THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

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COMMENTS: HERE IS THE LETTER

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Governor of Maryland
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Executive Director

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October 7, 1999

Educ - Accountability Fund

The Honorable Senator Jeff Bingaman
703 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bingaman:

On behalf of the nation's Governors, I write to express our strong support for your amendment to provide states with additional funds to help turn around schools that are failing to provide a quality education for Title I students.

As you know, under current law, states are permitted to reserve one-half of one percent of their Title I monies to administer the Title I program and provide schools with additional assistance. However, this small setaside does not provide the states with sufficient funds to improve the quality of Title I schools. A recent study by the U.S. Department of Education noted that the "capacity of state school support teams to assist schools in need of improvement of Title I is a major concern." The programs authorized to fund such improvement efforts have not been funded. As a result, states have been unable to provide such services. According to "Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: The Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I," in 1998, only eight states reported that school support teams had been able to serve the majority of schools identified as needing improvement. In twenty-four states, Title I directors reported more schools in need of school support teams than Title I could assist.

Earlier this year, the National Governors' Association (NGA) adopted an education policy that recognizes the important role of the states in providing technical assistance to local school districts to help them implement federal education programs. In addition, the policy calls for full implementation of the current Title I accountability provisions, including the requirements that states intervene in low performing schools. However, the policy calls on the federal government to provide states with sufficient funds to enable states to provide school districts with the tools to meet federal program requirements. Your amendment would provide such funding. Therefore, NGA supports your amendment and will urge other Senators to support the adoption of it.

We look forward to working with you towards the enactment of this and other provisions that will help states improve the quality of services provided to Title I students.

Sincerely,

Raymond C. Scheppach

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Educ - Accountability Fund

November 18, 1999

Dear Colleague:

In an important step forward for educational accountability, the President's plan to help turn around low-performing schools has been included in the final budget agreement. Along with the many other strides to improve public education in this budget – such as $1.3 billion to keep on track to hiring 100,000 quality teachers to reduce class size; $450 million to more than double federal support to expand after-school programs; $200 million to help disadvantaged students prepare for college; and increased funding for Title I, Hispanic education, educational technology, charter schools, and other important efforts, such as helping families pay for college – this accountability initiative will help strengthen the schools that need it most. It will set aside $134 million to ensure that failing schools are held accountable for results.

TURNING AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS. In January, President Clinton called on states and districts to identify and turn around their worst-performing schools – or shut them down. The final budget agreement provides communities the resources to help do so. It targets $134 million in new funds to districts with schools identified as low-performing under Title I. These are schools with the lowest achievement levels that have consistently failed to show improvement. Districts must use these resources for corrective strategies to improve the performance of these schools. The budget also includes a $75 million increase in Title I base funding, for a total Title I increase of $209 million over the Labor/HHS bill the President vetoed.

A STRATEGY THAT WORKS. The President's plan builds on the experience of local communities nationwide that have carried out these reforms to turn around their schools:

North Carolina sent assistance teams into its 15 worst-performing elementary and middle schools in 1997. Within a year, 14 of these schools met state standards in reading and math. Students in North Carolina have made dramatic gains in educational achievement of any state in recent years.

The Miami-Dade School District identified 45 low-performing schools in 1995, and implemented an intensive three-year corrective action plan, including school-wide reading programs and improved technology. Last year, the district determined that all the schools had made progress and removed all 45 schools from the state's list of low-performing schools.

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EXPANDING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE. The final budget also includes a provision to give students in low-performing schools in districts that receive accountability funds, the option to transfer to another public school not identified for improvement, unless the school district can show the state that it does not have the capacity to provide all students that option.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Andrews
Member of Congress

Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress

Educ - Accountability Fund

**Title I Accountability**
**Q&A**
**November 17, 1999**

**Q: What is this Title I accountability provision that Congress agreed to, what does it do?**

A: The provision is a set-aside in the Title I program to give school districts resources to help them improve failing schools. The budget agreement provides $134 million for this set-aside. School districts can use the resources for strategies to help failing schools improve, such as reconstitution, management changes, or a stronger curriculum. In addition, this provision gives students in low-performing schools the option to transfer to other public schools if there is space.

