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

COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

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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.

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.

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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, *that was*

quak

[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.]

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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.

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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

*Shutting down
significant* 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 fields.** *But we And we must do more to attract others to the teaching profession.*

**** 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.

per. Development &
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;

more to not ** 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.

continue w/ retention

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.

one pres' 4th proposal will ~~support~~ ^{provide sustained support for} them

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.** *This is a time of opportunity we should use to deal w/ prob's before they're exacerbated*

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. *Our school systems must do right by these children -- and we must do right by them*

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.

According to the Nat'l Academy of Sciences:

[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."

mention home visitation

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 →

they learn literacy early skills early.

We also know that ²⁵ programs that involve parents in the schools work.

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. *Though we have seen recent increases* Although overall reading performance has been *in* ~~more or less unchanged~~ since 1972, 40 percent of all nine-year-olds *reading performance* 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].

get kids ready to learn
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.

int
[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.]

cut down **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 ^{PRES.} Clinton ^{WEL} 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. ~~We know all our kids need help~~

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.~~

*our schools
need to
do right
by our
kids*

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.

shorten

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.

Administration's after school initiative
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.

the businesses understand that education is the key to our future

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.

Education Speech Outline

I. Progress on Education Reform since a Nation at Risk and Reforms in Arkansas

Setting the Stage: As we approach the Millennium, nothing is more important than ensuring that all our children receive a world class education. In the last two decades we have made significant progress towards that goal. But many challenges remain. However, it may be helpful to step back and see how far we've come, to better understand where we need to go.

A. *A Nation at Risk*

1. Roughly fifteen years ago, *A Nation at Risk* was published, which stated that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation."
2. Discuss the state of education as detailed by *A Nation at Risk*:
 - a. Reading, math, science proficiency -- U.S. students ranked last on all international tests and SATs were low (fear of global competitors)
 - b. low rates of college attendance -- only half of high school graduates went onto college
 - c. high dropout rates
 - d. discuss other indicators

B. The Response: As a country, at the federal, state, and local level, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work.

1. Use Arkansas reforms that you chaired as an example of reform efforts at the local level (note: figure out interaction between those reforms and the report)
 - a. Greater accountability
 - b. Teacher quality
 - c. More focus on the classroom curriculum
 - d. High standards
2. Discuss President's efforts to promote education reform at the national level in the 1990s
3. Changed fundamental assumptions through these reform efforts
 - a. We have shifted the understanding of education's importance: we now understand the importance of educational attainment to our new technology economy. (Discuss National Center for Education and the Economy Report: *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, (HRC was on the Board of the Center))

II. Reforms are Working

A. Results -- slowly but surely we're making progress

1. National Results:

- a. SAT, NAEP scores are up
- b. The drop out rate is down
- c. College attendance is up
- d. Closing racial and ethnic gaps in achievement

B. There is every reason to be hopeful about public education -- even schools with the greatest challenges can and do turn around. Discuss specific low-income schools you have visited and some of the ways they have improved academic achievement. Also discuss the increases in achievement in low-income schools in general.

C. Lessons learned from these reforms

1. We know that every child can learn and that even schools with poorest achievement can become world class schools.
2. Importance of leadership from many sources -- teachers, principals, the community. *taking responsibility*
3. Vouchers are bad policy and a diversion from our real task of reforming our schools. Indeed, we can all agree that our public schools have to improve. (Vouchers discussion would be affected to some degree by our location.)

III. We Must Do Better (Her views)

A. We must build on what's working in the classroom:

1. Smaller class size
2. Higher standards and accountability -- expecting more from every child works
3. The New Basics -- focus on reading, math and science
4. Teacher Quality -- giving teachers the support and resources they need, giving students in schools that face the most challenges access to the best teachers

[Need to talk about how ESEA reauthorization does these things]

B. Community and Parental Involvement:

1. Schools are not separate from the community, e.g. business involvement,

importance of after-school programs

2. When parents get involved in the education of their children, we know children do better.

IV. What's at Stake

Improving our schools is not only critically important to our economic future, but to our democracy as well: As stated in *A Nation at Risk*, "A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society, and the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom."

Also include some discussion of how public education supports our democracy by fostering a number of values that democratic institutions rely upon, including tolerance of diversity, trust in others, a sense of community, amongst others. And that the denial of educational opportunities, in our own past and around the world, has been a tool to promote oppression.

You may want to note that the foundation of our modern democracy and free enterprise economy is the belief in the great capacity of all citizens to lift up America while lifting themselves up. Education, as John Dewey said, can be America's "great equalizer." In this way, we can include discussion of the importance of closing racial and ethnic gaps in academic achievement to fulfill the promise of American education.

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 and for inviting me to speak about Reimagining Education: A Matter of Justice and Possibilities. 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.

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

Today, that 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.

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.

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. 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.

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.

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.

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 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. 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.

I had a chance to further these efforts when my husband, then 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 and 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. Pushing for higher standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit in Charlottesville, co-chaired by then Governor Clinton, where national education goals for the first time were endorsed by a bipartisan group of governors and President Bush. 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.

Among the President's proudest achievements in the first term were Goals 2000 and the 1994 reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (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.

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.

These reforms have sparked a burst of state and local reform activity -- important innovations that are improving the educational progress of our children. Many state officials report that Goals 2000 has been a significant factor in their reform efforts. Forty-eight states have set new, more challenging academic standards, and most states are working to 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? That standards-based education reform works. A recent study of education reform in North Carolina — which has one of the best track records of improving achievement generally and closing racial achievement gaps -- shows us the ingredients of success -- particularly for disadvantaged students: a sustained commitment to raising academic standards, providing schools with the flexibility, targeting resources to help low-performing students, holding schools accountable for results.

