

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 20, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: DONALD A. BAER *DB*
MICHAEL WALDMAN *mw*

SUBJECT: EDUCATION SPEECH TO
NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

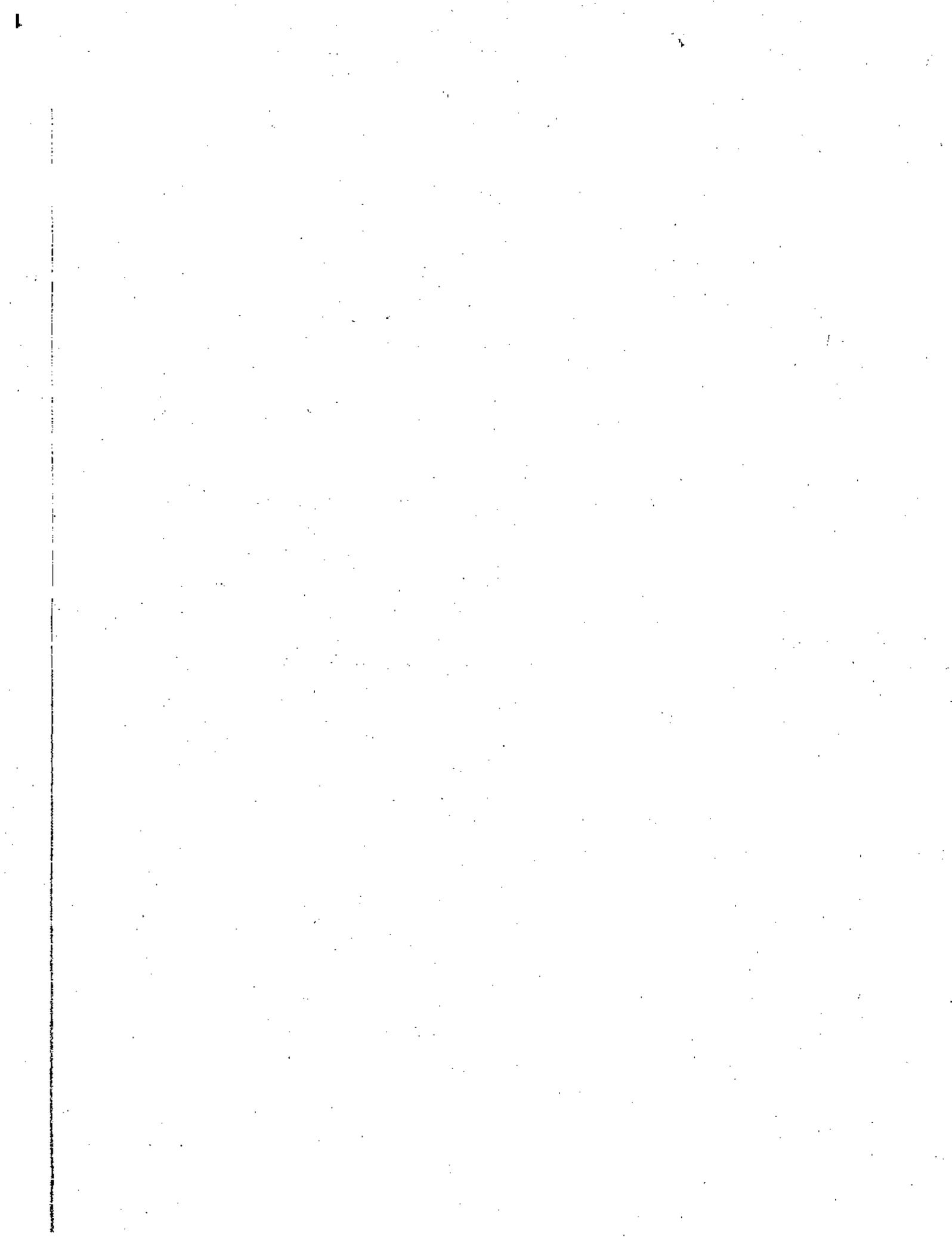
The attached memorandum from Bruce Reed and Gene Sperling outlines the elements of the education reform agenda that you could propose at the NGA education summit next week in New York.

Once you have decided on the appropriate policies (scheduling is preparing time for you and Secretary Riley to discuss this further), we propose to structure the speech much like the State of the Union -- a series of challenges which will encompass your specific proposals. The challenges will be directed, as appropriate, to the states, school authorities, business leaders, teachers, parents, and students. You will speak in your role as the national leader who can summon all these different forces to play their part, while articulating high national standards and a common sense of purpose.

If you agree with these proposals, our goal is to forward you a draft of the speech by the end of this weekend, so that we have ample time for revisions.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Bruce Reed
Gene Sperling

SUBJECT: Ideas for Speech to NGA Education Summit

Your speech next week to the NGA Education Summit will be your best opportunity since the State of the Union to put forward an ambitious agenda for a second term. This memorandum outlines a series of challenges -- to students, teachers, schools, parents, businesses, and communities. We need your guidance on these new ideas and any others you would like to announce in this speech.

I. Update on the Education Summit

The summit will include the governors, about 50 CEOs, and 30 education experts. The group is planning to embrace a set of general principles that focus on two themes: standards and technology. The draft statement is consistent with Goals 2000 and your overall philosophy, although it ignores any federal role. We have attached a draft of the NGA statement, Secretary Riley's State of Education speech, a summary of what governors said about education in their State of the State addresses this year, and some recent articles.

You can use this platform to reflect on what has been achieved since Charlottesville (by states and by this administration), to give a frank assessment of what's right with America's public schools and what's wrong, and to challenge governors, business leaders, teachers, administrators, parents, and students to do something about it. This is your chance to show how you will use the Bully Pulpit in a second term to make raising standards a national mission.

Thompson and others have marketed this summit as an effort to focus the nation's attention back on education. We are working with Democratic governors and Secretary Riley to make sure that your record is part of the story. Riley will tout the Administration's accomplishments in his speech to the summit so you don't have to. You can reflect briefly on what the Administration and many states have done to make good on the promise of Charlottesville agreement, but this is not the place to dwell on Goals 2000.

It is better just to show that you are moving forward on promoting standards and accountability.

II. New Proposals

We have been working with Secretary Riley, Mike Cohen, Mike Smith, Terry Peterson, Jennifer Davis, Al Shanker, and others on specific proposals that highlight your accomplishments in this term and signal that education will be one of your highest priorities in the years to come. Because the major focus of the summit is standards, this is a good chance to talk not just about policy but about values. The proposals below -- high standards for students and teachers, accountability for schools, discipline and safety, rewards for performance -- stress a familiar theme that public schools need an infusion of new opportunities and old values. The tougher and more demanding the speech, the more likely it will break through.

A. Standards for Students

The summit agreement will call on the states to set clear academic standards in specific subjects, with accurate assessments of how well schools and students are doing. The governors believe standards and testing are a state responsibility, but welcome "a national clearinghouse of best practices and resources." Riley and others at the Education Dept. fully agree with this approach. The voluntary national standards developed so far have been at best a mixed bag, and Riley believes it is far more important for us to insist that states have rigorous standards but let them figure out how to set them.

You should praise the summit's call for standards, and what many governors are doing to move in that direction. But you can also challenge them to move further and faster. Specifically, you can challenge every state to establish high standards in basic subjects and require students to achieve those standards before they can graduate. States should compare academic standards and compete with one another in a race to the top. You should reiterate Riley's challenge that every child should be able to read independently by the third grade. We think it is also important to make clear that we should also be promoting the basic skills of the 21st century -- like technological literacy.

But the best way to trump the governors on standards is to talk in concrete terms that parents will understand about how standards should be enforced. Here are two approaches:

1. No more automatic promotions. As you have often said, every child can learn - but we need to teach them, believe in them, and challenge them. Too many students in too many schools are passed from grade to grade without ever really getting taught or challenged. Schools that routinely promote students who are failing are doing those children a terrible injustice. Equity and excellence go hand in hand; we will never have

equity unless we aim high for all kids. That means we must break the entitlement mentality that is cursing too many children with low expectations. *We should not promote students from grade school to middle school or middle school to high school unless they can pass a test that proves they're ready. If a student isn't ready to move onto the next level, we should tell his parents, work with him after school and over the summer -- and if necessary, hold him back until he's ready.* That is what you did in Arkansas by requiring every 8th grader to pass a test before they could move on to 9th grade. Nobody should just get by without a real education.

2. No pass, no play. Texas abandoned this idea after Mark White left office, but it always drew strong support from the public. It is hard to argue with the basic principle. *Students should not be able to represent their school outside the classroom unless they're making the grade inside the classroom.* Education must come first.

B. Standards for Teachers

Earlier this month, Secretary Riley gave a tough speech to the Illinois Education Association in which he said two things: 1) Let's stop the teacher-bashing; and 2) Teachers and their professional organizations "should be the leaders of reform, not the objects." The speech was quite well-received, not just by the press but by the teachers themselves. Teachers don't mind being challenged, so long as they're given respect and the tools to succeed and rewards when they do. We can say to teachers, "We want to raise the prestige and respect that is deserved for teaching, but the way to do that is give teachers tools and honor excellence, not protect teachers who cannot make the grade." This is an important message for you to send, because you have been saying it for 15 years, even when the heat was on in Arkansas. Here are three ideas Riley has been discussing with Shanker and others:

1. Reward teachers for their skills and knowledge, not just seniority. You can praise what Gov. Hunt has done with the National Board of Teacher Certification. You should challenge states and communities to set high teaching standards and reward teachers and schools for their success. Once tough academic standards are met, we ought to get out of the way and give teachers the power to be good teachers.

2. Make it easier to get burnt-out teachers out of the profession, fairly and inexpensively. According to U.S. News, it costs \$200,000 in New York state to fire a bad teacher. We should be spending that money to reward good teachers instead. You can challenge states and districts to work together to change laws and policies so that burnt-out teachers can be asked to move on. Shanker has said privately that he believes teachers unions should take the lead in this effort, rather than resist it. You should take him up on it, and repeat Riley's challenge that teachers and their professional organizations be the leaders of reform, not the objects of reform.

3. Praise teaching as an honored profession and challenge young people to go into teaching, while making it easier for them to do so. You can praise Teach for America for attracting young people to the profession. You can also call for removing some of the certification barriers that keep many young teachers from teaching in the public schools.

C. Accountability for Schools

If we're going to expect more from students, we've got to expect more from schools as well. Three basic measures are crucial to hold schools accountable for results: 1) breaking down the bureaucratic obstacles to reform; 2) giving parents more choices; and 3) shutting down schools that don't work.

1. Spend more on students, less on administration. Public education is the one major public institution in America that has not yet been reinvented. Too many school districts still spend too much on administrators and too little on the classroom. We need to reinvent education the way we are reinventing government and the way the best American businesses retooled to compete in the global economy. That means putting more power and responsibility in the hands of front-line workers, and moving it away from bureaucrats in the capitol or downtown. For example, it is an outrage that in New York City, an estimated 70 cents on the dollar goes to overhead instead of teachers, classrooms, and books. In particular, we should:

- Challenge communities and businesses to work together to help school districts reduce overhead so they can spend less on administration and more on real education. States should live by the principle you set forth when you increased the sales tax in Arkansas: We should spend more on education, but every new dollar should go to teachers and teacher training, students, and the classroom, and not a penny more for needless administration.
- Challenge states to join us in expanding flexibility and reducing regulation. We've cut regulations for elementary and secondary education by more than 50% over the past three years. We should challenge states to do the same.

2. Expand choice, competition and accountability. The real debate is not over vouchers; it's over how to save the public schools that 9 out of 10 children attend. You can repeat your challenge from the State of the Union that every state should pass strong charter school and public school choice laws. You can announce the details of your charter school plan in this year's budget, which would help start 3,000 charter schools over the next five years. You can also call for report cards for every school, so that parents have the information they need to choose the best public school for their child and can hold schools accountable for high standards. The NGA statement endorses an external, independent, non-governmental effort to do annual progress reports for each state.

3. Shut down schools that fail. Choice, competition and accountability means not only empowering charter schools for those who can excel, it means putting out of businesses schools that fail to serve their students. Standards and assessments make it possible to have accountability with real teeth. This challenge connects with your call for preventing social promotions: schools that cannot make sure their students pass should not be allowed to stay open -- or at least not under the existing management. We should challenge every governor to take direct, concrete action to redesign or shut down failing schools. We reformed Title I to ensure that schools no longer get money for failing. We need more schools like the one you visited in San Diego, which was shut down and relaunched as a charter school.

D. Safety, Discipline, and Values

These concerns are at the top of most parents' list, and you have a strong record to build upon: school uniforms, the youth handgun ban, drug testing for school athletes, character education, religious freedom, crime prevention programs. Three new challenges would reiterate that commitment to values in the schools:

1. Give teachers and principals more freedom to maintain order in the classroom, suspend and expel the bad apples, and restore respect for authority. Many schools are wary of disciplining disruptive students for fear of being sued by parents. You could challenge other states to look at what Gov. Glendening has proposed in Maryland to shield schools from liability in disciplinary cases. You might also challenge local police to enforce truancy laws, as Chief Reuben Greenberg has done with great success in Charleston, South Carolina. Discipline raises some thorny questions -- how should schools handle disabled students who won't behave, where do you put the troublemakers you expel, etc. -- and while we don't want to suggest that we are giving up on these students, we also must recognize that getting bad apples out of the classroom is one of the most urgent concerns for parents and teachers.

2. Challenge communities to keep students safe. Most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Whatever some may think about midnight basketball, we at least should be able to agree as a country that young people whose parents work need a place to go after school. Your budget includes \$14 million for community schools, youth and after-schools programs. But it is equally important to challenge communities, schools, unions, churches, businesses, and parents to find ways to keep the schools open late. At the same time, communities and schools should ensure that young people can get to and from school safely. We can challenge communities to work with their local police departments and neighborhood watch groups to arrange walk groups and other ways to ensure that going to and from school is safe.

3. Teach values in schools. Our greatest challenge may be to listen to the many, positive voices in this debate who are seeking to find common ground and get something

done. Our efforts on character education, religious guidelines, and school uniforms are only the beginning; we need to challenge communities and parents to find more ways to put values back at the core of what children learn in school and at home.

E. Education Technology

At Gerstner's insistence, the summit will call for broader use of new technologies to improve student performance. This is an opportunity to repeat the challenges you spelled out in the State of the Union and on Net Day:

1. Challenge every state to come forward with a plan to meet your technology literacy challenge. The governors and national press need to be reminded that this challenge goes beyond wiring the schools to include more computers, better software, and well-trained teachers. New twists could include:

- Challenge states and telephone companies to make all access to the information highway as affordable as possible -- or even free -- under the new Telecommunications Act.
- Challenge teachers unions to join you in ensuring that every new teacher have the skills to teach with technology.

2. Challenge the software industry to develop new educational software so the most exciting video game in America is learning, not Mortal Kombat. Tremendous creativity and marketing genius goes into attracting children to addictive entertainment video games -- like Mortal Kombat and Mario Brothers. You should challenge the leaders of the software and entertainment industry to garner that same genius to create and market fun learning games and software that will make it easier for children to learn. The challenge to software programmers is the same as to the TV networks: don't sacrifice real content in the name of entertainment -- children deserve both.

F. Higher Education and School-to-Work

The summit is primarily about elementary and secondary education, but your challenges don't have to stop there. Riley suggests two challenges:

1. Open wide the doors to higher education. You can highlight your existing proposals -- the tax deduction, merit scholarships, expanded work-study -- and say to students: If schools set challenging standards and you work hard to reach them, we will make sure you get the help you need to go to college.

2. School-to-work. You can challenge business leaders, states, and educators to work together to reinvent the high school so that it helps all young people get the knowledge and skills they need to find the right path to further their education or go to work.

G. Personal Responsibility

The final challenge must be to call on parents, students, teachers, businesses, and communities to join in a national mission to expect more of ourselves and one another. We could have a million summits and it wouldn't matter if we don't restore the basic ethic that all children can learn and every parent must help them. The era of big government is over; the era of taking responsibility to meet our challenges has begun.

1. Challenge parents to be their children's first teacher. Don't wait for the V-chip -- turn off the TV right now. Help your kids with their homework, and if they don't have any, make sure they get some. Read to them 30 minutes a day, and during the summer. (You could mention Jesse Jackson's five challenges.) Tell your child's teacher and principal that you want to know on a regular basis whether your child is living up to tough standards, and let them know that you want your child to stay after school, go to summer school, or do whatever it takes to meet those standards. The most powerful force in nature is parents who care about their kids.

2. Challenge companies to help their workers be good parents. Every workplace should treat a parent's appointment with a teacher the same as if it were a life-or-death appointment with a doctor.

3. Challenge communities to come together to make public schools our most important public institution again. For much of the past century, the public school was one of the most important common bonds in our society -- the one place where people of different classes, different backgrounds, and eventually, different races, had a chance to mix. Saving the public schools is not just about giving our children a better education so they can get better jobs. It's about helping them (and us) be stronger citizens.

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NGA SUMMIT

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~~The following statement will be discussed at the next meeting of the NGA and will be revised to reflect comments and recommendations. This draft is confidential and not for public distribution.~~

~~The quality of our schools is one of the issues fundamental to America's future and our quality of life. No issue is more fundamental to America's future and our quality of life than our schools.~~ The primary purpose of education is to prepare students to flourish in a democratic society and to work successfully in a global economy. Governors and business leaders recognize that our nation's future depends on all students being able to perform to their highest potential. Our joint leadership is imperative. While parents may play the primary role in making decisions about their children's education, providing high quality educational opportunities and helping parents make good decisions for their children is a Education is a state and local responsibility, ~~and~~ The nation's Governors have made the strengthening of schools a top priority. Business leaders understand that companies can be successful and the nation can be economically viable only if the United States has a world-class workforce.

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, we agree that substantial and focused efforts must be taken to significantly accelerate student performance. In November 1995, the National Education Goals Panel marked the progress made in achieving the goals at the midpoint between the time they were established and the year 2000, when they are to be achieved. The report shows some positive developments, but it is clear that at the current pace, we will not meet these goals in any area. The report also shows that limited information is being collected to help us understand how students are performing. While we remain committed to the National Education Goals, it is clear that simply setting goals is not enough.

WHY WE HAVE COME TOGETHER

As Governors and leaders of American ~~businesses/corporations~~, we have a stake in the quality and performance of this nation's schools. We are united by our civic responsibilities, our concerns as parents, and our common interest in securing a prosperous future for our states and companies in the twenty-first century. We are compelled by the urgent need for schools to improve and for student academic performance to rise. Students must be challenged to perform at higher academic levels and be expected to demonstrate mastery of core academic subjects. All individuals must be able to think their way through the workday, analyzing problems, proposing solutions, communicating and working cooperatively, and managing resources such as time and materials. Providing all citizens with the opportunity to develop these skills will give our country a competitive edge. Today's economy demands that all high school graduates, whether they are continuing their education or are moving directly into the workforce, have higher levels of skills and knowledge.

Improving our schools is an investment in the future that cannot be postponed. The world and the economy are changing rapidly, but our nation's schools have not kept pace. We believe that schools must be more focused on ~~their clients~~ - students, parents, postsecondary education institutions, and employers. The calendar, structure, and requirements for student performance established at the beginning of this century are not adequate for the next century.

We do not prescribe change simply for the sake of change. The only reason to undertake change is to improve students' academic performance. To do that we must help states or local school districts develop a consensus on what children should know and be able to do. To be

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sure, parents must play a key role in this process. We also recognize that, because of our legitimate differences regarding the content and methods of providing education, building such consensus may be difficult, but such difficulty should not deter us from achieving our goal. This agreement will form the basis for developing high academic content and skill standards. We then must assist states or local school districts in developing assessments to measure student performance and to use such assessments as tool for providing students and parents with continuous feedback about student performance and specific areas where students may need some extra help. And finally, we must put in place the technology, professional development opportunities, and curriculum that will enable both parents and communities as a whole to hold their schools accountable.

EXPLICIT EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe that efforts to set clear, common, and community-based academic standards for students in a given school district or state is a necessary step in any effort to improve student performance. Academic standards clearly define what students should know and be able to do at certain points in their schooling to be considered proficient in specific academic areas. We believe that states and communities can benefit from working together to tap into the nation's best thinking on standards and assessments. We also believe that these standards and assessments should integrate both academic and occupational skills. However, standards and assessments are necessary tools to inform and direct our work, not an end unto themselves. We recognize that better use of technology, improved curriculum, better trained educators, and other changes in the organization and management of schools are necessary to facilitate improved student performance. However, without a clear articulation of the skills needed, specific agreement on the academic content students should be learning, clear goals for what needs to be accomplished, and authentic and accurate systems to tell us how well schools and students are doing, efforts to improve our schools will lack direction.

We believe that setting clear academic standards, benchmarking these standards to the highest levels, and accurately assessing student academic performance is a state, or in some cases a local responsibility, depending on the traditions of the state. We do not call for a set of mandatory, federally prescribed standards, but welcome the savings and other benefits offered by collaboration between states and school districts and the opportunities provided by a national clearinghouse of best practices and resources, since rapid changes in a global market call for a mobile and flexible workforce. But in whatever way is chosen, standards must be in place in our schools and must be in place quickly.

TECHNOLOGY TO GIVE STUDENTS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THEY WILL NEED IN THE WORKPLACE

We are convinced that technology, if applied thoughtfully and well integrated into a curriculum, can be used to boost student performance and ensure a competitive edge for our workforce. It can be used by trained educators in classrooms and other places students learn, such as in libraries, in museums, and at home. Interactive learning

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enables parents and educators to find new ways to help students improve academically, while helping students learn to use the tools that are being used not only in today's high-technology workplaces, but increasingly in any workplace. We cannot reach higher standards without developing new approaches and strategies to help students, teachers, and parents. While not a silver bullet, Technology is one important tool to accomplish this.

Governors and business leaders need to support educators in overcoming the barriers that impede the effective use of technology. Such barriers may include the complexities of planning for the acquisition and integration of technology into classrooms and schools; the high costs of acquiring, developing, and maintaining it; the lack of school technology policies; resistance to change from individuals both within and outside of the education system; and, most important, the need for staff development and curriculum change.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE USE OF STANDARDS TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

We endorse these efforts because we believe it will:

- help all students learn more by demanding higher student performance and providing new methods to help students achieve higher standards;
- provide parents, schools, and communities with an unprecedented opportunity to debate and reach agreement on what students should know and be able to do;
- focus the education system on common, well-defined goals to enable schools to work smarter and more productively;
- reinforce the best teaching and educational practices already found in classrooms and make them the norm; and
- provide real accountability by focusing squarely on results and helping the public and local and state educators evaluate which programs work best.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

We endorse these efforts because we believe that new uses of technology in schools will:

- equalize access to the best instructional methods and materials for all students;
- give families greater access to teachers and schools to increase family involvement and improve student learning;
- provide students with the hands-on experience to develop the knowledge and skills they will need to perform in the workplace;
- find and reinforce the best uses of technology that are already found in schools and classrooms and make them the norm;

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- serve as a driving force for innovation and creativity in order to restructure every aspect of education, raise student performance, and increase the efficiency of school administration;
- offer teachers access to specialized support, collegial relationships, and professional development to improve their effectiveness with students; and
- provide new ways for students to work at their own pace, eliminating the ceiling for those who are already performing well academically, raising the floor, and providing additional assistance to those who need it.

WHAT WE COMMIT TO DO

Swift action must be taken to address these issues. While we commend those states and school districts that have provided leadership to improve student performance, we urge greater progress and for others to increase their effort. We believe that standards can be effective only if they represent what parents, employers, educators, and community members believe children should learn and be able to do. However, the current rate of change needs to be accelerated and no process or time line should deter us from the results. We believe that Governors and business leaders must provide powerful and consistent support to ensure that this effort moves forward swiftly and effectively.

This summit is intended to demonstrate -- to parents, students, educators, our constituents, and clients -- our strong and nonpartisan support of efforts to:

- set clear academic standards for what students need to know or be able to do in core subject areas;
- assist schools in accurately measuring student progress toward reaching these standards;
- make changes to curriculum, teaching techniques, and technology uses based on the results;
- assist schools in overcoming the barriers to using new technology; and
- hold schools and students accountable for demonstrating real improvement.

WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

We commit to the following steps to initiate and/or accelerate our efforts to improve student achievement.

- **Implementing Standards.** As Governors, we commit to the development and establishment of world-class academic standards, assessments, and accountability systems in our states, according to each state's governing structure, within the next two years. For this purpose, we agree to the reallocation of sums sufficient to support implementation of those standards within a clear timetable for a full implementation. Such funds should be available, for the essential professional development, infrastructure, and new technologies needed to meet these goals.
- **Business Practices.** As business leaders, we commit to actively support the work of the Governors to improve student performance and to develop coalitions of other business leaders in our states to expand this support. As such we will clearly communicate to students, parents, schools, and the community the types and levels of skills necessary to

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meet the workforce needs of the next century and implement hiring practices within one year that will require applicants to demonstrate academic achievement through school-based records, such as academic transcripts, portfolios, certificates of initial mastery, or others as appropriate. We also commit to considering the quality of a state's value academic standards and student achievement levels academic excellence as a high priority factor in determining factor in business location decisions. We also agree to adopt policies to support parental involvement in their children's education and in improving their local school. Finally, we commit to developing and helping implement compatible, inexpensive, and easy to use products, services, and software to support teaching.

- **Public Reporting.** As Governors and business leaders, we commit to be held accountable for progress made in our respective states toward improving student achievement in core subject areas. First, we will establish an external, independent, nongovernmental effort to measure and report each state's annual progress in setting standards, improving the quality of teaching, incorporating technology, supporting innovation, and improving student achievement. Second, we will produce and widely distribute in each of our individual states our own annual progress report to educate the public on our efforts in these areas. Outstanding reports will be recognizing annually by the chair of the National Governors' Association at its winter meeting and will be widely disseminated within the states. Third, reports will be released at a high profile televised media announcement in each state, and we will work to coordinate the release nationally to help focus public awareness on this critical issue.
- **Collaboration and Technical Assistance.** As Governors and business leaders, we recognize that states and communities will need resources and technical assistance to develop and implement standards and assessments, to ensure these standards and assessments are of high quality and truly world-class, and to ensure that other parts of the education system reflect and reinforce these standards and assessments. We commit to, where appropriate and useful, work together to pool resources and expertise to move our states forward on this agenda. We also commit to designate a new or existing entity that can facilitate our work together on these issues and can provide guidance, help, and information to interested states and school districts. Finally, we commit to giving high priority to promoting professional development of educators, including efforts to improve instructional methods that use new technologies to help students achieve high standards.
- **Immediate Next Steps:** As Governors and business leaders, we commit to return to our states and immediately begin work on the tasks at hand. While the specific actions will be different in each state, Governors and business leaders will engage in a wide variety of activities to achieve the commitments stated above. Such activities will include: organizing town meetings to build public support and engage parents and communities in improving student performance; reaching out to other Governors and other Business leaders to identify and adopt "Best Practices" and look for opportunities where states and businesses can work collaboratively; arrange for teaching professionals to visit businesses throughout the states to help them develop a better understanding of the needs of employers; organize a state-level Education Summit to develop state-specific plan for developing and implementing standards and assessments; and review current state efforts to report on educational performance and prepare for the report of next year's release.

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Richard W. Riley*
U.S. Secretary of Education**Third Annual
State of American Education Address
St. Louis, Missouri
Wednesday, February 28, 1996****EDUCATION: THE GATEWAY TO AMERICA'S FUTURE**

Thank you Caroline for your very warm introduction. I take great pleasure in coming here to Saint Louis — the historic gateway to the American West — to report to you on the state of American education.

History tells us that the people of Missouri have always been strong for education. Catholic nuns opened the first school in Missouri in Saint Charles in 1818. The first public high school west of the Mississippi opened here in Saint Louis in 1853. I am delighted to be here again in the "Show Me" state, the heartland of America.

My special guest today — Doctor Mary Jarvis, a native of this area and a graduate of Southern Illinois University — exemplifies your strong commitment to education. "Doctor J," as her students call her, is recognized as the National Principal of the Year for her work helping at-risk young people stay in school. Now a principal in Denver, Colorado, Doctor Jarvis exemplifies what is best about American education.

I want to thank Dr. Ernie Perkins, principal of this wonderful school and Dr. Jerry Elliott, your very fine superintendent, and all the members of this community for your graciousness in allowing us to visit with you. I say that because we have guests from nine states in the audience and thousands of other Americans listening in at twenty-six down link sites across the nation.

I take great pride in recognizing the Missouri and Illinois winners of the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award for excellence in education who are with us today. And I am glad to see several recipients of Missouri's "Teacher of the Year" award here in the audience. These are the heroes of American education.

This is, I might add, the third time that Arline Kalishuman, the principal of A.B. Green Middle School here in Maplewood, has been honored as a leader of a Blue Ribbon school. These

The Secretary may depart from prepared remarks.

educators are the best we have, and I would like to ask all of them to stand and be recognized -- as well as the four students who are with us today who received perfect scores on the ACT.

THE ERA OF DUMBING DOWN IS OVER

I have come here to the heartland of America to talk about American education where it is happening; here at a typical American high school, where the future of America is being created each and every day -- to tell you that the era of "dumbing down" is over.

American education must reach for a new level of excellence, for the most basic of reasons: our very prosperity as a nation -- and the economic security of each and every American family -- depends on it.

Today, in many ways, we face the same challenges that confronted the pioneers who left Saint Louis and headed West across the frontier. For we are crossing our own frontier defined by new knowledge, a new economic landscape, new ways of communicating.

We need to remember that the pioneers who crossed the Mississippi set out as a community, bound together with a common goal. They surely had their differences, but they came together for the common good. And that is a lesson we must heed as well in 1996.

For there is a growing debate in America about how we educate our children. On one side are those who believe we can prepare for the future by cutting education today, who see little value in public education, who seek -- quite literally -- to abolish it as an institution.

This view is, to my mind, too narrow, too divisive, too fond of bashing teachers, too quick to tear down rather than build up.

I disagree with that vision. The politics of blame and exploiting people's legitimate anxieties have never served America well, and it is so wrong when it comes to the education of our children.

On the other side of this debate are those who are willing to roll up their sleeves and invest in our children, who see the rebuilding and the expansion of public education as the very cornerstone of our nation's economic and democratic future, who believe that getting a diploma ought to mean something because you have worked hard to achieve it.

Yes, public education has its problems. We have to contend with violence, with too little accountability, and some schools are just beyond repair. But for every problem, I have found many more successful school communities that have come together and found common purpose in rolling up their sleeves to help their children learn. And that's the right way to go.

Sometimes, people can get so caught up listening to themselves debate that they live, die and get buried, and then the next crowd gets up and starts debating all over again and nothing gets done.

My fellow Americans, if ever there was a time in the history of this great nation when we needed to come together for the good of all of our children, it is now. We Americans have never been shy about rising to a challenge. Let us recognize what we have achieved in our lifetime. Millions of Americans have lived the American Dream and become the first in their families to get a college education. Women and minorities have gained strong footholds in higher education and the professions. Disabled Americans are no longer left in the darkness of ignorance, and we must make sure that never happens again. This is why I urge quick passage by the Congress of the very important IDEA legislation this year.

But we have much more to do. Our classrooms are filling up. Next year, we will enroll more young people in our schools than at any time in our nation's history — 51.7 million — breaking the record set in 1971 when the baby boomers came of age. So we have got to push hard. We are making progress in making our young people smarter but the pace is too slow to satisfy me. I say that for the most personal of reasons.

I am a grandfather. I have seven wonderful grandchildren. Anna, the youngest, was born last June. I have probably waved her photograph around to more people than she will ever imagine. So I want to make amends to my other grandchildren and show you their pictures too.

When I read a story to my grandchildren or call one of them up to congratulate them on their report card, I know why I get up in the morning and go to work just like millions of other parents and grandparents.

