nation in the world -- everyone has a chance to live up to their God-given potential. It's a unique commitment to ensure that citizens can lift up their own lives while lifting up their country -- a goal admired and emulated around the world.

I've spoken with people in Northern Ireland, for example, who believe passionately that a unified education system like ours is absolutely critical to building a tolerant, and peaceful and just society. And that is our mission. Every single day, as children in classrooms everywhere learn the skills of the future, and the values we hold in common, our democracy is strengthened.

Yet we all also know that these values of democracy and fairness that we hold to so tightly are threatened when many of our children are unable to reap the benefits of the opportunities around them. Too many of America's children today attend schools that are understaffed; overcrowded; and falling down. Too many dreams go unfulfilled -- because no one expects them to succeed or accomplish something in their lives. And in too many schools and communities, the ~~gaps of knowledge and achievement~~^{achievement} ~~are~~^{is} widening between rich and poor, between black and white, between those who can navigate their way up the information superhighway, and those who are being left far behind.

Indeed, as we move into the 21st century, we see that the learning gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap -- with college educated Americans now making 76% more than those who simply hold a high school diploma. The terrible costs of not getting a quality education are increasing every day.

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century to unleash the vast potential of our people, by making a world-class education the birthright of every citizen. It's up to all of us to must make sure that public education truly becomes -- in the words of John Dewey, America's "great equalizer."

Over the years, I've heard many variations on the goals we have set for ourselves at the brink of this new century. But I like the simple mantra at public school #1 here in Manhattan. It states: "All children can learn... No exceptions... No excuses." Today, I'd like to talk about the remarkable progress we've made in making that statement a reality in the classrooms of America, and in the lives of our children. I believe, and I hope you do, that we have a great deal to be proud of. But I also want to talk about what we must still do together to fulfill the promise of the next generation.

It's easier to see how far we've come when we look back at where we were. I first became acutely aware of how many of our children were falling through the cracks when I worked with Marion Wright Edeleman at the Children's Defense fund in the early 1970s. We wanted to find out why millions of school-aged children were not coming to school. I knocked on hundreds of doors that year -- talking to parents about why their children weren't in school. That experience convinced me -- as never before -- that our schools had to do more than serve the best and the brightest. We had to be equally committed to fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of the disadvantaged, the disabled; and those who need extra help just to stay even.

we learned that the reasons too often were that school had declined to offer the children in these homes who were often disabled - what they needed to learn.

A decade later, with the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, it became clear to America that the challenges we saw in individual schools were widespread. We were told that our once unchallenged leadership in education was being eroded "by a tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." Only half of our high school graduates were going to

college. Academic achievement was plummeting -- and the drop out rate was rising. Compared to other industrialized nations, the US ranked at the bottom. Perhaps most troubling -- the report showed a growing chasm between a scientific and technological elite — and an ill informed citizenry.

A Nation at Risk sparked a national soul searching — and in response, people at the federal, state, and local level^s began rolling up their sleeves, and looking for solutions. In Arkansas, my husband, then Governor, asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas's educational system. I began traveling across the state -- listening and talking to teachers and parents about the challenges they faced. ~~It was~~ On these trips ~~that~~ I saw first hand the challenges many of our schools were facing -- particularly those in rural areas. Many didn't have libraries; or art programs. And students tended to meet the low expectations they were offered.

So we began to talk about the need for greater accountability for student achievement, and about raising teaching standards. We started to form alliances with businesses to improve our public schools, and introduced new programs that encouraged parents to become much more involved in the education of their children. But most of all -- we realized that if we did not change the approach to education; if we didn't upgrade the standards that were expected of every school — and every teacher — and every child — then we would never see the progress we wanted to see in this one small part of America.

I'll never forget talking to one young high school graduate -- ranked second in his class -- who told me with great pride that he wanted to be a doctor. But when I asked where he was going to college, he admitted he couldn't get in anywhere. His high school simply hadn't prepared him adequately. I remember thinking to myself: here's a young man who worked hard; stayed out of trouble; and whose family did all they could for him. But his local school didn't know what the standards were that would enable him to fulfill his ambitions. And it was then that both me and my husband decided that no matter where you are born in a state, or what state you were born in — you should be held to high standards, and high expectations. Pushing for high achievement standards became one of my husband's top priorities.

have the opportunity to study a rigorous curriculum.

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Williamsburg, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. Then governor Clinton-co-chaired that effort with the President. And when Bill Clinton was elected President -- he set to work with another former governor, Dick Riley, to support national goals -- and help schools and communities meet them.

Over the past six years~~se~~ we've worked hard to raise student academic achievement; improve teacher quality; involve more parents; and bring the technology of the 21st century into the classroom. We've also sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that schools -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling students to reach that raised bar of excellence.

So what have we accomplished since the *Nation at Risk* was published 15 years ago? (Are our children improving academically?) Have we raised our standards and expectations? Are we giving all of America's students -- regardless of where they live -- a world-class education? Like any dynamic reform process -- we see significant progress, and goals that remain unrealized. With 90% of America's students in public school, and with our country enjoying unparalleled growth and prosperity, we know we're moving in the right direction.

Can cut to higher

Thanks to dedicated educators and leaders like those of you here today, we've come a long way. Achievement levels of our high school students are ~~climbing back up~~ ^{on the rise}. SAT scores -- which in '83 were in a virtual free fall -- are once again heading in the right direction -- with the largest gains in math ~~and science~~. And just a few months ago, new data shows we've made small but significant gains in reading. Today, fewer students are dropping out, and raised expectations have resulted in higher college enrollment. In 1983 -- half of America's students enrolled in college. Today, two thirds are reaching that goal. And slowly but surely, students in our poorest schools are making gains, and the gap between those living in poverty and those in more prosperous neighborhoods is finally narrowing in some states and districts.

Don't think science is on the rise
SAT - need to check

But serious challenges remain. While the international standing for America's 4th graders is now comparing favorably to our counterparts overseas, ^{in math & science} our 8th and 12th graders do not fare as well. Our adult illiteracy rate remains unacceptably high. And reading scores -- while improving -- are not anywhere near where we want them to be.

Clearly we still have a long way to go. But we also have under our belts much more experience and information about what works. We know that yes -- every child can learn when given the attention they deserve, and that schools in even the poorest neighborhoods can become world class schools.

I've visited schools across the country that prove what can be accomplished when dedicated teachers, parents, and communities join forces, and turn failing schools into models of success. I've visited Chicago's Du Sable high school -- where only about half the students showed up on any given day, and achievement scores were some of the lowest in the nation. But the principal of that school laid down a new law of discipline, wired the school for the Internet, and created a "culture of reading." Teachers volunteered in after school and summer schools, and everyone learned a new vocabulary word a day. Even the security guards would quiz the kids. Leaders like Chicago's Mayor Daley are imposing strict new standards of accountability; putting low performing schools on probation, and reconstituting the worst ones. And as a result -- schools like Du Sable are turning around. →

programs

And these efforts paid off, today DuSable is ---

Here in New York, I recently visited the Lab School in Chelsea. The girl who introduced me was a proud star on her basketball team -- and she wore -- like all of her fellow students -- a T-shirt that read: "Dare to compete." That day, we were honoring pioneers in women's sports. But to me, that T-shirt represented the spirit that embraced the entire school -- where dedicated teachers, a rigorous curriculum, and an engaged community were helping students learn how to successfully compete in the 21st century.

I've also heard how schools like PS 154 in Harlem and PS 1 on the lower East Side -- are replacing low expectations with high achievement -- because parents are pitching in; new classes are being held in art and music; and there's a new spirit of accountability for success. I understand that at PS 154 -- there's a big sign hanging at the entrance stating: "Only positive attitudes beyond this point." I wish I could hang that sign in every school in the nation.

At a time when we are clearly moving forward — we can't allow ourselves to be pulled off track by false debates -- particularly by those who claim that vouchers are the real solutions to improving public education, and fixing failing schools. At a time when we should be devoting more resources, attention and intelligence to improving our public schools -- some want to drain off valuable resources and give them only to a few -- making it even more difficult for public schools to improve. Vouchers divide communities at a time when one of our greatest challenges as a nation is to pull communities together across racial and economic lines. And we've learned that ~~the voucher system~~ ^{do} simply does not deliver. I've read recent studies that show that when you look at the voucher systems that have been implemented there's no evidence that students do significantly better. It just hasn't worked.

Polls show that support for vouchers has declined sharply over the past few years -- particularly when ~~people~~ ^{parents} learn that voucher programs reduce funding for public schools. Overwhelmingly — Americans want to fix their public schools — not abandon them.