Because of our successes -- 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 -- particularly in bridging the racial gap of opportunity. Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at the level of most 13-year-old white students. And while the vast majority of white students graduate from high school -- only a third of Hispanics get their diplomas.

And as my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. 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 is increasing every day -- in lower quality of life, and lowered expectations.

Our challenge as we head into the 21st century is to push reform so it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

How do we help fulfill the promise of every student? The President has laid out a bold strategy for the future -- 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 improve teacher quality. Second, to target increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling. And third, to promote real accountability for results.

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.

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.

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 -- the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers an excellent benchmark. School districts must also 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?]

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 teaching profession, and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.

We need more ways to attract talented people to the profession of teaching, including strategies to enable mid-career entrants to get the training they need to translate their experiences into a teaching career, and to become certified through alternative routes. The Administration is planning to expand the President's Troops to Teachers initiative to reach mid-career professionals from other field. And 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.

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

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. 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.**

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.

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.

Peer assistance programs, like the one here in New York, allow high performing teachers to share their wisdom with new ones. Team planning, if built into the school day, would give teachers the opportunity to confer with their colleagues -- like doctors and lawyers do.

In response to these urgent needs, the President's has proposed a \$1.2 billion fund for these professional development activities.

Other administration initiatives include reducing class size -- particularly in the elementary grades -- is another 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 both teachers and 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 also 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.

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 professions. 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.**

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.

Early childhood development programs are also critical to ensure that every child comes to school ready to learn. I've pushed for increased federal support for home visiting and for funding for Head Start for many years, and I am pleased that under this President, Head Start dollars have more than doubled.

We are well on the way to 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 create developmentally appropriate education standards for Head Start and other preschool programs and to make related training widely available to early childhood teachers.

Reading 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. 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.

To close that 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.

Like reading, mathematics is a foundation for many other subjects. But here too, we find significant racial gaps. Too often, only students thought to be "good at math" or "college material" are given the chance to take higher level mathematics classes, and too few of those students 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.

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 like New York and states across the country are working hard to raise expectations and create higher achievement standards, the Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. We've 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 includes a proposal to require 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.

We must also help low-performing schools turn around. The President's ESEA proposal will also require states to identify the schools with the lowest achievement levels and least improvement and take corrective action. If these actions do not raise student achievement within two years, the proposal would require states to do more, such as permitting students to attend other public schools; reconstituting the school; 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.

If we want to be accountable for creating a "level playing field" -- then 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.

Many people worry that the President's 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.

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.

We can also learn from examples like East Harlem -- the first public school choice system in the country. That district was ranked last in the city when it adopted public school choice over 20 years ago. As a result, both reading and math scores have gone up in all schools -- and the district is still performing better than the schools in New York City with similar concentrations of poverty.

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.

There's also no clear evidence that students do significantly better in a voucher system. **We need to fix our public schools -- not abandon them.**

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.

We need communities to work in partnership with their schools, and be engaged in helping children thrive.

And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. They can also be powerful allies in the demand for high standards and student achievement.

When this nation was first founded, it was a radical idea that education could every become a public matter. Yet some of America's visionary leaders argued that public education was inherent in our commitment to democracy and justice, 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 -- and 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.

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.

To: Shirley
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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 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.

A little over a hundred years ago, a few far-sighted men and women stood together a block or two from here -- to celebrate the opening of a new brick and red sandstone building in the middle of what was otherwise a vacant lot. When bishops, college presidents and philanthropists came together to found Teachers College on that day -- 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 expect each one of their students to perform at the highest level of his or her abilities. (Need to say something laudatory here; while so many institutions have treated this college as a forgotten step-child, Columbia has built this college up as a model nation.)

Today -- we come together at another historic crossroads -- at the end of another century, and on the brink of a new millennium. And in many ways little has changed since this institution was founded so many decades ago. As educators; elected officials; community leaders; and parents, we still recognize 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 dreams -- and denies the nation the talents it needs -- when that education is in some way denied.

a leader in the field.

we still recognize some fundamental truths.

I don't like saying little has changed -- why not say --

we have stayed true

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 whether we can take advantage of the extraordinary opportunities that are presented to us.

Our public school system holds out that promise that everyone has a chance to lift themselves up, and that 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. *And what we seek, as we move into the 21st century, is an excellence in education that will*

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 gaps of knowledge and achievement~~ *are widening* between rich and poor, between white children and children of color; 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 knowledge gap is rapidly increasing the earnings gap. College educated Americans now make 75% more than Americans who simply have a high school diploma.

It is perhaps our greatest challenge in the 21st century that we ~~and those~~ *close the* ~~disparities of opportunity that are holding so many back~~ -- 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 PS 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.

I remember growing up in Chicago, where there used to be so many jobs in the factories on the south side. Jobs that didn't demand much education -- where a strong back and a willingness to work would get you there. But all that began to change, and our public education system didn't keep up. The economy was

moving so quickly; jobs were disappearing so fast; demands for a different approach to education were coming at such a rapid rate. Somewhere along the road -- we had lost our way.

Is this necessary?

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.

We saw how much work was ahead of us when *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 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 enormous disparities between many of our public schools -- particularly those in rural areas. Many didn't have libraries; or art programs, or high expectations for their students. *Maybe you could also say or say instead: Many we learned from our experiences that we had to expect more*

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.

