

everybody thought we would win the cold war as a matter of course—1964.

Four years later, when I finished college in '68, we had riots in our cities. It was 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection because the country was divided on Vietnam. And before you knew it, the longest expansion in American history was over, and we had failed to meet the large, long-term challenges of America.

Actually, I think we have fewer internal and external crises now than we did then. But the challenge is the same, and because we have fewer crises, the responsibility is greater. I believe our party's had a solid economic policy, a solid technology policy, a solid education policy, a good crime policy, a good welfare reform policy. But we need you. We need more and more partnerships. We need to keep working to create the conditions and give people the tools to do more and better. But we've got to be guided by the right vision. And the right vision is not a tax cut so big that it either puts us back in a deficit or keeps us from meeting our long-term objectives.

The right vision is to have a tax cut we can afford, targeted to purposes that are needed in the context of meeting the big, long-term challenges of America. That's what I stand for. I believe that's what our party stands for. And I hope that it's one of the reasons that you're here tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:21 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Phoenix Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Robert C. Torricelli, chair, and Senator Patty Murray, vice chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the Education Writers Association in Atlanta, Georgia
April 14, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, Kit. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to be here with all of you, along with Secretary Riley and Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Adviser.

It has been over 20 years now since Dick Riley and I, as young Governors, first began to grapple with the need to reform education. It's been 17 years since the "Nation At Risk" report sounded the alarm about the state of education nationwide; over 10 years since the Education Summit in Charlottesville, which put us on a path to national action; and as Kit said, it was 10 years ago this month that I got up at 4:30 in the morning to fly to Chicago to speak to this group. I hope you'll forgive me if I don't remember exactly what I said in the fog of that early morning. [Laughter]

Doubtless, some of the veteran reporters here have been around long enough to have seen this whole fascinating drama unfold. Today I'd like to talk about the progress our public schools have made and the hard work still ahead. First I want to note something astonishing that I think everyone in this room should be proud of: 17 years after the "Nation At Risk" report, over 10 years after Charlottesville, there is still a passionate sense of national urgency about school reform, about lifting standards, improving accountability, increasing learning.

I can think of no other issue that has sustained to such an intense level of commitment from the public, elected officials, business leaders, and the press. If anything, the determination of the American people to improve our schools is greater than ever. That's a tribute to the love of our people for their children, to their understanding of the importance of education in the global information economy, to the realization that we have the largest and most diverse student body in our history, and to the enduring American belief that all our children can and must learn.

It is also a tribute to the commitment and the enterprise of education writers in cities and towns all across this country who have kept the story of education reform in the news year after year.

This intense national commitment has produced real progress. Today I am pleased to announce a new report by the Department of Education which documents the progress of the last 7 years, some of which Kit mentioned. The report makes clear that math and reading scores are rising across the country,

with some of the greatest gains in some of the most disadvantaged communities. For instance, reading scores of 9-year-olds in the highest poverty schools rose almost an entire grade level on the National Assessment of Education Progress between 1992 and 1996, reversing a downward trend.

The report also shows that 67 percent of high school graduates now go on to college, up 10 percent since 1993. This is a copy of it, and it will be available soon, and I hope all of you will read it and then distill it for the people who read you.

Clearly, we're making progress. Our young people are getting the message they need a college education to have the future of their dreams. We've tried to make those dreams more affordable, with the largest expansion of college opportunity since the G.I. bill, including the creation of the HOPE scholarship tax credit, which over 5 million families have already claimed since 1998; education IRA's; more affordable student loans, which have saved students \$8 billion—about a third of our student loan recipients are in the direct loan program now—they've saved students \$8 billion, and the taxpayers \$5 billion more. They have helped us to take the default level from over 22 percent to under 9 percent, and to triple annual loan repayment rates.

We also have more Pell grants; we're up to a million work-study slots; we've had over 150,000 young Americans earn scholarships by serving in AmeriCorps, many of them in our public schools. And the GEAR UP program is now pairing college mentors with a quarter of a million middle school students who are at risk, to prepare them for college and convince them the money will be there when they're ready to go.

College entrance exam scores are rising, even though more students from disadvantaged backgrounds are taking the test. And before the Congress this year is my proposal to provide a tax deduction for college tuition of up to \$10,000. If we can do that, along with another increase in the Pell grants and the other proposals I've mentioned, I think when we leave, Dick and I, we'll be able to say that we have truly opened the doors of 4 years of college education to all Americans.

We also see progress in the fact that about two-thirds of all of our classrooms are connected to the Internet, with the help of the E-rate program which the Vice President pioneered. That's up from only 3 percent in 1993. Ninety-five percent of our schools have at least one Internet connection, including 90 percent of our poorest schools. And I think we'll be right at 100 percent by the end of the year for not only the schools but for almost all the classrooms, "except"—and this is a big "except"—in those schools that are literally too dilapidated to be wired for the Internet.

We see progress in falling class sizes in the early grades, and we're trying to help that with our program to hire 100,000 new highly-trained teachers, 30,000 of whom have been funded, and we're trying to go to 50,000 in this year's budget. We see progress in the very large increase we've had for preschool—and I've proposed the largest in history for this year—and in the fact that 1,400 of our colleges and universities are providing volunteers for the America Reads program to help make sure all our third graders can read independently by the time they finish that year.

And we see progress in the growing public consensus about what must be done to reach our ultimate goal, providing a world-class education for every child in America. I think this consensus can be summed up in a simple phrase that has been our mission for the last 7 years: Invest more in our schools; demand more from our schools.

When I became President in 1992 the education debate in Washington, I felt, was fairly stale and predictable and unfortunately divided into what I thought were partisan camps with false choices. On the one side were those, most of them in my party, who believed that money could solve all the problems in our schools, and who feared that setting high standards and holding schools and teachers and students accountable to them would only hold back poor children, especially poor minority children.

On the other side, there were those, mostly in the other party, who fundamentally did not think the public schools were fixable and therefore didn't want to spend much money trying. Also they felt education was a State responsibility and therefore should not have

a comprehensive national response. Some of them, you'll remember, even tried to get rid of the Department of Education.