Our children and grandchildren represent who we are and what America will become.

President Clinton challenged us in his recent State of the Union address to move America forward. One of the centerpieces of his challenge was improving and investing in education. And our challenges are many.

We need to get America reading again and give parents the power to be more involved in their children's education. Our children need to be protected from drugs and violence, and every young person has to gain the technological literacy he or she needs for the coming times.

We need to challenge ourselves to strive for the excellence of high standards and teach our young people real-life skills to get good jobs. And we must make sure that the doors to a college education are open wide to every deserving student who has worked hard to make the grade.

BECOMING A NATION OF READERS

Our very first challenge is to get America reading again. That big model of a computer behind me symbolizes that the American people "smell the future." They recognize the need to get computers into the classroom as quickly as possible.

But you can't cruise or use the Internet if you do not know how to read. And that to my mind is our most urgent task -- teaching our children good reading habits -- getting America serious about reading.

Our national math and science scores are up because we have invested more than ten years of hard work in that effort. We are turning the corner. This is a great success story for American education, and it tells me that we know how to get results.

Our national reading scores, however, are flat and they have been flat for far too long. Now, America does reasonably well on international comparisons when it comes to literacy. But too many of our young people are groping through school without having mastered this most essential and basic skill.

The 1994 NAEP report tells us that 41 percent of all 4th graders, 31 percent of all 8th graders, and 25 percent of all 12th graders scored below the basic reading level. This is just not good enough.

A young person who cannot read is placed at an extraordinary disadvantage. And in far too many cases, these are the very young people who start down the road to truancy, giving up and eventually dropping out.

Let us recognize what we are all about here. Reading is much more than just a skill. It allows us to learn the wisdom of the ages, to see beauty in a line of poetry, even as we test the new ideas of our times. To read Jefferson is to be engaged with the very spirit of our democracy. To read the poetry of Maya Angelou is to capture the surging spirit of a rising and hopeful America.

And, in our new complex economic environment, 89 percent of the jobs that are now being created require much higher levels of literacy and math. To my way of thinking, improving America's literacy rate is just as important to this nation's future economic growth as balancing the budget.

This is why I am announcing today the beginning of a long-term effort to improve America's literacy. We are creating a national reading and writing partnership of more than thirty-five diverse groups dedicated to the single goal of improving reading and writing in America.

Working with the American Library Association, the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, The National Retired Teachers Association, Hadassah, AMC theaters, Pizza Hut, the Girl Scouts of America, and the many members of our Family Partnership -- we want to encourage Americans to open a book and read.

This is a new partnership is going to put the spotlight on literacy. We are going to take our case to the American people and tell them that reading is where it all begins. We are going to lay out a strategy that gives parents "check points of progress" and encourages educators and state leaders to stay focused on helping our young people gain this most essential skill.

Now some people will surely put the blame for the lack of literacy on our schools. And some people will surely start up the debate about whether phonics are better than the whole language approach that some schools now use. I believe they are both appropriate and useful. It's not an either/or choice. But that debate, my friends, is not my purpose here today. Let's roll up our sleeves and rise to the challenge. We can all make a positive contribution.

I urge every family to follow the first rule of education and read to their children. Start early and keep at it. I encourage parents to find an extra thirty minutes in the day to help their children. If all parents in America made it their patriotic duty to find an extra thirty minutes to help their children learn more — each and every day — it would revolutionize American education.

All of our research tells us that this is so important. Read a book, read the sports page, read the comics or read R.L. Stine's "Goosebumps" and get excited together — it doesn't matter. Just read.

Now, what else should parents do? Every child should have a library card. If your child doesn't have one — and you should check today — make sure he or she gets one this weekend.

I also encourage parents to set summer reading goals. Our research tells us that some children lose up to three to four months of newly acquired reading skills during the summer if those skills are not kept up between the school years.

I urge state leaders to put a new emphasis on reading. Every child should be well-established as a reader and be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. We should accept nothing less. Rudy Crew, the new Chancellor of Education in New York City, has it right with his new emphasis on reading — and so does George Bush, Jr., the Governor of Texas.

I encourage local educators to use new assessments to make sure our young people read well, to give teachers and parents early and helpful feedback.

No young person should ever be put in the situation of accepting a high school diploma they cannot read or be unable to write a resume for the job she needs.

I ask community, civic and religious groups to work with our schools to open their classrooms at night to teach reading and writing, to give many immigrants — young and old — the gift of the English language. We will do our part to help you.

Millions of new immigrants want to be part of the American Dream. The issue isn't making English our national language; that's already a reality. The issue is finding enough teachers to teach all these immigrants who want to learn how to read and write English. Over the years, most immigrants pay back this country many times over for the opportunity to be good Americans.

THE CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Getting America reading again is our first challenge. Our second challenge is to give parents the power to help their children learn. Strong families make strong schools. When parents get involved in their children's education, good things start to happen.

The Clay Elementary School and the Shepard Accelerated Academy here in the Saint Louis area are models of what can be done. In each case, getting parents involved, building ties to the community, and creating active links to the business community enabled these schools to earn the distinction of being named Missouri "Gold Star" schools this year.

We must link our schools to the community in new and different ways and give parents the support they need. Business is increasingly making that connection, helping schools retool for new times, and giving working parents time to help at their children's schools. The good work of Inter-Act Saint Louis, led by former Senator John Danforth, in getting churches to adopt public schools is another example of solid community support.

I urge parents to have a fierce commitment to the education of their children. Volunteer in school and stay connected to your children. Too often we live such busy lives that we disconnect from our children, and we don't even know it is happening. The time crunch can just about wear you down. But don't give up.

Slow down your lives. Talk to your children. Teach them the difference between right and wrong. Make your children proud to be Americans. Define your moral standards, and if that means turning off the television sometimes or using a "V" chip, then be strong and determined.

And here it is important to remind all Americans that our nation's public schools are not "religion-free" zones. Children do not have to leave their religious faith at the school house door. The First Amendment provides a broad mantle of religious freedom. At the same time it ensures every parent that school officials do not overstep their bounds and coerce students to violate their freedom of conscience.

I can report to you today that President Clinton's Guidelines on Religion have been well received. There has been a marked decline in the confusion and legal confrontation about the right of students to express their religious faith.

THE CHALLENGE TO MAKE OUR SCHOOLS SAFE

Our third great challenge is to keep our schools safe, orderly and disciplined. That is a basic rule. No teacher should ever fear to walk into a classroom. And no child should ever stay home from school because he or she is afraid.

Alternative schools need to be seen as options for the most troublesome students. We cannot let

a few bad apples ruin the school day for the majority of our young people. We need to get these young people out of the regular classroom but not give up on them. They need good, structured learning environments.

School districts need to keep a sharp eye on truancy as a first sign that young people are losing their way. Graduating from high school still remains a significant benchmark for keeping young people out of trouble and off welfare.

The President has gotten a great deal of mail lately from young people across the country regarding his comments in the State of the Union speech on uniforms. Last week, the President was in Long Beach, California and talked about it some more. His point about uniforms is well taken. If parents and teachers think uniforms can help their children learn, then uniforms ought to be seen as one positive way to instill discipline and prevent violence.

I now want to speak very directly to the parents of middle school children. For four years in a row, drug use has gone up among 8th graders. This is a nationwide trend. It disturbs me. Our research tells us that many young people simply do not believe that drugs are harmful, life-threatening or addictive. Parents need to help their children develop some strong inner fiber -- good character.

Nothing will be accomplished unless the young people of America live their lives by a new code of conduct, an honor code that isn't written on paper but written in their hearts, because growing up really comes down choices.

The choice not to cheat on a test or drive drunk; the courage to say no to peer pressure when it comes to drugs or smoking marijuana; the willingness of young men and women not to throw their lives away in a moment of passion, to wind up with a baby, and maybe even on the welfare line.

THE CHALLENGE TO ACHIEVE HIGH STANDARDS

Our fourth challenge is to recognize that we are smarter than we think.

We will never help our young people -- especially those living in poverty -- to measure up if we lower their expectations, water down their curriculum, and write them off by categorizing and stigmatizing them.

I believe in the young people of America. They have the same capacity to achieve as the generation that won World War II, as the generation that sent man to the Moon, as the generation that set out to save the environment and as the generation that created the pentium chip.

We set high standards for the food we eat, for the medicine in our bathroom cabinets, and for the music we listen to -- when the Saint Louis Symphony performs, we hear classical music at its very

best. So why not reach for the best by giving all of our children a first class education?

To those who say America's effort to raise standards and increase accountability has lost its momentum -- I assure you, the standards movement is alive and well. We have had our peaks and valleys, but we are moving forward. I can report to you today that work is underway all across America to develop high standards in core academic subjects.

In Delaware, parents now know that in 12th grade science their children have to master an understanding of DNA. In Colorado, parents of 4th graders have a clear understanding of what is expected of their children when it comes to reading. And in northern Illinois twenty school districts are racing to be the first in the world in science and math.

We are beginning to expect more of our children and we are starting to see the results. In Maryland, a steady trend in improving test scores tells us that high standards are making a difference. In Kentucky, 4th, 8th and 12th graders are demonstrating "dramatic improvement" on statewide tests.

Now, setting standards is not easy. The new national standards for math, science, civics, geography and the arts have been well received. They are useful "road maps" for local and state educators who are defining their own high standards. But the history standards were unacceptable to me, and the effort to set English standards has run into difficulties as well.

But when you run into difficulties, you don't quit. You go back at it and try again. This is exactly what Missouri did with the new "Show Me" standards. And that is exactly what is being done now as a new panel of historians redrafts the national history standards.

I want to be very clear in saying that there is no one way to establish standards. Every state is going to have to decide what works best for its students. Look at the various model standards that are out there and use what works best for you. But aim high.

President Clinton and I urge every community and state, each in its own way, to reach for new levels of excellence. We will continue to support the good work now being done in so many local communities through the Goals 2000 initiative.

Now, Goals 2000 attracts a lot of heat, and there are some people who have some very strange notions about what it is. So I want to tell you how it works. Every principal in this country has a desk drawer full of good ideas. Most teachers do too. Too often those good ideas never see the light of day because our schools are hard pressed just trying to make ends meet.

And that is where Goals 2000 makes the difference. Because Goals 2000 gives schools the extra money they never get to improve themselves. That is what it is. The energy to get better. Nothing more. I won't surrender this good idea to a few people who see ghosts under their bed every night -- who never roll up their sleeves and make a positive contribution for the sake of our children.

I urge those committed to high standards to keep this effort as mainstream and bipartisan as possible. And I look forward to the new energy that the nation's governors and business leaders will bring to the issue at next month's education summit.

But aiming high is only half the battle. Teachers need to be able to teach to high standards and we need a greater sense of accountability in public education. Missouri is setting a fine example in making sure that teachers have the preparation they need to teach to the new standards. Missouri's establishment of nine regional centers linked to Missouri colleges and universities is an example of forward thinking.

Let's remember that teaching is not a job but a demanding and exacting profession. I'm tired of those who make a living out of bashing teachers. We will only win the battle for excellence if we have excellent teachers.

If we give our teachers the support they deserve, then we must also ask our public schools to be much more accountable. Graduating from high school has to mean more than getting to go to the senior prom. Many creative efforts need to be looked at to make this happen: testing at 4th, 8th and 12th grade, statewide exit exams, school "report cards," parent-teacher compacts, new demanding standards for certification and recertification of teachers and principals.

We need to find ways to keep the best teachers in the classroom, to weed out teachers who just can't cut it, and to have the good sense to counsel teachers to leave the profession when they have lost the excitement and zeal to teach.

I encourage teachers and their professional organizations to help make this happen. Public trust grows stronger when there is public accountability and public trust is good for all who have dedicated their lives to quality education.

THE CHALLENGE TO EFFECTIVELY INNOVATE

As we seek to aim high and increase public accountability, we need to press on in our effort to open up public education to new ways of doing business. That big computer behind me really is a symbol that we are in a new time, that the future is happening right now.

Technology is very much at the heart of our national effort to bring America's schools up to date. We are making good progress. One year ago, only 35 percent of all of America's public schools were hooked up to the Internet. Today, that figure stands at 50 percent. And we now have a new telecommunications law that gives schools the opportunity to be the first in line to get on line and at a lower cost.

We cannot miss this opportunity. We need to "fast forward" our efforts and make sure teachers are trained well. This is our national mission. It is as important as sending men to the Moon. If we persevere we will achieve President Clinton's goal of making sure that every library, school

and classroom in this nation is wired and on-line by the year 2000.

Getting computers into America's classrooms has to be seen as just one step in our growing effort to move American education into the future. Public school choice, schools-within-schools, and the expansion of the charter school movement are three other winning examples of American creativity.

Public school choice needs to be seen as an option. Some of our most successful schools are small schools that create a community of learning. Young people shouldn't get lost in school and forgotten.

This is why President Clinton is a strong supporter of charter schools with public accountability. The President has asked the Congress in his new budget to create new "venture capital" to encourage the development of charter schools. I urge the Congress to respond with enthusiasm. I have visited charter schools, and I am particularly impressed by what charter schools are doing for disabled and under-achieving children.

Now, there are some who will tell you that private school vouchers are good for education as well. I believe they are dead wrong. Unlike charter school, private school vouchers offer us no public accountability. They are a retreat from the democratic purposes of public education, a way to divert public tax dollars, and they will wind up costing taxpayers a great deal of money.

I am keenly sensitive to the fact that many parochial school supporters see vouchers as one way to support the good work that they do. I recognize their day-to-day financial struggle. This is why I will encourage the United States Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling in Aguilar v. Felton, which continues to place an undue burden -- both financial and educational -- on many Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish and other religiously affiliated schools.

But, I am concerned that some private school voucher proponents have something else in mind when they talk about vouchers. I fear that they seek nothing less than the demise of public education. It dismays me that some think-tank intellectuals are leading this retreat from support of public education, and the democratic spirit that has always defined American public education at its best.

The American people are very clear about what they want. They want safe schools, the basics as a sure foundation, more demanding courses that meet high standards, computers into the classroom, good citizenship and classes that teach our young people real life skills and prepare them for college level work. They do not want private school vouchers.

THE CHALLENGE TO PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WORK

And here, I think, is our sixth great challenge -- helping our young people to make something of themselves in these new economic times. Today, too many of our young people see no

connection between what they learn in school and the skills they need to function in real life. And too many business leaders rightly complain that high school graduates come to them without the skills for today's jobs.

We need to redesign our schools for success, and place more attention on the forgotten middle -- the average kids with untapped potential who are still looking for direction. Today's young people will be tomorrow's paramedics, emergency room nurses, Army helicopter pilots, and the skilled technicians who build the NASA rockets.

Last week, Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, told the Congress that our economy will only reap the "rewards of new technologies" when our schools do a better job of preparing our students and when we "ensure" that people on the job have the opportunity to keep on learning. He's got it right.

We know, for example, that by the year 2000 -- just four years from now -- 60 percent of all new jobs will require advanced skills. Yet, today, only 20 percent of our workforce possesses the skills needed to move ahead. Good paying jobs require more of an education, and that education has to start earlier and be more demanding. There is no point in preparing our young people for jobs in a widget factory.

This is why I am a strong believer in rethinking the American high school by creating partnership between high schools, business and community colleges that give many more of our young people career paths that fit the new economic times.

Apprenticeships, career academies, tech preps and other school-to-work opportunities represent concrete examples of how we can help young people prepare for good paying jobs. I urge young students to look at these new opportunities as real stepping-stones to go on to a local community college and future job security.

KEEPING THE DOORS TO COLLEGE WIDE

Keeping the doors to college wide open is our seventh great challenge.

Today, our nation's system of colleges and universities represents the brightest gemstone in America's educational and economic crown. It is the envy of the world. For more than fifty years, we have made access to higher education part of the American Dream.

Yet today, the burden of paying for college is being placed more and more on students and their families. Students have taken on a larger share of the cost of their education. Four out of five students work today. And too many parents are trying to make ends meet while trying to save for their children's college education in the future.

In the last twenty years, forty million Americans have used a federal student loan to pay for their

college education. That's the American middle class.

Today, two-thirds of all student financial aid dollars in this country come from my department. I am pleased to tell you that we have cut the student loan default rate in half, and we are collecting on many more defaulted loans, saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

Yet despite this good progress, we face difficulties reaffirming this national commitment to opening the doors to higher education even wider.

I remain perplexed, just about baffled, by the thinking of some in the Congress who want to cut student loans -- who don't seem to remember that they got their chance to go to college with the help of the American taxpayer. This is why we have spent the last year fighting to keep the new Congress from cutting \$10 billion from our student loan program.

I also once again urge the Congress to preserve and expand our "direct lending program" which has the support of America's higher education community. This is no time to cave into the special interests, who don't like the competition and who are up in arms because their profit margin is dwindling. Students will always win with healthy competition, and that is the right way to help America's colleges and universities.

As we look to the future we need to create a new sense of shared responsibility in finding new ways to finance American higher education. This needs to be a broad effort working on many fronts.

Our elementary and secondary schools must do a much better job of preparing students for college level work. As standards go up, colleges will be able to shift resources away from remedial courses.

State leaders must look down the road. In nine out of the last ten years, state budgets have declined in their commitment to higher education. This year, I see new evidence that many Governors are already thinking ahead.

They are increasing funding for higher education and supporting creative financing mechanisms, including: the creation of pre-paid college tuition programs; education IRAs; and tax credits for full-time students. I support these creative new initiatives.

I urge our colleges and universities to use their ingenuity to hold the line on the cost of going to college. We are already pricing too many young people -- smart students, who are just poor -- out of an education. And we have too many middle class families already stretched to the limit.

For our part, I want to speak directly to every high school student in America today and make this promise. If you do your share, we will do ours. Every deserving student who works hard can get needed financial help to pay the tuition at a two- or four-year public college through a combination of loans, grants, and work study options. If you want to go to college, don't give up.

the dream because you don't know where to turn for financial help.

We believe in rewarding excellence and hard work. This is why President Clinton has called for the creation of a new Presidential Honor's Scholarship of \$1,000 for the top 5 percent of all graduating students in every high school in America.

We also believe that the maximum Pell Grant program should go up during each of the next five years to ultimately reach \$3,120. And it makes good sense to me to rapidly expand our college work-study program to help millions of young people get ahead in life.

I encourage Congress to see the merit and enact into law President Clinton's tuition tax deduction, which would allow middle-class families to deduct up to \$10,000 a year for college tuition and other costs. This is a sensible proposal that will make an immediate difference for thousands of American families.

To those who say we cannot afford to help this generation of young people -- I say look at our record of success and look down the road. We are on the brink of change -- at the gateway of a new time. This is absolutely the wrong time to cut our investment in education at all levels -- and the wrong time for Congress to be so out of touch with the American people.

THE CHALLENGE TO COME TOGETHER AS AMERICANS.

The story of America in this century -- as I close now -- is the story of giving each new generation of Americans the opportunity to advance themselves through education. We are a people who believe in education, who know its value. And this I know for sure: We did not become the world's greatest superpower, the most productive nation in the world, on a foundation of ignorance.

As we cross this new frontier of knowledge, we need to recognize that the success and freedom of being an American -- in this day and age -- is the freedom of excellence -- the ability to be highly educated and highly trained -- to negotiate a complex economic environment to become productive and responsible citizens.

I urge every citizen in this great country to remember that we are raising our children not as Republicans, Democrats or Independents, but as Americans -- the future of our country. If we want to enlarge the civic life of this nation, let us re-invigorate our people's love of learning and put the "public" back into public education.

Improving education, caring for our children, keeping teenagers out of harm's way, and building our sense of community is a day-to-day civic task. What you put in, you get out -- that is the secret of success for American education. Just that.

Public education is one of the great essential building blocks of our democracy -- the public space

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where we teach our children good citizenship, and where we -- as adults -- often exercise our own citizenship by working with others for the good of our children.

E Pluribus Unum -- out of many, one -- doesn't come easy for America. But only America has done it well. Our task in these new times is not to retreat to our own separate racial, ethnic, cultural, or political interest group -- but rather to do the opposite -- to do the hard work of learning to come together for the good of all of our children.

Finding common ground is the urgent work of America in 1996.

If we are not quite the melting pot that we want to be, we are -- at the very least -- a rich American stew, full of many flavors. We all can contribute to what is good for America.

We know how to create good schools and now is the time to get the job done -- to roll up our sleeves -- and reclaim that pioneer spirit of working together to make America's schools bastions of hope, creativity and learning.

And I assure you of this -- as we come together, we will rekindle those civic virtues so essential to our democratic way of life, give our young people the skills they need for the coming times, and cross this new frontier of knowledge together. It is the right thing to do for our children and the right thing to do for America's future.

Thank you.

**What 27 Governors Said About Education In Their
State of the State Addresses
(10 Democrats, 17 Republicans)**

Standards

Number of governors who mentioned standards - 10

Democrats: 6 Republicans: 4

States of governors who mentioned standards - CO, DE, IN,
NJ, NC, ND, TX, VT, VA, WV

Quotes:

* CO -- "Fundamentally, what matters most is improving student performance. We were right three years ago, when we directed public schools to set clear high standards for student learning and to make sure students meet those standards. Your leadership on this issue has been important.

"We now have model standards in place at the state level. Communities are setting their own standards, and we'll have the first measurement of our progress next year. Colorado's standards are a model for the nation. They will ensure that our students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. Standards are tools to hold schools accountable. It's kind of like an educational 'check-up.'

"We should now make sure the standards are being met. That means: the right kind of assessments, improving teacher training, more time spent in the classroom learning, and more parental involvement. Business as usual won't get the job done."

* DE -- "Our education reforms have begun to take wing with new charter schools, public school choice, higher academic standards, modern technology, and classrooms that are safe for learning.

"In Delaware, we've drafted, disseminated, debated and finalized rigorous academic standards in math, science, English, and social studies. Today, in schools throughout Delaware, curriculum and lesson plans are being modified, and textbooks and other tools are being purchased to better reflect what kids should know and be able to do. While we're raising academic standards, we must also raise graduation standards. For too many years, students have been allowed to graduate with as few as 19 credits -- and with only two years of math and science. No wonder a lot of students coast through their senior year without breaking a sweat. No wonder many graduates lack basic skills. The time has come to set higher graduation standards -- requiring more credits in math, science and foreign languages, and a minimum

GPA for student-athletes."

- * IN -- "We have raised academic standards to core subjects like reading, writing, and math. We have developed new exams to assess academic achievement, not religious or personal beliefs. For the first time, students must demonstrate competency in basic skills to receive a high school diploma. Those who cannot, receive help. This year 128,000 students will receive additional instruction, the largest number in state history -- an increase of 500 percent in only one year."
- * ND -- "Because school is so important to the development of our children, I will host a statewide education summit in the spring. Our goal is to bring together parents, teachers, administrators, and members from the business community to talk openly and honestly about what we expect our children to know."
- * NJ -- "We must stop chasing dollars and start creating scholars. Educational equality will only come when we commit ourselves to educational quality for all our students."

"If we encourage our children to reach beyond what's comfortable -- to take on the tough stuff -- we will instill the discipline that comes from mastering difficult subjects.

"Martin Luther King, Jr., once wrote, 'The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.' We are defining core subjects that will foster those abilities and provide our students with the full opportunity to succeed in the next millennium.

"Since the start of this administration, we have been working with groups of teachers, school board members, business leaders, professors, and taxpayers to define what children should know in eight core subjects.

"Last week, these groups shared the standards they produced with the State Board of Education. After Education Commissioner Klagholz makes his formal recommendations next month, the Board will hold public hearings before finalizing them.

"I urge everyone to keep actively involved in this process. To date, we have held a total of 70 public forums in every part of the state to discuss this important issue.

"Thousands of citizens have made their views known. Now, all of us together must ensure that the standards represent the highest academic expectations we can possibly set.

"But once the standards are in place, we will give our schools the flexibility they need to meet them. Our emphasis will be on progress, not process.

"In the meantime, the Department of Education will revise our testing system to measure student achievement on the new standards.

"No student should be permitted to graduate without meeting those standards. High school diplomas should be worth more than the paper they're printed on.

"For the first time, we will fundamentally redefine what we expect students to learn when they attend schools in New Jersey."

* TX -- "The state should set high standards and hold teachers and administrators accountable for results. Our measuring system should be stable and open for review. It must measure progress toward excellence in four core subjects -- math, English, science, and social science."

* VT -- "If we are to have better jobs in Vermont, we must have better schools in Vermont. I remain convinced that we need to move away from old ideologies about education and become more pragmatic. Here is my vision for education in Vermont -- we need to spend less time concentrating on regulations and more time concentrating on student achievement.

"We must complete work on student performance standards, including the assessment of student progress towards those standards. If a school's students meet performance standards and the school lives within its budget, the state has no right to tell that school how many square feet should be in a gymnasium or how many people should be in the classroom. But for those few schools which are not able to meet academic standards within an established budget, the state must take greater responsibility."

* VA -- "A fourth area in which we have made some progress in the last two years -- but where much work remains -- is in improving and seriously reforming our educational system for our young people. As a candidate for governor, I made it clear that my top priority in education would be to raise academic standards in the basic subjects, and then test

students regularly to make certain they actually learn core subjects.

"Last summer, after working with my Champion Schools Commission, parents, and the educational community for more than a year, the bipartisan State Board of Education unanimously approved new, high academic standards in math, science, English, and history.

"That is why the most important of my education recommendations is the implementation of new high academic standards in the basics of English, math, science, and history, and the regular testing of students to make certain they and their schools are performing up to those standards. Then, these test results will be made available to students, parents, teachers, and all local citizens in school performance report cards."

Teachers

Number of governors who mentioned teachers - 9

Democrats: 4 Republicans: 5

States of governors who mentioned teachers - AZ, CO, GA, IL, MD, MN, MS, VA, WV

Quotes:

- * GA -- "Just like I promised, this budget includes \$166 million for another six percent raise for teachers in our public schools next school year. And if we do it again for two more years after this, Georgia's teacher salaries will reach the national average, and, even more importantly, Georgia will lead this region."
- * IL -- "We also will invest more resources in teaching our teachers. We will expand the number of regional training centers operated by the State Board of Education, showing teachers how to better integrate technology into the learning process."
- * MS -- "I believe most of our teachers want to produce well-educated, responsible citizens and will excel given this opportunity. Join with me, therefore, to activate the performance pay for national certification law which provides a \$3,000 annual supplement for nationally certified teachers."
- * WV -- "In 1989, our teachers were ranked 49th in the nation in pay. We have improved our standing to 31st, and I intend to continue our commitment to teachers' salaries. My budget includes the money to give each teacher a \$500 pay raise."

Safe, Disciplined, and Drug Free Schools

Number of governors who mentioned safer schools - 11

Democrats: 4 Republicans: 7

States of governors who mentioned safer schools - CA, CO,
IL, IN, MD, MA, MI, MO, NY, TX, VA

Quotes:

* IN -- "Our Safe Schools Fund is helping provide metal detectors, surveillance cameras and other security equipment to get weapons and violence out of our schools so that discipline and learning can come back in."

* MD -- "We propose to double the time a disruptive student can be removed from a classroom. Students will be able to return to the classroom only with the approval of the teacher. And principals and teachers will have legal immunity when they intervene to stop students' violent behavior. Our budget includes \$500,000 in operating and \$2 million in capital funds to support these programs.

"Further, we will request the authority to impose a statewide code of conduct. We propose clear and consistent standards so students, teachers and parents know the rules and know the punishment. That punishment includes students' families being held financially responsible for damages from disruptions or vandalism. Our young people MUST understand: There is a right and there is a wrong and you are responsible for your behavior."

* MA -- "This year, we are filing legislation to double the mandatory minimum penalties for anyone who brings an illegal gun on school property. And if a kid brings a gun into your child's classroom, he should not be allowed in that classroom again. We also want to double the mandatory minimum penalties for anyone who deals drugs to kids."

* NY -- "Just as teachers want to teach, most students want to learn. In order to create a safe and secure learning environment for both teachers and students, I will propose giving real authority to teachers to remove disruptive students from the classroom. Amazingly, they don't have the proper authority to do it now. We cannot allow those who refuse to learn to hold back those who want to learn."

* TX -- "School districts must be encouraged, not mandated, to start 'Tough Love Academies.' These alternative schools would be staffed by a different type of teacher, perhaps retired Marine drill sergeants, who understand that discipline and love go hand-in-hand."

Charter Schools

Number of governors who mentioned charter schools - 8

Democrats: 2 Republicans: 6

States of governors who mentioned charter schools - AZ, CO, DE, IL, MA, MI, MS, TX

Quotes:

- * CO -- "We need more innovation and more choices in schools; different students learn in different ways. One of the most promising efforts in this area has been charter schools -- schools that teachers and parents organize and run. We should continue to support and expand charter schools, and a commission that examined these ideas over the summer has a series of recommendations we should adopt."
- * MA -- "With our Education Reform Law of 1993, we've gone a substantial part of the way toward guaranteeing a good K through 12 education for every child. We are putting literally billions of dollars more into our classrooms. A sound second step would be universal school choice, for poor parents as well as rich parents. A third would be to remove the artificial limit on the number of charter schools, allowing any school to bypass the education bureaucracy and get those dollars straight to the classroom."
- * MI -- "To keep our high-performance economy competitive and growing, we need to build on our efforts to lower taxes, cut red tape, and establish Renaissance Zones. We need renaissance schools that prepare our young people for the jobs of the future. That is one reason why this Legislature recently affirmed Michigan's landmark charter school law -- to encourage competition and innovation among public schools across our state."
- * MS -- "We have consistently supported a greater role for parents in the education of their children. Let us continue in this tradition by enabling local communities to propose charter schools -- schools with special designs funded under the current minimum foundation formula. Nineteen other states in this nation have passed charter schools legislation. We have the benefit this year of information from these states. We propose the schools receiving charters be freed from all rules and regulations other than health, safety, and nondiscrimination."
- * TX -- "Any school district which so chooses, by the will of the people in that district, should be able to declare itself free from any state mandate. So long as the district meets state standards, the local

people should be free to chart the course to educational excellence."

Technology

Number of governors who mentioned technology - 13

Democrats: 7 Republicans: 6

States of governors who mentioned technology - CA (\$100M), CO, DE (\$30M), IL, IN (\$21M), IA, MD (\$4.2M), MN (\$22M), MO (\$20M), SC, VT, WV (\$10M), WI.

Quotes:

- * CO -- "Our schools must be interconnected with a broader system to facilitate distant learning. They need the right hardware and the software. But most of all, we need trained teachers who know how to use this system. And we need parents who also are knowledgeable about technology so that they can assist their students."
- * DE -- "We can get the same one-two punch out of the \$30 million technology investments we are beginning to make in schools throughout Delaware. Those investments will bring fiber optic cable to every public school classroom, create distance learning centers, buy computers, and train teachers to use those computers and software to educate students from widely-varied backgrounds."
- * IL -- "I am announcing today the state will build a statewide network. We will run a high-tech T-One line into every one of the 903 school districts in Illinois and then pay for the ongoing charges for that equipment. We also will invest more resources in teaching our teachers. We will expand the number of regional training centers operated by the State Board of Education, showing teachers how to better integrate technology into the learning process."
- * MN -- "I propose \$22 million for hardware, software, and communications technology for Minnesota's public schools. Some of that money will expand fiber optic lines, some will purchase computers, some will buy programming. We want a student in Blackduck, Minnesota, to learn French via the Internet while the student in Eagan writes a term paper using the Library of Congress. We want to equip our children with the computer literacy skills they will need to excel in the workplace of the future...Our goal is to put Minnesota schools in the top five in technology."
- * VT -- "By sharing state resources and appropriating \$1 million in the 1995 capital bill, this Legislature has made GovNet, the state's computer network, available to almost every child in Vermont. Vermont's students can now learn through an

international computer network available for the cost of a local call. That is a remarkable achievement, and I now seek your support in the capital bill for an additional \$500,000 for assistance to schools that have been unable to provide their students with the necessary computer hardware to access the Internet."