This was before she chaired the committee, is that confusing?
When my husband was elected governor of Arkansas, we began to invite student academic stars to come to the Governor's Mansion. Banquets were always

Christy - I'm not aware that the focus of her committee on education in Ark was the disparities I thought the state needed to improve.

+ students and that if we did, of someone asked risk to the challenge

Should just "let" response to me.

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 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.

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

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'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 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.

In fact, just a few months ago, we released new data that showed we made small, but significant gains in reading scores in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades (in the first time).

However many challenges remain

~~Here's the mixed news.~~ *While* The international 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; 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.

Here in New York -- I've visited the Lab school in Chelsea -- and ... in where the joy of learning is being sparked by dedicated teachers, a rigorous curriculum; and a community that is determined to give their children the best possible education. 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 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. Low expectations can dampen even the brightest hopes. 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 being offered in your school. Every child has talents; every child can contribute. They just need us to believe in them.~~

I want to applaud Rick Mills (position?) here in New York -- for doing away with the general diploma -- and committing city schools to give every child the chance to pass the Regent's exams. That takes courage. And I applaud him.

I also believe we must continue to set ^{high} state and national standards ^{in the classroom} for our schools, for our teachers, for student achievement. ^{and} Yet ^{we} as hard as we've worked to establish them, we also recognize they are only the first step. Our greatest challenge is to give teachers, students, and parents the tools to meet these higher goals. And I want to talk about some of the ways we can help schools ensure that

^{high standards:} we know that every child can reach high standards. We know if we have high expectations of them. We owe it to our children that level of belief + support. →

See next page

When ideologies assert that the only way to improve public education is to destroy it, nothing is gained. Absolutely nothing. We must strengthen public schools not weaken them. After

Should we talk about school choice

What does this mean? Is this believing in children or just not having resources?

Real improvements in education does not happen overnight

States are doing the hard work of creating new standards of achievement. Goals 2000 funds have helped states with this effort and we have made progress. Now each state is challenged to move from standards from the statehouse to the classroom + make them part of every teacher's daily lesson plan.

*as John Sargent, the late Sup of Seattle
said a few Vicky's in the classroom.*

every students succeeds, and and students succeed today -- and in the 21st century. Perhaps we should have a theme -- we must ensure that we focus on high STDS + that ~~the schools~~ ~~we have~~ ~~created~~

First, we know from experience that children learn better when they get more attention. So we must commit ourselves to reducing class size. A recent 5-year study of Milwaukee confirms the importance of having smaller classes. The report 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.

*the conditions to meet those STDS in our schools
↓
fewer in classroom*

Second, we must focus on teacher quality. We can't make any headway unless we give teachers the support and resources -- and most importantly -- the value that they so deserve. And students in schools that face the most challenges access to the best teachers. Having 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. Teachers Teachers' colleges obviously play a unique role in this effort. 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 it 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 in frustration if teacher's don't have the skills and knowledge to teach to those higher standards.

See what I wrote earlier

But we can't ignore the growing pressures that are building up here in New York and around the country -- as a result of the higher standards for teacher certification that are now in place -- and what that means down the road in terms of meeting the growing problem of teacher shortages. But 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.

We must do everything we can to show how much we value the extraordinary work that we know teachers do every day single day. And we must work harder not only to attract the brightest of our students to go into the teaching profession -- but to ensure they have the incentives to teach in inner city and rural schools -- where they're most needed.

Third, by expanding preschool and early childhood education. Ensuring our

*I would focus on steps we need to take to support teachers:
→ on-site professional development
→ healthy workplace;
see attachment*

I don't think we can do this

our children -- particularly those at risk -- come to school ready to learn is a top priority. And we know that preparation for learning begins in the first moment of life. Science now confirms what we've always believed all along: that how we interact with our young children -- whether it's reading them a book, or just talking with them -- affects how that child learns and develops for an entire lifetime. Programs like Head Start and Early Start give every child a chance to be exposed to stimulating education opportunities as early as possible. (And I'm pleased that in the President's new budget -- he's calling for a tripling

see
old
comments

Fourth, by making 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 well by 8 or nine, it's going to be very difficult for that child to ever catch up. That's why the President has called for a national effort, with volunteers helping teachers; with parents becoming involved; with tutors who are willing to give their time to make sure every child is able to read.

Need to discuss high SATs for every child

Fifth, by expanding 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.

very don't
you put this
after school
+ every cut
back in education

And finally by expanding choice and ~~accountability~~ in public education. And I believe that creating charter schools is the best way to provide parents and students other options within the public school system. I've been in and out of charter schools around the country -- and I've seen the dramatic differences they are making. 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.

Need to discuss public school
choice more + charter
less

too
much
cut
back

I want to take this opportunity to mention one further step that I believe we need to commit ourselves to taking if we want every child to learn. And that's the urgent need to get the arts back into our schools. We know that every child's intelligence is expressed differently, which means they learn differently as well. And 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. They can literally make the difference between lives of despair, and live of hope. I urge everyone here today to help get those classes back in our schools — where they belong.

But we can't ask our schools to be held accountable for the progress we want -- whether it's more qualified teachers; or better after school programs; or a more effective reading program -- if we don't hold ourselves accountable as well.

All our public efforts pale beside the power of every parent to make a difference. If America
~~We need parents who believe in the importance of education, and who 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. And whenever I meet children who are excited about learning, and proud of their achievements, I know their parents are involved in their education. ~~But we also know that it's hard to get parents engaged when their own schooling was not successful. So we must reach out to those parents in particular -- and empower them with more information and choices.~~

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 PTO and school board meetings, and in the legislatures — demanding that schools improve the way they are teaching their children; demanding better results; and demanding safer facilities. Parents are potent agents of change. And we need more of them to get involved.