Vice President Gore and I believed both those positions were wrong. There was plenty of evidence, even then, that high levels of learning were possible in even the most difficult social and economic circumstances. The challenge was to make the school transformation going on in some schools available and active and real in all schools. And we sought to do it by investing more in our schools and demanding more from our schools.

This did not require, as some have charged even recently, micromanagement of our schools by the Department of Education. Indeed, under Secretary Riley's remarkable, steady leadership, Federal regulations on schools K through 12 have been reduced by two-thirds. In addition, we made ed-flex available to all 50 States, which makes it possible for them to reduce even further Federal regulations on the details of how Federal dollars are spent.

In 1993 we passed a new economic plan that cut hundreds of programs in order to reduce the deficit and improve the economy. But even in that harsh budget year, we boosted education spending. Over the last 7 years, we've nearly doubled investment in education and training, even as we've turned record deficits into record surpluses.

In 1994 we overhauled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, requiring States to set academic standards for what their students should know. We passed the Goals 2000 legislation, which provided States with more resources to create and implement strategies to achieve standards. Since then, we've gone from only a handful of States having standards to nearly every State with them.

Forty-eight States also have assessments in place to measure student progress in meeting those standards—although, as Kit noted, I have been unsuccessful so far in convincing the Congress that we ought to have national standards and a voluntary national test to measure them. But because we insisted in 1994 that Title I funds be better targeted, 95 percent of high-poverty schools get them today, up from 79 percent 7 years ago. And I think it's very important that this progress

not be undone as Congress looks at Title I again this year.

In 1994 we began encouraging more competition and more choice for parents within the public school system, including magnet schools, schools within schools, worksite schools, and the creation of public charter schools. We also invested the resources necessary to get the charter school movement off the ground. When I became President, there was just one charter school in all of America, in Minnesota. Today, thanks in part to our investments, there are over 1,700. Vice President Gore has called for tripling that number.

I think the spread of the charter school movement is one of the great underreported stories in education, one that makes the whole debate over vouchers into something of a sideshow. Charter schools provide choice and competition that proponents of vouchers say they want. And unlike private schools, charter schools are accountable to the public for results. They all haven't succeeded, although most of them have done quite well; but then they can be shut down, if they don't. I think we should be working to make all public schools more accountable, not diverting much-needed energy and money away from them.

The strategy of greater accountability and greater investment continues to guide everything we're fighting for in education. I have sent Congress an "Education Accountability Act" to fundamentally change the way the Federal Government invests in our schools, to support more of what we know works and to stop supporting what we know does not work.

We want quality teachers in all classrooms; report cards to parents on school performance, for all parents and all schools; no social promotion, but help for students, not blaming them when the system fails them; a plan to identify failing schools and improve them, or shut them down; a systematic effort to make our schools safe, disciplined, and drug-free.

I've also asked Congress to make a range of other investments to make accountability work. Yes, we must end social promotion. But I say again, we need more investments in after-school and summer school programs.

It is wrong to blame the students for the failure of the system.

We had the first Federal support for after-school programs in 1997, at a million dollars a year; \$40 million in '98; \$200 million in '99; \$453 million in 2000; and we're asking for a billion dollars in 2001. If we get it, we will soon be able to provide after-school programs to every student in a poor-performing school in the United States.

We must also invest in modernizing our schools, to get our kids out of overcrowded classrooms or classrooms where the walls are too old to be wired for the Internet or where it's so stifling hot in the summer that students in summer school can't learn. There are many cities in this country where the average school building is 65 years of age or more. There are schools in New York City that are still being heated by coal-fired furnaces. There are literally school buildings all across the country that cannot be hooked up to the Internet—they simply can't be wired. And we all know the stories of how many of our kids are in trailers. The largest number of trailers I have seen behind the smallest school was 12, outside an elementary school in Jupiter, Florida, a couple of years ago. So I think that is very important.

We have also worked on this for a long time. For 4 years I have tried to get the Congress to approve my tax credit to help to build or modernize 6,000 schools. I have made the proposal again this year, along with an appropriation that would allow us to do renovations on another 5,000 schools a year for the next 5 years, in districts that are so poor it is simply unrealistic to expect that they could float a bond issue and raise the money, even with a tax credit.

Six years ago we passed legislation calling on States and school districts to identify and improve low performing schools. States have now identified some 7,000 low performing schools, and they're working to improve them. The education budget that I have presented last year—that we passed, excuse me, we passed last year required States that failed to turn around their low performing schools to let their students transfer out of those schools to other public schools.

I've asked Congress now to double our investment in the educational accountability

fund, so that we'll have adequate funding to help more schools turn around or be shut down. School districts can use this money to make the sweeping systematic changes that have proven so effective in turning around low performing schools, from Dade County to Kentucky to Chicago.

Last year, for example, I gave a Blue Ribbon Schools award to Beaufort County Elementary in Beaufort, South Carolina. Classified as one of the State's worst performing schools 5 years ago, Beaufort embraced accountability and higher academic standards and started after-school and summer school programs for students who were lagging behind. Today, their math and test scores exceed the State average, and local parents are pulling their children out of private school and putting them in the city's public schools.

If, for whatever reason, a school doesn't turn around, our educational accountability fund can be used to allow parents to transfer their students out of these schools into better performing ones, including charter schools.

The standards movement is making a difference. I believe when we passed Goals 2000 and provided funds to help States develop standards and strategies for meeting them, we made a contribution. Now, the real key is—and I think it's embodied in the topic of your conference—is if we have standards in all the States, how do we get them in the classroom? And how do we make sure they're making a difference in the lives of the students? That, to me, is the real key.

And you have to begin, I think, with improving the capacity of principals and teachers to do their jobs. We have \$40 million in our budget to help States improve school management and school leadership, instructional leadership, by principals. I have proposed a new teacher quality initiative to recruit more talented people into the classrooms, to reward good teachers for staying there, to give all teachers the training they need. This will build on the strong support we have given for incentives for people to go into inner-city and other underserved areas, that we've given to the National Board for Professional Teacher Certification.