Mentors

Quotes:

- * DE -- "As many as 2,500 mentors will join me in working with 2,500 at-risk kids in schools throughout Delaware this week. We help students with the 3Rs. Just as important, we provide positive adult role models for youngsters who badly need them. Mentoring is a win-win. It helps reduce discipline problems, while boosting academic achievement."

- * ND -- "Working with Col. Jim Hughes of the Highway Patrol, young teenagers who are beginning to get in trouble with the law will be given an opportunity for a ride along with a Highway Patrol officer. This one-on-one experience hopefully will provide a new point of view for the teenager who might be headed down the wrong path. In the coming year, we hope to expand this program to every sector of our society. I challenge parents, grandparents, teachers, business people, and public officials to look for one-on-one opportunities to spend more positive time with children. Like rocking a baby, shooting baskets with a fifth grader, or giving a teenager a chance to learn a meaningful "on the job" work skill."

Standards

* WI -- "Beginning in the year 2000, every student in this state must pass a graduation exam in order to receive a high school diploma. The standards for the graduation exam will be set by each school district, working together with parents, teachers, and employers." Standards will be "purely academic standards in core subject areas." Governor Thompson also wants "to develop a process for communities to set local graduation standards."

Teachers

Safe, Disciplined, and Drug Free Schools

Charter Schools

* WI

* OH

Technology

* WI -- "First, make additional [University of Wisconsin] courses available for high school students over the Internet. Second, establish a network for students and faculty on all 26 campuses to share interactive video and computer-based instructional materials. And third, give all high school students access to the UW System libraries as well as the Library of Congress. This will give students access to all the great libraries of the world...And never again will a student be able to say to a teacher: "The book is not in the library." I am also asking the Educational Technologies Board and the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation to make sure that at least half of all Wisconsin public high schools are on the Internet by this fall, with the remainder on line by the fall of 1997." Students will be able to apply over the Internet to all UW and technical colleges beginning in 1997.

* OH -- "Our commitment to spend a half-billion dollars on SchoolNet and SchoolNet Plus will make Ohio a national leader in bringing technology into the classroom. And, most importantly, we have committed the dollars necessary to give our teachers the training to maximize the use of this technology."

Mentors

Urban Areas

* OH -- Urban Schools Initiative which will focus on academic performance, parental involvement, and the problem of violence in our schools.



NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

THE GOVERNORS, POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE, 1996

State or jurisdiction	Governor	Regular term, in year	Present term began	Number of previous terms	Maximum consecutive terms
Alabama	Fob James Jr. (R)	4	1-95	1 (a)	2
Alaska	Tony Knowler (D)	4	12-94	—	2
American Samoa	A.P. Lutali (D)	4	1-93	1 (b)	2
Arizona	Fife Symington (R)	4	1-95	1 (c)	(d)
Arkansas	Jim Guy Tucker (D)	4	1-95	1 (e)	2 (f)
California	Pete Wilson (R)	4	1-95	1	2
Colorado	Roy Romer (D)	4	1-95	2	2 (g)
Connecticut	John G. Rowland (R)	4	1-95	—	—
Delaware	Tom Carper (D)	4	1-93	—	2 (h)
Florida	Lawton Chiles (D)	4	1-95	1	2
Georgia	Zell Miller (D)	4	1-95	1	2
Guam	Carl T.C. Gutierrez (D)	4	1-95	—	2
Hawaii	Benjamin J. Cayetano (D)	4	12-94	—	2
Idaho	Philip E. Batt (R)	4	1-95	—	—
Illinois	Jim Edgar (R)	4	1-95	1	—
Indiana	Evan Bayh (D)	4	1-93	1	2
Iowa	Terry E. Branstad (R)	4	1-95	3	—
Kansas	Bill Graves (R)	4	1-95	—	2
Kentucky	Paul E. Patton (D)	4	12-95	—	2
Louisiana	Mike Foster (R)	4	1-96	—	2
Maine	Angus S. King Jr. (I)	4	1-95	—	2
Maryland	Paris N. Glendening (D)	4	1-95	—	2
Massachusetts	William F. Weld (R)	4	1-95	1	(h)
Michigan	John Engler (R)	4	1-95	1	2
Minnesota	Arne H. Carlson (R)	4	1-95	1	—
Mississippi	Kirk Fordice (R)	4	1-92	—	2
Missouri	Mel Carnahan (D)	4	1-93	—	2 (i)
Montana	Marc Racicot (R)	4	1-93	—	2 (j)
Nebraska	E. Benjamin Nelson (D)	4	1-95	1	2 (j)
Nevada	Bob Miller (D)	4	1-95	2 (k)	2
New Hampshire	Stephen Merrill (R)	2	1-95	1	—
New Jersey	Christine T. Whitman (R)	4	1-94	—	2
New Mexico	Gary E. Johnson (R)	4	1-95	—	2
New York	George E. Pataki (R)	4	1-95	—	—
North Carolina	James B. Hunt Jr. (D)	4	1-93	2 (l)	2
North Dakota	Edward T. Schafer (R)	4	12-92	—	—
Northern Mariana Is.	Froilan C. Tenorio (D)	4	1-94	—	2 (l)
Ohio	George V. Voinovich (R)	4	1-95	1	2
Oklahoma	Frank Keating (R)	4	1-95	—	2
Oregon	John A. Kitzhaber (D)	4	1-95	—	2
Pennsylvania	Tom Ridge (R)	4	1-95	—	2
Puerto Rico	Pedro Roselló (D) (m)	4	1-93	—	—
Rhode Island	Lincoln Almond (R)	4	1-95	—	2
South Carolina	David M. Beasley (R)	4	1-95	—	2
South Dakota	William J. Janklow (R)	4	1-95	2 (n)	2
Tennessee	Don Sundquist (R)	4	1-95	—	2
Texas	George W. Bush (R)	4	1-95	—	—
Utah	Michael O. Leavitt (R)	4	1-93	—	(o)
Vermont	Howard Dean, M.D. (D)	2	1-95	2 (p)	—
Virginia	George Allen (R)	4	1-94	—	(q)
Virgin Islands	Roy L. Schneider (D)	4	1-95	—	2
Washington	Mike Lowry (D)	4	1-93	—	(r)
West Virginia	Gaston Caperton (D)	4	1-93	1	2
Wisconsin	Tommy G. Thompson (R)	4	1-95	2	—
Wyoming	Jim Geringer (R)	4	1-95	—	2

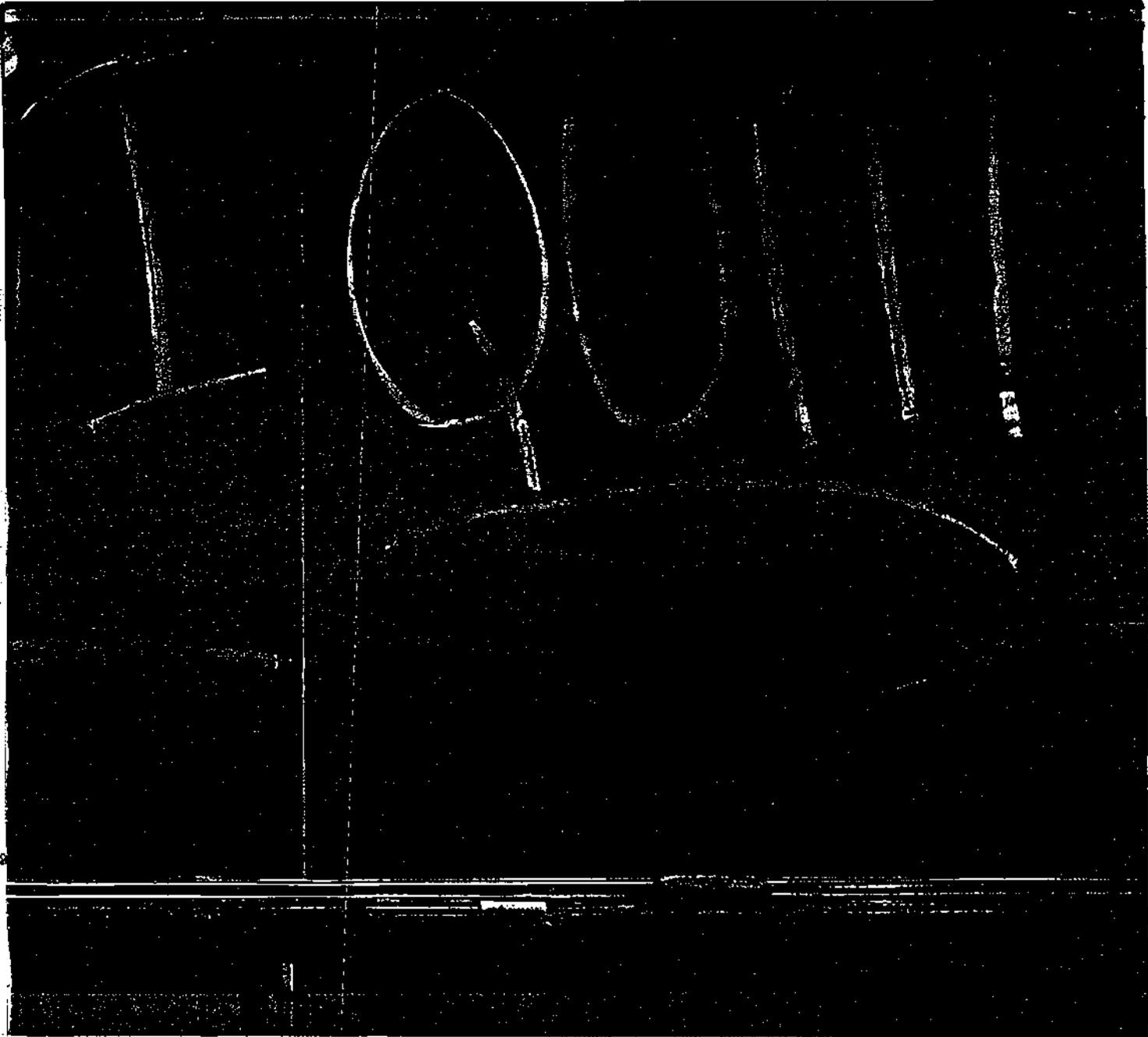
(See next or back page)



WHY TEACHERS

The nation's future lies in its classrooms. But teachers' unions are driving out good teachers, coddling bad ones and putting bureaucracy in the way of quality education

Call it a little morality play about America's schools. In Act I, a dedicated Los Angeles math teacher named Jaime Escalante becomes a national hero for his work with barrio kids at Garfield High School, a saga chronicled in the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*. In Act II, Escalante flees the Los Angeles school system for Sacramento, taking his devotion and his brilliant teaching skills



DON'T TEACH

with him. Why did he leave? Teacher union officials contend the fame went to his head. Escalante fires back that a major reason was that Los Angeles union leaders objected to his zeal. One problem: He says they chastised him for having too many students in his calculus class. "If you looked into what is going on in this school in the name of the union, I think you ... would be ap-

palled," the teacher wrote in 1990 to his union president, a year before he resigned and moved.

Escalante's experience is hardly unique. In the 34 years since the signing of the first teacher collective-bargaining contract in New York City, teacher unions have become the single most influential force in public education, their impact felt in classrooms across the coun-

try. Union policies that work against quality teaching are driving many top teachers out of public schools, making it tougher for good teachers who stay to do their best work and leaving incompetents entrenched in many classrooms. And at a time when corporate leaders and others are calling on schools to hold students to significantly higher standards, the intransigence of the unions has slowed the pace

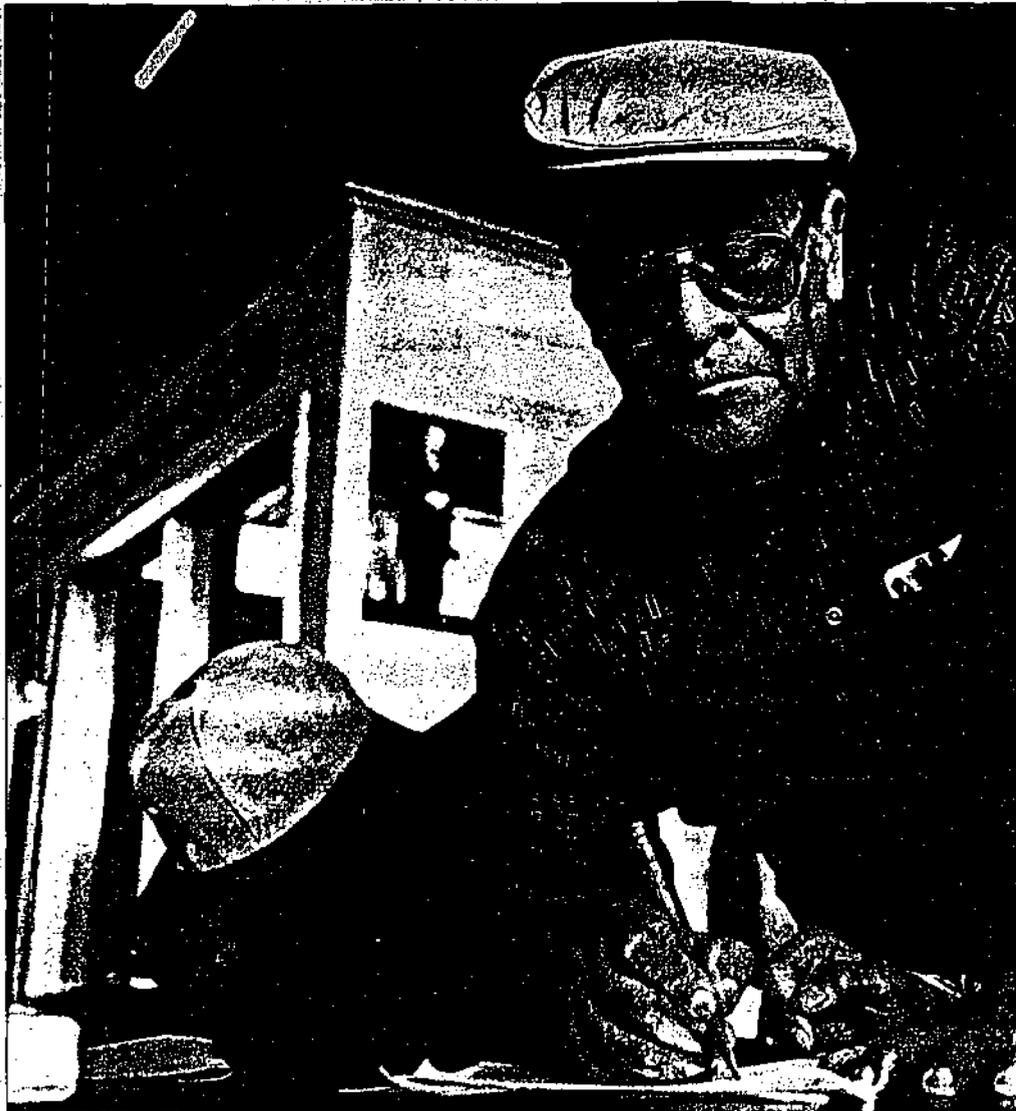
■ CULTURE & IDEAS

of school reforms, eroding public confidence in the schools and spurring an unprecedented wave of tuition-voucher plans and similarly targeted initiatives. The crisis is so great that Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), plans to propose a radically new model of teacher unionism to his membership (box, Page 70).

Unions entered the teaching profession for a reason: The vast majority of teachers were poorly paid and subject to patronage hiring and other inequities. Organizing made sense. In the past 30 years, laws granting teachers the right to bargain collectively have entered the books in 37 states, and nearly 90 percent of the nation's 2.5 million teachers now belong to either the National Education Association, the nation's largest union, or its smaller, more reform-minded twin, the AFT. (Leaders say that they expect the two unions to begin merging within the next four or five years.)

Many teachers happily pay union dues because they believe the unions have fought for improved pay and working conditions and gave them a professional voice. Unions also offer members a host of attractive benefits, ranging from liability insurance to low-interest credit cards. "The union gives you a sense of professionalism; there's support from people with experience," says Betty Lewis, a veteran reading teacher at the Hopewell Crest School and member of the Hopewell Educators Association in Bridgeton, N.J.

But the nation's schools have paid a large price for the marriage of classroom and bargaining table. By embracing old-style industrial-labor tactics, the unionism of traditional auto plants and steel mills, the AFT and the NEA have given teaching the feel of classic blue-collar work, where winning workers big checks for the shortest possible hours has been the aim and the quality of the product is considered to be management's worry. Under this ethic, good teaching is often punished, poor teaching rewarded and bureaucracy placed squarely in the way of common sense, a tangled system played out in schools from New York to California. *U.S. News* looked into some of the most troubling problems:



"I thought the union was going to focus on how to improve our skills. But they're more interested in politics than kids."

JAIME ESCALANTE, who became famous for his teaching but says he left L.A. largely because of the union

EXCELLENCE IS NO GUARANTEE

In 1990, Cathy Nelson, a Ph.D. history teacher at Fridley High School just outside Minneapolis, was named Minnesota's Teacher of the Year. But Fridley's students weren't enjoying the fruits of Nelson's outstanding teaching: She had been laid off months earlier, under a union-bargained "last-hired, first-fired" policy. A 15-year veteran and third-generation teacher, Nelson was the least senior of Fridley's five social-studies teachers. Ironically, she had been laid off under the same policy three other times. Her love of kids kept her com-

ing back. But in 1990, she finally abandoned the classroom, fed up with being treated like a "yo-yo."

Good teaching is what education is about. But in most school systems, seniority counts more than competence. Seniority-based hiring and firing rules are universal in public education, and the unions defend them. NEA President Keith Geiger says critics of that system are really trying "to get rid of experienced, expensive teachers." But seniority systems, in often rendering a teacher's classroom skills irrelevant in staffing decisions, are less than fair to students, critics say. "It cheats kids of the most effective faculty. It's a system that puts the needs of adults first," says Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute and a teacher for nearly a decade.

Seniority rules leave many principals with little control over who teaches in



ity system may work well in a factory where you're just connecting widgets, but it makes no sense in public schools."

PROBLEM TEACHERS STAY IN CLASS

Students began complaining about Juliet Ellery's English classes in 1981. The veteran teacher at El Cajon Valley High School outside San Diego refused to answer questions, they said. Her assignments made no sense. Her speech was unintelligible. Ellery was dismissed in 1986 but fought her termination. After years of hearings and court proceedings—she tried unsuccessfully to get the Supreme Court to hear her case—her teacher's license was suspended for one year in 1994. The school district's cost in legal fees: \$300,000. Ellery claims she was victimized by students who couldn't meet her standards.

If quality teaching goes unrewarded in the nation's schools, bad teaching is not only tolerated but often safeguarded to an extent that leaves principals gnashing their teeth and parents in despair. Union contracts grant a myriad of due-process protections against dismissal after teachers have spent two or three years in the classroom, making it tremendously difficult to fire even the most incompetent instructors. And even when a school system

does succeed in firing a teacher, the cost is high: In New York State, for example, the average cost to fire a teacher is \$200,000. In one celebrated New York case, a special-education teacher collected his salary behind bars for several years after he was sent to prison in 1990 for selling cocaine to undercover police, while school officials battled unsuccessfully to get him fired.

Unions argue that tenure safeguards against capricious firings. "The union only has one goal in this type of a situation," says John Logsdon, the union representative in Ellery's case, "and that is to see that the teacher gets a fair and complete hearing. It is not our goal to perpetuate poor teaching." But Mary Jo McGrath, a California school board lawyer, says it's so tough to fight the tenure system that administrators usually don't bother. Instead, they often cut deals with unions, giving bad teachers satisfactory ratings in return for union help in getting

"Tenure doesn't protect incompetent teachers; it protects competent teachers from unfair practices and dismissals."

KEITH GEIGER, NEA president, who says his union is moving away from "hard-nosed collective bargaining"

their schools. "If principals can't hire and fire, they can't shape a team with a shared sense of mission, something that all good schools have," says Carolyn Kelley, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

More frustrating, when jobs are at stake, unions often urge that veteran teachers be assigned to subjects in which they have no training. The NEA vows to fight "any attempts to diminish the quality of learning or services through . . . the involuntary assignment [of teachers] out of [their] field [of licensure]." But voluntary out-of-field assignments are another matter, and there are lots of them. The U.S. Department of Education reports that a third of high school math teachers, nearly a quarter of high school English teachers and nearly a fifth of high school science teachers are teaching without a college major or minor in their subjects. Says Michael Levin, a Willow Grove, Pa., labor lawyer who represents school systems: "The senior-



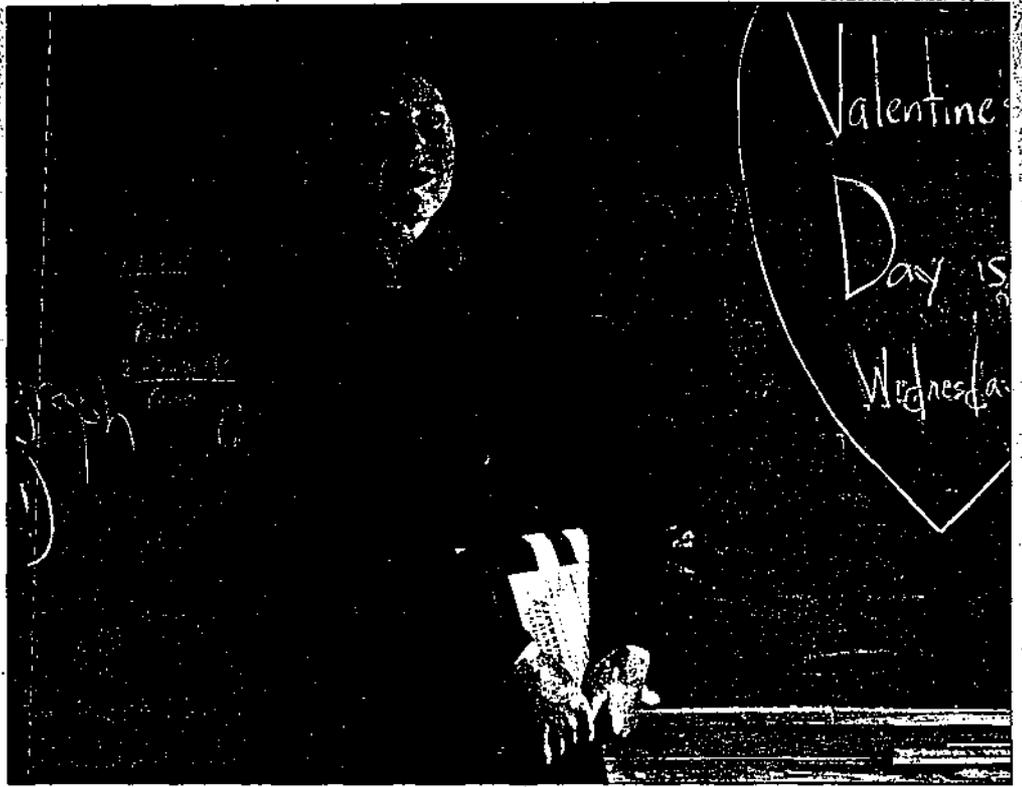
CULTURE & IDEAS

them transferred to other schools—a cynical practice known as “the dance of the lemons” or “passing the trash.” “The whole system is corrupt,” says Joseph Viteritti, a professor of public administration at New York University. “It says to hard-working teachers that there are no standards, that it doesn’t matter.”

RED TAPE REPELS BRIGHT MINDS

Tracy Seckler graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in 1992. Two years later, she decided to become an urban teacher and enrolled in the master’s program at Teachers College, Columbia University. While working on her degree, Seckler wanted to substitute teach and set out to obtain a license. She called the New York City licensing office four times to find out what papers she needed to bring in and was given four different answers. When she arrived in person, she told the clerk who reviewed her application that she wanted to teach English. But the clerk said that was impossible: On Seckler’s Harvard transcript, her course codes began with “hist,” the abbreviation for an interdisciplinary honors program called History and Literature. Even though Seckler wrote her thesis on American literature, she was told she could substitute teach only in history classes because she lacked sufficient credits to teach English. Today, Seckler is teaching in suburban Scarsdale.

Most teachers enter the classroom through state and local licensing systems, which generally demand only that applicants take the right college courses. Teachers don’t have to show in



“Nobody in her right mind would go through the [New York City] licensing process. It is very haphazard and it’s unprofessional.”

TRACY SECKLER, whose Harvard thesis was on American literature but wasn’t allowed to teach English in Manhattan

any serious way that they know the subject they are teaching or that they can teach it—a far cry from standards in professions like medicine. It’s a system many unions support but one that repels bright minds and produces many teachers who are licensed but not truly qualified. “By and large, we are getting people who wouldn’t be admitted to

college in other countries,” concedes the AFT’s Shanker.

Astonishing numbers of education graduates fail basic literacy tests introduced in many states in recent years to shore up standards. California administered 65,000 such exams in 1994-95 and gave failing grades to about 20 percent of those tested. But unions haven’t

made tough standards a priority. To the contrary, the NEA fought basic skills testing in teacher licensing for years, shifting its stance only after a majority of states introduced the tests.

BOUND AMBITION

Last summer, the Mount Clemens, Mich., school system opened the Dr.

NEA AT A GLANCE

The National Education Association is the nation’s largest union.

- **President.** Keith Geiger
- **Founded.** 1857 in Philadelphia
- **Membership.** 2.1 million
- **Locals.** 13,200
- **1995 budget.** \$185.7 million
- **Campaign contributions.** \$8.9 million from 1989 to mid-1995. From 1993 to 1994, \$3.5 million has been given to Demo-

crats; \$37,300 to Republicans

- **Top 1995 recipients.** These lawmakers got the most: Rep. Lynn Rivers, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- Rep. Dale Kildee, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- Rep. Tim Johnson, D-S.D. (\$4,000)
- Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo. (\$3,500)
- **Dues.** \$1 in 1857; \$104 now

AFT AT A GLANCE

The American Federation of Teachers was founded in Illinois in 1916.

- **President.** Albert Shanker
- **Membership.** 885,000, largest membership in New York
- **Locals.** 2,500
- **1996 budget.** \$78 million
- **Campaign contributions.** \$5 million from 1989 to mid-1995
- **Top 1995 recipients.** These lawmakers got the most:

- Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y. (\$5,000)
- Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo. (\$5,000)
- Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn. (\$5,000)
- Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- **First strike.** 1946 by St. Paul, Minn., local
- **Famous members.** Albert Einstein, Elie Wiesel, Hubert Humphrey

■ CULTURE & IDEAS

Martin Luther King Jr. Academy, a new school with a new curriculum. The Mount Clemens Education Association, the local union, insisted that the school's teachers be paid for several weeks of training in the new curriculum. But a group of younger teachers wanted extra training in math. The school couldn't afford it, so the teachers volunteered to take the training without pay. Veteran teachers rejected the idea, pointing out that unpaid work was forbidden by the union contract. The training never took place.

The drive of a Jaime Escalante is rare in any field, but many public-school teachers want to do the best possible job for their students. Union work rules frequently get in their way. "They tell you what you can't do," says NYU's Viteritti.

Teachers who want to "go the extra mile" often find themselves unappreciated by their colleagues. Patricia Simonds, a 26-year veteran at Truman Elementary in Vancouver, Wash., last year was among the first teachers in the nation to earn an advanced license from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards—a program started in the late 1980s to reward outstanding teachers by creating a system akin to board certification in medicine. President Clinton invited Simonds and other winners to the White House. And the national leaders of both the NEA and the AFT back the NBPTS. But, in contrast to the ceremony at the nation's capital, there wasn't much fanfare at Truman Elementary to celebrate Simonds's national award.

Ultimately, it is students who pay the biggest price. Teachers in two affluent suburban Maryland high schools protested budget cuts several years ago by "working to the rule"—refusing to do any tasks not required of them in their contract. They refused to write college letters of recommendation for seniors in the class of 1992 unless students "first presented addressed and stamped letters to a council member or state legislator urging the passing of taxes necessary to fund salary increases, school programs, etc.," according to a letter to union members. The NEA's Geiger insists that work rules were essential to

counter big differences in teachers' workloads and other abuses. But he acknowledges that many contracts today are "too rigid."

MEDIOCRITY GETS THE GOLD

Gil Troutman was raised in western Pennsylvania and went to a local liberal arts college, where he graduated with honors in history. At 23, he joined the social studies

Teaching generally doesn't. Unions have barred teachers from being paid on the basis of their performance. They have negotiated so-called single salary schedules that reward teachers strictly on the basis of years of experience and the number of college courses completed. Pushed by unions to equalize pay scales that traditionally favored men over women, whites over blacks and high



Not everyone with 10 years' experience "has the same level of expertise. Some people just do the job better than others do."

GIL TROUTMAN, who won awards for teaching, which never translated into a higher salary for him

department at General McLane High School in nearby Edinboro. Troutman loved his work. He taught history and economics, coached wrestling and, in time, won awards for his teaching. But in the early 1990s, at 37 and in the prime of his career, he quit teaching to open an insurance business. The main reason: After 14 years, his paycheck wasn't any bigger than that of other teachers in the school at his level of experience, despite his award-winning teaching. Says Troutman: "I wanted to be in a profession that recognizes the level of work you put forth."

school teachers over elementary teachers, the single salary schedule has become a huge barrier to teaching excellence in public education, robbing many teachers of the motivation to excel and driving many of the best out of the profession. "Teachers who do better in college and are rated higher by their principals leave [the profession] at higher rates," says Ann Weaver Hart, dean of the graduate school at the University of Utah and an expert on teacher rewards. "The single salary schedule is a major factor."

The single salary schedule also has led to a huge waste of taxpayers' money. In most places, pay raises are linked directly to the number of college credits teachers earn, usually without any requirement that those credits be earned in courses related to what teachers do in their classrooms. The system—constructed with teachers, not students, in

■ CULTURE & IDEAS

mind—has led to teachers taking the easiest courses they can find, and a disproportionate number of school-administration courses, since teachers can earn higher salaries by leaving the classroom to do administrative work.

Indeed, most union leaders are loath to have teachers paid strictly on the basis of their performance. "Salary is not what attracts people to teaching and keeps them there," argues Barbara Kelley, a Bangor, Maine, teacher official who is vice chair of the NBPTS. But

"Teachers unions are losing the public battle. The survival of public education is at stake."

ED DOHERTY, who is president of the Boston Teachers' Union and believes in reform

Kelley's own story seems to disprove her point. A veteran gym teacher, she raised her salary by several thousand dollars a couple of years ago by earning a master's degree in business. She says she is thinking about leaving teaching and that the degree might help her in another career. The average U.S. teacher salary is \$36,874.

BUCKING THE CALL FOR REFORM

Any number of blue-ribbon panels since the early 1980s have called for reforms in teaching. The latest, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chaired by Gov. Jim

Hunt of North Carolina, is discussing tougher teacher licensing standards, performance pay, stronger dismissal systems and other reforms that might be included in a report to be released next September.

But teacher unions have used their resources to fight reform—and their resources are vast. Such is their influence in state capitals that in many states, the unions are by far the largest contributors to statewide elections. The NEA also spends \$39 million a year to keep 1,500 organizers in the field helping the union's 13,250 affiliates lobby school boards, file grievances and do many other things to promote unionism. The union's palatial Washington, D.C., headquarters, renovated in 1991 at a cost of at least \$52 million, is a testament to its power in national politics, where the NEA has wedded itself to the Democratic Party. The union handed out \$8.9 million to congressional candidates between 1989 and 1995, only a fraction of it to Republicans. And the Clinton White House is banking on the NEA playing a big role in this year's presidential campaign. In a 1995 report to the NEA, for example, Clinton pollster Stanley Greenberg attempts to refine the union's message on behalf of the president's re-election. His advice: Hammer home the theme that education is a key to reversing "civic decay."