**Q: What schools does this apply to?**

A: This provision applies to schools designated for school improvement or corrective action under Title I. These are schools that have consistently failed to improve student achievement.

**Q: Is this consistent with the accountability agenda the President has been talking about?**

A: Yes. In fact, this provision is modeled on a provision in the President's Education Accountability Act. States like North Carolina have demonstrated that one of the most effective strategies for improving overall achievement is to target the worst schools for extra help. That's why the President has been advocating this set-aside to ensure that schools that need assistance get it. The President also has long supported expanding this public school choice. This public school choice provision is very similar to a provision that passed the House by 358-67 in October, with virtually unanimous Democratic support.

**Q: What about the public school choice provision, it seems that a lot of the education groups are opposed to that?**

A: The President has long supported efforts to expand public school choice. A very similar provision passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support a few weeks ago as part of the Title I reauthorization. The President's own ESEA plan also includes public school choice for students attending schools in corrective action. Many states and school districts around the country are already implementing public school choice including charter schools, open enrollment and inter-district choice. We have more work to do to pass a strong ESEA reauthorization bill next year. But we believe these steps to hold failing schools

accountable for results and give students more and better choices within the public school system will help begin to turn around the schools that need it most.

Educ - Accountability Fund

**PRESIDENT'S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**
**TO TURN AROUND FAILING SCHOOLS ADOPTED IN FINAL BUDGET**
**November 17, 1999—DRAFT-NOT FOR RELEASE**

*"States and school districts must turn around their worst-performing schools – or shut them down."*
President Clinton
State of the Union Address – January 19, 1999

In an important step forward for educational accountability, the President's plan to help turn around low-performing schools has been included in the final budget agreement. Along with the many other strides to improve public education in this budget – such as $1.3 billion to keep on track to hiring 100,000 quality teachers to reduce class size; $450 million to more than double federal support to expand after-school programs; $200 million to help disadvantaged students prepare for college; and increased funding for Title I, Hispanic education, educational technology, charter schools, and other important efforts, such as helping families pay for college – this accountability initiative will help strengthen the schools that need it most. It will set aside $134 million to ensure that failing schools are held accountable for results.

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**EXPANDING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE.** The final budget also includes a provision to give students in low-performing schools in districts that receive accountability funds, the option to transfer to another <u>public</u> school not identified for improvement, unless the school district can show the state that it does not have the capacity to provide all students that option.

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(202) 659-5565

Educ / Accountability Fund

To: Bruce Reed
From: Bill Taylor
Date: November 24, 1999

Thanks for calling this to my attention. I'll keep you apprised of developments.

*ADMITTED IN MARYLAND ONLY

# Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

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Memorandum
To: Joel Packer
From: Bill Taylor Bill
Re.: Public school choice as Corrective Action
Date: November 23, 1999

This is to follow up our recent conversations about the controversy that arose on public school choice in the Labor -HHS- Education appropriation. I have reviewed the correspondence that members of your E1-Sec coalition sent to the Administration and the Hill and the only quarrel I have with it is in its implications for the substantative reauthorization legislation.

There is the implication in the letter that the group will oppose a right to transfer from failing schools as a mandatory corrective action under Section 1116 ( c ). The letter states that the "mandate is inconsistent with the current effort to provide more state and local flexibility in use of federal education funds," noting that currently Section 1116 ( c ) lists a right to transfer as one of seven options that may be selected when corrective action is required.

This is a correct statement of current law. But H.R.2, as passed by the House in October, specifically requires that an LEA "shall provide all students enrolled in a school identified for school improvement with an option to transfer to any other public school... that has not been identified for school improvement," Section 112 (b)(6)(A). This transfer option can be coupled with a range of other corrective actions, but it must be afforded.