There were no board-certified master teachers when I took office; there are now 5,000. We've done everything we could to

support that program. There are 10,000 teachers who are in the application process at this time. Our goal is to provide funding enough to get up to 100,000 teachers that are board-certified master teachers, with the idea that there ought to be one in every school building in America. When that happens, I think it will significantly change the culture of education in our country, because of the rigorous certification process and the work that is done to make sure that the teachers are actually effective at teaching our children.

We're also trying to help deal with some of our teacher shortages. Secretary Riley has established a commission on math and science teaching, and Senator John Glenn has taken that on as his next mission. In October they will give us a report which I hope will spur further action in that area. The Secretary has also called for the creation of more dual schools, that provide English plus education in at least one other foreign language, which could, I think, help to moot the whole English-only debate, show that we're interested in teaching all of our kids English and teaching them in English, but recognize the vast diversity we have in the country and the need we have to have more teachers who are bilingual and who can teach in an effective manner the students who come to our schools whose first language is not English.

I would also like to mention that in our proposal to create 100,000 new teachers for smaller class sizes, the teachers are required—every new teacher under that proposal is required to be fully qualified. And I think that this whole movement to improve teacher quality is really catching on. I know that you know that today the American Federation of Teachers is proposing a national standard and a national test for all new teachers. And I applaud them for it. I've been fighting for testing for higher standards, for better pay for teachers for almost 20 years now. In 1993 Hillary and I passed a law that made Arkansas the first State in the country to test teachers. That was a really popular law at the time. *[Laughter]* It was an interesting experience. But because our teachers performed, I might add, better than anyone anticipated, it happened that the children began to perform better, as well. Today, I

think Al Shanker would be very proud of the AFT, his successor, Sandy Feldman, and all of them. And I think all of you should be proud of them.

We need to demand more of our teachers, but we need to reward them better. We're going to have a couple of million teachers retiring in the next few years. We already have the largest student population and the most diverse one in our history. We're going to have to work very, very hard to get more qualified teachers in the classroom. There are already too many teachers teaching classes for which they're not fully qualified, and this problem is going to be dramatically exacerbated by the size of the student population, combined with the retirement plans and just the ticking of the time clock for many of our teachers. So we have to focus more and more and more attention on this.

And in that connection, let me say I have repeatedly challenged States—I'd like to do it again today—to spend more of their budget surpluses on raising teacher pay. Most of our States are in terrific shape today, but they, too—every one of these States is facing the prospect of too many teacher retirements. With very low unemployment, they're having the same problem recruiting teachers that we're now having in some of our military positions, recruiting and retaining. But they don't have any of the sort of supplemental benefits that you get if you're in the military.

Everybody says this is the most important thing in the world. Most of the money still comes at the State level. When the budget surpluses are there, when the money is there, now is the best time most States have had in a generation to make a dramatic increase in teacher pay, and I hope they will do so.

Now, let me just make a couple of points about where we are and where we're going. The fundamental lesson of the last 7 years, it seems to me, is that an education investment without accountability can be a real waste of money. But accountability without investment can be a real waste of effort. Neither will work without the other. If we want our students to learn more, we should do both.

The strategy is working. But again I say, with the largest, most diverse student body

in history and the educational premium rising every year in the global information society, we must do more. I've been very pleased at the proposals that Vice President Gore has made and the education plans he's put forth. I'm also pleased that, after some struggle, we have had bipartisan majorities for the education budgets of the past few years. Unfortunately, it's still a fight every year. Yesterday the House Education Committee passed a so-called reform bill that eliminates after-school programs, abandons our class size effort, which is totally bipartisan, and fails to modernize a single school in yet another year. This comes on top of the Senate's education bill, which rolls back reform even more.

I believe that the majority of people in the other party in Congress are still resisting the investments our schools need. In the name of accountability, they are still pushing vouchers and block grants that I believe would undermine accountability. And both bills greatly underfund education.

There's an even bigger problem with many of the plans being discussed in this election season, and many of them apparently appealing. But the problem is, even the apparently appealing plans advanced by Republicans are in trouble because of the combined impact of their proposed tax cut and defense spending increases. You know, one of the things—somebody asked me the other day, "Well, Mr. President, what was your major contribution in your economic reform package to this longest expansion in American history?" And you know what my answer was? "The return of arithmetic. We brought arithmetic back to the budget. We replaced supply-side economics with arithmetic." [Laughter] And lo and behold, it worked.

And so when anybody says anything—they're for this, that, or the other thing—you have to say, "Well, how does all this add up? Here's the surplus; it's going to be reduced by X amount, depending on what your tax cut is. Then it's going to be reduced by Y amount, depending on what you require for defense. Now, what are your plans for the retirement of the baby boomers? How will you deal with the fact that Social Security today is slated to run out in 2037, before the end of the baby boomers' life expectancy? What about Medicare? What are you going

to do with education?" Arithmetic is a very important element in politics and public life. And it is often ignored—you're laughing, but I'm telling the truth, and you know it. [Laughter]

And so here's the problem with some of these education proposals. If you take over \$1 trillion out over 10 years for a tax cut, and you increase defense even more than I have—and I've been a pro-defense Democrat; we've increased defense spending every year I've been President—there simply will not be the money left to fund a lot of these education and other proposals. I think it's wrong to spend about \$100 of the surplus on tax cuts for every dollar you spend on education. I just don't think that is consistent with our national priorities.

A study came out last week showing that the percentage of income the average American family is paying on income taxes is the lowest it's been since 1966. And it is true that income tax for lower income working Americans is now largely negative, because of the impact of the earned-income tax credit. It is true that people in the highest 20 percent are paying higher rates, but because of the way the economy has grown, their after-tax income in real, constant dollars, even with higher rates, is 24 percent higher than it was 12 years ago.