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't give students and teachers greater public school choice. Charter schools and magnet schools are some of the ways we can foster innovation in the system, and challenge children in different ways. By giving these schools greater flexibility and freedom, they can experiment with new approaches -- and still be held accountable for making sure their students are making the grade. I've been in and out of charter schools around the country -- and while some are struggling -- I've seen the dramatic differences some of them are making in the lives -- and opportunities -- of their students.

But if we are committed to level the playing field for our children -- then we must raise our expectations for all students. If there's anything we've learned — it's that they will meet the new challenge. I've heard that high expectations recently got a boost here in New York -- when you did away with the general diploma -- and committed city schools to give every child the chance to earn the more rigorous Regency diploma. I applaud [] Rick Mills and others for demonstrating confidence not only in New York's schools -- but in your students.

While cities and states across the country are doing the hard work of creating new achievement standards, the Clinton Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. Goals 2000 funds have helped states go from pushing for standards to implementing them -- to make them part of every teacher's lesson plan. To get us to the next stage, President Clinton will soon send to Congress a significant revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It's based on a comprehensive ~~three~~ ^{two}-part strategy: targeting increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling; improving teacher quality; and promoting real accountability for results. But we don't need to wait for this legislation to pass. There is much we can do today that will make real difference in

the lives of all of our children. As John Sanford, the late superintendent of Seattle's schools has said, "the victory is in the classroom."

First, we know from experience that all children learn better when they get more attention. So we must commit ourselves to reducing class size. Who hasn't been in classroom where even the most talented teacher is struggling to maintain order -- let alone teach -- a group of 35 or 40 rambunctious children. A recent 5-year study of Milwaukee confirms the importance of having smaller classes. It showed that ^{public with} schools having a 17-1 student teacher ratio outperformed students not only ⁱⁿ the regular public schools but those who ^{attended private schools} received scholarships ^{through voucher system}. Reports like this one and so many others are why the President is fighting so hard to hire 100,000 teachers -- so that we can lower class size in the early grades.

Second, placing a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom is the single most important thing we can do to ensure our children succeed. America's teachers are America's future -- and all of the things that we've talked about so far -- about higher expectations and student achievement -- will not happen unless we make teaching a first class profession.

We must recognize the extraordinary work -- sometimes I'd call it magic -- that teachers do every single day in the classroom. But we must also look harder at what we need to do to prepare new teachers -- and provide professional development for those already in the classroom. We just can't throw a warm body into a classroom, and hope for the best.

As we strive to ensure that every child has a high quality teacher -- and to hold schools and states accountable for making it happen -- we also have to encourage them to stay in the profession. We can't give new teachers the toughest assignments -- and then leave them to sink or swim. One solution could be to have seasoned teachers serve as mentors to new recruits. Another is to pay teachers what they're worth -- something this nation has never done. We must also do a better job of matching teachers to classroom^s -- to keep teachers teaching in their field of expertise. And we must support professional development for all educators -- experienced and new -- not one shot workshops, but sustained, high quality learning opportunities.

Third, we must expand preschool and early childhood education. Ensuring all our children come to school ready to learn is a top priority. And we know that preparation for learning begins early -- in the first three years of life. Science now confirms what we've always believed all along: that time sharing a favorite book or talking with a child -- or even a newborn -- helps the brain to grow -- and prepares him or her for a lifetime of reading and learning. I'm pleased that the President the President has proposed making a \$3 billion investment in the Early Learning Fund -- so that the language and literacy skills so critical to success in school can be learned long before a child steps into the classroom.

Ensuring children come to school ready to learn will help boost our fourth goal -- to make sure every student can read independently by the end of 3rd grade. For all of you who have worked with and studied children, you know that if a child is not ready ^{ing} well by 8 or nine, it's going to be very difficult for that child to ever catch up. ^{But} yet today, 40% of our children's can't read independently by that time. That's why we need every elementary school teacher to be

schooled in the latest research -- given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist -- and be supported by parents and ~~other~~ volunteer tutors. The President has laid down a daunting challenge. It will take the work of all of us to meet it.

5th
And fourth, we must expand the opportunities for those who are behind to get ahead — through summer schools programs and demanding after school programs that not only provide opportunities for sports and the arts, but which focus as well on gaining ground on their academics. Again, we can't just set the bar higher. We must be willing to spend the extra time, effort, and resources it will take to help children catch up. And I'm pleased that in the President's new budget — he's calling for a tripling of the funding for summer school and after school programs — to keep a million children learning.

Schools by themselves can't ensure that every child is given a world-class education. We can't ask them to be held accountable for the progress we want -- whether it's more qualified teachers; higher standards; expanded after school programs; or a more effective reading program -- if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well. We need a true partnership.

We need parents who believe in the importance of education, and support their schools and teachers -- and most importantly, their children. All of our public efforts pale beside the power of every parent to make a difference.

We need communities who work in partnership with their schools, and are engaged in helping children on their journey to adulthood. I've ~~what~~ ^{seen} what can be accomplished when everyone from the local police officer to the retired teacher to the owner of the local market makes a commitment to create conditions for learning and success.

And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. I've seen the impact on a school's learning environment when local businesses donate everything from school-to work experiences and college scholarships to computer labs and volunteer mentors.

[Conclusion: what's at stake -- What we do today to educate all of America's children will define the destiny of this nation for decades to come. democracy; justice; unleashing potential; etc.]

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
“RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION: A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND
POSSIBILITIES”

COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

APRIL 19, 1999

Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just world for our children; and for your friendship. I also want to thank both you and Ken for sponsoring this innovative new lecture series. It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. We are indebted to President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of his students into dedicated teachers who will make a real difference in the lives of their students. I also want to recognize the creative vision of Peter Cookson -- whose Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation brings the best minds to bear on the challenges of teaching today.

Contributions of Teacher's College

A little over a hundred years ago, when a group of far-sighted college presidents, bishops and and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College -- the world was in upheaval. Our country was in the throws of transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from the countryside and immigrants from around the world.

It was time -- your founders had decided -- to start educating a new breed of teachers to meet the educational needs of this unprecedented new influx of people, cultures, and experiences.

That same pioneering spirit ~~and commitment to meet the needs of a changing world~~ lives on in all that you do ~~here at Columbia's~~ Teacher's College; every time you give teachers the skills to spark the imagination of a child; every time you instill the spirit of social justice as part of your educational framework; and everytime you pioneer new strategies to better reach the students of today. At a time when so many higher education institutions have closed their schools of education -- or down graded their importance -- Columbia's Teacher's College has maintained the highest standards of excellence.

[Whether it was teaching early childhood education -- before it became conventional wisdom to look at the importance of those early years; or researching new ways of teaching urban and minority students -- you've expanded our knowledge about what it takes to create a world-class teacher.

You've also used your resources and talents to be instruments of change and progress in the New York city schools -- initiating writing projects; helping to establish professional development schools; and mentoring first year teachers, so they stay on in the toughest schools. Your work to get the arts back into the city's public schools has helped transform lives in hundreds of schools. And today, thanks to a collaboration between Teacher's College and the city schools -- 9th and 10th graders at the Heritage School are now benefitting from a dynamic new curriculum infused with the arts and culture. I salute the leadership and faculty of Teacher's College.

II. Importance of Public Education

We've all here today because as all Americans, we still believe that nothing offers our children ~~or ourselves~~ the chance for a better future than a good education. ~~And nothing so limits an individual's dreams~~ ~~and denies the nation the talents it needs~~ ~~when that education is in some way beyond reach.~~ In this era of almost limitless possibilities -- our public school system holds out the promise that here, in the most diverse and multi-cultural nation in the world -- everyone has a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

I've spoken with people in strife-torn countries like Northern Ireland, who believe that a unified education system like ours is absolutely critical to building a tolerant, ~~and~~² peaceful and just society. And that is our mission. Every day, as children learn the skills of the future, and the values we hold in common, our democracy is strengthened.

b. Those values are threatened by unequal access

Yet those values are threatened when many of our children are unable to reap the benefits of the opportunities around them. When too many of America's children attend schools that are understaffed; overcrowded; and falling down. When too many dreams go unfulfilled -- not because a child lacks ability -- but because no one expects him or her to accomplish something, or succeed.

Today, more than four decades after the Supreme court ended segregation in America's schools, the color of your skin can still determine the quality of your education. [Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at the level of most 13-year old white students.

Today, the vast majority of white students graduate from high school, compared to a third of Hispanics. Today, a third of white Americans are college graduates. Blacks graduate half that many.]

I would keep
[Not surprisingly, the learning gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap. As my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. College educated Americans are now making 76% more than those who simply hold a high school diploma. The terrible costs of not getting a quality education -- in lower quality of life and lowered expectations -- are increasing every day.]

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century to find ways of unleashing the vast potential of all our people, by making a world-class education the birthright of every citizen. It's up to all of us to must make sure that education truly does become -- in the words of John Dewey, America's "great equalizer."