This proposed change in the law responds to a proposal made by the Clinton Administration. More to the point, it responds to a statement of objectives for the reauthorization hammered out by the Leadership Conference over a series of meetings and finally adopted last September. The pertinent part reads as follows:

> **"Ensure Effective Corrective Action.** Instead of just listing a broad array of discretionary measures, LCCR urges Congress to strengthen accountability so that schools that persistently fail are required to redesign

and give their students the right to transfer to higher performing schools." (emphasis supplied)

Although you talk of the need for flexibility in the group letter it is my understanding that the tradeoff for flexibility is accountability. And a right to transfer out of a failing school is to many of us a very important step in holding school officials accountable for results. In addition I believe that affording choice in a public school context is an important means to ward off the drive for vouchers, a drive which I'm sure you agree is not dead despite our success in the House.

As your letter says, the right to transfer remedy is "more appropriately addressed within the context of the current ESEA authorization." I think that HR2 addresses the fundamental issue appropriately and correctly. No doubt it can be improved, e.g. 'by requiring that needed transportation be financed by the State, not out of Title I funds. I hope we can agree on the fundamentals and work together on needed improvements in the Senate.

cc: Charlotte Fraas (AFT)
Cindy Brown (CCSSO)
Nancy Zirkin (AAUW)

nea news

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Educ. – Accountability Fund

**For more information:**
Steve Wollmer 202-822-7239
Kathleen Lyons 202-822-7213

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
**November 2, 1999**

# NEA President: Appropriations Bill Fails America's Children

## *'False flexibility' opens the door to spending on vouchers*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Bob Chase, president of the nearly 2.5 million-member National Education Association (NEA), today issued this statement on the pending education appropriations bill:

"Cutting spending for class size reduction and Title I for disadvantaged students runs counter to everything we know about what our students need to succeed.

"Congress is telling school districts that cutting funding for class size reduction, and denying Title I benefits to 120,000 students will give them more 'flexibility' in education spending, but you can't do more with less. A promise of false flexibility can't hide the damage that these proposed cuts would do to children and public education.

"And, by allowing class size reduction funds for 'any other local need that is designed to improve student performance,' this bill opens the door for federal spending on school vouchers. As it's written right now, this bill fails America's children and public education.

"Class size reduction and the individualized attention afforded by Title I are absolutely essential to improve the performance of America's students from all backgrounds. Congress must match its rhetoric with a commitment to our children's futures."

# # #

*The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing nearly 2.5 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support personnel, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.*

Bruce/Eric
see you
redo,
update
+ send to
POTUS
Thanks
(JOK)

Education –
Accountability

October 5, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: Bruce Reed
Andrew Rotherham

SUBJECT: Education Accountability Strategy

While most of our education reform agenda will be bound up with ESEA reauthorization next year, we should press for accountability measures as part of this year's appropriations as well. This memo lays out our accountability agenda and outlines our options for injecting it into the budget debate.

## I. Overview

In the State of the Union, the President proposed an Education Accountability Act (which we sent Congress in May as part of our omnibus ESEA bill) conditioning federal education assistance to states and school districts on five basic steps:

1. **Turning around failing schools** by setting aside 2.5 percent of each state's Title I allocation for an accountability fund to intervene in and turn around or close failing schools. The President's FY2000 budget request includes $200 million in Title I for this accountability fund.

2. **Improving teacher quality** by ending the practice of hiring emergency certified teachers and out-of-field teaching. Our proposal would require that within four years at least 95 percent of a state's teachers must be fully certified or working toward certification through an alternative route. States would also have to ensure that at least 95 percent of secondary school teachers have academic training or demonstrated competence in the field they teach.

3. **Increasing public accountability through school report cards** by requiring states, school districts, and schools to furnish parents with school report cards that include information on student achievement (disaggregated where appropriate), teacher qualifications, class size, and school safety.