So I support, as I think all of you know, I support a tax cut. But mine is considerably more modest. I want the \$10,000 deduction for college tuition. I want a refundable child care tax credit. I want an increase in the earned-income tax credit. I want families to have a \$3,000 tax credit for long-term care, to care for an elderly or disabled family member—it's becoming a huge problem, and as the aging of America progresses, it will be a bigger and bigger problem.

I want to give people with money, upper income people, financial incentives to increase philanthropy and to invest in the poor areas of America—the new markets of America that have been left behind—and to invest in new technologies that will help us clean the environment and combat global warming.

But I have applied arithmetic to my proposal. And I think it is very important that we think about this, because it would be tragic if, after we're finally beginning to really

make some nationally measurable progress in education here, not just in the inputs but in the outputs; and we know so much more about how to do it than we did when "Nation At Risk" was issued; so much more than we did in 1989 when the national education goals were written, in that wonderful all-night session in Charlottesville I'll never forget—we know so much more today. And we're able to invest in what works.

But the American people, their wealth, and their welfare will be far more greatly enhanced by making uniform excellence in education, proving that people, without regard to their race, their income or their cultural or linguistic backgrounds, can learn what they need to know and keep learning for a lifetime. That will do so much more for the American economy, for the strength and coherence and fabric of our national community, than a tax cut which cannot be justified and which will either throw us back to the bad old days of deficits or require big cuts in domestic programs, including education, or both.

So one of the things that I hope education writers will talk about is old-fashioned arithmetic.

Now, finally, let me just say, I think when all is said and done, there are only about three things worth focusing on. Do you believe that all children can learn or not? Do you believe that it's more important than ever before, for the quality of an individual's life, for the shape of a family's future, for the strength of the Nation? And do you believe we know how to do that now, with more investment and more accountability for higher standards?

If the answer to all three of those questions is yes, then I will consider that the work that the Secretary and I have done, even though we haven't won every battle, will have been more than worth the effort.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the question-and-answer session began, and Kit Lively, president, Education Writers Association, read questions from the audience. The first question was from a journalist with the Los Angeles Times, who asked what the President could do to head off a growing backlash against testing and standards.]

The President. Well, one of the things—Dick and I were talking about this on the way in today—one of the things that we thought would happen, if we could actually get some accepted national standards and then a voluntary national test that would measure against that, is that would provide an organizing principle, if you will, which we thought might allow some of these other tests to be dropped. I think it is absolutely true that in some districts there may be too many tests. And what are they measuring, and what do they mean?

I also think that on all this testing business, every few years you have to have kind of a mid-course review. You have to see where you are and where you're going. And I think I've earned the right to say that, since you know I believe in them. I mean, I've got a pretty long record here on this subject.

I think we shouldn't obscure the major point, which is, it is very difficult to make progress that you can't measure. There must be some way of measuring our movement. On the other hand, you don't want our children and our teachers to spend 100 percent of the time teaching to a test that does not encompass all the things our students need to know and our schools need to provide. You don't want the test to be so easy that the whole thing is a mockery and looks like a bureaucratic fraud. You don't want it to be so hard that it crowds out all the other endeavors that a school ought to be doing.

But all of that, it seems to me, argues for looking at the number and the types of tests, what you want to measure, and whether your goals are sharply focused. It's not an argument against testing and accountability. I see no possible way to continue to reform all our schools without some sort of testing and accountability.

Look, if none of us had ever come along, ever—including me—you know, it's hard to admit this, especially when you can't run again, but if none of us had ever come along, a lot of the good things that have happened in education would have happened. I've been saying for 15 years, every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere.

How many times have you gone to a school and then you've written this gripping story

about, oh, my goodness, look at this school in this high-crime neighborhood with all these poor kids and all this terrible disadvantage, and the kids have—they live in these little apartments, and they have to go into the bathroom to study at night in the bathtub and read all their books—I mean, how many of those stories have you written? Every one of you have written those stories, right? And look what the kids are doing.

What is the problem in American education? It is not that nobody does this; it is that we still have not figured out how to make achievement universal.

Every one of you has written this story about somebody succeeding against all the odds, about a great teacher, a great principal, a great school. What is the problem? We have not devised a method to make learning occur at a universally high level.

And that's what the voucher people argue. They argue that that's because public schools have a monopoly on revenues and customers. So we sought to break the monopoly without losing the accountability by promoting school choice, charter schools, and other alternatives. But you still have to have standards and measurement.

And let me just say this—I realize I'm talking this question to death, but this is pretty important because it really gets to everything else. If I were to suggest to you that standards and measurement are quite distressing and troubling, and so—and I'm worried about the anxiety they cause, so I think we'll ease up on them in the military—there would be a riot in the country, right? Thank you very much; send them back to the training.

And so I do think it's time to review all this; I think there are too many of these tests and some are too easy; some are too hard; some are too off-beat; some may crowd out other educational missions. But that's why we tried—Dick and I did—to have a set of generally accepted national standards with a voluntary national test to measure them and to have it done by a nonpolitical group and sort of modeling on what the NAEP people do, which I think is quite good, by the way.

And so, anyway, that's my answer. Just because there may be too much or wrong, doesn't mean you don't have to measure. You do have to measure. Might as well not have

standards if you're not going to measure whether you're meeting them.

[Ms. Lively read a question submitted by a journalist from *Catalyst Magazine*, which asked if the Chicago school system's approach to retention and promotion should be a model for the Nation.]

The President. Read the first part of the question again. I didn't understand.

[Ms. Lively repeated that research showed students retained had not benefited and were more likely to drop out.]

The President. Well, in order to answer that question, I would have to know the answer to something I think is equally important, which is, what happened to the kids that weren't retained because of their performance in summer school? Are they doing better than they were? Are they learning more? Are they more likely to succeed and stay in school?

Keep in mind, in the Chicago system, if you fail, you get retained only if you either don't go to summer school, or you go to summer school and you don't make the grade there. So most of the people—Chicago's summer school is now the sixth biggest school district in America. It's one reason that the juvenile crime rate is way down there. And it's the sixth biggest school district in America.