We need communities to work in partnership with their schools, and be 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 need businesses who 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.

Let's imagine -- for a moment -- that we are sitting in the classroom of the Heritage School at 106th and Lexington. The students before us are of every background -- and every level of ability. But in this one small school -- they are being held to high standards; learning their academic work through art, and music, and culture. Musicians come to the school, and students visit museums. And the community is involved at every turn. Try to imagine -- for a moment -- what it would be like if through these wonderful programs and demanding teachers we could unleash the enormous potential of every one of those youngsters. If we could tap into the talents that each of them has -- and spark their imaginations. If we could convince them that their abilities are only limited by the aspirations they hold for themselves. Imagine how enriched we would be if they were given the skills to be full participants in the life of their community, and citizens of the world.

Imagine the remarkable possibilities in that one classroom. And then let's recommit ourselves to the work ahead.

Thank you.

How about this end:

Today, we have more young people in our nation's schools than ever before, all 53 million of them. This generation -- learning at the cusp of a new century is entitled to its day in the sun. The 21st century will be their century and an American century, if we educate them well. How we educate their minds + shape their values now will go a long way to defining the destiny of this nation for decades to come.

to be done in a Victory in the classroom.

Shanker Education Speech Outline

I. Progress on Education Reform since a Nation at Risk and Reforms in Arkansas

Setting the Stage: As we approach the Millennium, nothing is more important than ensuring that all our children receive a world class education. In the last two decades we have made significant progress towards that goal. But many challenges remain. However, it may be helpful to step back and see how far we've come, to better understand where we need to go.

A. *A Nation at Risk*

1. Roughly fifteen years ago, *A Nation at Risk* was published, which stated that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation."
2. Discuss the state of education as detailed by *A Nation at Risk*:
 - a. Reading, math, science proficiency -- U.S. students ranked last, or close to last, on all international tests and SATs were low (fear of global competitors)
 - b. low rates of college attendance -- only half of high school graduates went onto college
 - c. high dropout rates
 - d. discuss other indicators

B. The Response: As a country, at the federal, state, and local level, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work.

1. *Use Arkansas reforms that you chaired as an example of reform efforts at the local level*
 - a. *Greater accountability*
 - b. *Teacher quality*
 - c. *More focus on the classroom curriculum*
 - d. *High standards*
 - e. *Private sector involvement*
2. Discuss President's efforts to promote education reform at the national level in the 1990s
3. Changed fundamental assumptions through these reform efforts
 - a. We have shifted the understanding of education's importance:

we now understand the importance of educational attainment to our new technology economy. (Discuss your experience with the National Center for Education and the Economy Report: *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*)

II. Reforms are Working

A. Results -- slowly but surely we're making progress

1. National Results:
 - a. SAT, NAEP scores are up
 - b. The drop out rate is down
 - c. College attendance is up
- d. Closing racial and ethnic gaps in achievement

B. There is every reason to be hopeful about public education -- even schools with the greatest challenges can and do turn around. Discuss specific low-income schools you have visited and some of the ways they have improved academic achievement. Also discuss the increases in achievement in low-income schools in general.

C. Lessons learned from these reforms

1. We know that every child can learn and that even schools with poorest achievement can become world class schools.
2. Importance of leadership from many sources -- teachers, principals, the community.
3. *Vouchers are bad policy and a diversion from our real task of reforming our schools. Indeed, we can all agree that our public schools have to improve.*

III. We Must Do Better (Your views on reforms)

A. We must build on what's working in the classroom:

1. *Smaller class size*
2. *Higher standards and accountability -- expecting more from every child works*
3. *The New Basics -- focus on reading, math and science*

4. Teacher Quality -- giving teachers the support and resources they need, giving students in schools that face the most challenges access to the best teachers

[Amplify President's reauthorization proposal for ESEA to some degree]

B. Community and Parental Involvement:

1. Schools are not separate from the community, e.g. business involvement, importance of after-school programs
2. When parents get involved in the education of their children, we know children do better.

IV. What's at Stake

Improving our schools is not only critically important to our economic future, but to our democracy as well: As stated in *A Nation at Risk*, "A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society, and the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom."

Also include some discussion of how public education supports our democracy by fostering a number of values that democratic institutions rely upon, including tolerance of diversity, trust in others, a sense of community, amongst others. And that the denial of educational opportunities, in our own past and around the world, has been a tool to oppress minority groups and women.

You may want to note that the foundation of our modern democracy and free enterprise economy is the belief in the great capacity of all citizens to lift up America while lifting themselves up. Education, as John Dewey said, can be America's "great equalizer." In this way, we can include some discussion of the importance of closing racial and ethnic gaps in academic achievement to fulfill the promise of American education.

March 13, 1999

Memorandum for Hillary Rodham Clinton

From: Chris Jennings, Neera Tanden

Re: Hofstra Speech on Health Care

cc: Melanne Verveer

This memo provides you with a brief description of the process by which we plan to help you construct your Hofstra health care speech. It also includes some preliminary ideas on a possible framework, from which we hope to obtain your initial reactions. Any response you can give in this regard will help direct the work we do on the speech while you travel during the latter part of this month.

For obvious reasons, there is great interest in your views about health care. This speech provides an excellent opportunity to lay out your evaluation of the current debate on a number of extremely "hot" health care issues (outlined below). It also permits you to place them in context of your past work on the Health Security Act and/or your vision of future health policy directions.