4. **Ending social promotion and grade retention** within 4 years by ensuring that states hold students accountable for subject mastery at key transition points, including high school graduation. States would be required to provide educational supports to ensure students meet challenging academic standards.

5. **Improving school discipline** by requiring that states hold school districts accountable for implementing sound discipline policies.

## II. Accountability and Appropriations

Most of these elements will be difficult to achieve through the appropriations process, for three reasons. First, the Republican leadership dislikes our accountability agenda perhaps even more than our spending programs. Their approach to education policy is based on block grants, local flexibility, and a smaller federal role. Second, Republicans will be under even more pressure than usual not to authorize on appropriations, given how angry authorizers were that we got class size that way last year. This year, the leadership has the additional excuse that Goodling and Jeffords are in the midst of reauthorizing ESEA. Finally, our traditional allies in this budget battle – Hill Democrats and the education groups – support some elements of our accountability agenda, but not with our level of enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, we can and should press our case in a few areas:

**1. Accountability Fund for Failing Schools:** The most important element of our accountability agenda – and perhaps the only one with any realistic chance of being enacted as part of this year's appropriations – is our fund to turn around failing schools. In theory, our accountability fund for Title I should win bipartisan acceptance, because (1) virtually everyone across the spectrum – from George W. Bush in Texas to Jim Hunt in North Carolina to the civil rights community – agrees that we should target failing schools; (2) we're earmarking new money, not changing existing formulas; and (3) even Congressional Republicans concede that the federal government has a right to expect accountability in Title I schools. But so far, neither House nor Senate version of the Labor/HHS bill includes our set-aside for accountability. The House bill funds Title I at last year's level; the Senate bill includes a $320 million increase (compared to a $264 million increase in our budget), but does not earmark any of that money for accountability.

When the Senate resumes debate on Labor/HHS this week, Senators Bingaman, Reed, and Kerry will offer an amendment to set aside $200 million for this purpose. (For parliamentary reasons, the Bingaman-Reed-Kerry amendment will incorporate corrective action provisions from current Title I law rather than our ESEA proposal, but will otherwise mirror our failing schools provision.) We should press this issue with the Democratic leadership, and make it a high priority in any negotiations on Labor/HHS. The President highlighted the absence of this provision in his statement on both the House and Senate bills, and every time we talk about education, we should continue to make this clear linkage between more investment and more accountability.

**2. Class Size and Teacher Quality**. Last fall, Republicans voted for (and campaigned on) our class size proposal, but this year their objective is to kill it. Their line of attack has generally been that we focus on class size to the exclusion of teacher quality. The House Labor/HHS bill consolidates the class size initiative into the Teacher Empowerment Act, which we pledged to veto. The Senate bill includes $1.2 billion ($200 million below our request) for a block grant. Both the House and Senate bills make even that funding contingent on authorization, which they know will never happen.

We should continue to stand firm for the core elements that distinguish our approach from the Republicans' block grant: making sure the money actually leads to class size reduction in the early grades; preserving a separate revenue stream for this purpose, and targeting high-poverty schools. George Miller made a good case to us today that if we end up in negotiations on Labor/HHS, we should press for stronger teacher quality provisions as well. His argument is that House Republicans already included his teacher quality package as part of their Teacher Empowerment Act, and will be hard-pressed to object if we raise it. As a matter of policy, Republicans may not like that deal: Miller's provisions are more prescriptive than ours, and would require all teachers to be certified, not 95% -- a goal few states could meet. But Miller is right that after months of using the teacher quality argument to criticize class size, some Republicans like Goodling may have come to regard it as their issue, and might view some provisions in this area as a partial victory. We will continue to pursue this strategy with Miller.