So I can't answer that question without knowing whether those kids did better and are more likely to stay in school and learn more, because it wouldn't be surprising that kids that are retained get discouraged and drop out. But there was a study a few years ago, and I haven't kept up with the literature as much as I should have since I've been President, which showed that one big reason for dropout after the middle school years was that kids weren't learning. If they weren't learning anything and they were being passed along, they got bored and dropped out, too.

So I don't want to disparage the study, but I don't know if it's right or not. And neither does the person who asked the question, until you follow what happened to the kids that weren't retained because they went to summer school and made the grade, and what are the percentage of those who made

the grade as opposed to those who were retained.

[A participant cited studies showing that kids in the Chicago system who went to summer school and passed did indeed stay, but she clarified the question by pointing out that 10,000 students were retained in the last several years and, despite efforts to help them, became increased risks.]

The President. But let me ask you this. Does it follow that they would have been helped by being promoted, or that it's worth promoting them even if they couldn't be helped, because the social stigma of being retained and dropping out makes them more likely to turn to crime? I mean, I think that's the answer.

I don't believe—I guess, fundamentally, what I'd like to see done is—and you may be right—let me go back to that. My answer to your question is, I don't know, so I'll start with that.

But you may be right. But what's hard for me to believe is that we can't help these young people. I mean, one of the things that I thought would happen with the Chicago system, sooner or later—and may be happening sooner, rather than later, from what you say about the study—is that we would identify young people who might not measure out to be special ed kids, for example, but who, for some reason, even though they showed up in class and seemed to be trying, just weren't learning, even though the teachers were trying, everybody was trying.

And I think there may be some of those kind of kids in virtually every district, but in a district, a town as big as Chicago, you'd have a larger number. And one of the things that I would like to see is, before the principle is abandoned, I would like to see some new and different efforts made to see if different kind of strategies would help those kids to learn.

One of the reasons I like the potential of this whole computer revolution in the schools—even though I think it can be oversold and there are a lot of computers being unused because either the software is not good or the teachers haven't been trained or whatever—but one of the things that I do believe is that there is quite a bit of evidence

that people of more or less equal intelligence may learn in dramatically different ways and that some of the people who seem to be impervious to the best efforts of education, but they would like to learn, may be able to learn in radically different ways. And Chicago may have enough people to identify a class of folks that we ought to make a special national effort to see if there are some other strategies that would help them.

I don't know the answer to that, but I'd be willing to try if they are, if they want to do it, if they want some help from us.

[Ms. Lively read a question asking the President's position on gay youth groups in high schools.]

The President. I think it ought to be decided by the school districts. I don't think the States ought to prohibit them. I think the school districts ought to make a decision based on what the facts are in every district.

Look, I think the real issue here is a lot of parents, even parents that are fairly open-minded on such matters, are worried that if you have these groups when children are still impressionable, that somehow they'll be sanctioning or encouraging people to adopt a lifestyle that they may have a choice not to adopt.

On the other hand, there's a lot of evidence that a sexual stigma for gay kids is one of the reasons that they have high suicide rates and other associated social problems. And I think that the facts will tend to be different from place to place, and that's why I think it would be better if the people who are on the ground who care about the kids and who aren't homophobic—that is, they're not interested in bashing them, but they understand there's got to be at some point below which you would not go, probably an age—were able to make these judgments based on the facts. That's my thinking about it.

Ms. Lively. Those are the three questions.

The President. Go ahead.

Ms. Lively. That's all we have.

The President. Oh, that's all? [Laughter] This is the first press group I have ever been with that said, "I'm sorry, we're out of questions." Where were you when I needed you the last several years? [Laughter]

Okay, go ahead.

[Ms. Lively read a question, by a journalist from the Savannah Morning News, who asked if the President remained in favor of charter schools despite studies showing they were not meeting their original goals and were draining funds from local systems.]

The President. Yes, but what I think the studies show is, some work and some don't. And the idea is that, unlike—when we started them, there were two ideas behind charter schools, let me remind you. There was an upside idea and a downside idea. The upside idea was that if teachers and parents and others organized these charter schools, either to deal with a certain kind of kids or to meet a certain mission or whatever, they would be more likely to succeed.

The downside hope was, if they failed, unlike other schools, the parents and kids could leave immediately and the thing could be shut down—that is, the school district, in return for letting the charter schools be free of a lot of the rules and redtape that other schools would be under, should have the discipline to shut the thing down if it had had enough years to operate to see that it wasn't succeeding. And I think the evidence is, a lot of them are doing quite well. And the ones who aren't, the thing I'm worried about is that the ones that aren't will become just like other schools that aren't doing so well, and nobody will want to shut them down either.

I mean, the whole purpose of the charter school was to bring the sort of hope—the concept of empowerment of the parents and the students into the public education system, and it would work on the upside. And if it didn't work on the upside, it would at least work on the downside. And that's where I think we need to focus.

But I think that some of them have done very well, and some of them have not done so well. And what we need is to make sure the downside potential is present as well. But yes, I do still favor them, based on the ones I've been in and the kinds of things they've been able to do.

And I don't think it's fair to say they drain resources. If you don't spend any more per kid in a charter school than you do per child

in another school, and you've got to have those kids somewhere, I don't think it's fair to say that, especially if you're not—unless you're paying for physical facilities you wouldn't otherwise pay for.

Ms. Lively. I've been told that was our last question. So, thank you. We know you have a busy day, and we appreciate you coming.

The President. Thank you again for your interest. I've enjoyed this very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom North at the Sheraton Colony Square Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sandra Feldman, president, American Federation of Teachers.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Cynthia A. McKinney in Atlanta

April 14, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, first of all, I'm glad to see you. [Laughter] And I'm glad to see you in such good spirits. And I want to thank you for being here for Cynthia and thank her for giving me a chance to come here and be with you.