As you have requested, we plan to contact a wide range of health care policy experts you have worked with in the past to help prepare the first draft of your speech. However, to ensure that they can be most responsive to your interests, we thought these conversations would be the most productive after we constructed a basic framework for the speech with you. (Such an approach would of course not preclude any great new idea that came up in our discussions, but should focus these thinkers a bit more constructively.) We will solicit the views of many of these experts while you are away.

The Harvard Commencement Address. Last year, your (attached) Harvard speech focused on a wide range of health care issues. Within the broad theme of the changing health care system and the opportunities and challenges it creates, you discussed a number of issues: (1) the limited but important successes in access and coverage

we have achieved since the Health Security Act, (2) the new health care and financing challenges that will be influenced by staggering demographic changes, (3) general themes of the great potential and perils of the age of biology, and (4) general or specific references about how we are trying to address some of these issues by passing legislation providing for a Patient's Bill of Rights, health and employment genetic discrimination prohibitions, and privacy protections.

Possible Framework for Hofstra Speech. This year, although you will undoubtedly want to reference the broad range of challenges confronting the health care system, you may want to consider focusing your speech in some detail on one or two of the issues that are gaining the most attention from both the public and the health policy elites. Regardless, there are a number of important issues that you may include in your speech, such as:

- **The Quality Agenda.** When you give this speech, the Congress will likely be entering the middle of its debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights. The defining issue will be the inadequacy of the Senate Republican Leadership's version of this bill, particularly focusing on enforcement (the right to sue and adequate remedies), medical necessity standards (which the Republicans want to drop altogether), and the fact the bill leaves out over 100 million Americans (because it covers only the self-insured.)
- **Coverage Expansion Initiatives.** In the wake of the Health Security Act and, in fact, the enactment of Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), much attention will be focused on your views on the next steps for coverage expansion. As you know, the Administration has proposed targeted health coverage expansions, primarily through Medicaid expansions or state grants. However, the "hot" issue in health policy circles and on the Hill of late, however, has been focused around bipartisan proposals (from McDermott to Arney) to use of tax credits to make health insurance more affordable. You could use this as an opportunity to welcome any new recognition of the unacceptability of having over 43 million uninsured Americans, and detail your views on different approaches to coverage (in particular, the potential and pitfalls of tax incentive approaches).
- **Medicare Reform.** The President's proposal to dedicate 15 percent of the surplus to Medicare, as well as the Medicare Commission's report and the subsequent reaction to it, has and will continue to focus the public's attention on Medicare and the challenges confronting it. Issues that will be front and center will include the need to dedicate substantial new revenues to the program to sustain it for any length of time, the desire to make the program more competitive, the risk of adding more Americans to the ranks of the uninsured by raising the eligibility age, and the need for long overdue benefit improvements (prescription drug, more prevention, mental health, etc.). The importance of these and numerous other changes to the program

to all generations of Americans, particularly women and the disabled, will also be a major focus.

- **Long-Term Care.** When you joined the President in unveiling the Administration's long-term care initiative, you succeeded in striking a chord with the public and the aging advocacy community, which has produced a strong and bipartisan reception on Capitol Hill. Although the needs in this area are overwhelming and extremely expensive, it has been received as an important "first step" toward recognizing the caregiving burdens that families, particularly women, face.

- **Potential and Perils of New Technology.** The “Age of Biology” and the use of computer and other technologies have extraordinary potential to produce breakthroughs in health care that could improve Americans’ health care status significantly and constrain health care cost growth. Every day, Americans read about the latest drug or technology that is going on the marketplace to make such claims. So far, however, there appears to be little correlation between this progress and major improvements in health care or demonstrable cost savings. Moreover, the use of genetic screening and the electronic claims processing has heightened Americans’ concerns about abuses in this area. A detailed discussion in this area could help illustrate the difficulties in drafting legislation that reconciles the need for privacy protections with the desires by some in the health care community to access the type of information they think will be essential to improve medical outcomes.

We believe that the issues outlined above represent the “top tier” health care issues. Again, although you might well want to acknowledge all of these issues, choosing one or two issues to particularly focus on would permit you to develop them in much greater detail. If you opt for such an approach, we would recommend that the issue(s) you choose would be framed by discussion about the challenges and opportunities of the issue. You would follow this foundation by focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of competing policy approaches that are being considered.

A framework follows that uses quality as an example:

Framework

Challenges and opportunities of the changing health care world as we approach the millennium and its direct impact on the age-old doctor-patient relationship, as well as the potential for using the new delivery system changes to improve health care. (If you chose not to pursue a detailed focus on the coverage issue, we believe you could integrate your views on the uninsured within this context as well).

Focus

- The new system’s impact on quality care and patients’ confidence in it.
- The ongoing Congressional debate that defines differing approaches to assuring quality.

Conclusion

We forward this memo to you to seek guidance. Based on your reactions to this memo, we will solicit views from the policy experts to supplement and amplify the message(s) (or to respond to any alternative approach you might have). We plan on meeting you, Melanne and the speechwriters during the first week of April to report back to you on our discussions and to work with you on producing a first draft of the speech.

March 19, 1999

Memorandum for Hillary Rodham Clinton

From: Shirley Sagawa, Neera Tanden

Re: Shanker Education Speech

As we discussed in our last issues meeting, we view the Shanker speech as an opportunity to lay out your vision on education. It will serve as one of the four major speeches you deliver over the next several months in which you discuss your views on your major domestic issues. This memo provides some preliminary ideas on a possible framework for your feedback. Any response you can give us will help direct the work we do on the speech while you are travelling.