Politics is not the only arena in which the unions fight off threats to the old system. The AFT and the NEA have waged recent court battles against laws in several states, including a Michigan statute limiting collective bargaining and an Ohio law giving parents tuition vouchers for private schools. And the



STRIKE IN SAN DIEGO. Some union leaders no

unions spend huge sums on public relations. The NEA has budgeted nearly \$14 million to defend schools and unions in fiscal 1996.

But, in response to growing public discontent and recent union defeats at the

UNION CONTRARIAN

America's 'most militant teacher' calls for reform

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, was once the most militant teacher in America. Three decades ago, he led the drive to introduce hard-edged unionism into public school teaching. Today, he's still a radical. But he has a very different mission: He's trying to lead his union away from many of the same demands and tactics that

he championed in the past.

Teacher unions' survival is at stake, he says. Unless they show they're working to improve public schools by improving classroom teaching, the unions will wither. "It's like being a strong man on a sinking ship," he says. "Being strong doesn't do you much good." So Shanker, 67, is shaping a new vision of teacher unionism, one that safe-

guards union members but also invests unions with far more responsibility for the quality of the teaching profession. "In the future, teacher unions should be about teacher standards," Shanker says.

To that end, he is drafting a variety of "teacher quality" reforms he hopes his membership will endorse at the AFT's convention this summer. He wants high entrance standards, performance pay, a "streamlining" of due-process protections and other measures that break sharply with industrial union practices now embraced by teacher groups. He wants unions to play a far larger role



AFT'S SHANKER seeks reform



re questioning the use of labor tactics that arose from industrial worker traditions.

hands of Republican-led legislatures, unions are gradually softening their opposition to teacher reforms. Adding to the incentives for change are recent membership studies, which reveal that the unions are out of step with a major-

ity of their younger members, who reject the unions' commitment to industrial unionism and partisan politics. Now some union leaders seem anxious to jump on the reform platform: NEA President Geiger, for example, says his

union is "moving away from hard-nosed collective bargaining." And Geiger says he has joined Shanker in discussing new teacher-pay systems with experts and is pushing the NEA to take a larger role in policing its membership.

But many union watchers remain skeptical. The education landscape, they say, is littered with token NEA reform projects designed to give the appearance of reform-mindedness. And local unions mostly lag far behind national union leaders in calling for reform. Still, a handful of meaningful union-backed teacher reforms exist around the nation: the suspension of staffing by seniority in a group of New York City schools; the opening of new Boston schools free of school-board regulations and union work rules; performance-based pay in Cincinnati, and policing of the teaching ranks by peers in Columbus, Ohio.

Teacher unions aren't going to disappear from public education; they are part of its permanent landscape. But as the public's confidence in public education steadily ebbs, and a rising chorus clamors for change, pressure is mounting for teacher unions to merge their goals with the goals of good teaching. "We're losing the public battle," says Ed Doherty, the reform-minded president of the Boston Teachers' Union. "The survival of public education is at stake." To Doherty, the unions' political problem is clear—and so is the solution. The question is whether other union leaders will get the message before it's too late.

BY THOMAS TOCH WITH ROBIN M. BENNEFIELD, DANA HAWKINS AND PENNY LOEB



CHARLIE ARCHAMBAULT - USNEWS

based on tougher standards.

in training and retraining of teachers. In his dramatic break with the past, he says he has lost confidence in a first principle of trade unionism—going on strike. "Strikes are political statements. And today, people aren't as sympathetic toward teachers as they were in the past."

Reluctant buyers. Such views put the bookish union leader, who grew up speaking only Yiddish on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, at odds with much of the teacher establishment. National education groups are uneasy with Shanker's candor about the state of the public schools and

his calls for reform. He knows his ideas won't be simple to sell to his membership. He pushed a similar reform agenda a decade ago but abandoned most of it in the early 1990s. "Convincing people to change has been a damn difficult thing to do," he says. "I would go into a state, talk up reform and as soon as I left the union attorney would come in and say, 'We've got a great tenure law, let's keep it.'" Seeking reform means new roles and new attitudes for veteran teachers, Shanker notes. "The union guy in Oshkosh isn't comfortable in the role of teacher retrainer," he

says. "He knows how to handle grievances."

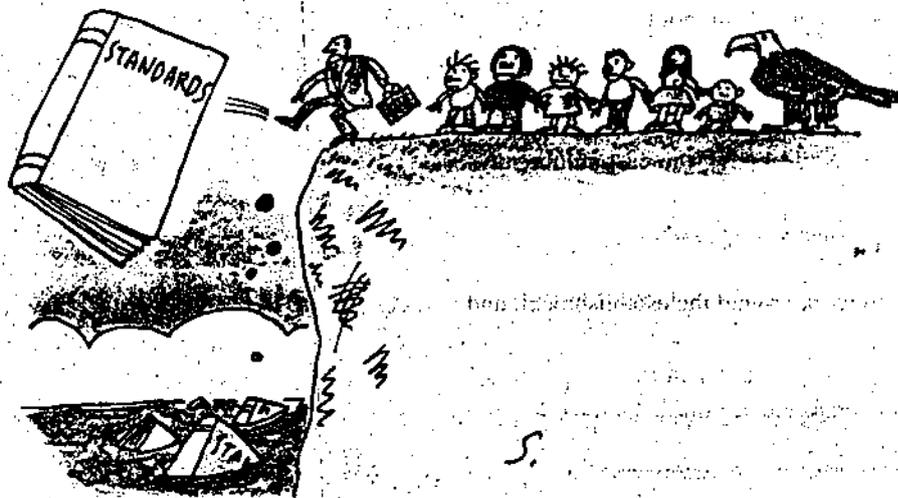
But Shanker says he's taking up the reform banner once again because the stakes have risen dramatically in recent years. "Unless we restore the public's faith in what we do, public education is going to collapse," he warns.

If there's hope in getting unions to focus on teacher quality issues, Shanker says, it's the fact that a growing number of union leaders share his anxiety about the future of public schools. "A lot of our leaders believe that we're close to the end of public education. They never did before." —T.T.

WHAT SHOULD CHILDREN LEARN?

by PAUL GAGNON

*National standards have been thwarted,
but state-mandated academic standards and
local action can yet save the schools*



CAN the wishes of two Presidents, Republican and Democratic, of most governors, of several Congresses, and of up to 80 percent of the American public and teachers simply be ignored? So it seems. Over the past five years all of them have called for national academic standards, to make schools stronger and more equal. But their will has been frustrated by the century-old habits of American educators unable to conceive of excellence and equity co-existing in the schools most children have to attend. This makes a depressing story, but some of it needs telling if those children are to see a happy ending. For to succeed where national efforts failed, state and local school leaders, teachers, parents, and citizens need to understand what they are up against, what has to be done differently, and how much is at stake.

They can begin by recognizing, and tolerating no longer, the vast inertia of an educational establishment entrenched in many university faculties of education; in well-heeled interest associations, with their bureaucracies, journals, and conventions; in hundreds of research centers and consulting firms; in federal, state, and local bureaucracies; in textbook-publishing houses and the aggressive new industries of educational technology and assessment. On the whole this establishment is well-meaning, and it is not monolithic, all of one mind. But its mainstream, trained and engrossed in the means rather than the academic content of education, instinctively resists any reform that starts with content and then lets it shape everything else—most certainly the means.

Starting school reform by first deciding what every child should learn strikes most people as only common sense. But to many American educators, it spells revolutionary change. The standards strategy for school reform would give subject-matter teachers and scholars, and the educated public, unprecedented power to spur genuine change—change far deeper than questions of school choice, methods, or management. Means and management are not the problem. The overused business analogy breaks down: business first decides the content of its product; means follow. But educators, unwilling to focus on subject matter, have never decided what content everyone should know; the curriculum stays frozen, incoherent and unequal. For more than a decade American citizens have wanted high, common standards—the only new idea for their schools in a century. But to get them, they will have to work around the establishment, and overturn the status quo.

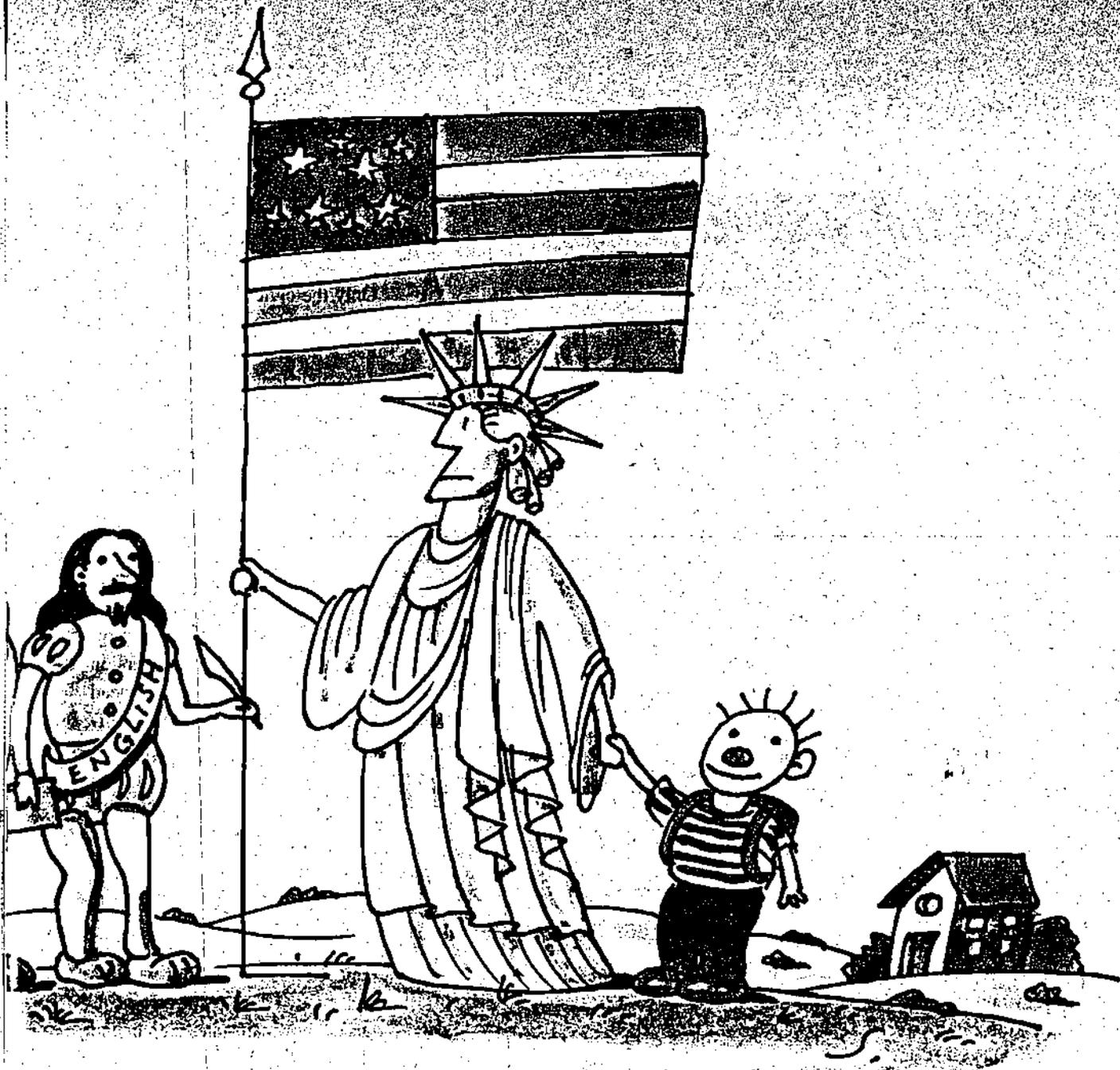
The first step toward change was taken in 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education delivered a ringing wake-up call: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." The commission's report, *A Nation at Risk*, told us that other countries' schools were doing better in both quality and equality of learning—and ours were losing ground on each count. In the commission's words, "a rising tide of mediocrity" belied our democratic promise that "all, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost."

A Nation at Risk gave rise to the standards strategy for school improvement, talk of the avoidance of which has preoccupied American educators ever since. It said that all high school students, regardless of background or vocational prospects, needed a common core curriculum of four years of English, three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies, and a semester of computer science. The college-bound should add two years of foreign language. In the early 1980s only 13.4 percent of our high school graduates had taken the first four of those "new basics." Adding the computer semester dropped the percentage all the way to 2.7,



and adding foreign language made it 1.9. "Mediocrity" was a mild word for what was going on. But the public paid attention: many states and districts raised their core academic requirements, over the objections of experts who declared that dropout rates would soar, for minorities most of all.

By 1990, the National Center for Education Statistics found, 39.8 percent of high school graduates had taken the recommended years of English, mathematics, science, and social studies; 22.7 percent added the computer semester; 17.3 percent added both computers and the foreign language. Instead of rising, the dropout rate for African-Americans declined, and for Hispanics remained roughly stable. The percentage of African-American students taking the required years of academic subjects rose from 10.1 to 41.1; for His-



panics it rose from 6.3 to 32.7. "Top-down" recommendations, with state and local implementation, had made a difference, and they continue, albeit at a slower rate, to do so.

The glass, however, is still at best half full. And by comparison with the democratization of public schools in other countries, it is well under half empty. Our 25 percent dropout rate means that the roughly 40 percent of high school graduates in 1990 who got the recommended classes made up only 30 percent of all young people of that age. In 1991, in two school systems at opposite ends of the earth, about two thirds of the corresponding Japanese and French age groups completed markedly more-demanding academic programs, which included foreign languages. In both countries about half the students were in programs combining technical and liberal

education. Even disregarding foreign languages, relatively few of our young people graduate from academic programs that are as rigorous as those abroad. For fully equivalent programs, a generous estimate of American completion would be 15 percent—about a quarter of the French and Japanese completion rate.

We used to say—and too many educators still say—that we cannot compare our schools with those of other countries, because they educate only an elite and we try to educate everybody. Untrue for thirty years, this is now the opposite of the truth. They educate the many, and we the few. To our shame, a disadvantaged child has a better chance for an equal and rigorous education, and whatever advancement it may bring, in Paris or Copenhagen than in one of our big cities.

Comparing curricula makes us look bad enough, but what is behind the course titles on student transcripts? Are American courses as substantial as those abroad? To make them so, President George Bush and the nation's governors launched a movement to set national standards for course content at meetings in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989. Goal Three of their statement insisted that course content be academically "challenging," comparable to that in the best schools here and overseas, and—for equity—that all students be offered such content and be expected to master it. Polls showed overwhelming public support, even for a national curriculum.

Shortly after, Congress set up a National Council on Education Standards and Testing, to "advise on the desirability and feasibility of national standards and tests." In its report of January, 1992, the council recommended both. National content standards, it said, ought to "define what students should know and be able to do" in English, geography, history, mathematics, and science, "with other subjects to follow." A core of common content was needed to "promote educational equity, to preserve democracy and enhance the civic culture, and to improve economic competitiveness." It should set high expectations, not minimal competencies; it should provide focus and direction, not a national curriculum.

The ball was handed off to the U.S. Department of Education, which in turn funded privately based consortia of scholars and teachers to decide what was most worth learning in each major subject. The stage was set to open equal opportunities for learning, to temper the curricular chaos of 15,000 school districts, so that children would no longer be entirely at the mercy of where or to whom they were born. Some of us in the Department of Education were sure it could be done. We were wrong. The department itself never decided how the standards strategy ought to work, or how to explain it to others. Last year four of the national projects it had commissioned—in the arts, civics, geography, and history—issued their documents. (Science and foreign-language projects are still under way. A math project had been separately completed



Had we looked overseas after midcentury, we could have learned from both our allies and our enemies in the Second World War. But we did not and still do not. Those most reluctant to look abroad are the promoters of giddy educational fixes that no foreign country would take seriously, from subjecting schools to the "free market" all the way to killing off academic disciplines in favor of "issue-based inquiry."

do it right? Are we as a people ready to apply the standards of our very best schools, public and private, to all the others, and reform a system that is generally mediocre and shamefully unequal? A century of avoidance says no.

THE TEN AND THE NINE

THE idea that democratic education requires a rigorously academic core for every student is not new. The report of the illustrious Committee of Ten, published in 1894, forcefully articulated it, calling for an established academic curriculum for all high school students, *whether or not they were going to college*. Italics are needed, for the committee was falsely accused in its time of caring only for the college-bound, and thus of being elitist and anti-democratic. This line is still taken by educators who have not read the report.

in 1991.) After spending more than \$900,000, the English project had been defunded for nonperformance, its professional associations unable to do for our language and literature what other nations have done for theirs. (One subcommittee solemnly voted that the phrase "standard English" be replaced by "privileged dialect.") Only the civics document earned countrywide respect. The others met with disbelief and complaint over their length and extravagant demands. The American-history standards set off an ideological conflict that is still boiling, an issue for presidential candidates at campaign stops. (For an examination of the disappointing standards for world history, see page 74.)

A year after the standards projects reported, the national version of standards-based reform is dead of multiple wounds, some self-inflicted, others from our culture wars, still others from congressional antipathy to any federal initiative, and most from American educators who have long resisted establishing a common core of academic learning. Recovery now depends on the states' choosing their own standards. But where a well-funded nationwide effort collapsed, how can states step in and

The story of the Ten's defeat and the triumph of progressive education's dumbed-down version of John Dewey's ideas, which reads eerily like the failure of the national-standards movement today, is best told in Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1964. Chaired by Charles William Eliot, the president of Harvard, the Committee of Ten was made up of six university scholars (several had taught in secondary schools), three high school principals, including the head of the Girls' High School in Boston, and William T. Harris, the U.S. Commissioner of Education. The common core they advocated required four years of foreign language and English language and literature, three to four years of math and science, and two to four years of history. Young Americans taking on the profession of citizen, they said, needed a demanding curriculum, not the "feeble and scrappy" courses offered in too many high schools. This was doubly important for "school children who have no expectation of going to college," so that they might have at maturity "a salutary influence" upon the affairs of the country.

The report could have been written today. It anticipated the progressive pedagogical agenda and our latest "innovations" as well. It decried the "dry and lifeless system of instruction by text-book." Facts alone were repellent; schooling was for "the invaluable mental power which we call the judgment." It deplored mere coverage. To reach a common core of essentials, less was more: "select the paramount." The committee argued for active inquiry in original sources, studies in depth, individual and group projects, seminars, debates and re-enactments, field trips, museum work, mock legislatures and conventions. All possible teaching aids should be used: engravings, photographs, maps, globes, and the "magic lantern." To make time, school hours needed to be longer and more flexible.

For the new curriculum the Ten urged that history, civil government, and geography be taught as one. They wanted history and English "intimately connected," with constant cross-referencing to other countries and eras, to literature and art. They wanted more time for foreign languages, starting in the elementary grades. The continuing education of teachers needed more rigor—courses during the school year, taught by university scholars, for teachers who needed "the spirit or the apparatus to carry their classes outside . . . [the] narrow limits" of textbooks. Educators today reinvent these century-old ideas and declare them "exciting," as though nobody before—least of all academicians—could have thought such things.

The Ten's marriage of common substance and varied methods—exactly the object of today's standards strategy—was broken by the advent of a new corps of nonacademic educators who argued that common requirements would force a multitude of students to drop out. In 1911 a Committee of Nine on the Articulation of High School and College turned the Ten on their heads. The Nine, primarily public school administrators, insisted that school "holding power" depended

on meeting interests that "each boy and girl has at the time." To focus on academics was to enslave the high school to the college, and lead students away from "pursuits for which they are adapted" toward those "for which they are not adapted and in which they are not needed." Schools should focus on industrial arts, agriculture, and "household science."

The influence of what Hofstadter called an "anti-intellectualist movement" also stood out in *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, issued in 1918 by the National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, and nationally distributed by the U.S. Office of Education. Again made up of administrators, the commission included no academic subjects in its list of seven things high schools ought to teach: health, command of fundamental processes (the three Rs), "worthy" home membership, "worthy" use of leisure, vocation, citizenship, and ethical character. This report, too, could have been written today, by the promoters of content-free brands of "outcomes-based education," which they celebrate as new and "transformational."

MASS TRIAGE

FROM the 1920s on, vast numbers of children were locked into curricular tracks and "ability groups" on the basis of surface differences—race, ethnicity, language, social class, sex, "deportment," and intelligence as categorized by inane notions of testing—that had nothing to do with their potential. At the low point of this mass triage, leaders of the "Life Adjustment" movement of the 1940s consigned up to 80 percent of all American children and adolescents to the nonacademic heap. Hofstadter called it the most anti-democratic moment in the history of schooling. In the next decade James Bryant Conant's influential book *The American High School Today* (1959) still sought no common academic core and considered no more than 20 percent of students as "academically talented." The rest, Conant said, should "follow vocational goals and . . . develop general interests." And in *The Education of American Teachers* (1963), Conant added that at the university level "a prescription of general education is impossible unless one knows, at least approximately, the vocational aspirations of the group in question."

Thus spoke mainstream American educators, habitually failing to recall the three distinct purposes of schooling—for work, for public affairs, for private culture—and ever unable to imagine what free people could be as citizens or private personalities outside their daily work. From the report of the Nine to the present, educators (including those at many universities) have put socializing the masses and job training ahead of intellect. At different times socializing takes on various looks from group to group, left to right. But its common root is distrust of ordinary people's minds and spirit. Unable to think and seek the good, ordinary people must be socially

engineered to amuse themselves and to behave. We boast of escaping the old world's class system, but cherish our own brand of social privilege. Academic standards, educators have said for a century, are not for everyone—as though most people do not deserve or need a liberal education, as though we want them not as equals but only to work and to buy. Beta-minuses out of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. To feel better, we tell one another the story that schools can be "different but equal," a swindle still outliving its twin, "separate but equal."

In contrast, the cataclysms of depression and war brought educators in Europe to other views by the 1950s: it was time to democratize their schools, by leveling upward. As European secondary schools were opened to all, the political parties of the left resolved that the children of workers and the poor should gain whatever personal and political power they could from the same academic curriculum formerly reserved to the few.

A generation earlier America had leveled downward, accepting a dual, unequal school system sold to trusting citizens with warm words of solicitude by expert-specialists. In fact those specialists were perpetuating elitism by denouncing liberal education as elitist. Europeans were not so trusting as we, either of experts or of one another. Out of revolution and class conflict they had raised wariness to a high art, looking behind words for consequences. In Europe the schools had been battlegrounds for ideas about human nature, religion, history, national honor, and democracy itself. European democrats who had suffered Nazi occupation were not about to accept the notion that schools could be different but equal.

Had we looked overseas after midcentury, we could have learned from both our allies and our enemies in the Second World War. But we did not and still do not. Those most reluctant to look abroad are the promoters of giddy educational fixes that no foreign country would take seriously, from subjecting schools to the "free market" all the way to killing off academic disciplines in favor of "issue-based inquiry." Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, puts it squarely, as usual: Americans tolerate a "marked inequality of opportunity in comparison with Ger-



Starting school reform by first deciding what every child should learn strikes most people as only common sense. But to many American educators, it spells revolutionary change. This strategy would give subject-matter teachers, and the educated public, unprecedented power to spur genuine change—change far deeper than questions of school choice, methods, or management.

many, France, or Japan." Why do students work harder in those countries, with the same TV and pop culture to distract them? Because their educators have decided what all students should know by the end of high school, Shanker says, and they have "worked back from these goals to figure out what children should learn by the time they are ages fourteen and nine." Standards are universal and known by everyone, so "fewer students are lost—and fewer teachers are lost."

CONTENT-BASED REFORM

GRANTED, the U.S. Department of Education's own ambivalence did not help the standards strategy's reception. What could easily have been explained as a necessarily slow four-step process—in which most important decisions would be left to states, local districts, schools, and teachers—remained in confusion. And when expensive standards projects refused to discipline themselves and lugged forth great tomes that looked like

national curricula, the department gave up trying. It let go the idea of a national core of essential learning and decided to say that setting standards was now up to the states.

Having fifty sets of standards need not mean disaster. But the Committee of Ten was right: something close to national agreement on a vital common core is indispensable to educational equity, to dislodge and replace the empty, undemanding programs that leave so many children untaught and disadvantaged. Without some such agreement, the much-heralded devolution of reform leadership to the states could make things worse.

The four steps essential to content-based school reform are no mystery. But conventional educators will object to them, for they focus on subject matter and must be carried out by subject-matter teachers and scholars, not by curriculum specialists unlearned in academic disciplines. In step one, teachers and scholars work together under public review to write the content standards—brief, scrupulously selected lists of what is most worth knowing in each academic subject. These have but one function: to lay before students, parents, teachers, and the university teachers of teachers the

essential core of learning that all students in a modern democracy have the right not to be allowed to avoid. "Core" means what it says: teaching it should take no more than two thirds of the time given to each subject, the rest being left to local school and teacher choice.

This step is the most critical but most often misunderstood. What is a subject-matter essential, or "standard," and what is not? It is specific, not abstract, but it does not descend to detail. In history a typical standard asks students to understand the causes of the First World War, with an eye to the technological, economic, social, and political forces at work, together with the roles of individuals, of accident, and of ordinary confusion. It does not ask students to "master the concept of conflict in world history." Nor does it ask them to memorize the names of the twenty central characters in the tragedy of the summer of 1914.

As they select each standard, scholars and teachers must consider whether they can explain its importance when students ask "So what?" The First World War is an easy example. What it did to Americans was to shape their lives and deaths for the rest of the twentieth century—from the Depression and the Second World War to the end of the Cold War, from our hubris of 1945 to our present fantasy that we have spent ourselves too poor even to keep our parks clean or our libraries open. If a standard cannot be explained to the young, or to an educated public, it is either too general or too detailed. In a hurry, some states have issued "common cores of learning" that are lists of healthy attitudes and abstract "learning outcomes." Others have copied detail directly out of the overstuffed national standards documents. Neither is a help to teachers or curriculum makers.

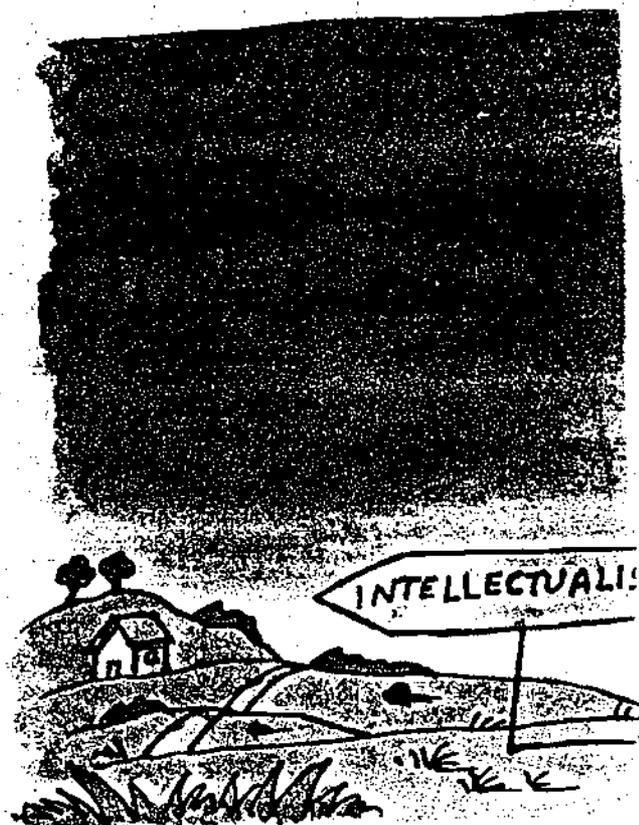
Step two was never "national" business: writing a state curriculum framework, saying in which grades the essentials should be taught. Its function is to end the plague of gaps and repetitions that only American educators seem resigned to accept as normal. Articulating subject matter across the elementary and secondary years also requires a collaboration of equals—teachers, scholars, and learning specialists—each of whom has things to say that the others need to hear. The word "framework," too, means what it says; it leaves the third step—course design and pedagogy—to the school and the teacher. They must have the authority to make the choices most important to them and to their students: the topics and questions by which to teach the essentials, the day-to-day content of instruction, the materials and methods best suited to their students and to their own strengths.

Step four, writing performance standards and tests of achievement, can sensibly follow only when the others have been taken. But some states are hurrying to award expensive contracts to outside testing firms before anyone has thought about, much less decided, what is worth testing. To leave this to experts and let the rush to "accountability"—which

now has a potent assessment lobby behind it—drive standards and course content will kill all chances for school improvement. Not everything precious can be measured, and not everything measurable is worth teaching; pap is pap, a drop or a gallon. So once more it is teachers and scholars who must decide what to assess.

Content-based reform will not always be easy even for teachers and scholars. All who teach, from the grades to graduate school, will have to be differently educated than they now are and teach differently than they now teach. For example, the history learned at any level depends on the prior education of both student and teacher. And the decision about what history to teach must anticipate what is to be learned at higher levels. But this is not how American schools and universities work. Teachers and academicians habitually shape each course as an island entire to itself, as though what they teach, or do not teach, matters to nobody but themselves—as if others had no right to notice, and none to intervene. That must change.

Schoolteachers and university scholars will have to accept each other as equals, because aligning subject matter demands seamless, collaborative work from pre-school through Ph.D. They rarely do so now. Nor do elementary and high school teachers confer, or teachers in the same building. Apart from ego, insecurity, and worries over turf, collaboration takes time, which schools and universities rarely provide, and personal commitment, which they rarely reward. Moreover, to choose essentials and to design frameworks



and assessments, educators will have to debate priorities. What is truly most worth knowing? What must be left out? Academicians avoid such questions at all cost; witness their chaotic college curricula. University faculties will have to alter their major programs, giving up pet courses for others that better prepare the next generation of teachers and help those already teaching. They will have to battle colleagues into coherent general-education requirements for undergrads. To do all this, academicians will need to be broadly educated, and be differently rewarded by administrative and trustee policies.

States whose educators accept this degree of change will accomplish standards-based reform. Where change is rejected, they will fail. The hard fact is that anchoring school reform in academic learning—and putting teachers and scholars in charge—is foreign in all senses. It would redirect the mainstream of American education as the twentieth-century parade of much-hyped fashions never has. Life Adjustment, "greening," the open classroom, "back to basics," career education, "futures learning," global consciousness, "doing-a-value," critical and creative thinking, and "outcomes-based" education (are there other kinds?)—not one of these has ruffled the establishment or gotten beneath the surface to substantial subject matter, and so not one has improved the schools of most American children. Indeed, by leaving weary teachers awash in the debris from successive tides of obsession and indifference, they have made things worse.

OBSTACLES AND PROSPECTS

Of the obstacles reformers confront, the toughest may be our mad utilitarianism. Consider the three aims of schooling—preparing the worker, the citizen, and the cultivated individual. We put the worker ahead of the other two, as if they had no effect on the nation's economy or the quality of work done. Turning to citizenship, we bypass the substance of history, politics, letters, and ideas and peddle ready-made attitudes. Thus American educators have never had to think consistently about the moral, aesthetic, or intellectual content of public schooling for the masses—the gifts that academic subjects open for everyone.

Since academics have been for the few, it follows that our teacher corps is academically undereducated, ill prepared to offer challenging content to all its charges. Teachers are not to blame. Since so little is expected from most students, the university teachers of teachers—whether in content or pedagogy—see no reason to ask much of *them*. The time it will take to re-prepare teachers is itself an obstacle. There are no shortcuts to content-based reform, which makes it vulnerable to hawkers of new fashions from an education industry whose planned obsolescence leaves *haute couture* in the dust.

States will discover that the changes required by academic school reform will call down showers of objection. "Standards alone will not solve our problems"—as if anyone



thought they could. "Standards will oppress minorities and the poor"—as if the absence of standards does not leave educators free to offer unequal schooling and tax cutters free to slash school spending. "Standards will stifle innovation"—as though clear and equal standards were not the best friends of innovators. Parents have seen far too many passing fads that skew or empty the curriculum. Settled aims will make it easier to experiment with school structure, school size, and all the ways that schools have to be different from one another to meet different circumstances.