I think we ought to give another hand to our hosts, the Sadris, for letting us come into their beautiful home today. [Applause] Beautiful place. I appreciated Governor and Mrs. Barnes and Mayor Campbell for being here. They had to leave. And as Roy and Bill said on the way out, "We've got to go, and besides, we've heard this speech before." [Laughter]

That reminds me of something Tina Turner said once. Tina Turner is my favorite political philosopher. [Laughter] I went to a concert of hers, and she sang all of these new songs. And at the very end, she started singing "Proud Mary." It was her first hit. And the whole crowd just went nuts, you know, clapping for her. So she didn't start singing; she just waited until they quit clapping. She said, "You know, I've been singing this song for 25 years, and it gets better every time I do it." [Laughter] So I thank the rest of you for hanging around.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Significant Narcotics Traffickers
Centered in Colombia**

May 2, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 2, 2000.

**Memorandum on the White House
Program for the National Moment
of Remembrance**

May 2, 2000

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive
Departments and Agencies*

*Subject: White House Program for the
National Moment of Remembrance*

As Memorial Day approaches, it is time to pause and consider the true meaning of this holiday. Memorial Day represents one day of national awareness and reverence, honoring those Americans who died while defending our Nation and its values. While we should honor these heroes every day for the profound contribution they have made to securing our Nation's freedom, we should honor them especially on Memorial Day.

In this time of unprecedented success and prosperity throughout our land, I ask that all Americans come together to recognize how fortunate we are to live in freedom and to observe a universal "National Moment of Remembrance" on each Memorial Day. This memorial observance represents a simple and unifying way to commemorate our history and honor the struggle to protect our freedoms.

Accordingly, I hereby direct all executive departments and agencies, in consultation with the White House Program for the National Moment of Remembrance (Program), to promote a "National Moment of Remembrance" to occur at 3 p.m. (local time) on each Memorial Day.

Recognizing that Memorial Day is a Federal holiday, all executive departments and agencies, in coordination with the Program and to the extent possible and permitted by law, shall promote and provide resources to support a National Moment of Remembrance, including:

- Encouraging individual department and agency personnel, and Americans everywhere, to pause for one minute at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day, to remember and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all.
- Recognizing, in conjunction with Memorial Day, department and agency personnel whose family members have made the ultimate sacrifice for this Nation.
- Providing such information and assistance as may be necessary for the Program to carry out its functions.

I have asked the Director of the White House Millennium Council to issue additional guidance, pursuant to this Memorandum, to the heads of executive departments and agencies regarding specific activities and events to commemorate the National Moment of Remembrance.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 3.

**Remarks at the Audubon Elementary
School in Owensboro, Kentucky**

May 3, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. I am delighted to see you all here. I think we should give Karen Cecil another round of applause. She did a great job, didn't she? [Applause] Superintendent Silberman, you might ought to just put her on the road as an advertising for the district.

I'm delighted to be here with all of you. I want to thank Governor Patton and Judi Patton for, first of all, for many years of friendship and support, and for, Governor, your truly magnificent leadership in this State. I have served—I was a Governor for 12 years, and I have served with over 150 Governors. And since I've been President 8 years, I guess I've known about 100 or so more. So I have some experience in this. He's one of the best I've ever seen, and I thank him very much. Thank you.

I thank your Lieutenant Governor, Steve Henry, for being here. And my longtime friend and also fellow former colleague, John Y. Brown, thank you, Governor, for coming. I'm glad to see you. And Senator Wendell Ford and Jean, I'm glad to see you. We miss you in Washington. I had to be funny Saturday night; they don't laugh enough since you came home. [Laughter] And we miss you.

I want to thank Attorney General Chandler and Treasurer Miller and Speaker Richards for being here, and the other State legislators who are here. And, Mayor Morris, thank you for welcoming me, along with the City Council. And I thank the Board of Education for their good work. I want to thank the AmeriCorps volunteers who are here for the work they do in the America Reads program. And thank you, Superintendent Silberman, and thank you, Diane Embry, for the work you do.

I've been in so many schools over the last 20 years, I can be in one for 5 minutes and know whether it's doing well or not. And there are a lot of rules, and you heard some of them today, but one of the things that Diane Embry did not say is that you nearly never have a good school unless you've got a great principal. And it's obvious that you've got a great principal here.

And I'd like to thank the bands who played. And most of all, I'd like to thank Crystal Davidson for letting me come into her class and read with her students. We read a chapter from "Charlotte's Web," a wonderful book. And Crystal said it was the students' favorite chapter. It's called "The Miracle," and it's about how Charlotte the spider weaves a magic web that says, "some pig." And everybody thinks that it's the pig that's special, not the spider, and as a consequence

the pig is not sent off to make bacon. And it's a pretty good story for real life, I think. [Laughter] I may recommend it to the Congress when I get home. [Laughter]

I am told that I'm the first President to come to Owensboro since Harry Truman. He always did have good judgment, Harry. But I have known about Owensboro for a long time, now. The Baptist minister that married Wendell and Jean Ford was my next-door neighbor in 1961. And his daughter graduated from high school with me and became one of my best friends and now is very active in the national adult literacy movement. So there's something in the atmosphere around here that promotes good education. I understand Lieutenant Governor Henry's mother was a 25-year veteran of the school system here in this county. So I'm delighted to be here.

I am on the first stop of a 2-day tour to highlight for the American people the good things that are happening in education in America and the challenges that are before us. I want people all across this country to know that there are places where people, against considerable odds, are bringing educational excellence to all our children. I want people to know this because the great challenge before us is how to get the reforms that worked in Audubon Elementary School into every elementary school in America.

And the first thing that you have to do if you want to achieve that goal is to know what was done and to believe it works. I came to Kentucky to show America how a whole State can identify and turn around its slow performing schools with high standards and accountability, parental involvement, and investments to help the schools and the students and the teachers meet the standards. After I leave you, I'm going on to Davenport, Iowa, to highlight the importance of having good school facilities. And this is a big issue, too. The average school building in America is over 40 years old; in many of our cities, the average school building is over 65 years old. We have school buildings in some of our cities that can't be wired for the Internet because the building just can't accommodate it. We have school buildings in New York

City still being heated with coal-fired furnaces. We have elementary schools in America with 12 or 13 trailers out back because there are so many kids in the schools. So I'm going to Iowa to try to emphasize that.