Our primary goal with this speech, in addition to honoring Al Shanker, is to lay out your vision to strengthen public education in a manner that recognizes your longstanding work on these issues. We recommend that with whatever framework you choose, you focus your remarks on how we as a nation can strengthen and reform our public schools. This focus would enable you to discuss particular reform initiatives, including those you have seen first hand in schools you have visited.

Possible issues to discuss within any framework:

- Teacher quality
- High academic standards
- Curriculum improvements including a focus on math and science
- Accountability
- Parent involvement
- Charter schools and school choice 1
- Social promotion
- Class size
- School construction
- Early childhood development

You may want to consider a focus on a particular set of initiatives that are more directly connected to the quality of education children receive in the classroom, such as teacher quality, reduced class size, high academic standards and curriculum improvements.

Here are a few possible frameworks.

Option 1-- Straightforward policy speech focusing on improvements over the last decade

You might frame the speech with an assessment of the state of public education roughly 15 years since your work on education reform in Arkansas and since *A Nation at Risk* was published. Due to the major reforms of this period (state standards, more rigorous graduation requirements, improved math and science instruction), the nation has seen improvements in graduation rates, achievement (particularly in math and science), and college attendance, though significant inequities persist and other challenges remain.

Your speech could describe your experiences in education reform and discuss the contributions of Al Shanker. You could highlight the last decade's improvements as a means of underscoring that those who would write-off public schools are wrong -- public education can improve and is an important American institution that must be supported. You could then turn to the need to do more, noting the challenges for public education today, stressing reforms that you support, and challenging the audience of teachers to play their part.

Option 2 -- School and community

In this option, instead of looking at the education system itself, you would focus on how the school relates to the community, using some of the themes of *It Takes A Village*.

You could focus on what schools provide (or ought to), with an emphasis on reaching *all* students, holding them to high standards, ending social promotion, and the important role of the teacher. (There have been some interesting studies that have found strong connections between student academic achievement and community involvement in the schools.) You could tie some of these to Administration policies and also talk about schools that you have visited that exemplify these characteristics as well as Al Shanker's support for many of these efforts. You might end with a challenge to the teachers to reach out to parents and the community, and to hold high expectations for all students, including those considered "at-risk."

Option 3 -- Public schools as the foundation of civil society and its role in our future

You could discuss how public education supports our democracy by fostering a number of values that democratic institutions rely upon, including tolerance of diversity, trust in others, community, amongst others. You might provide a short history of public education and the role it has played over the last century in supporting our civil society. You might then lay out the challenges of the

future -- an increasingly diverse population, the growing importance of education to economic success, and the need to see that no one is left behind. This could be followed by a discussion of your views on reforms of public education that will meet these challenges. (I still worry that she's going to adopt this framework and then she's going to be much less substantive on particular reforms. Should we help avoid that possibility by using this as part of the speech itself, but not doing it as a framework?? I'm not sure, but I'm a bit concerned. But we have to give her a few options I suppose.)

Option 4 -- Common ground

Only the most conservative, anti-government extremists advocate that public schools be eliminated -- most accept that public schools will continue but have to compete with private schools for funding. Their theory is that competition will breed excellence, and some public schools will close and others improve as a result.

In this option, you would note your opposition to vouchers, but advocate common ground -- for all reasonable people, whatever their position on vouchers, to work toward improving education for all children. You would focus on reforms that work, highlighting your own experiences. And then you would challenge the teachers to put children first as they work with others -- school boards, administrators, parents -- to put public education on a faster track toward excellence.

(Shirley -- I'm pretty concerned that this is a very difficult framework for us because we then have to navigate between sounding too confrontational and sounding like we've given up our principles. I worry that conservatives will take this as an attack, and our anti-voucher supporters will be worried that we're backtracking when we say we need to find common ground. I think that we face a similar difficulty with abortion and the focus on making it rare, but we adopted that focus after much consultation with our allies. I also worry that this sets up too much of a focus on vouchers, and not enough focus on what she would do to improve our schools affirmatively. I think that perhaps we can make this point within a discussion of vouchers, but to use it as a framework makes me nervous.)

Shanker Education Speech Outline

I. Progress on Education Reform since a Nation at Risk and Reforms in Arkansas

Setting the Stage: As we approach the Millennium, nothing is more important than ensuring that all our children receive a world class education. In the last two decades we have made significant progress towards that goal. But many challenges remain. However, it may be helpful to step back and see how far we've come, to better understand where we need to go.

A. *A Nation at Risk*

1. Roughly fifteen years ago, *A Nation at Risk* was published, which stated that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation."
2. Discuss the state of education as detailed by *A Nation at Risk*:
 - a. Reading, math, science proficiency -- U.S. students ranked last, or close to last, on all international tests and SATs were low (fear of global competitors)
 - b. low rates of college attendance -- only half of high school graduates went onto college
 - c. high dropout rates
 - d. discuss other indicators

B. The Response: As a country, at the federal, state, and local level, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work.

1. *Use Arkansas reforms that you chaired as an example of reform efforts at the local level*
 - a. *Greater accountability*
 - b. *Teacher quality*
 - c. *More focus on the classroom curriculum*
 - d. *High standards*
 - e. *Private sector involvement*
2. Discuss President's efforts to promote education reform at the national level in the 1990s
3. Changed fundamental assumptions through these reform efforts
 - a. We have shifted the understanding of education's importance:

we now understand the importance of educational attainment to our new technology economy. (Discuss your experience with the National Center for Education and the Economy Report: *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*)

II. Reforms are Working

A. Results -- slowly but surely we're making progress

1. National Results:
 - a. SAT, NAEP scores are up
 - b. The drop out rate is down
 - c. College attendance is up
- d. Closing racial and ethnic gaps in achievement

B. There is every reason to be hopeful about public education -- even schools with the greatest challenges can and do turn around. Discuss specific low-income schools you have visited and some of the ways they have improved academic achievement. Also discuss the increases in achievement in low-income schools in general.