States will find friends in teachers and citizens who, not overspecialized, have no ideology to press, and who understand that the three purposes of education—for work, for citizenship, and for private life—are by their nature distinct, many-sided, requiring different, sometimes opposite, modes of teaching aimed at different, sometimes opposite, results. Schooling for work is a "conservative" function, demanding disciplined mastery of tasks from the world of work as it is, not as we wish it to be, and objective testing of student competence. Schooling for citizenship, in contrast, is a "radical" activity, egalitarian and skeptical in style, mixing the hard study of history and ideas with free-swinging exchange on public issues. The school nurtures both teamwork and thorny individualism, at once the readiness to serve and the readiness to resist, for nobody knows ahead of time which the good citizen may have to do. To educate the private person, the school must detach itself much of the time from the clamor of popular culture. It must be conservative in requiring students to confront the range of arts, letters, and right behavior conceived in the past, toward the liberal end that their choices be informed and thereby free.

People well know that to work at these three purposes, schools must serve both society and the individual, must be close to daily life at some moments and wholly insulated at others. They know that different things are learned best in different ways, from drill to brainstorming, and that schools have to be *both* disciplined and easygoing, hierarchical and egalitarian, at different times for different subjects at different levels—mixing pleasure and pain, each often following upon the other.

In sum, they can understand why TheodoreSizer is not indulging in paradox when he says that only "a loose system that has rigor" can correct what he describes in *Horace's School* (1992) as "the inattention of American culture to serious learning." We need, he says, "generous localism" applied with high and common academic expectations. For a century we have resisted this, treating the majority of our children as though they were learning-disabled. We say that knowledge is power, but we have kept knowledge from millions of children, adolescents, and even college students. Our chance to make this long-delayed turn to democratic education is now in the hands of the states and local schools.

Botched Standards

Which is more important for young people to study—Magna Carta or the Mongol empire? The latest answer may surprise you

THE world-history document issued by the National Center for History in the Schools, at UCLA, and funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities, is worth a close look as a cautionary tale for reformers who may assume that scholars see the role of standards more clearly than others do. Given its 314 pages, and the limited time schools allot to world history, it is not helpful even for picking and choosing, because it has no continuing questions to help readers focus on essentials, as better textbooks do. To avoid the battles among specialists that selection would have set off, its authors, careful to offend no vocal constituency, acted on the dubious principle that all societies and all eras back to prehistory deserve equal space in the education of young Americans. By so doing they buried essentials under mounds of undifferentiated matter, much of it academic exotica and antiquarianism.

The document's failure is surprising, because its opening pages are eloquent on why citizens must study history. No reason, it argues, is "more important to a democratic society than this: *Knowledge of history is the precondition of political intelligence.*" It adds, "Without history, a society shares no common memory of where it has been, what its core values are, or what decisions of the past account for present circumstances." Also in italics is Etienne Gilson's remark "*History is the only laboratory we have in which to test the consequences of thought.*" But between the promise and the execution we find a chasm. The volume is weakest on thought and the consequences of ideas, on core values and common memories, not only the West's but any civilization's. It is thin on political turning points and institutions, and thereby on the drama of human choice and its effects. For all its length and pretentious demands, it scants the artistic, literary, and philosophical legacies of world cultures, and it shortchanges the past 250 years, which saw so many of the decisions that "account for present circumstances."

Its treatment of world history has thirty-nine main standards, 108 subheads, and 526 sub-subheads, all of them called standards. None of the main standards or subheads is devoted to ideas, whether philosophical, religious, ethical, or moral, social, economic, or political. One must descend to the 526 sub-subheads, or to fragments of them. Neither the

Judaic nor the Christian principles that are the sources of Western values, morals, and views of justice and of ideas of the individual's dignity and responsibility—even for unreligious or anti-religious thinkers—are given more than one half of a sub-subhead, less than a thousandth of the document's substance. The ideas of Islam and of Protestant reformers fare no better. However, the topic "mastery of horse-riding on the steppes" gets twice that space, the Scythians and the Xiongnu fill two full sub-subheads, and the Olmecs get a main standard all to themselves.

On the secular side, there is nothing of medieval thought about just rules of law, war, economic life, or social responsibility. Later we find nothing of Renaissance or Reformation theory concerning society, economics, or politics. Enlightenment thought and its impact on Church and State are relegated to a single sub-subhead. French revolutionary ideas "on social equality, democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, and nationalism" get one sub-subhead out of ninety-four for the years 1750–1914. For the twentieth century a single sub-subhead asks students to explain the "leading ideas of liberalism, social reformism, conservatism, and socialism as competing ideologies in 20th century Europe." Leninist and Fascist-Nazi ideologies are each assigned half of a sub-subhead, so that only two sub-subheads must do for the political ideas and ideology of the entire twentieth-century world.

In squeezing European civilization, the document is also meager on the political history that makes sophisticated citizens. There is nothing on the failure of Athenian democracy to overcome the forces of pride and demagoguery. The vast questions about Rome's decline that so preoccupied the American Founders are compressed into part of a subhead, less than half the space given the Gupta empire in India. As to politics in the years 1000–1500, a single sub-subhead is

devoted to "analyzing how European monarchies expanded their power at the expense of feudal lords and assessing the growth and limitations of representative institutions in these monarchies." So, buried and unnamed in half of that sub-subhead are Magna Carta and the Model Parliament, along with the prime political lesson that true constitutions require a balance of power in society. In the same era entire standards take up the Mongol empire and sub-Saharan Africa.

The seventeenth-century English Revolution gets a single sub-subhead (out of eighty-four for the era 1450–1770)—no more than "evaluating the interplay of indigenous Indian, Persian, and European influences in Mughal artistic, architectural, literary, and scientific achievements." The authors find nothing special about English constitutional history that American citizens should know, in keeping with today's fashion of decrying "Whig history," as though the worldwide struggle for political freedom, and all of its sacrifice, setbacks, and advances, were only a myth to hoodwink the innocent young. All but absent, too, is the history of labor. In the section covering the twentieth century there is no mention of trade unions, their battles and importance to democracy and social justice, and why totalitarians make them their first victims. Even the vast twentieth-century struggle of liberal democracies to overcome Nazism and Soviet communism fades into pale generalities.

Some of the weaknesses in the world-history document are but the reverse side of American virtues: hopefulness and generosity; our eagerness to embrace diversity, to be self-critical, to shun "ethnocentrism." In what other country do people cringe at that word and are students required to study other cultures but not their own? The standards also reflect our impatience with politics, our reluctance to admit that only politics can turn aspirations into reality, and our impa-



tience with the gloomier views of human nature that accept the presence of evil in the world, and the tragedy and imperfection of the human condition.

The fact remains, however, that in deference to current styles in the history profession, the authors played down the Western sources of their own American consciences, and failed to do the work of selecting what would best serve the education of American students, or of society at large. Fortunately, their introduction makes clear why state and local teacher-scholar teams must do better. Nothing less is at stake than our political competence as a people.

Taking the solidity of democratic institutions for granted, educators have worried too little about the hard things they require citizens to understand. Now, in the mid-1990s, we have reasons to pay more attention. For one thing, it takes a perverse effort of will to deny that the effects of technology

NIGHT TERRORS

Whose voice is it in mine when the child cries,
terrified in sleep, and half asleep myself I'm there
beside him saying, shh, now easy, shh,

whose voice?—too intimate with all the ways
of solace to be merely mine; so prodigal
in desiring to give, yet so exact in giving

that even before I reach the little bed,
before I touch him, as I do anyway,
already he is breathing quietly again.

Is it my mother's voice in mine, the memory
no memory at all but just the vocal trace,
sheer bodily sensation on the lips and tongue.

of what I may have heard once in the pre-
remembering of infancy, heard once and then
forgot entirely till it was wakened by the cry:

brought back, as if from exile, by the child's cry—
here to the father's voice, where the son again
can ask the mother, and the mother, too, the son:

why has it taken you so long to come?

—ALAN SHAPIRO

and economics, demography and nature, make our problems and the world's more complicated than ever. Or to deny that nostrums peddled by the loudest voices in politics and talk TV and radio are more simplistic than ever. Or that blaming "government" for every ill and anxiety—while not yet so virulent as under the Weimar Republic—betrays a flaming ignorance of history and human nature.

WHAT HISTORY TEACHES

WITH respect to world history, what should Americans know and teach? What is the main story? It is not the parade of military, technological, and economic "interactions," or the endless comparisons among often incomparable centers of great power, that global studies dwell upon—although these must, of course, be taken into account. The big story is not the push to modernize but the struggle to civilize, to curb the bestial side of human nature. What students can grasp very well is that this is a common struggle, in which all peoples and races are equal—equal in our natures, equal in the historical guilt of forebears who pursued war, slavery, and oppression. Black Africans, Anglo-Americans, Europeans, Native Americans, North African and Middle Eastern peoples, Mongols, Chinese, and Japanese—all have pursued these things when they have had the power to, afflicting one another and weaker neighbors.

For our time, the first lesson to be learned from world history, the most compelling story, is the age-old struggle of people within each culture to limit aggression and greed, to nourish the better side of human nature, to apply morality and law, to keep the peace and render justice. Students can see the glory and agony of this struggle, and how often it has been lost. Because human evil exists, good intent has never been enough. It has taken brains, courage, self-sacrifice, patience, love, and—always with tragic consequences—war itself to contain the beast. Against the twin temptations of wishfulness and cynicism, history says that evil and tragedy are real, that civilization has a high price but that it, too, is real, and has been won from time to time. In history we find the ideas, the conditions, and the famous and ordinary men and women making it possible.

All peoples have taken part in the struggle to civilize. An honest look at the past reveals a common human mixture of altruism, malevolence, and indifference, and reasons for all of us to feel both pride and shame. Starting from any other point of view is historically false, and blind to human nature. Historians—and standard setters—have a special obligation to be candid. But many popular textbooks are unflinchingly pious about other cultures and ultra-critical of our own, preaching a new-style ignorance in reaction against, but just as pernicious as, our older textbook pieties about ourselves and disdain for others. Both are pernicious because both sap the will to civilize. People who are taught to feel specially

guilty, or specially victimized, or naturally superior, will not reach out to others as equals; they will not pay the costs in toil, tears, and taxes always imposed by that struggle.

This is not a "conservative" or "liberal" issue but one of trusting children, adolescents, and adults to work with historical truth, however inconvenient or impolite it may seem. History reinforces the rough notion of equality that we learn on the playground and in the street: there are like proportions of admirable and avoidable people in every imaginable human grouping—by age, class, race, sex, religion, or cultural taste. Individuals are not equal in talent or virtue, and certainly not equally deserving of respect. To teach otherwise is to invite ridicule and resentment. Instead what must repeatedly be taught, because it is not quickly learned—but is quickly forgotten in hard times—is that in civilized society it is every person's *rights* that are equally deserving of respect: rights to free expression, equal protection under law, fair judgment, rigorous education, honest work and pay, an equal chance to pursue the good.

This hard truth we accept, and remember, only with the help of historical insight, which is indispensable in forging a democratic conscience—that inner feeling that we ought to do the right thing even if only out of prudence. For we see again and again that societies failing to accord a good measure of liberty, equality, and justice have hastened their own decay, particularly over the past two centuries, since the American and French revolutions told the world that these three were the proper aims of human life and politics, and that it was right and possible to bring them to reality—by force if necessary.

Student-citizens need to be acutely sensitive to the central political drama of world history since the 1770s—what Sigmund Neumann called the "triple revolution" aimed at national unity and independence, at political democracy and civil rights, and at economic and social justice. This, too, is not a liberal or conservative matter. Whether we approve or deplore these ends, or the means to them, does not lessen their force or our need to deal with them, at home and abroad. Modern history tells us that whenever any one of them is frustrated for long, masses of people will sink to envy, self-pity, fury, and a search for scapegoats, *führers*, and quick, violent solutions.

Good history is not always fun to learn, any more than is chemistry or mathematics, and we should not pretend that it is. The job of citizen is no easier to prepare for than that of doctor or bridge builder. Nor is good history always popular. It denies us the comforts of optimism or pessimism. It gives the lie to nostalgia, whether for left-wing or right-wing or feel-good politics. Its lessons offer no cure for today's problems, only warnings we are silly to ignore. As they select the essentials of U.S. and world history, state and local standard setters and curriculum makers can look for the particulars that teach such lessons best—memorable events, ideas, and people whose stories need telling, but always in the context of longer narrative history.

For example, an American-history standard should require

the ability not only to recall points in the Constitution and Bill of Rights but also to understand the ideas and events behind them, back to Greek and Roman thought and institutions, to Judeo-Christian views of human nature and responsibility, to Magna Carta and the English Revolution, to Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu, Burke, Paine, the Federalists and the anti-Federalists. These essentials are not grasped by playacting a few quarrels from hot Philadelphia afternoons of 1787—though playacting can make a good start if the script is based on original sources.

Moreover, the lesson of the Constitution is not nearly complete without learning the harrowing consequences of a cheap answer to labor shortages that American planters were sure they had found in the early 1600s—slaves from Africa. A tortured Constitution, belying the Declaration's promise, was only one, early payment. The Civil War followed, and even 620,000 dead did not purchase the free and equal Union for which Lincoln prayed in his Second Inaugural. New chains of bondage were forged, and another century of repression and humiliation followed, before the civil-rights movement of the 1960s restarted a process of liberation whose grinding slowness continues to divide and embitter us.

Likewise, a world-history standard on the Second World War teaches little unless that war is seen as a consequence of the outbreak of the First World War and of the murderous incompetence with which it was fought, of the Bolshevik Revolution, of world depression, of the furies and civic ineptitude that destroyed the Weimar Republic, of Hitler's rise on the shoulders of private armies, and of the liberal democracies' wishful rejection of the costs of collective security, from the Paris Conference of 1919 through the Spanish Civil War to the Nazi occupation of Prague in 1939. Nor can it teach nearly enough without examining the Holocaust, the ultimate horror, itself a consequence of all these things and more since the Middle Ages.

The fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War brought back the war's satanic nature, from Rotterdam to Dresden, Nanking and Bataan to Hiroshima. The debates over guilt revealed widespread avoidance of history's warnings. Some seemed to doubt that evil exists and has to be dealt with, even by making war. Others seemed to deny that any war, launched for whatever cause, will carry frightful human consequences, will be as hellish as weapons permit. And 1945 was not the end. The Cold War followed from the effects of both world wars. Draining lives and resources, fouling our politics, skewing economic life, it divided us against one another, from the Red scares of the 1940s and 1950s through the bloody Korean and Vietnam wars. Its legacy clouds our view of a changing world and its needs, not least our own need to distinguish between force that is necessary and force that is not. All these afflictions are consequences of human choices back to 1914 and earlier, many of them in pursuit of cheap, quick answers in defiance of history's lessons and the imperatives of civilized life. ☉

Economic Trends

BY GENE KORETZ

CONGRESS' NEW TEMPTATION

What to do with a budget windfall

It's remarkable what a robust economy, a roaring stock market, and a little time can do for a government's fiscal woes. At the start of the year Congress was looking down the barrel of a projected \$124 billion federal deficit in fiscal 1997 and focusing on measures to bal-



ance the budget by 2002. By the time the fiscal year ended in October, the current budget deficit had melted away to a trivial \$23 billion, and legislators were considering ways to spend an unexpectedly strong inflow of revenues.

"With next year a Congressional election, it would be an act of extraordinary discipline if Congress resisted the temptation to curry favor with voters via new tax cuts or spending programs," says economist Mitchell Held of Smith Barney Inc.

Among the ideas already being floated are eliminating the income-tax marriage penalty, shortening the holding period for capital gains, and boosting educational outlays. The urge to splurge will be even greater if, as Smith Barney is projecting, fiscal 1998 produces an actual surplus approaching \$20 billion—a possibility enhanced by the hefty capital-gains tax revenues generated by Wall Street's recent turmoil.

The temptation extends beyond Washington. Revenues of state and local governments have been growing so fast that surplus cash is piling up even though many have been cutting taxes. The upshot is that the total government budgetary position—reflecting all levels of government—is running its largest surplus as a percent of gross domestic product in nearly 20 years.

All of this bodes well for the bond market over the next few months, says economist L. Douglas Lee of HSBC Washington Analysis, because the government as a whole will be adding to the economy's aggregate savings. A year from now, however, governments will be operating in fiscal 1999 and implementing budgetary decisions made by legislators in the first half of next year. "The chief risk," says economist Mark Zandi of Regional Financial Associates Inc. in West Chester, Pa., "is that federal and state governments will assume that the revenue surge is permanent and will be too aggressive in cutting taxes and raising spending."

If that happens, a stock market slump or a recession, which isn't envisioned in the recent budget agreement, would make a balanced budget virtually unattainable for the foreseeable future. And it would become even more difficult to solve the massive fiscal problems that will confront the nation when the baby boomers start to retire after the turn of the century.

Meanwhile, Smith Barney's Held warns that excessive legislative generosity could actually threaten the expansion itself. "The longer the economy stays close to full employment," he says, "the greater the chances that the stimulative effects of another round of tax cuts would impel the Fed to step down hard on the monetary brakes."

SPREADING TAX RELIEF AROUND

So far, state cuts favor the rich

As states with bulging coffers consider new tax cuts to dole out surplus revenues, they might consider the effects on different income groups. According to a new study from the liberal Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, state tax systems in the U.S. have become increasingly regressive in the 1990s—taking a larger proportion of income from low- and middle-income taxpayers than from higher-income groups.

In the early 1990s, reports the research group, states faced with recession-induced revenue shortfalls boosted income taxes, which fall most heavily on high-income households, by some \$8.2 billion. At the same time, they raised sales and excise taxes, which hit low- and moderate-income groups the hardest, by \$11.7 billion.

More recently, however, cash-rich states have been easing tax burdens.

The problem is that almost all of the relief has gone to higher-income groups. In the past four years, the states have cut personal income taxes by \$9.8 billion, often by trimming only the top rates. But they have cut sales and excise taxes by a mere \$200 million. Indeed, the number of states with a general sales tax rate of 6% or higher has grown from 10 in 1989 to 17 today.

In light of the heavy impact of sales and excise taxes on the working poor—and the implicit goal of recent welfare reform to increase work incentives—the study's authors think states might do well to direct more of future tax relief to lower-income groups.

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A TEACHER CRUNCH AHEAD?

High school rolls are rising sharply

Public school systems, already experiencing fiscal problems in many areas, will face huge new strains in the coming decade. According to an Education Dept. report, enrollments in U.S. high schools, which added 1.1 million students over the past decade, will climb by another 1.9 million, or 13%, between 1997 and 2007. (The number of grade school students will rise only slightly.) The pickup in high schools will require more than 150,000 additional teachers.

The enrollment surge will be most dramatic in California, where the ranks of high school students are expected to jump by some 35%. But several other states—including North Carolina, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island—will also experience increases of more than 20%.

Finding qualified high school teachers won't be easy.

Economist Russell Devlin of DRI/McGraw-Hill notes that many school districts have been offering attractive early-retirement packages to older staff members in order to replace them with younger teachers at lower salaries. As time passes and hiring problems intensify, he predicts that "many will rue the day they eased experienced educators out of their schools."



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ERIC HOFFMAN/VIEW

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Education Summit in Palisades, New York

March 27, 1996

Thank you very much, Governor Miller, Governor Thompson; Lou Gerstner. Thank you for hosting this terribly important event. To all of the Governors and distinguished guests, education leaders, and business leaders who are here, let me say that I am also delighted to be here with the Secretary of Education, Governor Dick Riley. I believe that he and Governor Hunt and Governor Branstad and I were actually there when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued, as well as when the education summit was held by President Bush. I want to thank Secretary Riley for the work that he has done with the States and with educators all across the country. And I know that every one of you has worked with him, but I'm glad to have him here, and he's been a wonderful partner for me and I think for you.

This is an extraordinary meeting of America's business leaders and America's Governors. I know some have raised some questions about it, but let me just say on the front end I think it is a very appropriate and a good thing to do, and I applaud those who organized it and those who have attended.

The Governors, after all, have primary, indeed constitutional responsibility for the conditions of our public schools. And the business leaders know well, perhaps better than any other single group in America, what the consequences of our failing to get the most out of our students and achieve real educational excellence will be for our Nation.

So I am very pleased to see you here doing this, and I want to thank each and every one

of you. I also think you have a better chance than perhaps anyone else, even in this season, to keep the question of education beyond partisanship and to deal with it as an American challenge that all the American people must meet and must meet together.

All of you know very well that this is a time of a dramatic transformation in the United States. I'm not sure if any of us fully understands the true implications of the changes through which we are all living and the responsibilities that those changes impose upon us. It is clear to most people that the dimensions of economic change now are the greatest that they have been since we moved from farm to factory and from rural areas to cities and towns 100 years ago.

In his book "The Road From Here" Bill Gates says that the digital chip is leading us to the greatest transformation in communications in 500 years, since Gutenberg printed the first Bible in Europe. If that is true, it is obvious beyond anyone's ability to argue that the educational enterprise, which has always been central to the development of good citizens in America as well as to a strong economy, is now more important than ever before.

That means that we need a candid assessment of what is right and what is wrong with our educational system and what we need to do. Your focus on standards, your focus on assessment, your focus on technology is all to the good. We know that many of our schools do a very good job, but some of them don't. We know that many of our teachers are great, but some don't measure up. We know many of our communities are seizing the opportunities of the present and the future, but too many aren't.

And most important, we know that—after the emphasis on education which goes back at least until 1983 in the whole country and to my native region, to the South, to the late seventies when we began to try to catch up economically with the rest of the country—we know that while the schools and the students of this country are doing better than they were in 1984 and better than they were in 1983, when the "Nation At Risk" was issued and in 1989 when the education summit was held at Charlottesville, most of them still are not meeting the standards that are nec-

essary and adequate to the challenges of today. So that is really what we have to begin with.

Now America has some interesting challenges that I think are somewhat unique to our country in this global environment in which education is important, and we might as well just sort of put them out there on the front end, not that we can resolve them today.

The first is that we have a far more diverse group of students in terms of income and race and ethnicity and background and indeed living conditions than almost any other great country in the world.

Second, we have a system in which both authority and financing is more fractured than in other countries is typically the case.

Third, we know that our schools are burdened by social problems not of their making, which make the jobs of principals and teachers more difficult.

And fourth, and I think most important of all, our country still has an attitude problem about education that I think we should resolve, that is even prior to the standards and the assessment issue, and that is that too many people in the United States think that the primary determinant of success and learning is either IQ or family circumstances instead of effort. And I don't. And I don't think any of the research supports that.

So one of the things that I hope you will say is, in a positive way, that you believe all kids can learn and in a stronger way that you believe that effort is more important than IQ or income, given the right kind of educational opportunities, the right kind of expectations. It's often been said that Americans from time to time suffer from a revolution of rising expectations. This is one area where we need a revolution of rising expectations. We ought to all simply and forthrightly say that we believe that school is children's work and play, that it can be great joy, but that effort matters.

I see one of our business leaders here, this former State senator from Arkansas, Senator Joe Ford, whose father was the head of our educational program in Arkansas for a long time. We had a lot of people in one-room schoolhouses 40 and 50 and 60 years ago, reading simple readers, who believed that ef-

fort was more important than IQ or income. They didn't know what IQ was. And we have got to change that. And Governors, every Governor and every business leader in this country can make a difference.

I'm no Einstein, and not everybody can do everything, but if you stack this up from one to the other, all the Americans together in order by IQ, you couldn't stick a straw between one person and the next. And you know it as well as I do. Most people can learn everything they need to know to be good citizens and successful participants in the American economy and in the global economy. And I believe that unless you can convince your constituents that that is the truth, that all of your efforts to raise standards and all of your efforts to have accountability through tests and other assessments will not be as successful as they ought to be. And I think frankly, a lot of people, even in education, need to be reminded of that from time to time.

Now let's get back to the good news. Thirty or 40 years ago, maybe even 20 years ago, no one could ever have conceived of a meeting like this taking place. Governors played little role in education until just a couple of decades ago, and business didn't regard it as their responsibility. In the late seventies and the early eighties this whole wave began to sweep America. And one important, positive thing that ought never to be overlooked is that the business leadership of America and the Governors of this country have been literally obsessed with education for a long time now. And that's a very good thing, because one of the problems with America is that we tend to be in the grip of serial enthusiasms. It's the hula hoop today and something else tomorrow. Boy, that dates me, doesn't it? [Laughter]

In this country the Governors have displayed a remarkable consistency of commitment to education, and at least since 1983, the business community has displayed that commitment. And I think it's fair to say that all of us have learned some things as we have gone along, which is what has brought you to this point, that there is a—you understand now, and I've heard Lou Gerstner talk about it in his, almost his mantra about standards—that we understand that the next big step has to be to have some meaningful and appro-

priately high standards and then hold people accountable for them.

I think it's worth noting that the 1983 "Nation At Risk" report did do some good things. Almost every State in the country went back and revised its curriculum requirement. Many revised their class size requirements. Many did other things to upgrade teacher training or to increase college scholarships or to do a lot of other things.

In 1989 I was privileged to be in Charlottesville working with Governor Branstad and with Governor Campbell, primarily, as we were trying to get all the Governors together to develop the statement at the education summit with President Bush. And that was the first time there had ever been a bipartisan national consensus on educational goals.

The realization was in 1989 was that 6 years after a "Nation At Risk," all these extra requirements were being put into education, but nobody had focused on what the end game was. What did we want America to look like? It's worth saying that we wanted every child to show up for school ready to learn, that we wanted to be proficient in certain core courses and were willing to assess our students to see if we were, that we wanted to prepare our people for the world of work, that we wanted to be extra good in math and science and to overcome our past deficiencies. All the things that were in those educational goals were worth saying.

Another thing that the Charlottesville summit did that I think is really worth emphasizing is that it defined for the first time, from the Governors up, what the Federal role in education ought to be and what it should not be. I went back this morning, just on the way up, and I read the Charlottesville statement about what the Governors then unanimously voted that the Federal role should be and what it should not be.

When I became President and I asked Dick Riley to become Secretary of Education, I said that our legislative agenda ought to be consistent, completely consistent with what the Governors had said at Charlottesville. So, for example, the Governors said at Charlottesville, the Federal Government has a bigger responsibility to help people show up for school prepared to learn.

So we emphasized things like more funds for Head Start and more investment in trying to improve the immunization rates of kids and other health indicators; and more responsibility for access to higher education, so we tried to reform the student loan program and invest more money in Pell grants and national service and things like that; and then, more responsibility to give greater flexibility to the States in K through 12 and to try to promote reform without defining how any of this should be done.

And so that's what Goals 2000 was about. We tried to have a system in which States and mostly local school districts could pursue world-class standards based on their own plans for grassroots reform. And we overhauled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as we redid title I to do one thing that I think is very important: We took out of what was then in the law for Chapter 1, which was lower educational expectations for poor children. It was an outrage, and we took it out of the law. I don't believe that poor children should be expected to perform at lower levels than other children.

And Dick Riley, since he has been Secretary of Education, has cut Federal regulations over States and local school districts by more than 50 percent. It seems to me that that is consistent with exactly what the Governors said at Charlottesville they wanted done.

Now the effort to have national standards, I think it's fair to say, has been less than successful. The history standards and the English standards effort did not succeed for reasons that have been well analyzed, although I'm not sure the debate was entirely worthless; I think the debate itself did some good.

But there are recommended standards that have been widely embraced, coming out of the math teachers, that most people think are quite good, and the preliminary indications for science are encouraging. And I want to say again, it would be wrong to say that there's been no progress since 1983. The number of young people taking core courses has jumped from 13 percent in '82 to 52 percent in '94. The national math and science scores are up a grade since 1983, half of all the 4-year-olds now attend preschool, 86 percent of all our young people are completing

high school. We're almost up to the 90 percent that was in the national education goals. That is progress.

But what we have learned since Charlottesville and what you are here to hammer home to America is that the overall levels of learning are not enough and that there are still significant barriers in various schools to meeting higher standards.

I accept your premise; we can only do better with tougher standards and better assessment, and you should set the standards. I believe that is absolutely right. And that will be the lasting legacy of this conference. I also believe, along with Mr. Gerstner and the others who are here, that it's very important not only for businesses to speak out for reform but for business leaders to be knowledgeable enough to know what reform to speak out for and what to emphasize and how to hammer home the case for higher standards, as well as how to help local school districts change some of the things that they are now doing so that they have a reasonable chance at meeting these standards.

Let me just go through now what I think we should do in challenging the country on standards for students, as well as for teachers and schools. I suppose that I have spent more time in classrooms than any previous President, partly because I was a Governor for 12 years and partly because I still do it with some frequency. I believe the most important thing you can do is to have high expectations for students—to make them believe they can learn, to tell them they're going to have to learn really difficult, challenging things, to assess whether they're learning or not, and to hold them accountable as well as to reward them.

Most children are very eager to learn. Those that aren't have probably been convinced they can't. We can do better with that. I believe that once you have high standards and high expectations, there is an unlimited number of things that can be done. But I also believe that there have to be consequences. I watched your panel last night, and I thought—the moment of levity on the panel was when Al Shanker was asked, when I was teaching school and I would give students homework, they said, "Does it count?" That's the thing I remember about the panel

last night. All of you remember, too. You laughed, right? [Laughter] "Does it count?" And the truth is that in the world we're living in today, "does it count" has to mean something, particularly in places where there haven't been any standards for a long time.

So if the States are going to go back and raise standards so that you're not only trying to increase the enrollment in core courses, you're trying to make the core courses themselves mean more. I heard Governor Hunt last night say he'd be willing to settle for reading and writing and math and science, I think were the ones you said.

Once you have to—if you're going to go back and define what's in those core courses and you're going to lift it up, you have to be willing, then, to hold the students accountable for whether they have achieved that or not. And again, another thing that Mr. Shanker said that I've always believed, we have always downgraded teaching to the test, but if you're going to know whether people learn what you expect them to know, then you have to test them on what you expect them to know.

So I believe that if you want the standards movement to work, first you have to do the hard work in deciding what it is you expect children to learn. But then you have to have an assessment system, however you design it, in your own best judgment at the State level, that says: no more social promotions, no more free passes. If you want people to learn, learning has to mean something. That's what I believe. I don't believe you can succeed unless you are prepared to have an assessment system with consequences.

In Arkansas in 1983 when we redid the educational standards, we had a very controversial requirement that young people pass the 8th grade tests to go on to high school. And not everybody passed it. And we let people take it more than once. I think it's fine to do that.

But even today, after 13 years, I think there are only five States in the country today which require a promotion for either grade to grade or school to school for its young people, to require tests for that. I believe that if you have meaningful standards that you have confidence in, that you believe if they're met your children will know what they need

to know, you shouldn't be afraid to find out if they're learning it, and you shouldn't be deterred by people saying this is cruel, this is unfair, or whatever they say.

The worst thing you can do is send people all the way through school with a diploma they can't read. And you're not being unfair to people if you give them more than one chance and if at the same time you improve the teaching and the operation of the schools in which they are. If you believe these kids can learn, you have to give them a chance to demonstrate it. This is only a cruel, short-sighted thing to do if you are convinced that there are limitations on what the American children can do. And I just don't believe that.

So that, I think, is the most important thing. I believe every State, if you're going to have meaningful standards, must require a test for children to move, let's say, from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school or to have a full-meaning high school diploma. And I don't think they should measure just minimum competency. You should measure what you expect these standards to measure.

You know, when we instituted any kind of test at home, I was always criticized by the fact that the test wasn't hard enough. But I think it takes time to transform a system, and you may decide it takes time to transform a system. But you will never know whether your standards are being met unless you have some sort of measurement and have some sort of accountability. And while I believe they should be set by the States and the testing mechanism should be approved by the States, we shouldn't kid ourselves. Being promoted ought to mean more or less the same thing in Pasadena, California, that it does in Palisades, New York. In a global society, it ought to mean more or less the same thing.

