

Educ-
Themes

Department of Education

December 22, 1995

Thoughts on 1996 State of Union Speech

Major Themes: Continue major theme of "opportunity and responsibility"

1. Increase Emphasis on responsibility
 - o Responsibility to others, to society, to America
 - o Taking advantage of opportunity requires hard work
 - o Use concepts such as performance, accountability, standards, respect for others, discipline.

2. We are emerging into a new post cold-war, post balanced-budget era. We need to position America to be a strong democracy and economy in a diverse society with constrained spending.
 - o Smaller, more responsive and efficient government
 - o Focus on selected national purposes -- to support good citizenship and economy: Quality schools, clean water and air, healthy youngsters, safe streets and schools.
 - o Performance Partnerships with states based on national purposes.

3. Provide leadership to address fundamental stresses and strains in society:
 - o racial tensions
 - o income inequalities
 - o responsible role for youth who are not going on to college

4. Invest in Education: New Federal K-12 role based on leadership and high standards
 - o Reaffirm (national purpose of public schools) -- to promote citizenship and create the public as well as serve the public.
 - o Performance partnership with states around high state standards, local responsibility and flexibility with accountability.
 - o National leadership through voluntary (national standards, support for citizenship and service in schools, putting technology to use, and charter schools.

5. Invest in Education: Insure access to at least two years of college for all prepared high school graduates.
 - o Scholarships based on merit for top two percent of all graduating classes.
 - o Strong direct lending program with income contingent repayment allowing graduates to take low paying, service

Neil Postman

oriented jobs.

- o Increase responsibility through greater work-study opportunities.
- o Reduce regulations for schools with strong administrative records.

6. Face issue of work for non-college going youth. "More recently he has proffered the wisdom that instead of simply yelling at the unskilled underclass to get off their duffs and go to work, we might spend some thought seeing to it that there is some entry-level work for them to do -- some modern-day equivalent of the factory." (WM Raspberry paraphrasing Hugh Price. WPost 12/22)

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Other Thoughts on 1996 State of Union Speech:

Beginning to fleshing out some of the Themes

Emerging new federal role in post-cold war post-balanced budget era: Requires a new vision -- not a highly regulated government or the fragmented, rudderless vision of the Republicans. Government will be smaller, more responsive.

o Need **bold federal leadership** in critical areas of national purposes and responsibilities -- clear direction in those domestic and international arenas required to keep our democracy and economy strong and to ensure "domestic tranquility."

o **Performance Partnerships around national purposes:** Structure around clear standards of **performance** rather than conformity with process: Get incentives straight -- support and reward progress, quality, innovation, and hard work; emphasize responsibility; exercise accountability when progress is not forthcoming.

o **Tight budgets with new resources created by economic growth targeted to national priorities and a different way of doing business.**

o **Key national priorities** -- all where state and local governments are critical -- but where our national livelihood is at stake: To build a strong nation we need:

* **Strong schools that prepare all of our youth to be productive and involved citizens with good jobs through solid basic skills, high academic standards, and clear rules of conduct with consequences for mis-behaving.**

* **Clean water, clean air**

* **Healthy youngsters ... Basic safety net.**

* **Safe streets, communities and schools ...**

Education: A different Federal Role based on leadership, vision, identification of national purposes

o Reaffirm fundamental national purpose of public schools -- public schools do not only serve the public, they create the public.¹ Public schools are necessary to prepare our students to live and work in a challenging and internationally competitive democracy and economy.

o To meet this purpose public schools must prepare students to meet rigorous academic and occupational standards and to participate as Americans in our diverse democratic society. High academic standards as well as the basics, a safe and disciplined environment, well trained teachers, local flexibility and charter schools, occupational training for high paying jobs, support for all prepared students to attend college -- these are the ingredients of an effective education strategy. Clinton priority programs will help make this happen.

o A strong nation needs a strong school system -- while we have a long way to go the nation is beginning to move in the right direction: achievement is up in math, science and reading, 4 times as many advanced placement courses taken than in 1980, standards are having great effect in Maryland, NYC, KY and other states and communities throughout the nation.

o The federal government is beginning to move in the right direction -- put into place strong programs in support of state and local reforms for all students, reduced programs by over 70, reduced regulations in elementary and secondary education by over 75%, implemented large scale waiver program for the first time.

o At Elementary and Secondary level continued national leadership is necessary to make performance count. The need for increased national efforts is greater than ever as the school population will see a tidal wave of new students (over 20% increase) over the next decade to the highest levels ever.