C. Lessons learned from these reforms

1. We know that every child can learn and that even schools with poorest achievement can become world class schools.
2. Importance of leadership from many sources -- teachers, principals, the community.
3. *Vouchers are bad policy and a diversion from our real task of reforming our schools. Indeed, we can all agree that our public schools have to improve.*

III. We Must Do Better (Your views on reforms)

A. We must build on what's working in the classroom:

1. *Smaller class size*
2. *Higher standards and accountability -- expecting more from every child works*
3. *The New Basics -- focus on reading, math and science*

4. Teacher Quality -- giving teachers the support and resources they need, giving students in schools that face the most challenges access to the best teachers

[Amplify President's reauthorization proposal for ESEA to some degree]

B. Community and Parental Involvement:

1. Schools are not separate from the community, e.g. business involvement, importance of after-school programs
2. When parents get involved in the education of their children, we know children do better.

IV. What's at Stake

Improving our schools is not only critically important to our economic future, but to our democracy as well: As stated in *A Nation at Risk*, "A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society, and the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom."

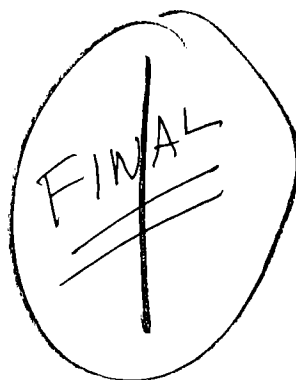
Also include some discussion of how public education supports our democracy by fostering a number of values that democratic institutions rely upon, including tolerance of diversity, trust in others, a sense of community, amongst others. And that the denial of educational opportunities, in our own past and around the world, has been a tool to oppress minority groups and women.

You may want to note that the foundation of our modern democracy and free enterprise economy is the belief in the great capacity of all citizens to lift up America while lifting themselves up. Education, as John Dewey said, can be America's "great equalizer." In this way, we can include some discussion of the importance of closing racial and ethnic gaps in academic achievement to fulfill the promise of American education.

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



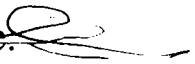
Thank you, Jill, for that kind introduction, for your passionate commitment to creating a more just world for our children; and for your friendship. I also want to thank both you and Ken for sponsoring this innovative new lecture series. It is a great honor and a pleasure to be here at this revered educational 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.

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.

Today, 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.

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.~~ 

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. 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.

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.

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.

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.

I had a chance to further these efforts when my husband, then 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.~~ ^{and} 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. Pushing for higher standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.

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.

Among the President's proudest achievements in the first term were Goals 2000 and the 1994 reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (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.

~~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.

Over the past six years -- we've sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that school -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling studentst o 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. 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? That 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: ^{a 7. consistent 16} 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.

Because of our successes -- 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 -- particularly in bridging the racial gap of
opportunity. Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at
the level of most 13-year-old white students. And while the vast
majority of white students graduate from high school -- only a third of
Hispanics get their diplomas.]

And as my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. 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 is increasing every day -- in lower quality of life, and lowered expectations.

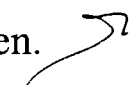
Our challenge as we head into the 21st century is to push reform so it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

How do we help fulfill the promise of every student? The President has laid out a bold strategy for the future -- 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 improve teacher quality. Second, to target increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling. And third, to promote real accountability for results.

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 goals we have set for ourselves will be accomplished if we don't make teaching a first class profession.

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 -- the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers an excellent benchmark.** 

**** School districts must also 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?

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^{ing} profession, and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.

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.

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

Other are taking the initiative a well.

** 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.

1 ~~** 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.

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. 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 strategies have been proven to give new teachers the extra support they need:

Effort like --
** peer assistance programs, like the one here in New York, ~~that~~
allow high performing teachers to share their wisdom with new ones;
and give them the extra support they need.

~~and~~
** Team planning, if built into the school day, would give teachers the opportunity to confer with their colleagues -- like doctors and lawyers do. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40% say it improves their teaching "a lot" -- and another third say it "moderately." ~~Too many teachers are isolated in their classrooms.~~
~~Let's change that.~~

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.

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.

In response to these urgent needs, the President's 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 another 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.

~~///~~ ^{also} 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.

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.**

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.

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 federal support for home visiting and for 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~~ *getting closer to* 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.

~~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. 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.

To close that 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.

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 too few of those students 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.

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 like New York and states across the country are working hard to raise expectations and create higher achievement standards, the Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. We've 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 includes a proposal to require 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.

We also must also help low performing schools turn around.

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. 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 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.

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.

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.

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. [San Fernando Valley charter school]

We can^{also} 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. As a result, both reading and math scores have gone up in all schools -- and the district is still performing better than the schools in New York City with similar concentrations of poverty.

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And we need businesses who understand they have a major stake in producing a well educated, highly skilled workforce. They can also be powerful allies in the demand for high standards and student achievement.

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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 -- ^{and} 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. ^{and for inviting me to speak about Reimagining Education: A Matter of Justice + Possibility} 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.