Over the years, I've heard many variations on the goals we have set for ourselves at the brink of this new century. But I like the simple mantra at public school #1 here in Manhattan. It states: "All children can learn... No exceptions... No excuses."

Today, I'd like to talk about what we must do together to fulfill the great promise of the next generation.

III. Progress to Improve Public Education

a. HRC involvement

It's easy to see how far we've come when we look back at where we were. I first became acutely aware of how many of our children were falling through the cracks when I worked with Marion Wright Edeleman at the Children's Defense fund in the early 1970s. We wanted to find out why millions of school-aged children were not coming to school. And as Jill said, I knocked on hundreds of doors that year -- talking to parents about why their children weren't in school. That experience convinced me -- as never before -- that our schools had to be as committed to fulfilling the dreams of the disadvantaged and disabled as we were to serving the best and the brightest.

b. ~~A Nation at Risk~~

With the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, it became clear to America that the challenges we saw in individual schools were widespread.

We were told that our once unchallenged leadership in education was being eroded “by a tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people.” Only half of our high school graduates were going to college. Academic achievement was plummeting -- and the drop out rate was rising. Compared to other industrialized nations, the US ranked at the bottom. Also troubling -- there was a growing chasm between a scientific and technological elite — and an ill informed citizenry.

c. State Efforts (Arkansas)

~~A Nation at Risk sparked a national soul searching — and in response, people at the federal, state, and local level began rolling up their sleeves, and looking for solutions.~~ ^{I had a chance to further this effort when} ~~In Arkansas, my husband, then~~ ^{of Arkansas} Governor, asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas’s educational system. I began traveling across the state -- listening and talking to teachers and parents about the challenges they faced. ~~I saw first hand the challenges many of our schools were facing -- particularly those in rural areas.~~

So we began to talk about the need for greater accountability for student achievement. We started to form alliances with businesses to improve our public schools, and encouraged parents to become much more involved in the education of their children. But most of all -- we realized that if we didn't upgrade standards that were expected of every school — and every teacher — and every child — then we would never see the progress we wanted to see.

[I'll never forget talking to one young high school graduate -- ranked second in his class -- who told me with great pride that he wanted to be a doctor. But when I asked where he was going to college, he admitted he couldn't get in anywhere. His high school simply hadn't prepared him adequately. I remember thinking to myself: here's a young man who worked hard; stayed out of trouble; and whose family did all they could for him. But his local school didn't know what the standards were that would enable him to fulfill his ambitions. And it was then that Bill and I decided that no matter where you lived, you should have the chance to complete a rigorous curriculum that prepares you for whatever you plan to do in life. Pushing for high standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.]

Keep
Kernal

D. Charlottesville Summit

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Charlottesville, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. Then Governor Clinton co-chaired that effort. And when he was elected President -- Bill set to work with another former governor, Dick Riley, to support national goals -- and help schools, teachers, and students meet them.

E. Goals 2000/ESEA

Among the President's proudest achievements in the first term were Goals 2000 and the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. Goals 2000 -- ^{spell it} for the first time -- required states to set academic standards and develop assessments aligned to those standards. ESEA's Title I built on this requirement -- by mandating that states use these standards for disadvantaged students -- thus ending the practice of setting lower expectations for low-income students. ~~ESEA also launched the~~

~~President's initiative to establish 3,000 charter schools -- and permitted high-poverty schools to combine their funds and use them to improve the entire school.~~

Both Goals 2000 and ESEA held schools accountable for results. Title I now requires states to set annual goals for each school and district [relating to the number of students who must reach academic standards]; to report progress for each school; and to intervene in schools that fail to make adequate progress.

Taken together -- these two reforms have fundamentally changed the federal role in elementary and secondary education to support the development and implementation of high academic standards for all children. In the past -- our system had too often supported and encouraged a two-tiered system that had low expectations for poor children -- and held them to lower academic standards. Over the past six years, we've been working hard to end that unequal and unjust system -- and we've begun to see the fruits of our labor.

IV. Where are we as a result of these efforts?

Over the past six years -- we've worked hard to raise student academic achievement; improve teacher quality; involve more parents; and bring the technology of the 21st century into the classroom.

We've also sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that schools -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling students to reach that raised bar of excellence.

These reforms have sparked a burst of state and local reform activity -- important innovations that are improving the educational progress of our children. ~~The rapid development of statewide~~

~~academic standards is unprecedented in the United States, and~~

~~awareness of the need to change practices to support standards is strong~~

~~across states, districts and schools. Federal efforts -- ESEA and Goals~~

~~2000 -- have been a major force in supporting and stimulating state-~~

~~based reform.~~ Forty-eight states have set new, more challenging

academic standards, and most states are working to develop or adopt new assessments aligned with those standards.

And as a result of hard work at the federal, state and local level -- and perhaps most of all as a result of our dedicated teachers -- schools are improving and our students are doing better. A few weeks ago, we released new data that tells us that our nation's reading scores are up for the first time in all three grades levels -- 4th, 8th and 12th.

Our achievement scores are up for math and science. SAT scores — which in '83 were in a virtual free fall — are once again heading in the right direction — with the largest gains in math. For the first time in history, SAT and ACT scores have increased each year for the past five years.

The key lesson that we've learned from Goals 2000, ESEA and related state and local reform initiatives are that standards-based education reform works. A recent study of education reform in North Carolina and Texas -- the two states with the best track record of improving achievement generally and closing achievement gaps between minority and white students -- shows us the ingredients of success -- particularly for disadvantaged students: sustained, statewide approaches of raising academic standards, providing schools with the flexibility they need, targeting resources for extra help to low-performing students and schools, and holding schools accountable for results.

[Other studies have shown that states and school districts, like Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago, that have adopted similar approaches have shown significant gains in reading and math.]

A recent study by GAO shows how Goals 2000 funds are being used to support a broad range of education activities at the state and local levels -- including local education reform, professional development, and the development of education standards and assessments. Many state officials reported that Goals 2000 has been a significant factor in promoting their education reform efforts.

[HRC's visits to NYC schools -- most recently the Lab School in Chelsea, where T-shirt read "Dare to compete."]

[I've heard how schools here in New York are replacing low expectations with high achievement -- because parents are pitching in; new classes are being held in art and music; and there's a new spirit of accountability for success. I've heard that at PS 154 -- there's a big sign hanging in the entrance hall stating: "Only positive attitudes beyond this point." I wish I could hang that sign in every school in the nation.]

Because of the success of these efforts
We know that every child can learn when given the attention he or she deserves, and that schools in even the poorest neighborhoods can become world class schools. *But we still have*

a long way to go --

poor equity still exists here

Our challenge is to push reform so it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

What we must do: ESEA's three-part strategy:

How do we help fulfill the promise of every student? The President has laid out a bold strategy -- through a major revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) -- which is designed to take us to the next step of accountability and higher standards. It's based on a comprehensive three-part strategy: first, to ²target increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling. Second, to ¹improve teacher quality. And third, to promote real accountability for results.

A. IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

John Sanford, the late superintendent of Seattle Schools has said: "The victory is in the classroom." That victory is only assured when a talented and dedicated teacher is in each classroom. America's teachers are America's future -- and none of the things we've talked about so far - - about higher expectations and student achievement -- will be accomplished if we don't make teaching a first class profession.

How we recruit, prepare, and retain good teachers must be the central strategy for improving our schools.

1. Higher Standards

The vast majority of teachers are dedicated professionals who are preparing their students well for the challenges ahead. But nothing undermines the profession of teaching more -- or hurts our children's chances more -- than a poorly prepared teacher who doesn't have the knowledge or tools they need to succeed. Too many teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation -- with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers not even holding a minor in their main teaching field.

First, we must hold teachers to the same standards we hold for our children.

** State Licensing must be based on demonstrated performance, knowledge of subject matter; teaching skills -- and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offer an excellent benchmark.

** School districts must end the practice of using emergency certification to fill classrooms. — ~~Today, more than 50,000 teachers~~
~~are teaching on emergency certification~~

How can we expect results when more than 30 percent of newly hired teachers are entering without full certification -- and over 11 percent have no license at all?

What we're doing about it

The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to phase out out-of-field assignments and emergency certification. It will also ask states to adopt performance examinations for all new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate both subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. And we will provide resources to help them achieve these goals.

Some may say we can't meet our needs to hire up to two million new teachers over ten years -- and still achieve these goals for teacher quality. I say we can -- if we do more to improve the teacher profession, and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.

2. Recruitment/attraction

Colleges of education are one of the best sources for top quality candidates -- ~~as is proved every day here at Teacher's college~~. But unfortunately, too few teacher preparation programs hold themselves to the high standards of this institution. Universities must be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce in these educational programs -- and if they can't measure up, these programs should be closed. Universities must stop thinking of their colleges of education as poor stepchildren, and instead, devote the same attention and resources to them as they do to programs that prepare doctors and lawyers.

