

EDUC. - PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT

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MESSAGE

At the PTA Gala ^{Founder's Day} remarks, the President could approach the need for standards of excellence in our schools from yet another complimentary direction. He could endorse the new PTA Standards to Encourage Parent Involvement (enclosed) and reinforce his message about more rigorous student standards and testing.

He also could talk in a new way about HOPE/10,000 deduction in terms of what it means to a parent and teacher of middle school and high school students - giving them hope, a reason to study hard and make the grade -- stay out of trouble and on the right track.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 1997

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW STANDARDS TO BOLSTER PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

WASHINGTON—The National PTA has developed standards to encourage parent involvement in their children's education. In a handbook released today, the National PTA highlighted six standards it believes are essential for any school or program involving parents and families. The standards are included in a guidebook that is designed to help educators and program administrators incorporate parents in their child's learning process.

"We know from three decades of research that children with involved parents do better in school and are more successful in life," said National PTA President Joan Dykstra. "Our organization is taking the much-needed step of identifying what factors are effective components of consistent, high quality parent involvement programs."

The six factors identified by the National PTA are:

- Regular, two-way, meaningful communication between home and school
- Promotion and support of parenting skills
- Active parent participation in student learning
- Parents as welcome volunteer partners in schools
- Parents as full partners in school decisions that affect children and families
- Outreach to the community for resources to strengthen schools

(more)

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

- Standard I:** Communicating—Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Standard II:** Parenting—Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Standard III:** Student Learning—Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Standard IV:** Volunteering—Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- Standard V:** School Decision Making and Advocacy—Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Standard VI:** Collaborating with Community—Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

National PTA

Speech by
Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

Release of PTA National Standards
for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

National Press Club, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 1997

Good afternoon. Thank you Joan Dykstra for that kind introduction. It is a great pleasure to be here today with you and so many other concerned people who are working hard to strengthen our schools by increasing the involvement of the parents and communities around them.

Parent and community involvement are essential ingredients - perhaps the most crucial components -- of building stronger schools and increasing student achievement. I congratulate you and the PTA not only for the standards you are releasing today in support of this goal, but also for 100 years of service to the nation. And what a service it has been. You are one reason why a public education today is more important than ever as a foundation of our democracy.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to accompany President Clinton to Glenbrook North High School just outside of Chicago. There, he discussed the critical role that education plays in helping children achieve strong and successful futures in today's complex economy.

He reemphasized the message of his inaugural address that he plans to focus during his second term on expanding educational opportunities for all children through the development of a number of initiatives, including:

- the Hope Scholarship tax cut to make the first two years of college universally available to those who work hard and make the grade;
- \$5 billion to serve as an incentive (up to 50 percent of interest) to help local communities address the growing need for school construction and renovation;
- giving parents more public school choices and supporting the start up of 3,000 charter schools; and
- the "America Reads Challenge" which will marshal the skills of 30,000 reading specialists to

mobilize one million volunteer tutors nationwide -
- all to ensure that every child can read well by
3rd grade.

Each of these initiatives will help our nation reach standards of excellence in education. Because we are learning that without standards of excellence by which we can measure ourselves, American students will fall behind.

Last year, for instance, educators from around the world tested half a million students in math and science, including 40,000 in the United States. And we found that our 8th graders are above the world average in math but below it in science. This is not good enough. And we can -- and are -- doing better.

In Illinois, for instance, 20 school districts took this same international test and came out tied for first place in the world in science, and tied for second in the world in math.

How did they achieve this? By having high expectations, by creating vigorous academic standards for students, supporting quality teachers and schools, offering more challenging classes, and promoting greater parent and community involvement in our schools.

This is why today's announcement of these national standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs is so welcome and well-timed. These standards offer schools, education leaders, and parents a baseline with which to build and strengthen communications and participation between school and home -- communications which are integral to the learning process.

Decades of research at the U.S. Department of Education and elsewhere conclusively demonstrate the link between successful schools and increased parent and community involvement in those schools. The recent international reading literacy study demonstrated this principle yet again. It found that where parent involvement in a school is low, the classroom average was 46 points below the national average, and where involvement is high, the classroom score was 28 points above the national average.

This kind of direct correlation is one reason why two years ago at the U.S. Department of Education we initiated the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education with the

strong support and cooperation of the PTA and many other family, community, religious and business groups. Today, I am happy to say that nearly 2,500 such organizations have signed on as partners and are working in communities to strengthen schools and build partnerships.

The standards being released today by the PTA are an important means of increasing this cooperation and building the vital parent, family and community involvement that makes strong schools. These standards will help hold schools accountable for involving parents in the education of their children.

I would only add that while the role of the schools in developing this partnership is a crucial one, it is only a part of the equation. Parents and communities have a mutual responsibility to become involved in schools and to open and carry on dialogues. It is this kind of partnership -- compacts for mutual responsibility -- that we encourage every principal and teacher to develop with the parents at their schools.

These National Standards for Family Involvement are about getting American families more involved in our public schools--bringing people in to lift up the public schools. These standards are in direct contrast to vouchers, which take needed monies and needed families out of public schools. That is why I am so strong for these standards for parent involvement and so much against vouchers. Now is the time to invest our time and money to make our schools better.

I congratulate the PTA on your hard work in developing these standards and I look forward to working with you in the future. Strong families and strong schools make strong communities. Strong communities make a strong nation!

Thank you so much.



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Serving All Elementary and Middle School Principals

Statement of Carole L. Kennedy
Principal of New Haven Elementary School
President, National Association of
Elementary School Principals
National Press Club

January 23, 1997

Joan (Dykstra) has spoken to you as a parent and as the president of the National Parent Teacher Association. Secretary Riley will speak to you as a parent, grandparent, and as the head of the U.S. Department of Education. I speak to you "from the trenches." As an elementary school principal, I'm constantly reminded of the importance of parents being involved in meaningful ways in the education of their children.

At New Haven Elementary in Columbia, Missouri, we *live* the research on family involvement. We know that children whose parents are participating in their schooling have better attendance, have more positive attitudes toward school, and achieve at higher levels. We believe that it is the responsibility of the school to reach out to families and build the bridge that will result in the kind of partnership that makes a difference for our kids.

The research is clear, consistent in its findings, and has stood the test of time. However, translating research into practice is not always easy for educators.

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