I was always offended by the suggestion that the kids who grew up in the Mississippi Delta in Arkansas, which is the poorest place in America, shouldn't have access to the same learning opportunities that other people should and couldn't learn. I don't believe that.

So I think the idea—I heard the way Governor Engler characterized it last night, I thought was pretty good. You want a non-Federal, national mechanism to sort of share

this information so that you'll at least know how you're doing compared to one another. That's a good start. That's a good way to begin this. I also believe that we shouldn't ignore the progress that's been made by the goals panel, since Governor Romer was first leader of that going through Governor Engler, and by the National Assessment on Educational Progress. I know a lot of you talked about that last night. They've done a lot of good things, and we can learn a lot from them. We don't have to reinvent the wheel here.'

I also would like to go back and emphasize something I heard Governor Hunt say last night. I think we should begin with a concrete standard for reading and writing because the most troubling thing to me is that we've been through a decade in which math and science scores have risen and reading scores have stayed flat. Intel recently had to turn away hundreds of applicants because they lacked basic reading and writing skills.

Now that will present you with an immediate problem because if you want to measure reading and writing, you will not be able just to have a multiple choice test which can be graded by a machine. You'll have to recognize that teachers do real work with kids when they teach them how to write, and you have to give them the time and support to do that. And then there has to be some way of evaluating that. I know that's harder and more expensive, but it really matters whether a child can read and write.

And for all the excitement about the computers in the schools—and I am a big proponent of it—I would note that when we started with a computer program in our school, and I believe when Governor Caperton started in West Virginia, he started in the early grades for the precise purpose that technology should be used first to give children the proper grounding in basic skills. So I think that's quite important.

Secretary Riley says that every child should be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. And parenthetically, that if that were the standard, I think we would be more successful in getting parents to read to their children every night, which would revolutionize the whole system of education anyway.

The second thing I think we have to do is to face the fact that if we want to have these standards for children, standards and tests, we have to have a system that rewards and inspires and demands higher standards of teachers. They, after all, do this work. The rest of us talk about it, and they do it.

So that means that first of all, you've got to get the most talented people in there. There's been a lot of talk about this for a decade now, but most States and school districts still need work on their certification rules. We should not bar qualified, even brilliant young people from becoming teachers. The Teach For America group in my home State did a wonderful job, and a lot of those young kids wind up staying and teaching, even though they can make 2 and 3 times as much money doing something else. Every State should, in my view, review that.

I also believe any time you're trying to hold teachers to higher standards they should be rewarded when they perform. I know that in South Carolina and Kentucky, if schools markedly improve their performance, they get bonuses and the teachers get the benefit. That's not a bad thing; that's a good thing, and we should have more of that.

I want to thank Governor Hunt for the work he's done on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We had the first group of teachers who are board certified in the White House not very long ago. Every State should have a system, in my opinion, for encouraging these teachers to become board certified. The Federal Government doesn't have anything to do with that. Encourage these teachers to become board certified because they have to demonstrate not only knowledge but teaching skills. And when they achieve that level they should be rewarded. There should be extra rewards when they do that.

We also need a system that doesn't look the other way if a teacher is burned out or not performing up to standard. There ought to be a fair process for removing teachers who aren't competent, but the process also has to be much faster and far less costly than it is. I read the other day that in New York it can cost as much as \$200,000 to dismiss a teacher who is incompetent. In Glen Ellyn, Illinois, a school district spent \$70,000 to dis-

miss a high school math teacher who couldn't do basic algebra and let the students sleep in class. That is wrong. We should do more to reward good teachers; we should have a system that is fair to teachers but moves much more expeditiously and much more cheaply in holding teachers accountable.

So States, and school systems and teachers unions need to be working together to make it tougher to get licensed and recertified, easier and less costly to get teachers who can't teach out of the classrooms, and clearly set rewards for teachers who are performing, especially if they become board certified or in some State-defined way prove themselves excellent.

The third thing I think we have to do is to hold schools accountable for results. We have known now for a long time—we have no excuses for not doing—we have known for a long time that the most important player in this drama besides the teachers and the students are the school principals, the building principals. And yet, still, not every State has a system for holding the school districts accountable for having good principals in all these schools and then giving the principals the authority they need to do the job, getting out of their way and holding them accountable, both on the up side and the down side. To me, that is still the most important thing. Every school I go into, I can stay there about 30 minutes and tell you pretty much what the principal has done to establish a school culture, an atmosphere of learning, a system of accountability, a spirit of adventure. You can just feel it, and it's still the most important thing.

Secondly, the business community can do a lot of work with the Governors to help these school districts reinvent their budgets, I think. There are still too many school districts spending way too much money on administration and too little money on education and instruction. And there needs to be some real effort put into that, that goes beyond rhetoric. I mean, I was given these statistics, which I assume are true because I had it vetted four different times—I hate to use numbers that I haven't—if it is true that New York City spends \$8,000 a student on education, but only \$44 goes to books and other classroom materials, that's a disgrace.

That's wrong. And that's true in a lot of other school districts.

We cannot ask the American people to spend more on education until we do a better job with the money we've got now. That's an area where I think the business community can make a major, major contribution. A lot of you have had to restructure your own operations; a lot of you have had to achieve far higher levels of productivity. If we can reduce the Federal Government by 200,000 people without undermining our essential mission, we can do a much better job in the school districts of the country.

Let me also say I think that we ought to encourage every State to do what most States are now doing, which is to provide more options for parents. You know, the terms of the public school choice legislation and the charter schools—a lot of you have done a very good job with the charter schools. But I'm excited about the idea that educators and parents get to actually start schools, create and manage them, and stay open only if they do a good job within the public school system. Every charter school I visited was an exciting place. Today, 21 of you allow charter schools. There are over 250 schools which are open; 100 more are going to open next year. Freed up from regulation and top-down bureaucracy, focusing on meeting higher standards; the schools have to be able to meet these standards if you impose them.

Secretary Riley has helped 11 States to start new schools, and in the balanced budget plan I submitted to Congress last week, there is \$40 million in seed money to help start 3,000 more charter schools over the next 5 years, which would be a tenfold increase. That may become the order of the day. So I believe we need standards and accountability for students, for teachers, and for schools.

Let me just mention two other things briefly. I don't believe you can possibly minimize—and a lot of the Governors I know have been in these schools—you cannot minimize how irrelevant this discussion would seem to a teacher who doesn't feel safe walking the halls of his or her school or how utterly hopeless it seems to students who have to look over their shoulders when they're walking to and from school. So I believe that we have to work together to continue to

make our schools safe and our students held to a reasonable standard of conduct, as well.

You know, we had a teacher in Washington last week who was mugged in a hallway by a gang of intruders, not students, a gang of intruders who were doing drugs and didn't even belong on the school grounds. We have got to keep working on that. All the Federal Government can do is give resources and pass laws. That's another thing the business community can help with, district after district. This entire discussion we have had is completely academic unless there is a safe and a disciplined and a drug-free environment in these schools.

We passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, the Gun-Free Schools Act. We supported random drug testing in schools. We have supported the character education movement. We've almost ended lawsuits over religious issues by the guidelines that Secretary Riley and the Attorney General issued, showing that our schools don't have to be religion-free zones. We have worked very hard to help our schools do their job here.

The next thing I hope we can do, all of us, in this regard is to work to help our schools stay open longer. Our budget contains \$14 million for helping people set up these community schools to stay open longer hours. But remember that 3 in the afternoon to 6 in the evening are the peak hours for juvenile crime, and all that comes back into the schools. So I think that's another thing we really need to look at. A lot of these schools do not have the resources today to stay open longer hours, but they would if they could.

And one of the primary targets I would have if I were a local leader trying to redo my district school budget is to reduce the amount spent on administration so that I could invest more money in keeping it open longer hours, especially for the latch-key kids and the other kids that are in trouble that don't have any other place to go. So that's something that I think is very important.

Finally, let me just echo what Governor Miller said about the technology. We did have a barnraising in California, and we hooked up actually more than 20 percent of the classrooms to the Internet on a single day. But we need every classroom and every

library in every school in America hooked up to the Internet as quickly as possible. We set a goal as the year 2000; we could actually get there more quickly. I propose that in the budget, a \$2 billion fund to help the communities who don't have the money to meet the challenge, but every community, every State in America, at least, has a high-tech community that could help get this done.

The Congress passed a very fine Telecommunications Act that I signed not very long ago which gives preferential treatment to people in isolated rural areas or inner-city areas for access to schools and hospitals. So the infrastructure, the framework is there.

Anything you can do to help do that, I think is good if the educators use the technology in the proper way. And I'll just close with this example. I was in the Union City School District in New Jersey not very long ago. That school district was about to be closed under the State of New Jersey's school bankruptcy law, which I think, by the way, is very good, holding school districts accountable, and they can actually lose their ability to operate as an independent district in New Jersey and the State takes them over if they keep failing.

There are a lot of first-generation immigrant children in that school. It was basically a poor school. Bell Atlantic went in and worked with others. They put computers in all the classrooms. They also put computer outlets in the homes of a lot of these parents. And you had—I talked to a man who came here from El Salvador 10 years ago who is now E-mailing his child's principal and teacher to figure out how the kid's doing.

But the bottom line is the dropout rate is now below the State average, and the test scores are above the State average in an immigrant district of poor children, partly because of the technology and partly because the business community said, "Hey, you kids are important," and partly because the place has a good principal and good teachers.

But I do think that the business community—if you look at the technology as an instrument to achieve your higher standards and to infuse high expectations into the community and to give the kids the confidence they need that they can learn, then this technology issue is a very important one.

Well, that's what I hope we'll do. I think we ought to have the standards. You should set them. We'll support you however you want. But they won't work unless you're going to really see whether the standards are being met and unless there are consequences to those who meet and to those who do not. I think you have to reward the good teachers and get more good people in teaching and that we have to facilitate the removal of those who aren't performing.

I think the schools need more authority and should be held more accountable. We've got to redo these central school budgets until we have squeezed down the overhead costs and put it back into education. And unless we have an environment in which there is safety and discipline, we won't succeed. And if we do have an environment in which the business community brings in more technology, we will succeed more quickly.

I believe that this meeting will prove historic. And again, let me say, I thank the Governors and the business leaders who brought it about. In 1983 we said, "We've got a problem in our schools. We need to take tougher courses. We need to have other reforms." In 1989 we said, "We need to know where we're going. We need goals." Here in 1996, you're saying you can have all of the goals in the world, but unless somebody really has meaningful standards and a system of measuring whether you meet those standards, you won't achieve your goals. That is the enduring gift you have given to America's schoolchildren and to America's future.

The Governors have to lead the way, the business community has to stay involved. Don't let anybody deter you and say you shouldn't be doing it. You can go back home and reach out to all the other people in the community because, in the end, what the teachers and the principals and more importantly even what the parents and the children do is what really counts. But we can get there together. We have to start now with what you're trying to do. We have to have high standards and high accountability. If you can

achieve that, you have given a great gift to the future of this country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Watson Room at the IBM Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada, NGA vice chairman; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin, NGA chairman; Louis Gerstner, chief executive officer, IBM; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Gov. Terry E. Branstad of Iowa; Gov. Carroll W. Campbell of South Carolina; Gov. Tom Carper of Delaware; Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Gov. John Engler of Michigan; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; and Albert Shanker, president, American Federation of Teachers.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Radiation Control for Health and Safety

March 27, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 540 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360qq) (previously section 360D of the Public Health Service Act), I am submitting the report of the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the administration of the Radiation Control for Health and Safety Act of 1968 during calendar year 1994.

The report recommends the repeal of section 540 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act that requires the completion of this annual report. All the information found in this report is available to the Congress on a more immediate basis through the Center for Devices and Radiological Health technical reports, the Radiological Health Bulletin, and other publicly available sources. The Agency resources devoted to the preparation of this report could be put to other, better uses.

William J. Clinton

The White House
March 27, 1996.

I will continue to report periodically to the Congress on significant developments, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1703(c):

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 25, 1996.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 27.

Statement on Signing the Land Disposal Program Flexibility Act of 1996

March 26, 1996

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2036, the "Land Disposal Program Flexibility Act of 1996," which brings needed reforms to the Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA).

This Act would eliminate a statutory mandate that requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promulgate stringent and costly treatment requirements for certain low-risk wastes that already are regulated under the Clean Water Act or Safe Drinking Water Act. The EPA considers these wastes to present little or no risk, due to existing regulation under State and Federal law.

The Act requires EPA to conduct a study to determine whether, following elimination of this mandate, there will be any risks that might not be addressed by State or other Federal laws. It also preserves EPA's authority to impose any additional controls that are needed to protect public health and the environment. In addition, H.R. 2036 reforms certain municipal landfill ground water monitoring requirements under current law, thereby easing burdens on local governments.

The Administration's support for H.R. 2036 originated in its initiative for Reinventing Environmental Regulation, as announced on March 16, 1995. As part of that initiative, I made a commitment to support commonsense reforms to the SWDA—if those reforms could be developed through a bipartisan process. This Act addresses one of the most important issues that the Administration identified in our initiative. Once implemented by EPA, it will eliminate an unnecessary and duplicative layer of costly reg-

ulation, yielding tens of millions of dollars in savings to private industry.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 26, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 2036, approved March 26, was assigned Public Law No. 104-119. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 27.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Education Summit in Palisades, New York

March 27, 1996

Thank you very much, Governor Miller, Governor Thompson; Lou Gerstner. Thank you for hosting this terribly important event. To all of the Governors and distinguished guests, education leaders, and business leaders who are here, let me say that I am also delighted to be here with the Secretary of Education, Governor Dick Riley. I believe that he and Governor Hunt and Governor Branstad and I were actually there when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued, as well as when the education summit was held by President Bush. I want to thank Secretary Riley for the work that he has done with the States and with educators all across the country. And I know that every one of you has worked with him, but I'm glad to have him here, and he's been a wonderful partner for me and I think for you.

This is an extraordinary meeting of America's business leaders and America's Governors. I know some have raised some questions about it, but let me just say on the front end I think it is a very appropriate and a good thing to do, and I applaud those who organized it and those who have attended.

The Governors, after all, have primary, indeed constitutional responsibility for the conditions of our public schools. And the business leaders know well, perhaps better than any other single group in America, what the consequences of our failing to get the most out of our students and achieve real educational excellence will be for our Nation.

So I am very pleased to see you here doing this, and I want to thank each and every one

of you. I also think you have a better chance than perhaps anyone else, even in this season, to keep the question of education beyond partisanship and to deal with it as an American challenge that all the American people must meet and must meet together.

All of you know very well that this is a time of a dramatic transformation in the United States. I'm not sure if any of us fully understands the true implications of the changes through which we are all living and the responsibilities that those changes impose upon us. It is clear to most people that the dimensions of economic change now are the greatest that they have been since we moved from farm to factory and from rural areas to cities and towns 100 years ago.

In his book "The Road From Here" Bill Gates says that the digital chip is leading us to the greatest transformation in communications in 500 years, since Gutenberg printed the first Bible in Europe. If that is true, it is obvious beyond anyone's ability to argue that the educational enterprise, which has always been central to the development of good citizens in America as well as to a strong economy, is now more important than ever before.

That means that we need a candid assessment of what is right and what is wrong with our educational system and what we need to do. Your focus on standards, your focus on assessment, your focus on technology is all to the good. We know that many of our schools do a very good job, but some of them don't. We know that many of our teachers are great, but some don't measure up. We know many of our communities are seizing the opportunities of the present and the future, but too many aren't.

And most important, we know that—after the emphasis on education which goes back at least until 1983 in the whole country and to my native region, to the South, to the late seventies when we began to try to catch up economically with the rest of the country—we know that while the schools and the students of this country are doing better than they were in 1984 and better than they were in 1983, when the "Nation At Risk" was issued and in 1989 when the education summit was held at Charlottesville, most of them still are not meeting the standards that are nec-

essary and adequate to the challenges of today. So that is really what we have to begin with.

Now America has some interesting challenges that I think are somewhat unique to our country in this global environment in which education is important, and we might as well just sort of put them out there on the front end, not that we can resolve them today.

The first is that we have a far more diverse group of students in terms of income and race and ethnicity and background and indeed living conditions than almost any other great country in the world.

Second, we have a system in which both authority and financing is more fractured than in other countries is typically the case.

Third, we know that our schools are burdened by social problems not of their making, which make the jobs of principals and teachers more difficult.

And fourth, and I think most important of all, our country still has an attitude problem about education that I think we should resolve, that is even prior to the standards and the assessment issue, and that is that too many people in the United States think that the primary determinant of success and learning is either IQ or family circumstances instead of effort. And I don't. And I don't think any of the research supports that.

So one of the things that I hope you will say is, in a positive way, that you believe all kids can learn and in a stronger way that you believe that effort is more important than IQ or income, given the right kind of educational opportunities, the right kind of expectations. It's often been said that Americans from time to time suffer from a revolution of rising expectations. This is one area where we need a revolution of rising expectations. We ought to all simply and forthrightly say that we believe that school is children's work and play, that it can be great joy, but that effort matters.

I see one of our business leaders here, this former State senator from Arkansas, Senator Joe Ford, whose father was the head of our educational program in Arkansas for a long time. We had a lot of people in one-room schoolhouses 40 and 50 and 60 years ago, reading simple readers, who believed that ef-

fort was more important than IQ or income. They didn't know what IQ was. And we have got to change that. And Governors, every Governor and every business leader in this country can make a difference.

I'm no Einstein, and not everybody can do everything, but if you stack this up from one to the other, all the Americans together in order by IQ, you couldn't stick a straw between one person and the next. And you know it as well as I do. Most people can learn everything they need to know to be good citizens and successful participants in the American economy and in the global economy. And I believe that unless you can convince your constituents that that is the truth, that all of your efforts to raise standards and all of your efforts to have accountability through tests and other assessments will not be as successful as they ought to be. And I think frankly, a lot of people, even in education, need to be reminded of that from time to time.

Now let's get back to the good news. Thirty or 40 years ago, maybe even 20 years ago, no one could ever have conceived of a meeting like this taking place. Governors played little role in education until just a couple of decades ago, and business didn't regard it as their responsibility. In the late seventies and the early eighties this whole wave began to sweep America. And one important, positive thing that ought never to be overlooked is that the business leadership of America and the Governors of this country have been literally obsessed with education for a long time now. And that's a very good thing, because one of the problems with America is that we tend to be in the grip of serial enthusiasms. It's the hula hoop today and something else tomorrow. Boy, that dates me, doesn't it? *[Laughter]*

In this country the Governors have displayed a remarkable consistency of commitment to education, and at least since 1983, the business community has displayed that commitment. And I think it's fair to say that all of us have learned some things as we have gone along, which is what has brought you to this point, that there is a—you understand now, and I've heard Lou Gerstner talk about it in his, almost his mantra about standards—that we understand that the next big step has to be to have some meaningful and appro-

priately high standards and then hold people accountable for them.

I think it's worth noting that the 1983 "Nation At Risk" report did do some good things. Almost every State in the country went back and revised its curriculum requirement. Many revised their class size requirements. Many did other things to upgrade teacher training or to increase college scholarships or to do a lot of other things.

In 1989 I was privileged to be in Charlottesville working with Governor Branstad and with Governor Campbell, primarily, as we were trying to get all the Governors together to develop the statement at the education summit with President Bush. And that was the first time there had ever been a bipartisan national consensus on educational goals.

The realization was in 1989 was that 6 years after a "Nation At Risk," all these extra requirements were being put into education, but nobody had focused on what the end game was. What did we want America to look like? It's worth saying that we wanted every child to show up for school ready to learn, that we wanted to be proficient in certain core courses and were willing to assess our students to see if we were, that we wanted to prepare our people for the world of work, that we wanted to be extra good in math and science and to overcome our past deficiencies. All the things that were in those educational goals were worth saying.

Another thing that the Charlottesville summit did that I think is really worth emphasizing is that it defined for the first time, from the Governors up, what the Federal role in education ought to be and what it should not be. I went back this morning, just on the way up, and I read the Charlottesville statement about what the Governors then unanimously voted that the Federal role should be and what it should not be.

When I became President and I asked Dick Riley to become Secretary of Education, I said that our legislative agenda ought to be consistent, completely consistent with what the Governors had said at Charlottesville. So, for example, the Governors said at Charlottesville, the Federal Government has a bigger responsibility to help people show up for school prepared to learn.

So we emphasized things like more funds for Head Start and more investment in trying to improve the immunization rates of kids and other health indicators; and more responsibility for access to higher education, so we tried to reform the student loan program and invest more money in Pell grants and national service and things like that; and then, more responsibility to give greater flexibility to the States in K through 12 and to try to promote reform without defining how any of this should be done.

And so that's what Goals 2000 was about. We tried to have a system in which States and mostly local school districts could pursue world-class standards based on their own plans for grassroots reform. And we overhauled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as we redid title I to do one thing that I think is very important: We took out of what was then in the law for Chapter 1, which was lower educational expectations for poor children. It was an outrage, and we took it out of the law. I don't believe that poor children should be expected to perform at lower levels than other children.

And Dick Riley, since he has been Secretary of Education, has cut Federal regulations over States and local school districts by more than 50 percent. It seems to me that that is consistent with exactly what the Governors said at Charlottesville they wanted done.

Now the effort to have national standards, I think it's fair to say, has been less than successful. The history standards and the English standards effort did not succeed for reasons that have been well analyzed, although I'm not sure the debate was entirely worthless; I think the debate itself did some good.

But there are recommended standards that have been widely embraced, coming out of the math teachers, that most people think are quite good, and the preliminary indications for science are encouraging. And I want to say again, it would be wrong to say that there's been no progress since 1983. The number of young people taking core courses has jumped from 13 percent in '82 to 52 percent in '94. The national math and science scores are up a grade since 1983, half of all the 4-year-olds now attend preschool, 86 percent of all our young people are completing

high school. We're almost up to the 90 percent that was in the national education goals. That is progress.

But what we have learned since Charlottesville and what you are here to hammer home to America is that the overall levels of learning are not enough and that there are still significant barriers in various schools to meeting higher standards.

I accept your premise; we can only do better with tougher standards and better assessment, and you should set the standards. I believe that is absolutely right. And that will be the lasting legacy of this conference. I also believe, along with Mr. Gerstner and the others who are here, that it's very important not only for businesses to speak out for reform but for business leaders to be knowledgeable enough to know what reform to speak out for and what to emphasize and how to hammer home the case for higher standards, as well as how to help local school districts change some of the things that they are now doing so that they have a reasonable chance at meeting these standards.

Let me just go through now what I think we should do in challenging the country on standards for students, as well as for teachers and schools. I suppose that I have spent more time in classrooms than any previous President, partly because I was a Governor for 12 years and partly because I still do it with some frequency. I believe the most important thing you can do is to have high expectations for students—to make them believe they can learn, to tell them they're going to have to learn really difficult, challenging things, to assess whether they're learning or not, and to hold them accountable as well as to reward them.

Most children are very eager to learn. Those that aren't have probably been convinced they can't. We can do better with that. I believe that once you have high standards and high expectations, there is an unlimited number of things that can be done. But I also believe that there have to be consequences. I watched your panel last night, and I thought—the moment of levity on the panel was when Al Shanker was asked, when I was teaching school and I would give students homework, they said, "Does it count?" That's the thing I remember about the panel

last night. All of you remember, too. You laughed, right? [Laughter] "Does it count?" And the truth is that in the world we're living in today, "does it count" has to mean something, particularly in places where there haven't been any standards for a long time.

So if the States are going to go back and raise standards so that you're not only trying to increase the enrollment in core courses, you're trying to make the core courses themselves mean more. I heard Governor Hunt last night say he'd be willing to settle for reading and writing and math and science, I think were the ones you said.

Once you have to—if you're going to go back and define what's in those core courses and you're going to lift it up, you have to be willing, then, to hold the students accountable for whether they have achieved that or not. And again, another thing that Mr. Shanker said that I've always believed, we have always downgraded teaching to the test, but if you're going to know whether people learn what you expect them to know, then you have to test them on what you expect them to know.

So I believe that if you want the standards movement to work, first you have to do the hard work in deciding what it is you expect children to learn. But then you have to have an assessment system, however you design it, in your own best judgment at the State level, that says, no more social promotions, no more free passes. If you want people to learn, learning has to mean something. That's what I believe. I don't believe you can succeed unless you are prepared to have an assessment system with consequences.

In Arkansas in 1983 when we redid the educational standards, we had a very controversial requirement that young people pass the 8th grade tests to go on to high school. And not everybody passed it. And we let people take it more than once. I think it's fine to do that.

But even today, after 13 years, I think there are only five States in the country today which require a promotion for either grade to grade or school to school for its young people, to require tests for that. I believe that if you have meaningful standards that you have confidence in, that you believe if they're met your children will know what they need

to know, you shouldn't be afraid to find out if they're learning it, and you shouldn't be deterred by people saying this is cruel, this is unfair, or whatever they say.

The worst thing you can do is send people all the way through school with a diploma they can't read. And you're not being unfair to people if you give them more than one chance and if at the same time you improve the teaching and the operation of the schools in which they are. If you believe these kids can learn, you have to give them a chance to demonstrate it. This is only a cruel, short-sighted thing to do if you are convinced that there are limitations on what the American children can do. And I just don't believe that.

So that, I think, is the most important thing. I believe every State, if you're going to have meaningful standards, must require a test for children to move, let's say, from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school or to have a full-meaning high school diploma. And I don't think they should measure just minimum competency. You should measure what you expect these standards to measure.

You know, when we instituted any kind of test at home, I was always criticized by the fact that the test wasn't hard enough. But I think it takes time to transform a system, and you may decide it takes time to transform a system. But you will never know whether your standards are being met unless you have some sort of measurement and have some sort of accountability. And while I believe they should be set by the States and the testing mechanism should be approved by the States, we shouldn't kid ourselves. Being promoted ought to mean more or less the same thing in Pasadena, California, that it does in Palisades, New York. In a global society, it ought to mean more or less the same thing.

I was always offended by the suggestion that the kids who grew up in the Mississippi Delta in Arkansas, which is the poorest place in America, shouldn't have access to the same learning opportunities that other people should and couldn't learn. I don't believe that.

So I think the idea—I heard the way Governor Engler characterized it last night, I thought was pretty good. You want a non-Federal, national mechanism to sort of share

this information so that you'll at least know how you're doing compared to one another. That's a good start. That's a good way to begin this. I also believe that we shouldn't ignore the progress that's been made by the goals panel, since Governor Romer was first leader of that going through Governor Engler, and by the National Assessment on Educational Progress. I know a lot of you talked about that last night. They've done a lot of good things, and we can learn a lot from them. We don't have to reinvent the wheel here.

I also would like to go back and emphasize something I heard Governor Hunt say last night. I think we should begin with a concrete standard for reading and writing because the most troubling thing to me is that we've been through a decade in which math and science scores have risen and reading scores have stayed flat. Intel recently had to turn away hundreds of applicants because they lacked basic reading and writing skills.

Now that will present you with an immediate problem because if you want to measure reading and writing, you will not be able just to have a multiple choice test which can be graded by a machine. You'll have to recognize that teachers do real work with kids when they teach them how to write, and you have to give them the time and support to do that. And then there has to be some way of evaluating that. I know that's harder and more expensive, but it really matters whether a child can read and write.

And for all the excitement about the computers in the schools—and I am a big proponent of it—I would note that when we started with a computer program in our school, and I believe when Governor Caperton started in West Virginia, he started in the early grades for the precise purpose that technology should be used first to give children the proper grounding in basic skills. So I think that's quite important.

Secretary Riley says that every child should be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. And parenthetically, that if that were the standard, I think we would be more successful in getting parents to read to their children every night, which would revolutionize the whole system of education anyway.

The second thing I think we have to do is to face the fact that if we want to have these standards for children, standards and tests, we have to have a system that rewards and inspires and demands higher standards of teachers. They, after all, do this work. The rest of us talk about it, and they do it.

So that means that first of all, you've got to get the most talented people in there. There's been a lot of talk about this for a decade now, but most States and school districts still need work on their certification rules. We should not bar qualified, even brilliant young people from becoming teachers. The Teach For America group in my home State did a wonderful job, and a lot of those young kids wind up staying and teaching, even though they can make 2 and 3 times as much money doing something else. Every State should, in my view, review that.

I also believe any time you're trying to hold teachers to higher standards they should be rewarded when they perform. I know that in South Carolina and Kentucky, if schools markedly improve their performance, they get bonuses and the teachers get the benefit. That's not a bad thing; that's a good thing, and we should have more of that.

I want to thank Governor Hunt for the work he's done on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We had the first group of teachers who are board certified in the White House not very long ago. Every State should have a system, in my opinion, for encouraging these teachers to become board certified. The Federal Government doesn't have anything to do with that. Encourage these teachers to become board certified because they have to demonstrate not only knowledge but teaching skills. And when they achieve that level they should be rewarded. There should be extra rewards when they do that.

We also need a system that doesn't look the other way if a teacher is burned out or not performing up to standard. There ought to be a fair process for removing teachers who aren't competent, but the process also has to be much faster and far less costly than it is. I read the other day that in New York it can cost as much as \$200,000 to dismiss a teacher who is incompetent. In Glen Ellyn, Illinois, a school district spent \$70,000 to dis-

miss a high school math teacher who couldn't do basic algebra and let the students sleep in class. That is wrong. We should do more to reward good teachers; we should have a system that is fair to teachers but moves much more expeditiously and much more cheaply in holding teachers accountable.

So States and school systems and teachers unions need to be working together to make it tougher to get licensed and recertified, easier and less costly to get teachers who can't teach out of the classrooms, and clearly set rewards for teachers who are performing, especially if they become board certified or in some State-defined way prove themselves excellent.

The third thing I think we have to do is to hold schools accountable for results. We have known now for a long time—we have no excuses for not doing—we have known for a long time that the most important player in this drama besides the teachers and the students are the school principals, the building principals. And yet, still, not every State has a system for holding the school districts accountable for having good principals in all these schools and then giving the principals the authority they need to do the job, getting out of their way and holding them accountable, both on the up side and the down side. To me, that is still the most important thing. Every school I go into, I can stay there about 30 minutes and tell you pretty much what the principal has done to establish a school culture, an atmosphere of learning, a system of accountability, a spirit of adventure. You can just feel it, and it's still the most important thing.

Secondly, the business community can do a lot of work with the Governors to help these school districts reinvent their budgets, I think. There are still too many school districts spending way too much money on administration and too little money on education and instruction. And there needs to be some real effort put into that, that goes beyond rhetoric. I mean, I was given these statistics, which I assume are true because I had it vetted four different times—I hate to use numbers that I haven't—if it is true that New York City spends \$8,000 a student on education, but only \$44 goes to books and other classroom materials, that's a disgrace.

That's wrong. And that's true in a lot of other school districts.

We cannot ask the American people to spend more on education until we do a better job with the money we've got now. That's an area where I think the business community can make a major, major contribution. A lot of you have had to restructure your own operations; a lot of you have had to achieve far higher levels of productivity. If we can reduce the Federal Government by 200,000 people without undermining our essential mission, we can do a much better job in the school districts of the country.

Let me also say I think that we ought to encourage every State to do what most States are now doing, which is to provide more options for parents. You know, the terms of the public school choice legislation and the charter schools—a lot of you have done a very good job with the charter schools. But I'm excited about the idea that educators and parents get to actually start schools, create and manage them, and stay open only if they do a good job within the public school system. Every charter school I visited was an exciting place. Today, 21 of you allow charter schools. There are over 250 schools which are open; 100 more are going to open next year. Freed up from regulation and top-down bureaucracy, focusing on meeting higher standards, the schools have to be able to meet these standards if you impose them.