- Support state and local reforms for challenging standards through Goals 2000 and School to Work.

- Strong Presidential and Secretarial support for voluntary national standards to help guide and challenge our schools. Strengthen National Assessment of Education Progress to give us regular performance feedback on our national and state efforts. Give public clear

¹ See recent Neil Postman book The End of Education.

expectations about what is high quality, internationally competitive work.

- **Promote flexibility and accountability for results:** Establish a system of **performance partnerships** with states to give **incentives to states with improved achievement** -- waive all federal education laws and regulations except civil rights laws and IDEA for states that have demonstrated improved achievement. In consultation with MD and other states to implement this plan.

- **Presidential and Secretarial support** for increased attention to **citizenship** in our schools -- public service, saluting the flag, clear guidelines for religious activities ...

- **Technology** -- public, private partnership to put computers to use **in every classroom in the nation** by the year 2000 -- wire all schools to the world wide web -- and train all teachers to use computers to enhance student opportunities to reach high academic standards.

- Provide strong incentives for the development and initial implementation of **charter schools** throughout the nation.

o **At Post-Secondary level: Insure financial access to college for all deserving high school graduates.** Simplify and strengthen other student assistance programs. (Could propose IRAs for college use -- Laura Tyson's plan: This would be expensive but powerful!!) Alternatively:

- Establish \$1000/year scholarship based on merit for up to two years for the top two percent of all graduating students in every secondary school in the nation (grade point average) for use in the college of their choice. 60,000 students per year cost up to \$120 million in the second year (when 120,000 students would have received awards).

- Increase Pell grants, the heart of the financial aid programs, to \$3128 by 2002!!

- Continue to have a strong Direct Loan program.

- Increase work-study by 50% phasing in over five years.

- Reward schools with strong records in administering student aid with dramatic reduction in federal regulatory requirements.

Connecting Education As A National Concern to Local Action and Support

1. *Given the long American tradition of local and state control, are education and its funding a national or federal concern of the public? Examples from recent polls show strong support:*

- * 81% oppose decreasing federal education funding to decrease the federal deficit; 19% would favor (Times Mirror, 1994).
- * 75% said federal aid to education should be expanded; 18% said "keep same"; and 4% said "cut back" (Gallup, 1995).
- * 80% of Americans think the federal Department of Education is necessary; 70% say "very necessary" (NBC/Wall Street Journal, 1995).
- * 76% disapprove of reducing federal funding for low-income schools to balance the federal budget; by comparison, 61% disapprove of cutting the rate of spending growth for Medicare; and 36% oppose cutting food stamp funding (Times Mirror, 1995).
- * 74% of Republicans in New Hampshire (10/25/95), said "no" to cuts in education to reduce the deficit as compared to 62% "no" to Medicare cuts; 33% "no" to defense cuts; and 43% "no" to cuts in assistance to the poor.
- * By almost 2-to-1, young voters (18-34) cite education as a top voting issue over the budget deficit, crime, and Medicare (NBC, Wall Street Journal, 11/2/95).

However, citizens clearly don't want micromanagement of detailed programs from the federal or state levels, but they do want accountability and want to reduce waste and red tape. They like encouragement of community-based solutions and local partnerships. They want all of us to work together on needed educational changes to reflect the changed realities of American society and the demands of today's and tomorrow's workplaces.

2. *What is the overall message on education that connects with local citizens?*

Celinda Lake has a framework that captures this well. Combining her findings with several others gives a good general message about needed focus and attention.

- * Quality education is absolutely necessary not only to the future of our children and our families but to the future of America. A good education is certainly essential to each citizen for full participation in the changing economy, but a well-educated citizenry is also essential to our country's democratic way of life. As a nation, we have a stake in giving our children a solid foundation to make the most of their lives and to be productive, responsible adults.