We must do more to attract talented people to the profession of teaching -- and do more to enable mid-career entrants to get the training they need to translate their subject matter and life experiences into a teaching career.

**** The Administration is planning to expand the President's Troops to Teachers initiative to reach mid-career professionals from other field.**

** I'm pleased Teacher's College has a teaching program for Peace Corps volunteers to get a degree and teach in schools -- if they commit to two years.

** The Administration is also providing loan forgiveness to students who agree to teach in high-poverty schools.

** Some school districts and universities are working together to create middle and high school programs that expose young people to the teaching profession. South Carolina's teacher cadet programs gives academically talented high school juniors and seniors supervised experiences teaching young children -- and the opportunity to study education with school and university faculty.

We need more programs like these to make sure we raise standards -- and don't exacerbate the looming teacher shortage.

3. Retention

Once we've attracted the best individuals into teaching -- we must do more to retain them. It makes no sense to take someone who has made the commitment to teach -- and who has spent years preparing themselves with every intention of making teaching their life's work -- and then just drop them into a classroom to sink or swim.

It's no wonder that one out of five new teachers leaves after three years. We must stop giving the most difficult teaching assignments to the teachers with the least experience -- standing logic on its head. This might make sense if our goal was to reward seniority whatever the cost - but not if our goal is to give the children who most need the help to receive the best possible teachers. **School boards, administrators and teacher unions must work together to make sure that the best interests of students are the top priority.**

These have been proven
Strategies to give new teachers the extra support they need:

- ** peer assistance programs, like the one here in New York, *that* ^{*share their wisdom*} allow high performing teachers to ~~work~~ with new ones;
- ** ~~school districts should allow time for team planning~~ ^{*if built into the school day would give*} Unlike ^{*the opp to*} doctors and lawyers, who routinely confer with colleagues, teachers ~~are~~ ^{*are*} often cut off from their co-workers. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40% say it improves their teaching "a lot" -- and another third say it "moderately." Yet ^{*how many teachers are isolated in*} this ~~practice remains~~ ^{*new classrooms*} the exception -- not the rule.

4. Professional Development

All teachers should have the opportunity to receive ongoing professional development. But unfortunately -- the most common forms of these activities continue to be those that are least beneficial -- the “one shot” workshops that last a day -- and have little relevance to teachers’ work in the classroom. ~~The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future found that the biggest impediment to improving teaching was lack of access to the kind of knowledge and skills teachers need to help students succeed.~~

A serious program of sustained development -- based on research that works and is relevant to teacher’s classroom needs -- ought to be in place in every school district. Teachers need help to keep up to date in their subject, to learn proven teaching methods; to understand how to adjust their curriculum in response to state and local standards; and to response to new challenges in the modern classroom. They also need more help with technology, and teaching children from diverse cultures; with disabilities; and with limited English proficiency.

What the Administration is doing to help

****** The 1994 re-authorization act included a greater focus on research-based principles of professional development -- and the Department of Education funds research and other efforts to improve the practice of teaching. But more needs to be done. That's why the President has proposed increasing funding that can be used for professional development -- as an important part of the ESEA proposal.

****** Reducing class size -- particularly in the elementary grades -- is a major goal of the Clinton Administration. And we are pleased that Congress made a down payment toward the goal of 100,000 new teachers last year. Over and over, we see how smaller class size is good for students.

A recent 5-year study of Milwaukee schools confirms that schools having a 17-1 student teacher ratio outperformed not only students in the public schools but those who received vouchers to go outside the system. Small class size is also good for teachers -- who know the limits of one human being teaching to a class of 25, 30 or even 40 young children.

**** The Administration supports the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- established in 1987 to create a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet higher standards. So far -- not enough states have created incentives for teachers to undergo this rigorous assessment -- and not enough teachers have come forward to participate. But we are moving in the right direction -- getting serious about teacher quality at every level.**

Paying teachers what they're worth

And finally, I strongly believe that experienced, high quality teachers are the most important resources this nation has in ensuring that we remain the nation of opportunity for all. But too often, we fail these teachers just as we fail many idealistic new teachers. Experienced teachers ought to be paid what they are worth -- or we risk losing them to other, better paid professionals. This is a particular challenge for school districts in low income communities -- and I challenge state leaders to find ways to help those poorer school districts get the resources they need to retain their best teachers. **As we raise standards, we ought to raise salaries as well.**

B. TARGETING INCREASED INVESTMENTS TO DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Just as the shortage of high quality teachers is most acute in schools serving predominately low-income and minority children, other resources are similarly limited when it comes to the children who are most in need.

Early Learning

This disparity begins before birth, when a mother's access to prenatal care can make the difference between a healthy baby and one who will suffer lifelong disabilities. We know that even in the first years of life, reading to and talking to a child literally stimulates the brain to learn and grow.

[Our White House Conference on Early Development and Learning gave the leading experts in the field of early childhood development the opportunity to explain their discoveries and to put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families. I have worked with the President to develop a proposal for an Early Learning Fund to help more families put this research into practice, particularly those with the least resources.

[This is also the premise behind the Prescription for Reading Partnership, which I helped launch two years ago to bring together publishers, booksellers, pediatricians, and citizens so that health care professionals can “prescribe” reading to parents. We're now serving more than 780,000 children in 47 states.]

Early childhood development programs are also critical to ensure that every child comes to school ready to learn. For over three decades, Head Start has provided low-income preschool children with comprehensive development services to make sure they don't begin school already behind. I've pushed for increased funding for Head Start for many years, and I am pleased that under this President, Head Start dollars have more than doubled. Many states have provided additional funding for early childhood education, and we are well on the way to what ought to be our goal: providing every child the opportunity to receive high quality early childhood education to help them become “school ready.”

But we need to do more, particularly in the area of quality. We know, for example, that in order for children to be on track to read well, they should come to school having a strong base of cognitive skills.

Children need background knowledge, and a love of books. We're not talking about sitting preschool-age children at desks in rows and forcing them to memorize the alphabet. Much of what they need to know can be learned if they are read to, and talked do. I propose that the early childhood and education communities work together to develop appropriate education standards for Head Start and other preschool programs and to make related training widely available to early childhood teachers.

Reading

We put great emphasis on reading because it is the foundation of almost every other subject. Failure to read is the overwhelming reason that children are retained, assigned to special education, or given long-term remedial services. Although overall reading performance has been more or less unchanged since 1972, 40 percent of all nine-year-olds score below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test. There is also a continuing gap between white students and African-American and Hispanic students. [While 69 percent of African-American and 64 percent of Hispanic students scored below the basic level in 1994, only 31 percent of white fourth graders did].

To close the gap, we need to change the way we teach reading in many classrooms. Every elementary school teacher should be schooled in the latest research, given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist, and have the support of parents and other tutors. The President has laid down a daunting challenge: every child reading independently by the end of third grade. It will take the work of all of us to meet it.

[Title I

The ESEA reauthorization will extend, expand, and improve Title I -- which has been so beneficial for disadvantaged children, including a disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic students. Historically, Title I has been the single largest source of Federal funding targeted to raising the achievement levels of students in high-poverty schools and helping to close the achievement gap between these children and their more advantaged peers. The 1994 reauthorization required states to develop content and performance standards in reading and math, and improved the targeting of resources. It also expanded school-wide programs, and strengthened parental involvement.

These changes are having an impact, but we are not anywhere near where we need to be. Therefore, the President's reauthorization proposal continues to hold at-risk children in high-poverty schools to the same high standards expected of other children -- but goes even further, with additional resources for the lowest achieving schools, increased authority for school-wide programs, and phasing out the use of teacher aides as instructors in Title I schools. Consistent with the National Academy of Sciences recommendations, the legislation proposes the use of diagnostic assessments in the first grade to ensure the early identification of children with reading difficulties.]

Mathematics

Like reading, mathematics is a foundation for many other subjects, particularly science and technology. But here too, we find significant gaps among whites and African American and Hispanic students. Too often, only students thought to be "good at math" or "college material" are given the chance to take higher level mathematics classes, and a disproportionate number of children who are offered less rigorous mathematics courses and poorer quality instruction are African American or Hispanic.

Many young people will be effectively denied the opportunity to go on to college and to enter many careers unless teachers, counselors, and school administrators hold higher expectations for all students in the area of mathematics achievement, eliminate "general math" in the curriculum, and provide the additional supports some students will need to succeed in higher level mathematics.

C. PROMOTING REAL ACCOUNTABILITY

If we are committed to level the playing field for our children -- then we must raise our expectations for all students -- regardless of their race or background. I've heard that high expectations recently got a boost here in New York -- when you did away with the general diploma -- and committed city schools to give every child the chance to earn the more rigorous Regent's diploma. I applaud all of you for demonstrating confidence not only in New York's schools -- but in your students.