Secretary Riley has helped 11 States to start new schools, and in the balanced budget plan I submitted to Congress last week, there is \$40 million in seed money to help start 3,000 more charter schools over the next 5 years, which would be a tenfold increase. That may become the order of the day. So I believe we need standards and accountability for students, for teachers, and for schools.

Let me just mention two other things briefly. I don't believe you can possibly minimize—and a lot of the Governors I know have been in these schools—you cannot minimize how irrelevant this discussion would seem to a teacher who doesn't feel safe walking the halls of his or her school or how utterly hopeless it seems to students who have to look over their shoulders when they're walking to and from school. So I believe that we have to work together to continue to

make our schools safe and our students held to a reasonable standard of conduct, as well.

You know, we had a teacher in Washington last week who was mugged in a hallway by a gang of intruders, not students, a gang of intruders who were doing drugs and didn't even belong on the school grounds. We have got to keep working on that. All the Federal Government can do is give resources and pass laws. That's another thing the business community can help with, district after district. This entire discussion we have had is completely academic unless there is a safe and a disciplined and a drug-free environment in these schools.

We passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, the Gun-Free Schools Act. We supported random drug testing in schools. We have supported the character education movement. We've almost ended lawsuits over religious issues by the guidelines that Secretary Riley and the Attorney General issued, showing that our schools don't have to be religion-free zones. We have worked very hard to help our schools do their job here.

The next thing I hope we can do, all of us, in this regard is to work to help our schools stay open longer. Our budget contains \$14 million for helping people set up these community schools to stay open longer hours. But remember that 3 in the afternoon to 6 in the evening are the peak hours for juvenile crime, and all that comes back into the schools. So I think that's another thing we really need to look at. A lot of these schools do not have the resources today to stay open longer hours, but they would if they could.

And one of the primary targets I would have if I were a local leader trying to redo my district school budget is to reduce the amount spent on administration so that I could invest more money in keeping it open longer hours, especially for the latch-key kids and the other kids that are in trouble that don't have any other place to go. So that's something that I think is very important.

Finally, let me just echo what Governor Miller said about the technology. We did have a barnraising in California, and we hooked up actually more than 20 percent of the classrooms to the Internet on a single day. But we need every classroom and every

library in every school in America hooked up to the Internet as quickly as possible. We set a goal as the year 2000; we could actually get there more quickly. I propose that in the budget, a \$2 billion fund to help the communities who don't have the money to meet the challenge, but every community, every State in America, at least, has a high-tech community that could help get this done.

The Congress passed a very fine Telecommunications Act that I signed not very long ago which gives preferential treatment to people in isolated rural areas or inner-city areas for access to schools and hospitals. So the infrastructure, the framework is there.

Anything you can do to help do that, I think is good if the educators use the technology in the proper way. And I'll just close with this example. I was in the Union City School District in New Jersey not very long ago. That school district was about to be closed under the State of New Jersey's school bankruptcy law, which I think, by the way, is very good, holding school districts accountable, and they can actually lose their ability to operate as an independent district in New Jersey and the State takes them over if they keep failing.

There are a lot of first-generation immigrant children in that school. It was basically a poor school. Bell Atlantic went in and worked with others. They put computers in all the classrooms. They also put computer outlets in the homes of a lot of these parents. And you had—I talked to a man who came here from El Salvador 10 years ago who is now E-mailing his child's principal and teacher to figure out how the kid's doing.

But the bottom line is the dropout rate is now below the State average, and the test scores are above the State average in an immigrant district of poor children, partly because of the technology and partly because the business community said, "Hey, you kids are important," and partly because the place has a good principal and good teachers.

But I do think that the business community—if you look at the technology as an instrument to achieve your higher standards and to infuse high expectations into the community and to give the kids the confidence they need that they can learn, then this technology issue is a very important one.

Well, that's what I hope we'll do. I think we ought to have the standards. You should set them. We'll support you however you want. But they won't work unless you're going to really see whether the standards are being met and unless there are consequences to those who meet and to those who do not. I think you have to reward the good teachers and get more good people in teaching and that we have to facilitate the removal of those who aren't performing.

I think the schools need more authority and should be held more accountable. We've got to redo these central school budgets until we have squeezed down the overhead costs and put it back into education. And unless we have an environment in which there is safety and discipline, we won't succeed. And if we do have an environment in which the business community brings in more technology, we will succeed more quickly.

I believe that this meeting will prove historic. And again, let me say, I thank the Governors and the business leaders who brought it about. In 1983 we said, "We've got a problem in our schools. We need to take tougher courses. We need to have other reforms." In 1989 we said, "We need to know where we're going. We need goals." Here in 1996, you're saying you can have all of the goals in the world, but unless somebody really has meaningful standards and a system of measuring whether you meet those standards, you won't achieve your goals. That is the enduring gift you have given to America's schoolchildren and to America's future.

The Governors have to lead the way, the business community has to stay involved. Don't let anybody deter you and say you shouldn't be doing it. You can go back home and reach out to all the other people in the community because, in the end, what the teachers and the principals and more importantly even what the parents and the children do is what really counts. But we can get there together. We have to start now with what you're trying to do. We have to have high standards and high accountability. If you can

achieve that, you have given a great gift to the future of this country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Watson Room at the IBM Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada, NGA vice chairman; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin, NGA chairman; Louis Gerstner, chief executive officer, IBM; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Gov. Terry E. Branstad of Iowa; Gov. Carroll W. Campbell of South Carolina; Gov. Tom Carper of Delaware; Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Gov. John Engler of Michigan; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; and Albert Shanker, president, American Federation of Teachers.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Radiation Control for Health and Safety

March 27, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 540 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360qq) (previously section 360D of the Public Health Service Act), I am submitting the report of the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the administration of the Radiation Control for Health and Safety Act of 1968 during calendar year 1994.

The report recommends the repeal of section 540 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act that requires the completion of this annual report. All the information found in this report is available to the Congress on a more immediate basis through the Center for Devices and Radiological Health technical reports, the Radiological Health Bulletin, and other publicly available sources. The Agency resources devoted to the preparation of this report could be put to other, better uses.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 27, 1996.

Edvc. - NGA Summit

To BRUCE REED
From JEREMY

FYI!
re NYC school
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June 7, 1996

Mr. Michael Casserly
Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools
Suite 702
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Michael:

Thank you for your letter regarding my speech on education to the conference of governors and business leaders. I greatly appreciate the work the Council of Greater City Schools has done to support my Administration's efforts to maintain and deepen our national investment in education.

As you know, the focus of my speech to the governors was on our obligation not only to maximize resources spent directly on students' education, but also to minimize those spent on administration and bureaucracy costs. I have passed your letter along to my staff to ensure that the questions you raise about specific figures can be thoroughly examined.

Thanks again for writing and, as always, for your organization's continued dedication to excellence in education.

Sincerely,
BILL CLINTON

BC/LIJ/JFB/bws (Corres. #2928154)
(5.casserly.m)

cc: w/inc Jeremy Ben Ami



Council of the Great City Schools

Council of the Great City Schools

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April 22, 1996

The Honorable William Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of the nation's largest urban public school systems, was dismayed to read your remarks about the New York City Public Schools in your otherwise positive speech at the Education Summit in Palisades, New York.

Your speech was inaccurate in stating that only \$44 of the \$8,000 the New York City Schools spend per pupil is devoted to "books and other classroom materials". The figures you cite came from an audit done on the school system at the request of the current Mayor of New York for what many considered political purposes. Our best information is that the New York City Schools spend between four and five times as much per pupil on books and classroom materials--or around \$200. In addition, the \$8000 figure is misleading. Only \$6185 of that amount is used for "current expenditures", i.e., spending directly allocable to instruction, teacher salaries, books, materials and classrooms. The balance goes to transportation, food service, pensions and debt service.

The numbers you cited were refuted some time ago by the very firm that compiled them, a fact easily checked because the audit was conducted while a former member of your Transition Team and Administration, Ray Cortines, was Chancellor of the New York City Schools. He now serves as a Special Advisor to the Secretary of Education. In addition, the former Deputy Chancellor of the New York City Schools, Stanley Litow, serves as Director of the IBM Foundation and helped plan and coordinate the Summit. Either could have been called to determine the accuracy of these statistics. Certainly, White House staff could have obtained the facts by calling the school system. Finally, staff knows our organization; we could have been called as well. The thorough vetting process claimed in the speech could not have been such, unless it was overridden by a staff decision to gain political points in front of the press, the Governors and corporate leaders.

We can not understand why that would have been done. To make matters worse, the statements were made in the school system's backyard when they were not even



invited by the hosts to the meeting. New York City, their public schools, teachers, administrators and board members have been loyal supporters of your Administration and its education agenda, and have filled any number of requests from the White House and its agencies for information, provided access to schools, and helped arrange special events--overlooking some areas of disagreement along the way. We were demoralized, then, by this seemingly gratuitous swipe, especially as the New York City Schools are working to counter erroneous notions about what they are doing and to gain a greater degree of funding equity from their state legislature.

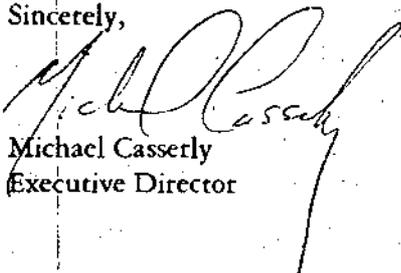
The problem was compounded by your stating that it's "true in a lot of other school districts" as well. We are pleased to report that it is not true in urban public schools, generally. The average Great City School system spends about \$120 per pupil on school books and materials, not what we would like, but higher than what was stated. While statistics vary by source, our best numbers indicate that the average school system nationally spends about \$143--meaning that New York City may be spending as much as 40% more on books than other systems.

Your point was that there are "too many school districts spending too much money on administration and too little money on education and instruction". The Administration's downsizing of some 200,000 individuals (or some 9.8% of the 2.2 million member federal civilian workforce) was cited as an exemplar for school systems nationally. You should know, however, that the New York City Public Schools have reduced their central administration by over 30% since you became President. If the federal workforce had been reduced at the same rate as the New York City Schools, then it would have declined by some 660,000 federal workers. One might claim that the New York City Schools could serve as an example to the federal government.

Similar reductions are evident in urban public schools across the nation. A recent poll by our organization indicated that urban educators generally believed that central office downsizing was one of their more effective reforms. Urban schools, nationally, spend only 4.2% of their total revenues on the operations of the Board of Education, Superintendent and all other central and business operations, lower than the national average of about 4.4%--well below what they once were and probably well below the overhead rates of most of the corporations at the Summit. New York State indicates that the New York City Schools have an overhead rate of just under three percent.

Again, your speech was a positive one overall. But, before others at the city, state and federal levels begin to quote the President of the United States to justify their cuts to the New York City Schools and other urban school systems around the nation, we ask that the record be corrected and that these statements be retracted.

Sincerely,


Michael Casserly
Executive Director

POSTSCRIPT

Bill Clinton on How to Save the Public Schools

In the March issue, we ran a story on the peril of the country's public schools that began by noting that the nation's leaders have consistently failed to make education a top priority. The piece specifically criticized President Clinton who, with his daughter safely enrolled in the private Sidwell Friends School, has "kept us waiting" on public education.

*Since then, the President has risen in the polls and, newly confident, begun to consider what he might do in a second term. According to a report by Matthew Cooper in *The New Republic*, the point man for developing that vision is domestic policy advisor Bruce Reed. And Reed's most recent major project, with speechwriter Michael Waldman, was Clinton's address before the education conference of governors and business leaders in Palisades, New York, on March 27.*

Whatever text Waldman and Reed prepared, this speech was clearly the President's own. He referred back to various panels at the summit and to his own considerable experience in Arkansas. He showed not just that he is familiar with schools, but that he understands them. In the course of 35 minutes, he laid out a reform plan that was intelligent, comprehensive, and politically courageous.

*If you're scratching your head wondering what speech we're referring to, that's because you didn't catch it on C-Span and depended on journalists to report it to you. All but a few of the major papers neglected to mention what was truly significant in the speech—Clinton's call to reduce the bureaucracy, recruit good principals and hold them accountable, and improve the ranks of teachers. Regarding this last measure, a favorite of reformers like us, the President endorsed "alternative certification"—allowing able people with knowledge of the subject to teach without going through education schools—and merit pay for teachers. Stories in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times* omitted these issues entirely. *Time* and *Newsweek* didn't cover the speech at all.*

Had they been paying attention—or known what to listen for—the reporters in Palisades would have also heard Clinton take on a core Democratic constituency. After praising teachers and pointing out that good ones are the key to successful schools, Clinton said that the process of removing teachers who are "burned out or not performing up to standard ... has to be much faster and far less costly than it is." In essence, Clinton was calling for bad teachers to be fired. This is anathema to the teachers' unions—who seem to believe their job is to protect the marginals and incompe-

tents, not the vast majority of teachers who are hard-working and effective. But Clinton is right on target. He is also right to want to include teachers' unions—and, of course, teachers themselves—in the monitoring and evaluation of teachers. "[S]tate and school systems and teachers unions needs to be working together," the President said. We couldn't agree more.

We applaud the President—and hope he'll stay with this topic as long as it takes. Since you're not likely to read a full account of it elsewhere, we are reprinting portions of Clinton's address. —The Editors

I suppose that I have spent more time in classrooms than any previous President, partly because I was a governor for 12 years and partly because I still do it with some frequency. I believe the most important thing you can do is to have high expectations for students—to make them believe they can learn, to tell them they're going to have to learn really difficult, challenging things, to assess whether they're learning or not, and to hold them accountable as well as to reward them.

Most children are very eager to learn. Those that aren't have probably been convinced they can't. We can do better with that. I believe that once you have high standards and high expectations, there is an unlimited number of things that can be done. But I also believe that there have to be consequences.... [I]f you want the standards movement to work, first you have to do the hard work in deciding what it is you expect children to learn. But then you have to have an assessment system, however you design it, in your own best judgment at the state level, that says, "no more free passes." If you want people to learn, learning has to mean something. That's what I believe. I don't believe you can succeed unless you are prepared to have an assessment system with consequences.

In Arkansas in 1983 when we redid the educational standards, we had a very controversial requirement that young people pass the 8th grade tests to go on to high school. And not everybody passed it. And we let people take it more than once. I think it's fine to do that. But even today, after 13 years, I think there are only five states in the country today which require a promotion for either grade to school or school to school for its young people.... The worst thing you can do is send people all the way through school with a diploma they can't read.... [Y]ou will never know whether your standards are being met unless you have some sort of measurement and have some sort of accountability....

[W]e shouldn't kid ourselves. Being promoted ought to mean more or less the same thing in Pasadena, California, that it does in Palisades, New York....

I was always offended by the suggestion that the kids who grew up in the Mississippi Delta in Arkansas, which is the poorest place in America, shouldn't have access to the same learning opportunities that other people should and couldn't learn. I don't believe that. I think we should begin with a concrete standard for reading and writing because the most troubling thing to me is that we've been through a decade in which math and science scores have risen and reading scores have stayed flat. Intel recently had to turn away hundreds of applicants because they lacked basic reading and writing skills. Secretary [of Education Richard] Riley says that every child should be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. And parenthetically, that if that were the standard, I think we would be more successful in getting parents to read to their children every night, which would revolutionize the whole system of education anyway.

* * *

The second thing I think we have to do is to face the fact that if we want to have these standards for children, standards and tests, we have to have a system that rewards and inspires and demands higher standards of teachers. They, after all, do this work. The rest of us talk about it, and they do it. So that means that first of all, you've got to get the most talented people in there. There's been a lot of talk about this for a decade now, but most states and school districts still need work on their certification rules. We should not bar qualified, even brilliant young people from becoming teachers. The Teach For America group in my home state did a wonderful job, and a lot of those young kids wind up staying and teaching, even though they can make two and three times as much money doing something else. Every state should, in my view, review that. I also believe any time you're trying to hold teachers to higher standards they should be rewarded when they perform. I know that in South Carolina and Kentucky, if schools markedly improve their performance, they get bonuses and the teachers get the benefit. That's not a bad thing; that's a good thing, and we should have more of that.

I want to thank Governor Hunt for the work he's done on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We had the first group of teachers who are board certified in the White House not very long ago. Every state should have a system, in my opinion, for encouraging these teachers to become board certified. The Federal Government doesn't have anything to do with that. Encourage these teachers to become board

certified because they have to demonstrate not only knowledge but teaching skills. And when they achieve that level they should be rewarded. There should be extra rewards when they do that.

We also need a system that doesn't look the other way if a teacher is burned out or not performing up to standard. There ought to be a fair process for removing teachers who aren't competent, but the process also has to be much faster and less costly than it is. I read the other day that in New York it can cost as much as \$200,000 to dismiss a teacher who is incompetent. In Glen Ellyn, Illinois, a school district spent \$70,000 to dismiss a high school math teacher who couldn't do basic algebra and let the students sleep in class. That is wrong. We should do more to reward good teachers; we should have a system that is fair to teachers but moves much more expeditiously and much more cheaply in holding teachers accountable. So state and school systems and teachers' unions needs to be working together to make it tougher to get licensed and recertified, easier and less costly to get teachers who can't teach out of the classrooms, and clearly set rewards for teachers who are performing....

* * *

The third thing I think we have to do is to hold schools accountable for results. We have known now for a long time that the most important player in this drama besides the teachers and the students are the school principals.... And yet, still, not every state has a system for holding the school districts accountable for having good principals in all these schools and then giving the principals the authority they need to do the job, getting out of their way and holding them accountable, both on the up side and the down side. To me, that is still the most important thing. Every school I go into, I can stay there about 30 minutes and tell you pretty much what the principal has done to establish a school culture, an atmosphere of learning, a system of accountability, a spirit of adventure. You can just feel it, and it's still the most important thing.

Secondly, the business community can do a lot of work with the governors to help these school districts reinvent their budgets, I think. There are still too many school districts spending way too much money on administration and too little money on education and instruction. And there needs to be some real effort put into that, that goes beyond rhetoric. I mean, I was given these statistics, which I assume are true because I had it vetted four different times—I hate to use numbers that I haven't—if it is true that New York City spends \$8,000 a student on education, but only \$44 goes to books and other classroom materials, that's a

“We have to have a system that rewards and inspires and demands higher standards of teachers”

disgrace. That's wrong. And that's true in a lot of other school districts. We cannot ask the American people to spend more on education until we do a better job with the money we've got now....

Let me also say I think we ought to encourage every state to do what most states are now doing, which is to provide more options for parents.... I'm excited about the idea that educators and parents get to actually start schools, create and manage them, and stay open only if they do a good job within the public school system. Every charter school I visited was an exciting place. Today, 21 of you allow charter schools. There are over 250 schools which are open; 100 more are going to open next year. Freed up from regulation and top-down bureaucracy, focusing on meeting higher standards, the schools have to be able to meet these standards if you impose them....

Let me just mention two other things briefly. I don't believe you can possibly minimize ... how irrelevant this discussion would seem to a teacher who doesn't feel safe walking the halls of his or her school or how utterly hopeless it seems to students who have to look over their shoulders when they're walking to and from school. So I believe that we have to work together to continue to make our schools safe and our students held to a reasonable standard of conduct, as well....

And one of the primary targets I would have if I were a local leader trying to redo my district budget is to reduce the amount spent on administration so that I could invest more money in keeping it open longer hours, especially for the latch-key kids and the other kids that are in trouble that don't have any other place to go. So that's something that I think is very important. Finally, let me just echo what Governor Miller said about the technology. We did have a barnraising in California, and we hooked up actually more than 20 percent of the classrooms to the Internet on a single day. But we need every classroom and every library in every school in America hooked up to the Internet as quickly as possible. We set a goal as the year 2000; we could actually get there more quickly....

I believe that this meeting will prove historic. And again, let me say, I thank the governors and the business leaders who brought it about. In 1983, we said, "We've got a problem in our schools. We need to take tougher courses. We need to have other reforms." In 1989 we said, "We need to know where we're going. We need goals." Here in 1996, you're saying you can have all of the goals in the world, but unless somebody really has meaningful standards and a system of measuring whether you meet those standards, you won't achieve your goals! That is the enduring gift you have given to America's schoolchildren and to America's future.... □

The Washington Monthly

JOURNALISM AWARD

FEBRUARY 1996

The Washington Post

Both Congress and the Clinton administration have used verbal pressure and fiscal restraints to hamper federal agencies' ability to enforce government regulations. The unsettling results, meticulously documented by the *Post* in a four-part series, include corner-cutting by the Environmental Protection Agency in its enforcement of the Clean Air Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's inability to ensure the safety of many workplaces.

City Limits (New York)

Taking a rotting movie theater as an emblem of an urban neighborhood's thwarted potential, Glenn Thrush uses vivid turns-of-phrase to document how a "Tammany-in-training-wheels political structure" has created entrenched political fiefdoms that keep East New York mired in poverty.

The Indianapolis Star

In a five-part series on special-interest donations to the Indiana state legislature, the *Star* detailed which groups' money pushed or pulled the state's lawmaking process, and succinctly identified what was missing from the political process: "Democracy. Or at least the spirit of democracy—the expectation that public servants will make laws with the good of everyday Hoosiers in mind."

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for April stories are due May 10.

Edie -
NBA Summit

Governors Will Repeat Academic Course

Summit Will Aim to Get Goals 2000 Reforms Back on National Track

By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer

The nation's governors, worried once more that school reforms in many states are stalling or failing, will convene an education summit in New York next month in another attempt to create tough new academic standards for students.

The summit will be the first national meeting on education that the governors have held since 1989, when they gathered in Charlottesville, Va., at the invitation of then-President Bush and launched a 10-year campaign to improve the nation's schools. But that drive has made only slight progress so far, and recent polls have shown that anxiety about education is rising among voters across the country.

"We've clearly lost momentum," said Wisconsin Gov. Tommy G. Thompson (R), the chairman of the National Governors' Association, which concluded its winter meeting in Washington this week. "We need to get it going again at this summit."

Thompson said the purpose of the national meeting will be for governors to reach agreement on rigorous, blunt new standards for what students in every grade level should be learning in core subjects such as reading, science and math—then to develop ways to hold schools and teachers accountable for them.

It will be up to each state to adopt what the governors propose. Since some recent attempts to create voluntary national standards for schools have provoked great opposition, it's their hope that putting the burden on states will be an easier route to success.

So far, governors from 37 states have agreed to attend the summit, which will be held in Palisades, N.Y., March 26 and 27. They will be joined by top business leaders from nearly every state. Louis Gerstner, the chief executive officer of IBM, told the governors this week that schools will not improve unless business leaders demand higher standards and do much more to hold states and educators accountable to them.

"We know there is a crisis. We know we must act," Gerstner said. "This summit will not be a debate. We will not argue about whether a problem really exists or how serious is the crisis."

Governors left the Charlottesville summit vowing to spark great new



BY JAMES M. THRESHER—THE WASHINGTON POST

During the 1989 education summit in Charlottesville, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton and his wife, Hillary, at right, were among those who walked the University of Virginia campus with President George Bush.

progress in the nation's schools. But since then, high school graduation rates nationally have not risen, reading achievement among high school seniors has declined, and reading scores among fourth- and eighth-graders are flat. The gap between white and minority students attending college and earning degrees has not closed, either.

Some governors contend that those problems persist partly because they set only broad goals—and not clear standards for teachers and students—at the last summit.

Another reason for convening the governors again, Thompson said, is that only six of them who backed the broad education goals set at the Charlottesville summit—such as making American students first in the world in math and science—are still in office. Many of the rest are newcomers to the debate over academic standards.

Unlike many other industrial nations, the United States has never set precise national expectations for what students should learn. That varies from state to state. But there has been a great push for tougher standards in recent years. Many states are revising their own, and prestigious national groups of educators have created voluntary guides for what students should know in science, math and history.

The Clinton administration is also distributing \$400 million to states this year through its Goals 2000 program to help improve classroom standards. But Goals 2000, which evolved from

the Charlottesville summit, has been under fire.

Some critics have denounced it as excessive federal meddling in education, while others have said it is too loosely defined to help schools. Some Republican leaders in Congress want to eliminate it. Several states have refused to take Goals 2000 money.

Those battles and others involving the voluntary national standards proposed for teaching history—which have been denounced as too biased and negative—have helped undermine interest in academic standards, governors said.

Thompson said that distrust of the federal government on the issue is so intense that it is now solely up to the governors to get the movement back on track. Doing that, however, will require great cooperation from an array of teacher unions and legislatures.

"We're not pretending this is going to be easy," Gerstner said.

The National Education Association, which represents 2.2 million teachers, said that its leaders have accepted an invitation to attend the summit and believe that it could bring more clarity and strength to the campaign for better academic standards.

"The Goals 2000 initiative is faltering, and so is the standards movement," said Kathleen Lyons, a NEA spokeswoman. "We want to do our part to give it new life."

Hill GOP Leaders to Study Governors' Welfare Plan

Gingrich Predicts House Will Act by Early March; Senate Appears More Problematic

By Judith Havemann
and Barbara Vobejda
Washington Post Staff Writers

House Republican leaders yesterday said they would summon key legislators back from their winter break to take up a welfare reform measure drafted by the nation's governors this week, raising the possibility that Congress will pass another welfare bill this year.

Speaker Newt Gingrich said yesterday he expected the House to pass welfare legislation "certainly sometime in early March. I would say probably 80 to 90 percent" of the National Governors' Association plan will be passed by the House. The situation in the Senate was more problematic.

Many senators were upbeat but wanted to see the details. "If all the governors . . . are for it," said Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), "it's something we've got to pay attention to." Sen. John H. Chafee (R-R.I.) a moderate Republican, said that there was a "heavy tilt in favor of it."

However, conservatives Sen. Latch Faircloth (R-N.C.) and Rep. James M. Talent (R-Mo.) registered strong opposition because it didn't address what they believe to be the central task of welfare reform—curbing out-of-wedlock births.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) predicted that the president would veto a bill based on the governors' proposal if it did emerge from Congress. He said that the proposal is nothing more than the welfare re-

TODAY IN CONGRESS

SENATE

Not in session.
Committees:
Labor & Human Resources—9:30 a.m. Improving economic competitiveness through joint labor-management efforts. 430 Dirksen Office Bldg.
Special Committee—10 a.m. Investigation of Whitewater Development Corp. & related matters. 216 Hart Office Bldg.

HOUSE

Not in session.
Committees:
Banking & Financial Services—9:30 a.m. Raising debt ceiling. Treasury Secretary Rubin. 2128 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Reform & Oversight—9 a.m. Human resources & inter-governmental relations subc. Screening of Medicare claims. 2247 RHOB.
Judiciary—9 a.m. Courts & intellectual property subc. Internet copyright protection. 2237 RHOB.
— LEGISLATE Inc.

form bill that President Clinton vetoed last month "with a few special programs sprinkled on."

The National Governors' Association endorsed a welfare plan at their annual meeting Tuesday that provides new funds for child care, performance bonuses and provisions to help the states move welfare recipients into jobs.

Like the vetoed bill, it breaks with 60 years of federal policy by wiping out the federal guarantee of coverage to all who are eligible and also cuts off benefits after five years.

The governors' action obliges Clinton to make a politically difficult

choice between the Democratic governors who have endorsed a proposal and powerful advocates like Moynihan and the Children's Defense Fund, who strongly oppose basic elements of the new proposal. Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund and a long-time Clinton friend, charged that the governors' plan "would leave many more children poorer, hungrier, sicker and at greater risk of abuse and neglect."

The White House was noncommittal. "In some respects the governors' approach is better than the Senate bill, in some cases it's worse than the . . . bill that the president vetoed," spokesman Mike McCurry said.

Democrats involved in drafting the governors' plan said that they thought they could get the Republicans to compromise on issues of major concern to Clinton and that ultimately they were involved in a grand bargain that encompassed both welfare and an overhaul of the Medicaid program.

The question of eliminating the federal entitlement to benefits was set aside because "there has been for some time a willingness to accept a cash assistance block grant as long as there was reasonable contingency, and the ability states to access it in an emergency," said Delaware Gov. Thomas R. Carper (D).

Keeping in touch with the White House, Carper said, he attempted to fix the president's problems with the vetoed bill. More money was added

for child care and a contingency fund. The work requirements that states had to deny aid to families who had additional children while they were on welfare were dropped.

When the issue of an entitlement to benefits came up, said Wisconsin Gov. Tommy G. Thompson (R), chairman of the NGA, "We thought the president would sign a block grant, and we were able to convince the Democrats."

Colorado Gov. Roy Romer (D), busy negotiating the NGA's breakthrough Medicaid plan—which did retain a federal guarantee of coverage—said, "It was midnight, we were still in the writing process. I was not able to focus on welfare."

"I thought there was probably a trade-off we had to make," Romer said. "I went with it because we were kind of approaching this as a package—Medicaid, welfare, job training."

Vermont Gov. Howard Dean (D) who had raised a last-minute storm over Republican plans to allow states to turn the school lunch program into a block grant, felt he couldn't vote no on the welfare bill after Republicans had caved in to his demands to preserve the program intact.

"I voted for it. I am not backing away from it," said Dean. "But it's clear the Republicans got the upper hand on welfare and the Democrats got the upper hand on Medicaid."

Staff writer Helen Dewar contributed to this report.

For Now, It's Madame Speaker

Morella Elected to Fill Gingrich's Role During Break in House Act

By John E. Yang
Washington Post Staff Writer

It's *House Speaker* Constance A. Morella (R-Md.)—for the time being, at least.

While House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) was busy rehearsing his lines for an upcoming episode of "Murphy Brown" in Burbank, Calif., Tuesday night, Morella was taking the oath of office as House speaker pro tempore in the House chamber.

She was elected to serve as speaker during the current congressional break, while Gingrich is out of town through Feb. 27, because of a House rule that requires the speaker to open House sessions at least every fourth day.

"This is Speaker Morella calling," Morella jokingly began a telephone conversation yesterday.

Outlining the agenda for her speakership, Morella declared: "We will have no more government shutdowns. We will have the budget for '96 done and then move on to the budget for '97. We'll take care of the environment, education and Medicare."

"Any requests?" she inquired after taking a breath. Of course, Morella, a Montgomery County moderate who voted against her own party's majority more often than any other House Republican, doesn't have quite that much power.

The House had planned to adjourn during the current congressional break, but can't now that the Senate has refused to go along. Neither the House nor the Senate may adjourn without the agreement of the other. Since the Republicans took con-

trol of the House, Morella routinely has been given authority during congressional recesses to carry out the speaker's duty of signing bills before they go to the White House. It is her signature, for instance, that is on the legislation overhauling federal regulation of the telecommunications industry.

But this is the first time she has been formally elected to the position and sworn in. "No votes against me at all," she pointed out. True, but Rep. Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.) was the only other lawmaker present at the time.

Will there be an orderly transfer of power at the end of the month?

"Power is a heady thing," Morella said with a laugh. "If it's used well, it should be preserved. So, I don't know."

Cover Story

WILL SCHOOLS EVER GET BETTER?

Enrollments are up, money is tight—but there's hope

Americans are fed up with their public schools. Businesses complain that too many job applicants can't read, write, or do simple arithmetic. Parents fear that the schools have become violent cesspools where gangs run amok and that teachers are more concerned with their pensions than their classrooms. Economists fret that a weak school system is hurting the ability of the U.S. to compete in the global economy. And despite modest improvements in test scores, U.S. students still rank far behind most of their international peers in science and math.

And the woes of public schools may be about to get even deeper. Over the rest of the decade, the nation's schools will face a financial crunch that will be far worse than almost anyone had projected. Tight budgets will mean overcrowded classrooms, less individual attention, deferred maintenance, and elimination of such "frills" as music, art, and sports. And schools will have difficulty paying for the computers and other information technology needed to prepare young Americans for the new workplace.