And then tomorrow I'm going to St. Paul, Minnesota, to visit the first public charter school in America, which was basically created to give more accountability with less bureaucratic paperwork, and I'm going to talk about that. And then I'm going to Columbus, Ohio, to talk about the importance of teachers and results in the classrooms.

Dick Riley and I have been working on this for over 20 years, since we were young Governors together in 1979. We met in late 1978, when we went to Atlanta—they had a conference to show us how to be Governors. They recognized that there was a difference between winning the election and doing the job. [Laughter] And for over 20 years we've been wrestling with the challenge of how to improve our schools and how especially to give people who live in communities where there are a lot of lower income people the same excellence in education that every American has a right to.

And because he's from South Carolina and I'm from Arkansas, we feel a lot of affinity with Kentucky. I have been here—I came to Kentucky for the first time in 1979. I served with five Kentucky Governors, and I feel like, since Paul has been so close to us these last 7 years, I've served with six. And I wanted to come here because I believe so strongly that we can have the kind of educational excellence we need for every child in the country if people will take the basic things you have done here and do them.

I believe that intelligence is equally distributed throughout the human race, and I think educational opportunity ought to be also equally distributed. And I do want to say just one thing about Dick Riley: I don't think there's any question that even my political opponents would admit that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had.

Governor Patton talked about a decade of commitment to excellence since you passed your landmark reform bill in 1990. But he was on a committee called the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence back in

the 1980's, so he's been at this a long time, too. And I guess the first thing I would say to people all across America who are interested in this: This is not a day's work or a weekend's work or a month's work. You've got to make a long-term disciplined commitment to your children. And I thought one of the best things about what Karen Cecil said was how she charted the improvements in this school through the lives of her children. It was personally very moving to me, but it also made the larger point that if you really want excellence in education, you have to be prepared to pay the price of time and really work at it.

Now, here's what Kentucky did—a lot of you know this, but I think it's worth repeating for the audience across the country interested in this. First, in 1990 you set high standards for what all Kentucky children should know. Second, you identified the schools where year after year students didn't learn enough to meet those standards. Third, you held the schools accountable for turning themselves around, with real consequences for the failure to do so, from dismissing principals and teachers to allowing parents to transfer children into higher-performing public schools. And fourth, you provided the investment and other supports necessary, which your principal and your parent have identified here today, to turn the schools around, from more teacher training to high quality pre-school, after-school, and summer school programs, to the latest educational technology. You have to do all of these things.

The results have been truly extraordinary. You know, because we're all here today with our friends from the media who will put this story out around the country, I want every American who doubts that we can provide excellence in education to listen to these Kentucky numbers. In 1996, Kentucky identified 175 schools needing major improvement. Two years later—in 2 years, 159 of those schools, 91 percent, had improved beyond the goals you set for them.

Audubon Elementary, where we are today, is a particularly dramatic example. Now listen to this; this is what this school did. This school went from 12 percent of your students meeting or exceeding the State standards on writing tests to 57 percent, from 5 percent

meeting or exceeding the State standards in reading to 70 percent—I saw that today—from zero students meeting or exceeding the State standards in science to 64 percent. This school is now the 18th-best performing elementary school in the State, despite the fact that two-thirds of your students qualify for free and reduced-price school lunches. That is truly amazing.

In fact—this is also very interesting—you can say that—I know that people who don't agree with what we're trying to do will say, "Well, so what? You know, they have Einstein for a principal there or something." [Laughter] And you may. But listen to this. In this entire State, 10 of the 20 best performing elementary schools in science—in science—are schools where half the students are eligible for free and reduced-price schools lunches. Don't tell me all children can't learn. They can learn if they have the opportunity and the system and the support.

Income is not destiny. You have proved that all children can learn, and you have also proved that public schools can succeed. Therefore, in my judgment, the answer to excellence for all our children is not to take money away from our schools through vouchers but to combine money with high standards, accountability, and the tools teachers, children, and parents need to succeed. Because all children can learn, and because both the children and the Nation need for all children to learn in the 21st century information economy, I think turning around low performance schools is one of the great challenges this country faces in the 21st century.

And I want to go off the script here for a couple minutes to tell you, you know, I'm not running for anything this year, so I can say this, I hope, with some credibility. In times of adversity, people tend to pull together and do what has to be done. You had a terrible tornado here in January. I know it was awful for you. We tried to give the support that we were supposed to give at the national level. But I'm sure you were amazed at the community response. I'm sure you were all inspired by it. At times of adversity, we find the best in ourselves.

Sometimes we are most severely tested in good times, when it's easy for our attention to wander, for our concentration to break,

for our vision to fade. Now, this country is in the best economic shape it's ever been in, and all the social indicators are moving in the right direction. And now is the time to ask ourselves, what's really out there for us to do? How are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America when all the baby boomers retire? We don't want to bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids. Therefore, we should lengthen the life of Social Security and make sure Medicare is all right—I think add a prescription drug benefit.

How are we going to continue to grow the economy at the end of the longest expansion in history? I think we have to sell more of our stuff overseas, but we also have to—as I said in Hazard, Kentucky, last summer—we've got to bring economic opportunity to the places that have been left behind. It's inflation-free economic growth. How are we going to lift our children out of poverty and give them all a world-class education? Those are three of the biggest challenges this country has.

When we were worried about unemployment, when we were worried about crime never going down, when we were worried about welfare roles exploding, it was hard to think about these big long-term challenges. Well, things are in hand now. We're going in the right direction. This is the best chance anybody in this gym today will ever have in your lifetime to deal with these big challenges.

And so I—that's another reason I'm here today. We can do this. We can give all our kids a world-class education. And if we're not going to do it now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We cannot afford to break our concentration. Now is the time to say, thank you for this good time, to be grateful to God and to our neighbors and to all the good fortune we've had, and then do the right thing by our kids. This is the best time we'll ever have to do this, and so—[applause]. Thank you.