While cities and states across the country are working hard to raise expectations and create higher achievement standards, the Clinton Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. Goals 2000 has helped states go from pushing for standards to implementing them -- to make them part of every teacher's lesson plan.

Now, we need to take accountability to the next level.

~~The President's agenda on accountability.~~

**** Annual School Report Cards.** The President has proposed requiring annual report cards, easily understood by and widely distributed to parents and the public, for each school, school district, and the state. We must empower parents with more information and more choices. In too many communities, it's easier to get information on the quality of the local restaurant than on the quality of local schools. We owe it to our parents and our children -- every school district should issue report cards on every school.

Tough interventions. The President's ESEA proposal will require states to identify the schools with the lowest achievement levels and least improvement and take corrective action to turn them around. These corrective actions, based on a careful assessment of each school's needs, would include steps such as intensive teacher training, support to improve school discipline, and the implementation of proven approaches to school reform.

If these actions do not raise student achievement within two years, the proposal would require states to ~~take additional corrective actions,~~^{do more} such as permitting students to attend other public schools; reconstituting the school -- by fairly evaluating the staff and making staff changes as appropriate; or closing the school and reopening it as a charter school or with an entirely new staff.

Nineteen states currently take similar actions to help improve low-performing schools, and experience demonstrates that when these interventions are carefully implemented and accompanied by the resources to support change, schools improve and student achievement increases. The President's FY 2000 budget contains \$200 million to help states begin taking these steps immediately.

I've visited schools across the country that prove what can be accomplished when dedicated teachers, parents, and communities join forces, and turn failing schools into models of success. Chicago's Du Sable high school -- where only about half the students used to show up on any given day, and achievement scores were some of the lowest in the nation.

But the principal of that school laid down a new law of discipline, wired the school for the Internet, and created a “culture of reading.” Teachers volunteered in after school and summer schools; and everyone learned a new vocabulary word a day. Even the security guards would quiz the kids. As a result -- Du Sable high school is turning around.

End social promotion. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can’t read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material. But we can’t just hold students back because the system fails them.

Many people worry that the policy of ending social promotion will hurt children of color unfairly, arguing that children who are retained in grade are more likely to drop out of school and face other challenges. But these critics miss the point. The goal of ending social promotion is to hold schools accountable for giving children the extra help they will need to succeed.

This extra help is reflected in the administration's class size reduction initiative, the Reading Excellence Act, and the 21st Century Learning Centers after school initiative, which the President has proposed to ^{triple} ~~dramatically expand~~. Instead of using this new policy as an excuse to toss aside children having difficulty learning, schools will be expected to take aggressive action to help all students make promotion standards on time, even if this means providing afterschool and summer school programs.

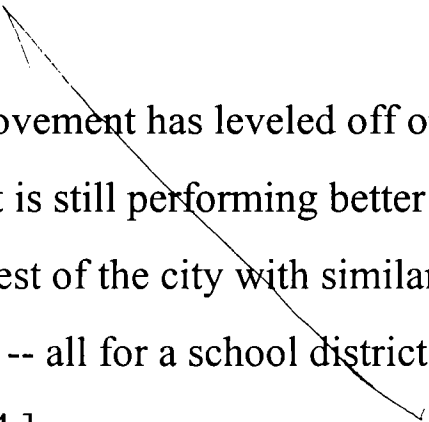
We can't afford to allow 10 or 15 percent of young adults graduate from high school without being able to balance a checkbook or write a letter. These are the students who are hurt by the current practice, and they are the ones with the most to gain from the proposed policy.

Give parents more information, and more choices. Giving parents more choices in selecting their public schools also strengthens accountability. Charter schools and magnet schools are some of the ways we can foster innovation in the system, and challenge children in different ways. By giving these schools greater flexibility and freedom, they can experiment with new approaches -- and still be held accountable for making sure their students are making the grade.

When the President first came into office -- there was just one independent public charter school in America. Now there are now 1100. And the President is proposing funding that assure that early in the next century -- there will be 3,000.

I've visited charter and magnet schools around the country -- and while some are struggling -- I've seen the dramatic differences others are making in the lives -- and opportunities -- of their students. [San Fernando Valley charter school story.]

We can ^{also} learn from examples like East Harlem -- the first public school choice system in the country. That district, ^{it was ranked last in the city} ~~that faces so many~~ ^{when it} ~~challenges,~~ adopted public school choice over 20 years ago. ~~And a recent evaluation of East Harlem by researchers at the State University of New York tells us important things: first the district nearly doubled the overall number of schools and created many small schools as alternatives to the traditional neighborhood schools. Second and most important,~~ ^{As a result,} both reading and math scores have gone up in all schools ^{← and the district is still performing better than NY w/ all of these similar circumstances} ~~both the neighborhood schools and the new alternative ones~~ -- contrary to fears that a choice system would create a district in which some were favored over others.



[Although the improvement has leveled off or declined slightly in the late 1980s, the district is still performing better on reading and math tests than schools in the rest of the city with similar concentrations of families living in poverty -- all for a school district that was ranked last in New York City in 1974.]

Vouchers

At a time when we are clearly moving forward — with greater accountability; higher standards; and greater public schools choice -- we can't allow ourselves to be pulled off track by false debates -- particularly by those who claim that vouchers are the real solutions to improving public education, and fixing failing schools. At a time when we should be devoting more resources, attention and intelligence to improving our public schools -- some want to drain off valuable resources for a few -- making it even more difficult for public schools to improve. Vouchers divide communities at a time when one of our greatest challenges as a nation is to pull communities together across racial and economic lines.

We've also learned that the voucher system simply does not deliver. I've read recent studies that show that when you look at the voucher systems that have been implemented there's no evidence that students do significantly better. It just hasn't worked. **We need to fix our public schools -- not abandon them.**

VI. Everyone has a stake, everyone has a role.

Schools by themselves can't ensure that every child is given a world-class education. We can't ask them to be held accountable for the progress we want if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well. We need a true partnership.

We need parents who believe in the importance of education, and support their schools and teachers -- and most importantly, their children. All of our public efforts pale beside the power of every parent to make a difference.

We need communities to work in partnership with their schools, and be engaged in helping children thrive. We've seen what can be accomplished when everyone from the local police officer to the retired teacher makes a commitment to creating conditions for success.

And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. I've seen the impact on a school's learning environment as a result of public/private partnerships -- when local businesses contribute everything from school-to work experiences and college scholarships to computer labs and volunteer mentors. They can also be a powerful force in holding schools accountable for high standards and student achievement.

VII. Conclusion

When this nation was first founded, it was a radical idea that education could every become a public matter. That mothers and fathers should care about children in households beyond their own. Yet some of America's visionary leaders argued that public education was inherent in our commitment to democracy and justice. That an informed citizenry was required to survive and prosper, and that every American had a stake in the learning of every child.

Surely, they were right. Let us never take for granted that lesson of history, that America's miracle of public education is not only vital to our future prosperity -- but a cornerstone of our democracy.

The interdependent world of tomorrow requires constantly expanding knowledge at its base -- not just its elite. Failure to spread that knowledge not only perpetuates injustice -- but injures our common potential for growth. America's greatest markets for future opportunity lie right here at home -- in our cities; in our rural communities; in our aging suburbs. Their hope -- and our hope -- begins with a constantly revitalizing system of public education in America.

Make no mistake. The maintenance and reform of public education is more urgent than ever for America. It will require imagination and daring; commitment and experimentation; and yes, money. But standing here today -- at this remarkable institution of teaching and learning -- I am convinced that the best days of America -- and America's public schools -- are before us. We can do no less for our children, and we can do no less for the future of our great country.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
"RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION: A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND
POSSIBILITIES"
COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
APRIL 19, 1999

Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just world for our children; and for your friendship. I also want to thank both you and Ken for sponsoring this innovative new lecture series. It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational institution, which for so long has set the nation's standard for excellence in teaching. We are indebted to President Levine for his inspired leadership of Columbia Teacher's College; and for his single minded determination to turn every one of his students into dedicated teachers who will make a real difference in the lives of their students. I also want to recognize the creative vision of Peter Cookson -- whose Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation

brings the best minds to bear on the challenges of teaching today.

Contributions of Teacher's College

A little over a hundred years ago, when a group of far-sighted college presidents, bishops and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College -- the world was in upheaval. Our country was in the throws of transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from the countryside and immigrants from around the world.

It was time -- your founders had decided -- to start educating a new breed of teachers to meet the educational needs of this unprecedented new influx of people, cultures, and experiences.