At the root of this school squeeze is an enrollment boom that has caught educators by surprise. Originally, the student population was supposed to rise by some 3 million students in the 1990s (chart). Instead, immigration and higher-than-expected birthrates have fueled a student rush that will add more

Public schools have frittered away vast sums without much visible improvement in student performance



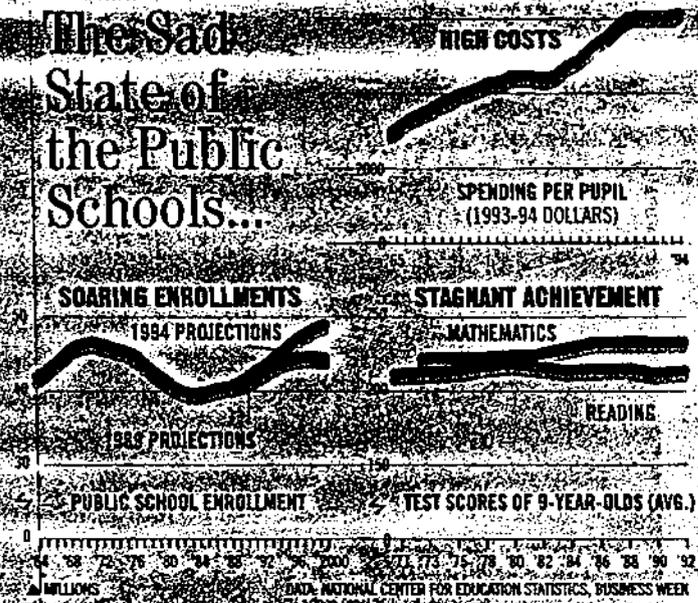
than 7 million students to the schools by the year 2000, with more to come after that. The school population is rising as fast as it did during the baby-boom years of the 1960s.

But this is not the 1960s, and overcrowded school systems can't expect big wads of tax dollars to bail them out. There's no help in sight from Congress, where Republicans have already proposed cutting federal spending on education. And times are tight on the state and local level as well: Schools already take more than one-third of state and local spending on goods and services, and taxpayers are increasingly unwilling to pour billions more into a system that is widely perceived as having failed.

Indeed, the schools are in large part responsible for their own financial problems. Only 52% of every school dollar actually gets into the classroom in a typical large school district, according to Bruce Cooper of Fordham University, working with the accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand (chart, page 67). And the schools have frittered away vast sums without much visible improvement in student performance. Per-pupil expenditures, adjusted for inflation, have risen more than 25% over the past 10 years. "A lot of money being spent in the schools is wasted," says Eric A. Hanushek, an education economist at the University of Rochester. "What we do know is the problem of inefficient use of resources seems to be everywhere."



The Sad State of the Public Schools...



...And What Can Be Done

Like the private sector, the public schools need to focus on boosting productivity and quality without raising costs. That means:

- Better information about how money is being spent today.
- Shifting more money into the classroom, where learning actually takes place.
- Using physical facilities and teachers more productively.
- Encouraging the creation of charter schools and other alternatives to the current system in order to increase competition.

If there is a problem with bloated and inefficient government, public education must be a big part of it. The country spends nearly \$270 billion a year on public elementary and secondary education, making that one of the largest government expenditures (table, page 66). And the 6 million people working for the public schools account for about 30% of all civilian government employment.

SYSTEM OVERLOAD School rolls are growing far faster than expected

Schools, long used to speaking the language of education—curriculum, test scores, standards—need to start talking about the issues of cost and efficiency. U.S. corporations have become more productive by getting rid of needless layers of management and focusing instead on improving efficiency on the factory floor or the back office. In the same way, public schools have to get more of their funds to the place where the process of learning actually occurs: the classroom. "One of the key concepts shared between the best schools and the best companies is a clear focus on the customer," says Katherine M. Hudson, chief executive of W. H. Brady Co., a Milwaukee manufacturer. "In the schools, that's the student."

Public education can benefit from the hard lessons learned by U.S. corporations in recent years. For one, it's now drummed into the bones of every successful corporate manager that productivity and quality cannot be improved without accurate information about current operations. But that's a place where the schools fall down badly. The vast majority

of school districts cannot answer the obvious question: How much money is actually getting to the classroom? "We keep pumping in more and more money, but we don't know where it goes when it gets into the system," says Cooper. "It's like swinging an ax in the dark."

The second lesson from the private sector is the importance of competition, which pushes schools to innovate and to break down rigid regulations and work rules. That can mean a voucher system, as in Milwaukee, where low-income parents can get money to send their children to private school (page 70). Or it can mean allowing parents, teachers, and organizations such as universities to set up "charter" schools—new public schools, but outside the existing bureaucracy. A new study by economist Caroline M. Hoxby of Harvard University shows that the availability of more school choices can lead to lower spending and higher student achievement. Indeed, competition can accomplish the goal of improving education without the need for top-down standards or rules.

BREAKING POINT. And the schools must learn to make better use of their physical and human resources, just as Corporate America has. Rather than building expensive new schools, overcrowded school districts need to consider alternatives such as shifting to year-round classes or using converted surplus office or retail space. And the almost 3 million teachers in the public school systems can be used more effectively. For example, educational research shows clearly that spending on early education can pay off big—yet high schools still have an average pupil-teacher ratio 19% lower than ele-

PHOTOGRAPH BY ED KASHI, CHART BY ROB COYLER

Cover Story



mentary schools. "We need to think about using those teaching resources differently," says Lawrence O. Picus, an education specialist at the University of Southern California.

Certainly, business as usual is no longer an option. The combination of soaring enrollments and tight finances means that pupil-teacher ratios are on the rise for the first time in the postwar era. And the school squeeze will hit some states harder than others. A new analysis by BUSINESS WEEK shows that the states facing the toughest school squeeze over the rest of the decade are California, New Jersey, and Maryland (chart, page 67). These are states where weak economic growth is combined with fast-growing student populations.

As enrollments rise, schools across the country will come under increasing pressure to curtail spending. Take Prince William County, Va., where hopes for a new source of tax revenue were dashed when Walt Disney Co. abandoned plans to build a historical theme park there. Student enrollments have risen by 12% over the past five years even as the county's economy has slowed, forcing the county to cut its school budget by 6% over the next three years. "We're now at the point where cuts will start to affect our instructional programs," says Robert A. Ferrebee, associate superintendent for management at the county school district. Pupil-teacher ratios have already risen, and some other cuts being contemplated include shortening the high school day, imposing user fees for high school sports, and cutting out elementary music.

"PRETTY GRIM." Some areas have become the victims of their own success. Vancouver, Wash., a largely blue-collar town of some 65,000, has become a mecca for young families, drawn by the plethora of jobs at Hewlett-Packard Co. and other high-tech plants in the area. As a result, the school population had skyrocketed, compelling the town to spend nearly \$60 million in 1990 to build three new schools and renovate five old ones. By 1994, the new schools were already overcrowded, and voters approved an additional \$135 million in school bonds. But with enrollment expected to rise 30% over the next seven years and the state school-construction fund running dry, that may not be enough. "Even with the financial commitment the community has already made, we can hardly keep up," says Tom Hagley, assistant to Van-

cover's superintendent of schools. "We're bursting at the seams."

And a flood of immigrants is imposing enormous costs on the school system in places such as Southern California, New York City, and South Florida. For example, school enrollment in Dade County, Fla.—which includes Miami and Miami Beach—has gone up by 40% over the past 10 years, far exceeding the growth in population. The reason? The retirees who once made up a big piece of the county's population are "re-retiring" to locales farther north and being replaced by young families, including many immigrants. As a result, Dade's school budget has soared 60% since 1989.

The financial problems for the schools go far beyond the enrollment growth. Many school districts across the country have deferred essential maintenance on their buildings. According to a new report from the General Accounting Office, the U.S. would have to spend \$112 billion to repair or upgrade schools. That's certainly true in Escondido Union School District in northern San Diego County, where 30% of the district's students are in portable classrooms—relocatable double-wide trailers with leaky roofs and holes in the floors. "It's pretty grim here when it rains," says Jane Gawronski, superintendent of the district. Nevertheless, on Mar. 7, Escondido voters rejected a \$52.5 million bond issue that would have paid for renovations and new buildings.

In addition, schools face the expensive prospect of moving into the computer age. That includes not simply the comput-

SQUEEZE PLAY Makeshift classrooms in Vancouver, Wash.

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How Public Education Costs Stack Up

Spending by all levels of government, fiscal year 1995*

BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

HEALTH CARE \$450

EDUCATION 345

ELEMENTARY/HIGH SCHOOL 267

POSTSECONDARY 78

SOCIAL SECURITY 336

DEFENSE 272

CRIMINAL JUSTICE 100

HIGHWAYS 80

*Estimated. SOURCE: U.S. DATA, GAO, COMMERCE DEPARTMENT, BUSINESS WEEK

PHOTOGRAPH BY ED KASHI

ers—which the schools can often get relatively cheaply—but the wiring and telephone lines required to support them and the space to put them in. And as Corporate America has found, the continuing costs of software and technical support for information technology far exceed the initial investment. "It's tough enough for schools to get the initial money, let alone plan for upgrading," says Darryl Toney, who manages Oracle Systems Corp.'s educational programs.

BLACK HOLES. The school squeeze is forcing districts to make hard choices as to where to spend their money. In recent years, public policy—on both the federal and state level—has emphasized helping disadvantaged students and districts. Out of the \$20 billion that the federal government provides for elementary and secondary education, the bulk goes for disadvantaged or handicapped students. And federal law requires schools to provide costly special education to a growing number of students.

Also, prodded by the courts, New Jersey, Texas, Michigan, Missouri, and others have passed reforms in school financing to bring up spending in the poorest school districts, sometimes at the expense of more well-to-do areas. For example, Michigan recently shifted from relying on local property taxes to finance schools—which favors the high-income districts—to using a statewide sales tax. The state also capped spending growth in the richer districts to give their poorer cousins a chance to catch up. Birmingham School District, one of the state's wealthiest districts, will only be able to boost per-pupil spending by 1.6% this year, while Shelby Public Schools in low-income Oceana County will

Where the School Squeeze Will Hurt the Most

The School Squeeze Index measures the projected gap between the growth in school spending and the growth in real personal income, 1994-2000*



*Assuming a 2% annual increase in real spending per pupil
DATA: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS, DRUMCRAW-HILL, BUSINESS WEEK

be able to raise spending by 6%. Still, while more equitable financing may be a good start, it's definitely not enough. Over the past 20 years, a virtual army of academic researchers has examined the question of whether spending more money raises student performance. The result? At best, simply throwing money at the schools has a marginal impact. The money has to be spent well for it to matter.

Indeed, many voters believe that their school dollars are going into a black hole. "Virtually all school districts lack credibility inside and outside the district," says Sheree Speakman, partner at Coopers & Lybrand.

So with money tight, the first priority is to get control of spending. As a result, more and more school districts are moving to "site-based reporting," which was first developed by Cooper of Fordham University and is now being nationally distributed by Coopers & Lybrand and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This accounting system shows where the money is going: instruction vs. support services, or central administration vs. individual schools (chart).

Site-based reporting has been applied to more than 50 school districts nationwide, including New York City, where it showed that out of total spending of almost \$8,000 per pupil per year, only \$44 was budgeted for classroom materials. And the new system gives school districts benchmarks for seeing where their expenditures are excessive or falling short.

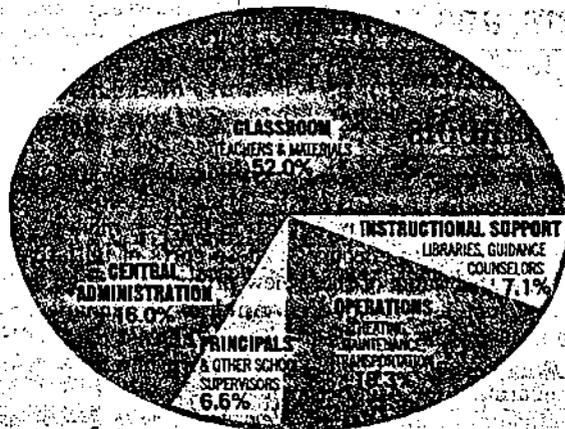
For example, when the Nashville public schools crunched the numbers, they discovered—much to their surprise—that they were spending 24% of their budget on operations such as maintenance, compared with 18% for a typical large school district (chart). The result? A program to bring down operating costs. Now the district is using site-based reporting to help set spending policy. "We have a goal of increasing yearly the percentage of our operational budget that goes into direct instructional spending," says Edward Taylor, assistant superintendent for the Metro Nashville Public Schools.

FEW REWARDS. The new system also shows what parents have always suspected: Even within the same district, some schools do a much better job than others in using money wisely. One school may get 30% to the classroom, while just six blocks away, another school gets 80% to the classroom. With this information, "you can target the children who aren't getting the education," says Cooper. "You can do that kind of precision bombing because you know where the money is."

And the frontline production workers—the teachers—may also benefit, if the improved information is used to increase the amount spent in the classroom. That's why teacher unions are cautiously supportive of the new system. "This will get us a long way toward understanding how to be more efficient," says Jewell Gould, director of research for the American Federation of Teachers.

Certainly, current funding can be used more efficiently. For example, school districts often put up expensive new buildings when existing space could be used better. About

Where The Education Dollar Is Going



DATA: BRUCE COOPER, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, COOPERS & LYBRAND

1,200 schools nationwide—mainly in California—now run year-round, increasing student capacity by 30% to 50%. And in Minnesota, some new charter schools are saving money by sharing facilities with the local housing authority

Cover Story

or recreation center and by reusing existing retail space.

And teaching resources can also be directed more effectively. It's well-known, for example, that the early years of schooling are critical: A student who slips behind when reading is being taught has little chance to catch up. However, most school districts direct far more resources to high schools, with their athletic programs and specialized courses. That's why Missouri structured its aid program so that districts have a financial incentive to reduce class size in the lower grades.

And within schools, new programs are showing how to reallocate existing money to better uses. For example, Success for All, a program developed by Robert Slavin of Johns Hopkins University, uses intensive tutoring to keep students from falling behind in the early grades. Now being used in about 200 schools in 20 states, it costs about \$1,500 per student—but Slavin points out that poor districts, which need the program the most, can cover most of those costs by using funds that schools already get from the federal government for disadvantaged kids.

But even when such programs work, they are hard to sustain, because they typically demand increased effort from teachers and principals and more parental involvement. Moreover, schools have few incentives, financial or otherwise, for better performance. "People who do a good job get no rewards, compared to people who do a mediocre or poor job," says Hanushek.

BUREAUCRACY BLASTERS. One possibility is to create alternatives to the current public schools and let competition create pressure for both educational and financial reform. At one extreme are vouchers allowing students to attend the private or public school of their choice. The only voucher system now in use is in Milwaukee. But five other states are currently considering similar programs, focused mainly on low-income families. "When targeted at low-income families, folks who had been wary—minorities and Democrats—have been coming out of the woodwork," according to Jeanne Allen, president of the Washington-based Center for Education Reform, a pro-voucher group.

But proposals to use vouchers often stir up enormous political opposition, as does privatization—allowing private profit-making companies to run public schools. The fear is that private schools would skim the best students off, leaving the public schools with the dregs.

Instead, an increasing number of states—including Minnesota, Michigan, and Massachusetts—are encouraging a more limited form of competition by allowing parents, teachers, and other groups to set up "charter" schools. A charter

school is a public school, in the sense that it has to meet certain standards and not discriminate in admissions. At the same time, it's independent of the traditional school system.

Charter schools typically receive funding from the state for each pupil. But because they must attract students who are not obligated to attend, they have an incentive to spend the money in ways that will actually improve education. And charter schools also benefit by running leaner. "We can get by" on less money, says Nancy Miller, a teacher at the Minnesota Country School, a charter school in its first year in LeSeuer, Minn., "because we don't build up all the bureaucracy traditional public schools do." With no administrators, Minnesota Country School can afford to spend more on new technology.

"INCENTIVES." And charter schools can also serve as a catalyst, pushing the existing public schools to offer new programs and improve existing ones. That's what happened in Boston last year, with the passage of a state law allowing charter schools. Faced with the unsettling prospect of competition, the Boston teacher's union agreed to the creation of new "pilot" schools, free of union and school board rules. "Charter schools provide new incentives for school districts to become more responsive and entrepreneurial," says Joseph Nathan, director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota.

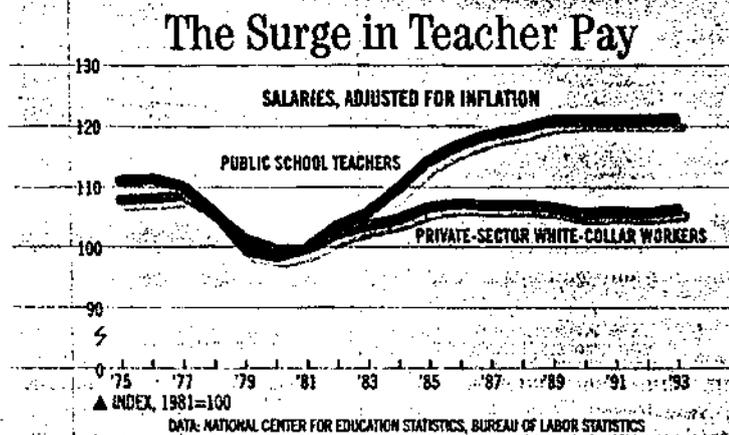
Competitive pressure may also lead to increased teacher productivity, which is critical in light of the rise in teacher salaries (chart). That's what's happening in Wilkensburg, Pa., a suburb of Pittsburgh, where Alternative Public Schools, a private corporation, has offered to run an elementary school at the same per-pupil cost but for longer hours and more days per year. The counterproposal from the local teacher's union: They would work 10 additional days a year, without any increase in pay.

In some cases, entire school districts are remaking themselves. Take Calvert County Public Schools in Maryland, where enrollment is skyrocketing at a time when state funding is tight. The traditional school model won't work, according to William Moloney, superintendent of the district. Instead, the district plans to restructure its elementary schools: Teachers will stay with the same kids two years, and schools will strive for a climate of work, discipline, and values. "Those things don't cost a lot, but they're tremendously important," says Moloney. "These

changes will bring us more education for less money."

The U.S. needs to encourage these sorts of initiatives. Is there a risk that some of these new programs will go astray? Sure. But just as beleaguered American companies were able to increase the quality and lower the cost of what they made, so, too, can the public schools learn how to provide a better education for America's children.

By Michael J. Mandel in New York, with Richard A. Melcher in Milwaukee, Dori Jones Yang in Seattle, Mike McNamee in Washington, and bureau reports



An increasing number of states are allowing parents, teachers, and others to set up "charter" schools that compete with traditional schools



MILWAUKEE'S LESSON PLAN

It's aggressively reinventing its schools

Neering the end of a typical 12-hour day, Howard Fuller slumps wearily in his office chair. But as he begins to talk, he sits taller, and his eyes shine. Two decades ago, he was organizing poor workers in the South. Today, Fuller is still crusading—as superintendent of Milwaukee's public schools. On this recent day, he has met with the district's 157 principals, lunched with executives to discuss funding, and ended the afternoon in a heated exchange with parents and teachers of a community school. "As I got older," says Fuller, 54, "I realized I couldn't change the world, so I decided to work on the lives of children. The struggle is to make sure all kids get the best education possible."

Once an outsider, Fuller now sits at the epicenter of a blaze

of reforms sweeping Milwaukee's classrooms. The nation's 15th-largest urban district is among the most aggressive systems overhauling American urban education. From Milwaukee's south side, with its ethnic stew of Hispanics and

Eastern Europeans, to the predominantly black north side, Fuller is helping principals and teachers break free of suffocating rules imposed by state and city bureaucrats. Together, they're wresting back control over school spending.

The city's educators and business leaders, meantime, have gone the furthest in the country in tying classroom learning to the labor market. In three years, the world of work will be a key piece of the curriculum from kindergarten to 12th grade. Blue chips such as A. O. Smith Corp. and Allen-Bradley Co. help train teachers in total quality concepts. Grades and test scores are inching up—all this in tightfisted times. "Milwaukee is a model for involving the private sector and other community groups," says Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a network of big-city schools. "It's one of the most risk-taking districts in the country."

Indeed, while politicians and pundits make much of vouchers, Milwaukee is the only place in the country that actually has such a program. The experiment, which uses public funds for private school, is limited, open to only a fraction of Milwaukee's students. But just the same, it forces some public

RISK-TAKER

Superintendent Fuller with Milwaukee kids

schools to compete for students and resources. Diverting money away from beleaguered public schools is plenty controversial, but Governor Tommy G. Thompson, a leading Republican reformer, wants to spread vouchers throughout the state—even to religious schools. "We need to expand the definition of public school," says Thompson. "They should serve the public, not necessarily be run by the government."

Milwaukee's innovations shed light on the way forward for U.S. schools as they face shrinking resources and growing enrollments. After two decades of failed reforms, educators have learned at least two lessons: One is that money alone, while important, doesn't help children learn and succeed. The other is that central administrations must loosen their grip so reform can bubble up from the classrooms and communities. Like Corporate America, schools will have to decentralize, learn to compete, and be held accountable. "We have a bureaucratic structure that functioned in an old Industrial Age," says Fuller. "Industry has thrown it away, but we still have it."

EARNINGS GAP. The stakes for Milwaukee, as for the nation, are enormous. A city of 630,000 on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee is a place where solid-paying manual jobs in breweries and machine shops have given way to a more diverse workforce. While the city boasts sophisticated manufacturing and prosperous financial services, these high-skilled, high-paid jobs are beyond the reach of a growing segment of the population. On any given day, more than one in five high school students fail to show up for class, and companies find that more and more graduates can't handle basic math and writing, let alone computers. "That kind of performance is unacceptable," says Robert J. O'Toole, chairman of auto-parts maker A. O. Smith.

property taxes to state general revenues. That will leave the state picking up an extra \$1.2 billion for schools next year, or two-thirds of the total, up from 51%. If the state's strong economy turns down, "it will be a major fiscal challenge to meet our school-funding obligations with all of the other priorities in state government," worries Mark D. Bugher, Wisconsin's secretary of revenue.

The city's history of segregation also has taken a toll on the schools. Two out of three students are bused to school, the result of a 1976 court order. But race relations remain volatile. And some schools must cope with gangs, neo-Nazis, and warring Serbian and Croatian students. Busing's other legacy: It has destroyed neighborhood schools and left thousands of parents far from their children's classrooms.

Still, many in Milwaukee are cautiously optimistic. For that, they credit Fuller, who was appointed in 1991. Fuller spent much of the '60s and early '70s using a Swahili name—Owusu Sadauki—while he organized hospital workers in North Carolina.

After coming home to Milwaukee in the 1980s, he held several state jobs. While a college administrator, he agitated for a separate black school system that would shift power to parents and upgrade black education.

The choice of Fuller as superintendent turned out to be a canny one. A product of Milwaukee's public schools and its tough housing projects, he was also an outsider with no teaching experience. While the teachers union and its supporters on the school board are often at odds with Fuller, most Milwaukeeans are cheering him on. "He has given most of the teachers, principals, and companies some hope that there's something salvageable," says Ted A. Hutton, of electronics maker Allen-Bradley.

ENTERPRISE ZONE

Kids' business displays at a school trade fair



A Snapshot of Milwaukee's Schools

The nation's 15th-largest urban school system at a glance

DATA: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; METROPOLITAN MILWAUKEE ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCE; MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS; COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS; EDUCATION DEPT.

• 103,000 Kids

• 157 Schools

• 59% Black

• 24% White

• 11% Hispanic

• 65% of kids from poverty-level families

How Milwaukee Stacks Up

	MILWAUKEE	NATIONAL
COMPOSITE ACHIEVEMENT SCORE	18.9	20.8
COLLEGE BOUND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES	60%	59%
PER CAPITA SPENDING	\$7,031	\$6,100

*Estimated for 1994-95

From the start, Fuller began mapping a vision of Milwaukee's schools as semi-autonomous units that would compete for kids and buy and sell services from a streamlined administration. Fuller has been giving principals some say over picking teachers. He's also letting schools control more of their funds. Before, the central administration had power over a school's entire budget. Now, it controls roughly 80%, and Fuller wants to go further. "You have to break up the monopoly," he says. "All of the adults have been organized to protect their interests. You run into union contracts, board mandates, state mandates, and the tremendous intangible—the way it's always been done."

Fuller also has moved quickly to toughen up the curriculum

TOOD BUCHANAN

Cover Story



and to hold teachers and principals accountable. He laid down 20 achievement goals that range from 90% high school attendance to above-average reading scores for 85% of third graders. Last fall, he started ranking each school in an annual district "report card." For those schools that repeatedly come up short, Fuller and the school board are threatening to close them down. The pace is slow, but some progress is being made. Fifth graders are beating their targets in writing, and third graders in reading. High schoolers' grade-point averages inched up from a miserable D+ in 1991 to C- in 1994, while dropout rates for entering seniors fell from 17.4% in 1993 to 15.4% in 1994.

Fuller gives his principals unprecedented freedom to experiment. And Alexander Hamilton High School principal Clark Lovell is taking full advantage. Part disciplinarian, part innovator, Lovell labors to hold together the raucous mix of ethnic groups in his 1,900-student school on Milwaukee's southwest side. He sets high standards and is unrelenting. "I consider this school to be different," Lovell asserts. "I expect my kids to be above average."

Lovell is pioneering what's now known as the school-to-work concept: linking learning to the work world. Lovell and his teachers are rearranging the curriculum to eliminate rigid barriers between such subjects as math and history, and they're encouraging students to work in teams. He also is creating a series of specialties—business and finance, arts and sciences—and is soliciting support from local institutions.

As part of Milwaukee's school-to-work project, Firststar Bank Milwaukee helped design the curriculum for the four-year busi-

EYE OF THE STORM

Legislator Williams helped make vouchers a reality

ness and finance cluster, and its managers will teach some classes. For students who complete the coursework, Firststar will guarantee employment; for those who go on to college, it will provide summer jobs. This is what President Bill Clinton had in mind when he helped push school-to-work legislation last year. Out of the \$100 million in seed money for such programs, Milwaukee has received \$2.9 million.

TVs AND SAVINGS BONDS. Conceding that the sheer beauty of learning, even in this new environment, may not be enough to lure all students, Lovell is dangling other enticements. To get kids to show up and then do well, he's handing out prizes, from color TVs to savings bonds, to top performers. About 400 kids are recognized every term, and \$5,000 in gift certificates and bonds—donated by local merchants—is handed out annually.

Lovell thinks the prizes are a key reason that grade-point averages have risen from C- to C+ in the past 18 months and that 60% fewer students were counted as tardy. Parents like the prizes, too. In a recent survey, they rated the three-year-old program as one of the features they liked

most about Hamilton, even though some parents and students deride the program as bribery.

Across town, at Silver Spring Elementary School, the incentives are more sophisticated. There, each class has set up a "company"—among them, Candyland USA and Paper, Pencil & Gift Co. Students are learning how to interview for executive positions and how to buy and sell. In January, fifth graders opened the First Student Run Bank, taking in \$1,000 in deposits from fellow students. The school's business patron, Associated Bank Milwaukee (a grown-up bank), provides a savings account to each student who deposits \$10. "We teach

Milwaukee's Report Card

Schools superintendent Howard Fuller has laid down tough, new goals for the public schools. Here's how they're doing:

GOAL/GRADE	ACTION PLAN	STATUS
RAISE ACADEMIC STANDARDS C+	More rigorous requirements and testing. New emphasis on writing.	High school grade average still C-, but dropout rate is falling
STREAMLINE BUREAUCRACY B-	Consolidate 20 departments into 6. Give principals more control over funds and staff	Schools don't have total control over curriculum or hiring teachers
FOSTER INNOVATION B+	Reduce bureaucratic control, freeing principals and teachers to experiment	More communities running own schools. Vouchers in limited use
INVOLVE BUSINESS A	Bring local companies in as partner in overhaul. Tap expertise of executives	Dozens of companies offering counseling, money, and jobs

DATA: BUSINESS WEEK

the kids how to put money in the bank and how to save," says Merinda Carter, the 10-year-old elected president by her peers and who runs the bank out of a storage closet. "We're learning about what we have to do later in life."

Cover Story

America's road to school reform is littered with ideas killed off by bureaucrats and union leaders. That's why so many reform efforts focus on setting up schools outside the system. The charter concept, which allows communities to form schools from scratch, is catching on: Authorized in 11 states, charter schools usually operate independently of school boards and free of union contracts. Wisconsin has a more limited charter law: A testament to the clout of the teachers union, the law forbids abrogation of contracts and authorizes only 10 new schools statewide. Governor Thompson, spurred on by Fuller, is pushing legislation that would lift such restrictions.

In the meantime, Milwaukee has created its own charterlike school, Hi-Mount Community School. It sprang to life last

There's little evidence so far that Milwaukee's experiment in vouchers is a miracle cure—nor is there evidence that it's poison for the public-school system

year in a hulking red-brick building on the west side. Hi-Mount is run by a 20-member community board comprising parents, businesspeople, and union leaders, which has broad powers to hire and fire the principal and teachers—although the school board retains some jurisdiction. And the community board controls nearly two-thirds of Hi-Mount's budget.

union isn't the enemy. The union says it is now talking with 20 schools seeking various contract waivers, à la Hi-Mount. But in Milwaukee and elsewhere, the union draws the line at privatization and vouchers. "These cut at the heart of the union," Carmen says.

In 1991, an unusual collection of supporters—Republican and Democrat, rich and poor—pushed through a state voucher law. It allows up to 1.5% of Milwaukee's student population, about 1,500 kids, to apply for places at 12 private schools. For each student taken in, 830 this school year, the state pays \$3,209 a year. The rest is paid by parents or through fund-raising.

TWISTS AND TURNS. Few people are dispassionate about vouchers. Annette "Polly" Williams, a Democratic state legislator who helped push the voucher law, insists that the public system is nearly hopeless. "I will not waste my time trying to change the system," she says. "This is all about saving children." Opponents are equally emphatic. Insists school board President Bills: Vouchers are a "smokescreen for reduced funding of public education."

But while the adults debate, Milwaukee's experiment provides little evidence so far that children gain or lose simply by changing to private school. John Witte, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who has studied the voucher program since it started, found that in academic achievement, measured since 1990, the children who went to private schools performed no better than those in public schools—although parental satisfaction is much higher.

Several factors may be responsible for this. Witte points out that it is wrong to assume that private schools will always turn out better students. He also notes that many "voucher kids" came from far poorer families than the average in public school, and that many of them had been underperformers. Witte's final word on vouchers: "There's no miracle here, but there's no devastation of public education, either."

Milwaukee's experience shows the twists and turns a genuine effort at reform can take. When all the players—parents, teachers, principals, business leaders—come together, things can happen. Along with many others, Fuller is working hard to keep Milwaukee's fragile coalition intact. He knows it can break apart, perhaps in a power struggle with the teachers union if he pushes too hard. But the reforms he has helped unleash will outlive his tenure. There will always be principals such as Rose Guajardo, who has turned Kagei Elementary School, in one of Milwaukee's most impoverished, gang-ridden neighborhoods, into one of the best performers in Wisconsin. "This is not a job," she says, "it's a mission." For teachers, parents, and principals across the country, turning around America's schools is nothing less.

By Richard A. Melcher in Milwaukee,
with Michele Galen in New York



UNION LEADER Carmen says teachers aren't the enemy

Winning over the teachers was key. Previous attempts to bring together teachers and administrators had fallen apart over turf battles. This time, Fuller and Mary Bills, the school board president, encouraged Hi-Mount principal Spencer Korte and a group of teachers to give the union a big role on the board. The planners also sold their idea to rank-and-file teachers at Hi-Mount. The sales pitch emphasized that the union contract would still hold but that teachers would gain a say in the budget process and in the design of a new curriculum. Once teachers bought the idea, the union offered up its own compromise, freeing the board to determine staffing and to alter class schedules. "Those are revolutionary concepts for a teachers' union," says Sam Carmen, executive director of the Milwaukee Teachers Education Assn.

Carmen points to Hi-Mount as proof that the teachers