In addition to academics, a quality education is one that stresses discipline, hard work, respect and responsibility where guns, violence and drugs are not present. We need to set the highest standards in education and we need to make this a national priority. Parents should have the choice of public schools or charter schools to escape poorly run or disorderly schools. Schools should not allow hostility to religion or to good citizenship.

HeadStart, strong teacher training, extra help in the basics, getting computers in the classroom, and streamlined college loans are fundamental to helping our children get started on the right course. Along with better financial aid for college, providing specialized courses for career preparation with work-study experiences is also important.

We should be making all of these initiatives better, not cutting them back. They are essential to a strong economic future for our children and our families, and to our ability to compete in an international economy to bring us together as Americans.

Recurring critical issues:

- * safe, disciplined, and drug-free learning environment.
- * promoting parent involvement.
- * rigorously teaching the basics.
- * getting quality teachers and upgrading teacher skills.
- * setting high standards of discipline and achievement.
- * getting computer technology into the classroom as soon as possible.
- * access to student loans and financial aid for college.
- * teaching and connecting young people to real life skills that prepare them for adulthood, careers, and college.

3. *What are any opportunities to address these issues locally?*

- a. The proposed reconciliation and appropriation bills by the "new" Congress cut the very education areas people support the most. In fact, the public wants to improve and expand them. However, most people do not know about the cuts nor what to do about them. Showing direct impact on local schools, colleges, students, parents and teachers can make this a real and very important local issue.
- b. Citizens like to see local parent-teacher, business-school, and community-school partnerships that are solving education problems faced by real families and students. Many of the changes in new education legislation passed by the last Congress are beginning to create, and will create, new opportunities for building and expanding local partnerships and community-based solutions to solve the very education issues of most concern to the American public: *school-law enforcement partnerships through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act; school-community partnerships for educational excellence through the Goals 2000: Educate America Act; school-employer-community college partnerships through the School-to-Work Opportunities Act; school-parent compacts through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; school-college partnerships through TRIO; and college student-direct financial aid through Direct Lending.* Highlighting these partnerships solving the above critical issues shows leadership for effective change.

Why Federal Education Funding Is Important

The Federal government plays a critical role in education. The most important contributions are:

- 1) **raising standards of achievement**
- 2) **improving basic skills of disadvantaged children**
- 3) **ensuring safe and disciplined schools**
- 4) **helping families pay for college**
- 5) **preparing youth for the world of work.**

The public overwhelmingly supports education, including the Federal role:

- ▶ 81 % oppose decreasing Federal education funding to decrease the federal deficit; 19 % would favor (Times Mirror, 1994).
- ▶ 75 % say federal aid to education should be expanded; 18 % say "keep same;" and 4 % say "cut back" (Gallup, 1995).
- ▶ In response to strong public demand and the outcome of the 1995 state election, Virginia's Governor George Allen this month submitted a new budget which substantially increases state expenditures for classrooms, technology, and higher education.
- ▶ 74 % of Republicans in New Hampshire say "No" to cuts in education to reduce the deficit as compared to 62 % "No" to Medicare cuts; 33 % "No" to Defense cuts; and 43 % "No" to cuts in assistance to the poor (10/25/95).
- ▶ By almost 2 to 1, young voters (18 to 34) cite education as a top voting issue over the budget deficit, crime, and Medicare (NBC/Wall Street Journal 11/2/95).
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The Department of Education addresses critical areas of National concern, including:

- ▶ Provides \$32 billion in financial aid to help 6.5 million students attend college.
- ▶ Through Title I grants to local school districts, provides \$7 billions to more than 6 million

students each year in the highest poverty schools to improve basic and advanced skills.

- ▶ Provides \$3 billion a year to help communities meet the special needs of over 5 million children with disabilities to prepare them for further education and employment.
- ▶ Helps communities and States raise standards of student achievement, prevent drug abuse and violence in schools, and build partnerships to get computers and technology in classrooms.
- ▶ Assists States in helping youth move from school to careers.

