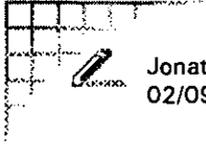


**NLWJC - Kagan**

**DPC - Box 020 - Folder 008**

**Education - Math/Science Directive**



Jonathan H. Schnur  
02/09/99 10:50:14 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Tanya E. Martin/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Blue Ribbon Commission on Math and Science

Attached is an Education Department document outlining a proposed new commission on math and science that Secretary Riley might preview in his State of American Education Address next week. The commission would be chaired by John Glenn, would focus on recruiting and training good math and science teachers, would begin work in April and finish its work between April and August of 2000. Education is proposing that this be announced at a White House event in several weeks.

I think it seems like a good idea, and in fact it might be something that the VP could lead.

**A few questions for you:**

- 1) What do you think? Would you like to make changes in the way this is being conceptualized?
- 2) Are you comfortable with Secretary Riley announcing this next week?
- 3) Do you think it makes sense for the VP to play some kind of leadership role in this? (If he did, I might want to explore with Education if it might make sense to delay even previewing the announcement until the VP could participate.)

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" A Blue Ribbon National Commission  
Improving K-12 Mathematics and Science Education

**Background.** The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and NASA believe the time is right to launch a Blue Ribbon National Commission to Improve K-12 Mathematics and Science Education. Senator John Glenn would like to devote some of his time to K-12 mathematics and science education and has expressed interest in serving as chair of this Commission.

**The Problem.** Far too many U.S. students finish high school without mastering the challenging mathematics and science necessary for success in higher education and in our competitive knowledge-based economy. The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results show that, while our 4th graders perform above the international average, performance begins to decline in the middle grades, and by the end of secondary school, U.S. students score significantly below the international average in both general and advanced mathematics and science. The TIMSS results also suggest possible avenues for change in its analysis of educational practices worldwide.

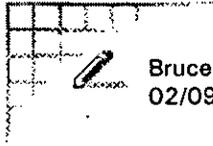
**How a National Commission Can Help.** A National Commission can review the current state of American K-12 math and science education and highlight important policy recommendations to improve U.S. student achievement in math and science. The TIMSS results have captured the attention of the public and the media, and the Administration has repeatedly cited math and science education as a priority. A high profile Commission can now convincingly articulate the steps needed to produce higher student achievement in math and science.

**Possible Outcomes/Recommendations.** The Commission will produce a report focused on specific action steps that federal, state, and local policymakers can take to address teacher supply and quality issues in K-12 math and science education. The report would highlight states and districts that have implemented some of these steps, resulting in higher student achievement in math and science. At the federal level, recommendations for legislation similar to the Reading Excellence Act, and building on current Congressional interest in math and science education, could emerge so that targeted resources become available to carry out the Commission's recommendations.

**Possible Members.** As mentioned above, Senator John Glenn has expressed interest in serving as chair of a Blue Ribbon Commission that will move policymakers forward. Among the remaining 12-15 participants would be key members of Congress, Governors, Mayors, Chief State School Officers, Nobel laureates, Business CEOs, University presidents, and so on.

**Charge and Timing.** Secretary Riley could foreshadow the announcement of the Commission in his State of American Education address by previewing a White House event and mentioning John Glenn as the chair. A White House event might include John Glenn, Neal Lane (OSTP), Rita Colwell (NSF), Daniel Goldin (NASA), Bruce Alberts (NAS), Secretary Richardson, Secretary Slater, and Secretary Riley, as well as a few of the Commission members. The Commission could begin meeting in April and meet once every other month for the next 12-16 months. The Commission will be charged to focus on teacher supply and quality in math and science, as described on the next page.





Bruce N. Reed  
02/09/99 11:30:50 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Jonathan H. Schnur/OPD/EOP  
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Tanya E. Martin/OPD/EOP  
Subject: Re: Blue Ribbon Commission on Math and Science 

I couldn't read all of what you sent, because I couldn't convert a Word 6.0 document. But I have 2 thoughts:

1. I'm not against a Glenn commission, but focusing on teacher prep and recruitment is too narrow and will get us an answer too late. We're rewriting teacher quality & recruitment as part of ESEA this year. A commission that reports on those issues in mid-2000 only slows us down. I would cast the commission's charge more broadly -- for example, I bet the way we teach math is as big a problem as who we have teaching it. We should figure out the mission before we launch it.

2. If we're going to do this, the President, VP, and Riley should announce it. We shouldn't dribble it out in Riley's speech -- we should do a full-blown WH event.