That same pioneering spirit and commitment to meet the needs of a changing world lives on in all that you do here at Columbia's Teacher's College; every time you give teachers the skills to spark the imagination of a child; every time you instill the spirit of social justice as part of your educational framework; and everytime you pioneer new strategies to better reach the students of today. At a time when so many higher education institutions have closed their schools of education -- or down graded their importance -- Columbia's Teacher's College has maintained the highest standards of excellence.

[Whether it was teaching early childhood education -- before it became conventional wisdom to look at the importance of those early years; or researching new ways of teaching urban and minority students -- you've expanded our knowledge about what it takes to create a world-class teacher.

You've also used your resources and talents to be instruments of change and progress in the New York city schools -- initiating writing

projects; helping to establish professional development schools; and mentoring first year teachers, so they stay on in the toughest schools. Your work to get the arts back into the city's public schools has helped transform lives in hundreds of schools. And today, thanks to a collaboration between Teacher's College and the city schools -- 9th and 10th graders at the Heritage School are now benefitting from a dynamic new curriculum infused with the arts and culture. I salute the leadership and faculty of Teacher's College.

II. Importance of Public Education

We've all here today because as all Americans, we still believe that nothing offers our children or ourselves the chance for a better future than a good education. And nothing so limits an individual's dreams — and denies the nation the talents it needs — when that education is in some way beyond reach. In this era of almost limitless possibilities -- our public school system holds out the promise that here, in the most diverse and multi-cultural nation in the world -- everyone has a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

I've spoken with people in strife-torn countries like Northern Ireland, who believe that a unified education system like ours is absolutely critical to building a tolerant, and peaceful and just society. And that is our mission. Every day, as children learn the skills of the future, and the values we hold in common, our democracy is strengthened.

b. Those values are threatened by unequal access

Yet those values are threatened when many of our children are unable to reap the benefits of the opportunities around them. When too many of America's children attend schools that are understaffed; overcrowded; and falling down. When too many dreams go unfulfilled -- not because a child lacks ability -- but because no one expects him or

her to accomplish something, or succeed.

Today, more than four decades after the Supreme court ended segregation in America's schools, the color of your skin can still determine the quality of your education. [Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at the level of most 13-year old white students.

Today, the vast majority of white students graduate from high school, compared to a third of Hispanics. Today, a third of white Americans are college graduates. Blacks graduate half that many.]

[Not surprisingly, the learning gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap. As my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. College educated Americans are now making 76% more than those who simply hold a high school diploma. The terrible costs of not getting a quality education -- in lower quality of life and lowered expectations -- are increasing every day.]

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century to find ways of unleashing the vast potential of all our people, by making a world-class education the birthright of every citizen. It's up to all of us to must make sure that education truly does become -- in the words of John Dewey, America's "great equalizer."

Over the years, I've heard many variations on the goals we have set for ourselves at the brink of this new century. But I like the simple mantra at public school #1 here in Manhattan. It states: "All children can learn... No exceptions... No excuses."

Today, I'd like to talk about what we must do together to fulfill the great promise of the next generation.

III. Progress to Improve Public Education

a. HRC involvement

It's easy to see how far we've come when we look back at where we were. I first became acutely aware of how many of our children were falling through the cracks when I worked with Marion Wright Edeleman at the Children's Defense fund in the early 1970s. We wanted to find out why millions of school-aged children were not coming to school. And as Jill said, I knocked on hundreds of doors that year -- talking to parents about why their children weren't in school. That experience convinced me -- as never before -- that our schools had to be as committed to fulfilling the dreams of the disadvantaged and disabled as we were to serving the best and the brightest.

b. A Nation at Risk

With the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, it became clear to America that the challenges we saw in individual schools were widespread.

We were told that our once unchallenged leadership in education was being eroded "by a tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." Only half of our high school graduates were going to college. Academic achievement was plummeting -- and the drop out rate was rising. Compared to other industrialized nations, the US ranked at the bottom. Also troubling -- there was a growing chasm between a scientific and technological elite — and an ill informed citizenry.

c. State Efforts (Arkansas)

A Nation at Risk sparked a national soul searching — and in response, people at the federal, state, and local level began rolling up their sleeves, and looking for solutions. In Arkansas, my husband, then Governor, asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas's educational system. I began traveling across the state -- listening and talking to teachers and parents about the challenges they faced. I saw first hand the challenges many of

our schools were facing -- particularly those in rural areas.

So we began to talk about the need for greater accountability for student achievement. We started to form alliances with businesses to improve our public schools, and encouraged parents to become much more involved in the education of their children. But most of all -- we realized that if we didn't upgrade standards that were expected of every school — and every teacher — and every child — then we would never see the progress we wanted to see.

[I'll never forget talking to one young high school graduate -- ranked second in his class -- who told me with great pride that he wanted to be a doctor. But when I asked where he was going to college, he admitted he couldn't get in anywhere. His high school simply hadn't prepared him adequately. I remember thinking to myself: here's a young man who worked hard; stayed out of trouble; and whose family did all they could for him. But his local school didn't know what the standards were that would enable him to fulfill his ambitions. And it was then that Bill and I decided that no matter where you lived, you should have the chance to complete a rigorous curriculum that prepares you for whatever you plan to do in life. Pushing for high standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.]

D. Charlottesville Summit

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Charlottesville, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. Then Governor Clinton co-chaired that effort. And when he was elected President -- Bill set to work with another former governor, Dick Riley, to support national goals -- and help schools, teachers, and students meet them.

E. Goals 2000/ESEA

Among the President's proudest achievements in the first term were Goals 2000 and the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. Goals 2000 -- for the first time -- required states to set academic standards and develop assessments aligned to those standards. ESEA's Title I built on this requirement -- by mandating that states use these standards for disadvantaged students -- thus ending the practice of setting lower expectations for low-income students. ESEA also launched the President's initiative to establish 3,000 charter schools -- and permitted high-poverty schools to combine their funds and use them to improve the entire school.

Both Goals 2000 and ESEA held schools accountable for results. Title I now requires states to set annual goals for each school and district [relating to the number of students who must reach academic standards]; to report progress for each school; and to intervene in schools that fail to make adequate progress.

Taken together -- these two reforms have fundamentally changed the federal role in elementary and secondary education to support the development and implementation of high academic standards for all children. In the past -- our system had too often supported and encouraged a two-tiered system that had low expectations for poor children -- and held them to lower academic standards. Over the past six years, we've been working hard to end that unequal and unjust system -- and we've begun to see the fruits of our labor.

IV. Where are we as a result of these efforts?

Over the past six years -- we've worked hard to raise student academic achievement; improve teacher quality; involve more parents; and bring the technology of the 21st century into the classroom.

We've also sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that schools -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling students to reach that raised bar of excellence.

These reforms have sparked a burst of state and local reform activity -- important innovations that are improving the educational progress of our children. The rapid development of statewide academic standards is unprecedented in the United States, and awareness of the need to change practices to support standards is strong across states, districts and schools. Federal efforts -- ESEA and Goals 2000 -- have been a major force in supporting and stimulating state-based reform. Forty-eight states have set new, more challenging academic standards, and most states are working to develop or adopt new assessments aligned with those standards.

And as a result of hard work at the federal, state and local level -- and perhaps most of all as a result of our dedicated teachers -- schools are improving and our students are doing better. A few weeks ago, we released new data that tells us that our nation's reading scores are up for the first time in all three grades levels -- 4th, 8th and 12th.

Our achievement scores are up for math and science. SAT scores — which in '83 were in a virtual free fall — are once again heading in the right direction — with the largest gains in math. For the first time in history, SAT and ACT scores have increased each year for the past five years.

The key lesson that we've learned from Goals 2000, ESEA and related state and local reform initiatives are that standards-based education reform works. A recent study of education reform in North Carolina and Texas -- the two states

with the best track record of improving achievement generally and closing achievement gaps between minority and white students -- shows us the ingredients of success -- particularly for disadvantaged students: sustained, statewide approaches of raising academic standards, providing schools with the flexibility they need, targeting resources for extra help to low-performing students and schools, and holding schools accountable for results.

[Other studies have shown that states and school districts, like Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago, that have adopted similar approaches have shown significant gains in reading and math.]

A recent study by GAO shows how Goals 2000 funds are being used to support a broad range of education activities at the state and local levels -- including local education reform, professional development, and the development of education standards and assessments. Many state officials reported that Goals 2000 has been a significant factor in promoting their education reform efforts.

[HRC's visits to NYC schools -- most recently the Lab School in Chelsea, where T-shirt read "Dare to compete."]

[I've heard how schools here in New York are replacing low expectations with high achievement -- because parents are pitching in; new classes are being held in art and music; and there's a new spirit of accountability for success. I've heard that at PS 154 -- there's a big sign hanging in the entrance hall stating: "Only positive attitudes beyond this point." I wish I could hang that sign in every school in the nation.]

We know that every child can learn when given the attention he or she deserves, and that schools in even the poorest

neighborhoods can become world class schools.