Education works:

- ▶ Greater prosperity. In 1992, average annual earnings for those with a bachelor's degree were 74 % higher than for those with a high school diploma, and 155 % higher than for those who had not graduated from high school. Also, a student who graduates from high school earns \$200,000 more during his lifetime than a student who doesn't. A college graduate earns \$1 million more than someone who doesn't.
- ▶ Less welfare. Only 5 % of college graduates have ever participated in government assistance programs (AFDC, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, housing assistance, or Medicaid), and only 10 % of high school graduates have, compared to 24 % of high school dropouts.
- ▶ Less crime. Although only about 18 % of the population has never finished high school, this group accounts for 41 % of state prison inmates and 47 % of prisoners on death row.
- ▶ More civic participation. Fully 85 % of college graduates and 75 % of high school graduates, but only 50 % of high school dropouts, are registered to vote.

Education programs work:

- ▶ The Rand Corporation found that the Title I program helped to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their advantaged peers (from 1970 to the mid 1980's, the learning gap in reading, mathematics, and science was cut by over a third--NAEP). Bipartisan reauthorization in 1994 focused on improving the program to challenge low-income students to high standards to help continue closing the gap.
- ▶ The dropout rate is declining (from 14 % in 1982 to 11 % in 1993) , fewer students are taking remedial math courses, more students are taking advanced placement courses (150,000 in 1982, 450,000 in 1992), and the science test scores of both the highest- and the lowest-performing students are increasing.

- ▶ Comprehensive standards-based reforms, such as those supported by Goals 2000, in leading-edge states are showing impressive gains in student performance, such as in Kentucky, where 4th, 8th, and 12th graders demonstrated dramatic improvement on 1993-94 assessments over previous years' tests in mathematics, reading, science, and social studies.
- ▶ IBM Chairman Lou Gerstner, for example, says that "Goals 2000 is only a small portion of what we need. But it is a very critical portion because it is the fragile beginning of the establishment of a culture of measurement standards and accountability in this country. We must go beyond Goals 2000. But if we lose Goals 2000, it is an incredibly negative setback for the Nation.
- ▶ Goals 2000 has received widespread support because of its flexibility and its emphasis on high standards and accountability. The Wall Street Journal has reported that Goals 2000 is viewed "by many political analysts as the most flexible education plan ever produced by the Federal government." (WSJ 8/30/95)
- ▶ The New York Times reports that tougher graduation requirements in New York City public schools are spurring thousands more school students to take and pass college preparatory mathematics and science courses (5/9/95). Entering freshmen at CUNY are the best academically prepared in two decades (12/10/95).
- ▶ Increases in special education funding have contributed to major educational gains in children with disabilities, who now have opportunities that were unavailable before enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- ▶ For 5 years, Maryland has been working systematically to raise academic standards and is showing significant improvement in achievement as a result.

1. Continue on basic theme with standards based reforms contributing to strong economy and individual opportunity.
 - o State standards and assessments
 - o Safe and drug free environments
 - o Better teachers
 - o Local flexibility -- fewer regs, charter schools etc.
2. Extend to few related areas:
 - o Greater emphasis on voluntary national standards
 - o Strong support for technology: provide hardware, software, teacher training and wire up all schools by 2000
 - o Performance partnerships with states
3. Extend to new areas: Make much more use of bully pulpit
 - o Emphasis on values/citizenship/role of schools in a diverse democracy. Make clear the public nature of public schools (Postman)
 - o Greater emphasis on responsibility of students and others -- reward through merit and hard work.
 - o Address inner cities through efforts to re-organize districts and provide alternative schooling for students in failing schools. Possibly work with DC?
 - o Develop strategies for community building through alternative opportunities for students after school and in summers ... (Putnam)
4. Links to Higher Education and Jobs
 - o Greater Emphasis on school to work --
 - o Guarantee of 13th and 14th years of schooling



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

December 18, 1995

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FAX TO: Bruce Reed
Carol Rasco
Gene Sperling
Jeremy Ben-Ami

FROM: Terry Peterson 

In light of our meeting a couple of weeks ago with Secretary Riley, we have been thinking not only of individual initiatives that the Administration can take to upgrade and publicize educational advancement but also underlying public sentiment and opinions about various ideas to improve education.