**3. After-School and Ending Social Promotion:** When the President announced that his budget would triple spending for after-school, he called on Congress to give priority to communities that are ending social promotion and are using after-school and summer school programs to end it the right way. We have already criticized both House and Senate bills for underfunding after-school: the House increases it by $100 million, the Senate by $200 million (we called for a $400 million increase). We could also try to get language authorizing Education to give some kind of priority for communities that end social promotion. While this makes great sense from a policy standpoint, we will have to overcome opposition not only from those who oppose our position on social promotion, but also from the child care community and from Jeffords, who created the after-school grant program.

→ CALL M. COHEN re MILLER
→ PODESTA re guns
→ CIRCULATE MEMO

October 5, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: Bruce Reed
Andrew Rotherham

→ House GOP quotes from 1998
- Goodling, Armey

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we ~~can suggest that if Republicans agree to class size reduction, we can support~~ stronger teacher quality provisions as well. ~~They may not think much of that trade: House Republicans included George Miller's~~ teacher quality package as part of the Teacher Empowerment Act, ~~but Senate Republicans dropped the language when they introduced the Senate version, and some observers think House Republicans have always intended to drop the Miller language in conference.~~ Miller's provisions are more prescriptive than ours, ~~he~~ and would require all teachers to be certified, not 95% - a goal few states could meet. ~~and he would eliminate alternative certification, which most reformers like.~~ But he's right that ~~Of course,~~ after months of using ~~Miller's~~ the teacher quality arguments to criticize our class size program, some Republicans like Goodling may have come to regard ~~teacher quality~~ it as their issue, and might view some provisions in this area as a partial victory. We will continue to ~~work with Miller to develop~~ pursue this strategy with Miller.

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# PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES PROPOSAL TO TRIPLE FUNDING FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT ARE ENDING SOCIAL PROMOTION

At the White House today, the President was joined by the First Lady and the Vice President as he announced that his FY 2000 budget will propose to triple funding (from $200 million to $600 million) for the 21st Century Learning Center Program, which funds after-school and summer school programs throughout the country. The President also announced that in awarding these funds, the Education Department will give priority to school districts that are ending social promotion by requiring students to meet academic standards in order to move to the next grade.

**Tripling Funding for a Program that Works.** President Clinton's FY 2000 budget will propose to increase funding -- from $200 million in FY 1999 to $600 million in FY 2000 -- for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, which gives schools funds to operate after-school and summer school programs. This proposal builds on the President's budget victory last year, in which he increased funds for the program from $40 million to $200 million. The 21st Century Learning Center Program increases the supply of after-school care in a cost-effective manner, primarily by funding programs that use public school facilities and existing resources. Over 190,000 children in 800 schools, in 46 states and the District of Columbia, are already benefiting from this program, by participating in after-school programs that provide students with enrichment activities, tutoring, recreation and other activities. The President's proposal will help roughly 1.1 million children each year participate in these programs.

**Giving Priority to School Districts that End Social Promotion.** Under the President's proposal, school districts with comprehensive policies in place to end social promotion will receive priority in the grant-making process. After-school and summer school programs are a critical tool in ending social promotion because they give students who are not on track an opportunity to get extra help so they can meet promotion standards. The President's proposal will target the new 21st Century funds to districts providing after-school and summer school programs to help these students, while enabling these districts to keep these programs open to all students.

Social promotion is the practice of promoting students from grade to grade without regard to whether they have met academic standards required to succeed at the next grade level. School districts with comprehensive policies to end social promotion: (1) require students to demonstrate that they have met academic standards at key grade levels in order to be promoted; (2) use valid objective measures and other indicators as necessary to determine whether a student has met the standards; (3) strengthen learning opportunities in the classroom with steps such as clear standards, small classes, well trained teachers, challenging curriculum, and the use of proven instructional practices; and (4) provide for the early identification of students who need extra help to meet the standards, and use extended learning time -- particularly after-school instruction and summer school -- to help students meet the standards. The President's proposal will help local school systems use after-school and summer school as part of their comprehensive strategy to end social promotion.