Our challenge is to push reform so it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

What we must do: ESEA's three-part strategy:

How do we help fulfill the promise of every student? The President has laid out a bold strategy -- through a major revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) -- which is designed to take us to the next step of accountability and higher standards. It's based on a comprehensive three-part strategy: first, to target increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling. Second, to improve teacher quality. And third, to promote real accountability for results.

A. IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

John Sanford, the late superintendent of Seattle Schools has said: "The victory is in the classroom." That victory is only assured when a talented and dedicated teacher is in each classroom. America's teachers are America's future -- and none of the things we've talked about so far -- about higher expectations and student achievement -- will be accomplished if we don't make teaching a first class profession.

How we recruit, prepare, and retain good teachers must be the central strategy for improving our schools.

1. Higher Standards

The vast majority of teachers are dedicated professionals who are preparing their students well for the challenges ahead. But nothing undermines the profession of teaching more -- or hurts our children's chances more -- than a poorly prepared teacher who doesn't have the knowledge or tools they need to succeed. Too many teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation -- with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers not even holding a minor in their

main teaching field.

First, we must hold teachers to the same standards we hold for our children.

**** State Licensing must be based on demonstrated performance, knowledge of subject matter; teaching skills -- and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offer an excellent benchmark.**

**** School districts must end the practice of using emergency certification to fill classrooms.**

How can we expect results when more than 30 percent of newly hired teachers are entering without full certification -- and over 11 percent have no license at all?

What we're doing about it

The President's ESEA proposal will require states and school districts to phase out out-of-field assignments and emergency certification. It will also ask states to adopt performance examinations for all new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate both subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. And we will provide resources to help them achieve these goals.

Some may say we can't meet our needs to hire up to two million new teachers over ten years -- and still achieve these goals for teacher quality. I say we can -- if we do more to improve the teacher profession, and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.

2. Recruitment/attraction

Colleges of education are one of the best sources for top quality

candidates -- as is proved every day here at Teacher's college. But unfortunately, too few teacher preparation programs hold themselves to the high standards of this institution. Universities must be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce in these educational programs -- and if they can't measure up, these programs should be closed. Universities must stop thinking of their colleges of education as poor stepchildren, and instead, devote the same attention and resources to them as they do to programs that prepare doctors and lawyers.

We must do more to attract talented people to the profession of teaching -- and do more to enable mid-career entrants to get the training they need to translate their subject matter and life experiences into a teaching career.

**** The Administration is planning to expand the President's Troops to Teachers initiative to reach mid-career professionals from other field.**

**** I'm pleased Teacher's College has a teaching program for Peace Corps volunteers to get a degree and teach in schools -- if they commit to two years.**

**** The Administration is also providing loan forgiveness to students who agree to teach in high-poverty schools.**

**** Some school districts and universities are working together to create middle and high school programs that expose young people to the teaching profession. South Carolina's teacher cadet programs gives academically talented high school juniors and seniors supervised experiences teaching young children -- and the opportunity to study education with school and university faculty.**

We need more programs like these to make sure we raise standards -- and don't exacerbate the looming teacher shortage.

3. Retention

Once we've attracted the best individuals into teaching -- we must do more to retain them. It makes no sense to take someone who has made the commitment to teach -- and who has spent years preparing themselves with every intention of making teaching their life's work -- and then just drop them into a classroom to sink or swim.

It's no wonder that one out of five new teachers leaves after three years. We must stop giving the most difficult teaching assignments to the teachers with the least experience -- standing logic on its head. This might make sense if our goal was to reward seniority whatever the cost -- but not if our goal is to give the children who most need the help to receive the best possible teachers. **School boards, administrators and teacher unions must work together to make sure that the best interests of students are the top priority.**

Strategies to give new teachers the extra support they need:

- ** peer assistance programs, like the one here in New York, that allow high performing teachers to work with new ones;

- ** school districts should allow time for team planning. Unlike doctors and lawyers, who routinely confer with colleagues, teachers are often cut off from their co-workers. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40% say it improves their teaching "a lot" -- and another third say it "moderately." Yet this practice remains the exception -- not the rule.

4. Professional Development

All teachers should have the opportunity to receive ongoing professional development. But unfortunately -- the most common forms of these activities continue to be those that are least beneficial -- the "one shot" workshops that last a day -- and have little relevance to

teachers' work in the classroom. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that the biggest impediment to improving teaching was lack of access to the kind of knowledge and skills teachers need to help students succeed.

A serious program of sustained development -- based on research that works and is relevant to teacher's classroom needs -- ought to be in place in every school district. Teachers need help to keep up to date in their subject, to learn proven teaching methods; to understand how to adjust their curriculum in response to state and local standards; and to response to new challenges in the modern classroom. They also need more help with technology, and teaching children from diverse cultures; with disabilities; and with limited English proficiency.

What the Administration is doing to help

****** The 1994 re-authorization act included a greater focus on research-based principles of professional development -- and the Department of Education funds research and other efforts to improve the practice of teaching. But more needs to be done. That's why the President has proposed increasing funding that can be used for professional development -- as an important part of the ESEA proposal.

****** Reducing class size -- particularly in the elementary grades -- is a major goal of the Clinton Administration. And we are pleased that Congress made a down payment toward the goal of 100,000 new teachers last year. Over and over, we see how smaller class size is good for students.

A recent 5-year study of Milwaukee schools confirms that schools having a 17-1 student teacher ratio outperformed not only students in the public schools but those who received vouchers to go outside the

system. Small class size is also good for teachers -- who know the limits of one human being teaching to a class of 25, 30 or even 40 young children.

**** The Administration supports the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- established in 1987 to create a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet higher standards. So far -- not enough states have created incentives for teachers to undergo this rigorous assessment -- and not enough teachers have come forward to participate. But we are moving in the right direction -- getting serious about teacher quality at every level.**

Paying teachers what they're worth

And finally, I strongly believe that experienced, high quality teachers are the most important resources this nation has in ensuring that we remain the nation of opportunity for all. But too often, we fail these teachers just as we fail many idealistic new teachers. Experienced teachers ought to be paid what they are worth -- or we risk losing them to other, better paid professionals. This is a particular challenge for school districts in low income communities -- and I challenge state leaders to find ways to help those poorer school districts get the resources they need to retain their best teachers. **As we raise standards, we ought to raise salaries as well.**

B. TARGETING INCREASED INVESTMENTS TO DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Just as the shortage of high quality teachers is most acute in schools serving predominately low-income and minority children, other resources are similarly limited when it comes to the children who are most in need.

Early Learning

This disparity begins before birth, when a mother's access to prenatal care can make the difference between a healthy baby and one who will suffer lifelong disabilities. We know that even in the first years of life, reading to and talking to a child literally stimulates the brain to learn and grow.

[Our White House Conference on Early Development and Learning gave the leading experts in the field of early childhood development the opportunity to explain their discoveries and to put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families. I have worked with the President to develop a proposal for an Early Learning Fund to help more families put this research into practice, particularly those with the least resources.

[This is also the premise behind the Prescription for Reading Partnership, which I helped launch two years ago to bring together publishers, booksellers, pediatricians, and citizens so that health care professionals can "prescribe" reading to parents. We're now serving more than 780,000 children in 47 states.]

Early childhood development programs are also critical to ensure that every child comes to school ready to learn. For over three decades, Head Start has provided low-income preschool children with comprehensive development services to make sure they don't begin school already behind. I've pushed for increased funding for Head Start for many years, and I am pleased that under this President, Head Start dollars have more than doubled. Many states have provided additional funding for early childhood education, and we are well on the way to what ought to be our goal: providing every child the opportunity to receive high quality early childhood education to help them become "school ready."

But we need to do more, particularly in the area of quality. We know, for example, that in order for children to be on track to read well,

they should come to school having a strong base of cognitive skills.

Children need background knowledge, and a love of books. We're not talking about sitting preschool-age children at desks in rows and forcing them to memorize the alphabet. Much of what they need to know can be learned if they are read to, and talked to. I propose that the early childhood and education communities work together to develop appropriate education standards for Head Start and other preschool programs and to make related training widely available to early childhood teachers.

Reading

We put great emphasis on reading because it is the foundation of almost every other subject. Failure to read is the overwhelming reason that children are retained, assigned to special education, or given long-term remedial services. Although overall reading performance has been more or less unchanged since 1972, 40 percent of all nine-year-olds score below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test. There is also a continuing gap between white students and African-American and Hispanic students. [While 69 percent of African-American and 64 percent of Hispanic students scored below the basic level in 1994, only 31 percent of white fourth graders did].

To close the gap, we need to change the way we teach reading in many classrooms. Every elementary school teacher should be schooled in the latest research, given the opportunity to work with a reading specialist, and have the support of parents and other tutors. The President has laid down a daunting challenge: every child reading independently by the end of third grade. It will take the work of all of us to meet it.