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~~ ² Our country was in the throws of transforming itself ~~from an agricultural~~ ² to an industrial nation, and cities were filled with new arrivals from ~~the countryside and immigrants from~~ ² 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.

Today, 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.

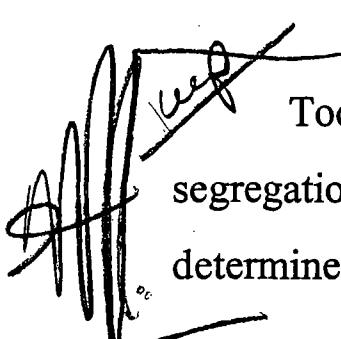
You've also used your resources and talents to be instruments of change and progress in the New York city schools -- initiating writing projects; helping to establish professional development schools; and mentoring first year teachers, so they stay on in the toughest schools. Your work to get the arts 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.~~

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. 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.

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.

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.

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 Edelman at the Children's Defense Fund in the early 1970s. ^{SKT} 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.

I had a chance to further these efforts when my husband, then 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.~~ ^{and} 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. Pushing for higher standards became one of my husband's lifelong priorities.

Our efforts bore fruit at the Education Summit ^{Charlottesville} ~~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 by} ~~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.

Among the President's proudest achievements in the first term were Goals 2000 and the 1994 reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (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.

~~Taken together~~ ^T 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.

Over the past six years -- we've sent the strongest possible message that we must not only set high standards for our students -- but that school -- and all of us -- must be held accountable for enabling studentst o 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. ^{Many state officials report that Goals 2000 has been a significant factor in their reform efforts.} 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? That that standards-based education reform works.

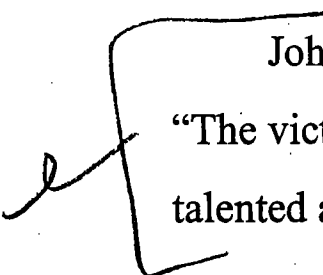
A recent study of education reform in North Carolina and Texas -
- the two states with the best track record of improving achievement generally and closing achievement gaps between minority and white students -- shows us the ingredients of success -- particularly for disadvantaged students: ^asustained, ^{commitment to} 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.

Because of our successes -- 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 -- particularly in bridging the racial gap of opportunity. Today, most 17-year-old African Americans are reading at the level of most 13-year-old white students. And while the vast majority of white students graduate from high school -- only a third of Hispanics get their diplomas.

And as my husband always says -- what you earn depends on what you learn. 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 is increasing every day -- in lower quality of life, and lowered expectations.

Our challenge as we head into the 21st century is to push reform so it reaches every school and every classroom in the country.

How do we help fulfill the promise of every student? The President has laid out a bold strategy for the future -- 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 improve teacher quality. Second, to target increased investments to disadvantaged children -- with particular attention to the early years of schooling. And third, to promote real accountability for results.



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 goals we have set for ourselves will be accomplished if we don't make teaching a first class profession.

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 -- the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers an excellent benchmark.~~

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

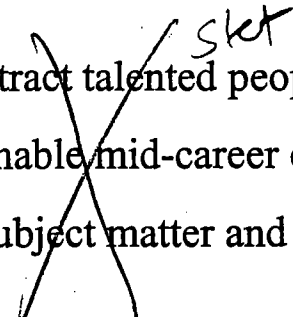
[How can we expect results when more than 30 percent of newly hired teachers are entering without full certification -- and over 11 percent have no license at all?]

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^{ing} profession, and create new strategies to recruit talented candidates to the profession.



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.



more *13* *→*

We need more alternative routes to certification and strategies to make it easy for mid-career professionals to gain the teaching skills and certification they need to make a career change

**** 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.

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. 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.**

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.

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.

we also need

** peer assistance programs, like the one here in New York, that allow high performing teachers to share their wisdom with new ones; *and*

more opportunities for teachers to engage in
** ~~Team planning, if built into the school day, would give teachers~~

the opportunity to confer with their colleagues -- like doctors and lawyers do. Among teachers whose schools dedicate time for team planning, 40% say it improves their teaching "a lot" -- and another third say it "moderately." Too many teachers are isolated in their classrooms. Let's change that.

In response to these urgent needs, the President's has proposed ^{a \$1.2 billion fund for these activities} ~~increasing funding that can be used for professional development~~ ~~as~~ ~~an important part of the ESEA proposal.~~

Other administration initiatives include:

Reducing class size -- particularly in the elementary grades -- is a another 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 ^{and teachers} ^{both}

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.

~~also~~ The Administration ^{also} 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 direct -- getting serious about teacher quality at every level.

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 professions^s. 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.**

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.

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 federal support for home visiting and for 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 ^{getting closer} 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 ^{create} develop ^{mentally} 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. Failure to read is the overwhelming reason that children are retained, assigned to special education, or given long-term remedial services. 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.

To close that 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.

Like reading, mathematics is a foundation for many other subjects, ~~particularly science and technology~~. But here too, we find significant *racial* 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 too few of those students 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.

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 like New York and states across the country are working hard to raise expectations and create higher achievement standards, the Administration is working to be a strong partner in this effort. We've 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 includes a proposal to require 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.

We must also help low performing schools turn around

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. 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.

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.

Many people worry that the ^{President's} 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.

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.

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We can^{also} learn from examples like East Harlem -- the first public school choice system in the country. That district, ^{was ranked last in the city} ~~that faces so many~~ ^{when it} ~~challenges,~~ adopted public school choice over 20 years ago. As a result, both reading and math scores have gone up in all schools -- and the district is still performing better than the schools in New York City with similar concentrations of poverty.

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.

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