Here is an early draft of two documents, one called *The American Voter and Education*. The other document is an overall message on education that we think would connect with Americans.

We will continue to work on these documents as well as on individual initiatives and ideas but we would appreciate your reactions to these overarching themes and ideas. Please call or fax me.

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DRAFT 12/18/95, 10:30am

The American Voter and Education

1. Most Americans want changes in public schools, but when they talk of specific changes, most don't favor radical new ideas (e.g., in a recent survey in Georgia, by almost 2 to 1, adults strongly disapproved of private management of schools even though 84% said they wanted "fundamental" or "some" change in public education). The public wants disciplined, safe learning environments in which the basics are rigorously taught. They want more parent involvement. They don't want schools to be hostile to religion. It is important to keep in mind that most of the "public" are older Americans -- many without children or without children currently in school -- 49.2 percent of voters are 45 years of age or older. They want a President fighting for better education to set young people on the right course to make the most of their lives.

Action needed. We need to stress what the Administration has done to address: discipline, the basics, safety and drug prevention; promoting parent involvement in schools; and breaking down the hostility toward religion in schools. Equally important, we must have several new initiatives (e.g., budget increases and other actions) that address the basics and discipline; and keep promoting better ways to increase parent involvement and common ground on religion and citizenship in schools. For instance, launching a reading campaign involving voluntary tutoring (e.g., Read*Write*Now) and strengthening the teaching of the basics is a good idea. A tough discipline message coupled with mentoring is a good idea.

2. Parents and the public in "middle America," for the most part, like their local schools (e.g., 65% of public school parents give their school "A" or "B"; 48% of the public gives their neighborhood school "A" or "B".) They naturally want to make improvements in their schools and don't like the status quo. Support for public education is particularly seen in the suburbs, smaller cities and rural areas where 75% of middle income people live -- a group the Administration needs "to do better with." Evidence of their support for public education can best be seen in the high rate of participation in public schools -- almost 90% of students in suburban/large towns attend public schools and more than 90% of children in rural and small towns attend public school. While safety and the basics are always a top concern, these communities also want computers in the classroom, the best trained teachers, higher expectations and standards so their children are prepared to compete successfully in college and in the job market. They also want the latest science equipment, arts, foreign language, and after-school and extracurricular programs. They want their kids (and grandkids) prepared for college and/or real careers with a future. Access to financial aid for college and student loans are very important because almost all want their children to have a chance to go to college.

Action needed. We need to describe what we are doing in these high priority areas since most of the legislation the President passed is just beginning to affect schools and colleges in 1995-96 (e.g., our investment in the improvement of 5,000 schools through Goals 2000; focusing 10,000 schools on improving the basics and core subjects through Title I; student loan consolidation). Also, we must have several new initiatives such as

getting computers in the classrooms and giving teachers the best training to use technology to better teach their students the basics, core academics and computer skills. Also a new initiative to make college more accessible is very important.

3. In these middle America communities, such ideas as charter schools and vouchers are often not high priorities because they are seen as taking money out of their schools at a time when we need to be strengthening the quality of public education. However, people want an escape valve from poorly run and disorderly schools. Public school choice and charter schools offer both an escape valve and a way to challenge the status quo. They also provide accountability for public funds, unlike using taxpayer money for school vouchers. That may be why among 13 different groups, not one shows a majority favoring private school vouchers at public expense (Gallup, 1995). However, to many, public school choice and charter schools are not known or understood. About half had not heard very much or nothing at all about public school choice or charter schools (Gallup, 1995). It is important to note that part of the appeal of charter and private schools may be that they tend to be small and personal, something large public schools are not.

Action needed. An interesting proposal is to expand the start-up funds to charter schools *and* add to it start-up funds for public school choice programs and start-up monies to make public schools smaller and more personalized, with advanced courses ... thereby gaining support from those who want safer, more disciplined schools, those who want to challenge the status quo, and those who believe in their local public schools, but want to make them better.

DRAFT 12/18/95

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