[Title I

The ESEA reauthorization will extend, expand, and improve Title I -- which has been so beneficial for disadvantaged children, including a

disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic students. Historically, Title I has been the single largest source of Federal funding targeted to raising the achievement levels of students in high-poverty schools and helping to close the achievement gap between these children and their more advantaged peers. The 1994 reauthorization required states to develop content and performance standards in reading and math, and improved the targeting of resources. It also expanded school-wide programs, and strengthened parental involvement.

These changes are having an impact, but we are not anywhere near where we need to be. Therefore, the President's reauthorization proposal continues to hold at-risk children in high-poverty schools to the same high standards expected of other children -- but goes even further, with additional resources for the lowest achieving schools, increased authority for school-wide programs, and phasing out the use of teacher aides as instructors in Title I schools. Consistent with the National Academy of Sciences recommendations, the legislation proposes the use of diagnostic assessments in the first grade to ensure the early identification of children with reading difficulties.]

Mathematics

Like reading, mathematics is a foundation for many other subjects, particularly science and technology. But here too, we find significant gaps among whites and African American and Hispanic students. Too often, only students thought to be "good at math" or "college material" are given the chance to take higher level mathematics classes, and a disproportionate number of children who are offered less rigorous mathematics courses and poorer quality instruction are African American or Hispanic.

Many young people will be effectively denied the opportunity to go on to college and to enter many careers unless teachers, counselors,

and school administrators hold higher expectations for all students in the area of mathematics achievement, eliminate "general math" in the curriculum, and provide the additional supports some students will need to succeed in higher level mathematics.

C. PROMOTING REAL ACCOUNTABILITY

If we are committed to level the playing field for our children -- then we must raise our expectations for all students -- regardless of their race or background. I've heard that high expectations recently got a boost here in New York -- when you did away with the general diploma -- and committed city schools to give every child the chance to earn the more rigorous Regent's diploma. I applaud all of you for demonstrating confidence not only in New York's schools -- but in your students.

While cities and states across the country are working hard to raise expectations and create higher achievement standards, the Clinton Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. Goals 2000 has helped states go from pushing for standards to implementing them -- to make them part of every teacher's lesson plan.

Now, we need to take accountability to the next level.

The President's agenda on accountability.

**** Annual School Report Cards.** The President has proposed requiring annual report cards, easily understood by and widely distributed to parents and the public, for each school, school district, and the state. We must empower parents with more information and more choices. In too many communities, it's easier to get information on the quality of the local restaurant than on the quality of local schools. We owe it to our parents and our children -- every school district should issue report cards on every school.

Tough interventions. The President's ESEA proposal will

require states to identify the schools with the lowest achievement levels and least improvement and take corrective action to turn them around. These corrective actions, based on a careful assessment of each school's needs, would include steps such as intensive teacher training, support to improve school discipline, and the implementation of proven approaches to school reform.

If these actions do not raise student achievement within two years, the proposal would require states to take additional corrective actions, such as permitting students to attend other public schools; reconstituting the school -- by fairly evaluating the staff and making staff changes as appropriate; or closing the school and reopening it as a charter school or with an entirely new staff.

Nineteen states currently take similar actions to help improve low-performing schools, and experience demonstrates that when these interventions are carefully implemented and accompanied by the resources to support change, schools improve and student achievement increases. The President's FY 2000 budget contains \$200 million to help states begin taking these steps immediately.

I've visited schools across the country that prove what can be accomplished when dedicated teachers, parents, and communities join forces, and turn failing schools into models of success. Chicago's Du Sable high school -- where only about half the students used to show up on any given day, and achievement scores were some of the lowest in the nation.

But the principal of that school laid down a new law of discipline, wired the school for the Internet, and created a "culture of reading." Teachers volunteered in after school and summer schools; and everyone learned a new vocabulary word a day. Even the security guards would

quiz the kids. As a result -- Du Sable high school is turning around.

End social promotion. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can't read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material. But we can't just hold students back because the system fails them.

Many people worry that the policy of ending social promotion will hurt children of color unfairly, arguing that children who are retained in grade are more likely to drop out of school and face other challenges. But these critics miss the point. The goal of ending social promotion is to hold schools accountable for giving children the extra help they will need to succeed.

This extra help is reflected in the administration's class size reduction initiative, the Reading Excellence Act, and the 21st Century Learning Centers after school initiative, which the President has proposed to dramatically expand. Instead of using this new policy as an excuse to toss aside children having difficulty learning, schools will be expected to take aggressive action to help all students make promotion standards on time, even if this means providing afterschool and summer school programs.

We can't afford to allow 10 or 15 percent of young adults graduate from high school without being able to balance a checkbook or write a letter. These are the students who are hurt by the current practice, and they are the ones with the most to gain from the proposed policy.

Give parents more information, and more choices. Giving parents more choices in selecting their public schools also strengthens

accountability. Charter schools and magnet schools are some of the ways we can foster innovation in the system, and challenge children in different ways. By giving these schools greater flexibility and freedom, they can experiment with new approaches -- and still be held accountable for making sure their students are making the grade.

When the President first came into office -- there was just one independent public charter school in America. Now there are now 1100. And the President is proposing funding that assure that early in the next century -- there will be 3,000.

I've visited charter and magnet schools around the country -- and while some are struggling -- I've seen the dramatic differences others are making in the lives -- and opportunities -- of their students. [San Fernando Valley charter school story.]

We can learn from examples like East Harlem -- the first public school choice system in the country. That district, that faces so many challenges, adopted public school choice over 20 years ago. And a recent evaluation of East Harlem by researchers at the State University of New York tells us important things: first the district nearly doubled the overall number of schools and created many small schools as alternatives to the traditional neighborhood schools. Second and most important -- both reading and math scores have gone up in all schools -- both the neighborhood schools and the new alternative ones -- contrary to fears that a choice system would create a district in which some were favored over others.

[Although the improvement has leveled off or declined slightly in the late 1980s, the district is still performing better on reading and math tests than schools in the rest of the city with similar concentrations of families living in poverty -- all for a school district that was ranked last in New York City in 1974.]

Vouchers

At a time when we are clearly moving forward — with greater accountability; higher standards; and greater public schools choice -- we can't allow ourselves to be pulled off track by false debates -- particularly by those who claim that vouchers are the real solutions to improving public education, and fixing failing schools. At a time when we should be devoting more resources, attention and intelligence to improving our public schools -- some want to drain off valuable resources for a few -- making it even more difficult for public schools to improve. Vouchers divide communities at a time when one of our greatest challenges as a nation is to pull communities together across racial and economic lines.

We've also learned that the voucher system simply does not deliver. I've read recent studies that show that when you look at the voucher systems that have been implemented there's no evidence that students do significantly better. It just hasn't worked. **We need to fix our public schools -- not abandon them.**

VI. Everyone has a stake, everyone has a role.

Schools by themselves can't ensure that every child is given a world-class education. We can't ask them to be held accountable for the progress we want if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well. We need a true partnership.

We need parents who believe in the importance of education, and support their schools and teachers -- and most importantly, their children. All of our public efforts pale beside the power of every parent to make a difference.

We need communities to work in partnership with their schools, and be engaged in helping children thrive. We've seen what can be

accomplished when everyone from the local police officer to the retired teacher makes a commitment to creating conditions for success.

And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. I've seen the impact on a school's learning environment as a result of public/private partnerships -- when local businesses contribute everything from school-to work experiences and college scholarships to computer labs and volunteer mentors. They can also be a powerful force in holding schools accountable for high standards and student achievement.

VII. Conclusion

When this nation was first founded, it was a radical idea that education could every become a public matter. That mothers and fathers should care about children in households beyond their own. Yet some of America's visionary leaders argued that public education was inherent in our commitment to democracy and justice. That an informed citizenry was required to survive and prosper, and that every American had a stake in the learning of every child.

Surely, they were right. Let us never take for granted that lesson of history, that America's miracle of public education is not only vital to our future prosperity -- but a cornerstone of our democracy.

The interdependent world of tomorrow requires constantly expanding knowledge at its base -- not just its elite. Failure to spread that knowledge not only perpetuates injustice -- but injures our common potential for growth. America's greatest markets for future opportunity lie right here at home -- in our cities; in our rural communities; in our aging suburbs. Their hope -- and our hope -- begins with a constantly revitalizing system of public education in America.

Make no mistake. The maintenance and reform of public education is more urgent than ever for America. It will require

imagination and daring; commitment and experimentation; and yes, money. But standing here today -- at this remarkable institution of teaching and learning -- I am convinced that the best days of America -- and America's public schools -- are before us. We can do no less for our children, and we can do no less for the future of our great country.