I can also tell you, we don't have unlimited time to do it. We've got the biggest school population in our history. It's finally, the last 2 years, been bigger than the baby boom generation. It is far more diverse. The school district just across the river from Washington,

DC, in Alexandria, has kids from 180 different racial-ethnic groups, speaking 100 different first languages. And the country will grow more diverse.

Now, in a global society, that's a good thing. Just like you want to have computers way out in the country, because they're connected to the world, right? This is a good thing, not a bad thing. But only if we have universal excellence in education.

Now, the other thing I'd like to say is, when Dick and I started doing all this, and John Waihee was elected the next year, back in the early 1980's and the late seventies, we were struggling to try to figure out what to do. Even when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued in 1983—and a lot of us responded to it; we tried basically to just do what they said. We didn't even have—many States didn't even have basic, adequate graduation requirements for high school.

But we've now had 20 years of serious effort at educational reform. So we not only have good economic times, we have the knowledge that we didn't have even 10 years ago about how to replicate what you have done here. And that's another reason we do not have any excuse for not doing this. We know what works. And what you've done here will work in any community in the country.

Will it have to be modified for the people that live there and the community conditions? Absolutely. But you know, I used to frequently visit an elementary school in Chicago, when the crime rate was really high, in the early nineties, in the neighborhood with the highest murder rate in Illinois. And the principal was an African-American woman from my home State, from the Mississippi Delta. And all the parents were in the school. They had a school dress code. They had no weapons in the school. They never had any violent incidents. They had a zero dropout rate, and they performed above the State average, just like you are. So we would see this from time to time. We would come across these jewels in the rough. But nobody could really figure out, for a long time, how to make this universal.

We know, now, what the basic things you have done are and how to make them available in every school in the country. We do

not have an excuse any longer not to do that. You have to set high standards. You have to have accountability. You have to train and pay decent teachers and principals. You've got to provide the technology, and you have to have the support staff. And you have to have the parental involvement and the community support. And kids have to have the extra help they need to meet the standards. You shouldn't declare children failures when the system doesn't work. So it's okay to hold the kids accountable, but you've got to give them the help they need to make it.

Now, that works—invest more, demand more. For 7 years in our administration, the Vice President and I and Secretary Riley and the others, we've worked to give States like Kentucky the tools you need to do the job. When we were cutting spending like crazy to turn deficits into surpluses, we still had nearly doubled the national investment in education and training. We required States to set academic standards, but Secretary Riley got rid of nearly two-thirds of the regulations on States and local school districts, to reduce the unnecessary paperwork and to focus on what was really critical.

And we've also worked to help you reduce class size. I was thrilled that—you know, I didn't think of you as a Clinton teacher, but —[laughter]—I'll take it any day of the week. I think it's wonderful, and I'm honored that you're there.

But when I was in Crystal's class today, and all those kids, every one of those children read to me. Every one of them. Now, some of them had a little more trouble than others, partly because of the arcane nature of the book we read and the way they were talking about Desotos and Studebakers and Packards—[laughter]—and not Isuzus and Hondas and other things. But every one of those children was in to reading and obviously had received individual attention. Because—I think there were 19 students in that class today, and you can't do that with 40 kids. So this is a big deal.

So we're into our third year now of trying to fund 100,000 new teachers, to help to reduce the class sizes in the early grades so that the young people can learn to read. And I'm also glad that young people like Crystal

Davidson want to be teachers and are dedicated to it, because we're going to have a lot teachers retiring in the next few years.

We've also supported the America Reads program. We have these volunteers here from AmeriCorps. There are 1,000 colleges now in America where young people are working in the elementary schools of our country. In addition to that, you have RSVP programs, Retired Senior Volunteers, which I think is a sponsor of the program here in this county, and other groups, church groups, other people all across this country helping. And I think that's very important.

I said I was going to the charter school in Minnesota. We had one when I became President; there are 1,700 today, and we think we'll have 3,000 school starts next year. We've really worked on this.

The Vice President fought very hard to get something called the E-rate in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which enables schools like this to hook the classrooms up to the Internet and to get a discount to do so. It's worth about \$2 billion a year, so that the poorest schools in the country can afford, just as the wealthiest schools can, to hook up their classrooms to the Internet.

When we started in '93, there were only 3 percent of our classrooms with Internet connections. Today, nearly 75 percent have. Only 16 percent of the schools had even one connection; today, 95 percent do, including 90 percent in low income areas in America. So this is making a difference, and it's very important.

Now, across the country math and reading scores are rising; 67 percent of all the high school graduates are now going to college. That's 10 percent more than in 1993. Part of that is because we tried to open the doors of college financially to all Americans with the creation of the HOPE scholarship which is a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, which makes community college at least virtually free to most families, and another tax credit for junior and senior years and for graduate school. There are 5 million families taking advantage of it already—it's just been in since '98.

And we've expanded the Pell grants; we've created education IRA's; we've cut the cost of the student loans through the Direct Stu-

dent Loan Program by \$8 billion. Students have saved \$8 billion on the program and lower interest costs on student loans, in just 6 years. And I'm trying to get the Congress this year to allow the cost of college tuition to be tax-deductible up to \$10,000 a year. And if we do that, we do that one last piece, we will really be able to say that we have opened the doors of college to every American family, and everybody will be able to go, and money should not be an obstacle. So we're trying to get this done.

Okay, that's the good news. Now, what's the bad news? The bad news is that you're here, and we're celebrating, but there are still a whole lot of schools in America, hundreds of them, that fail to give children the education that you give the children here in Audubon. And in this economy, that is bad for them and bad for the rest of us, because we live in an economy in which it's not only what you know that counts, it's what you're capable of learning.

The whole nature of work is being radically revolutionized by information technology. It's accounted for 30 percent of our economic growth in the last 8 years, even though people working directly in information technology are only 8 percent of the work force. But if you work in a bank, if you work in an insurance company—in my part of the country, if you drive a tractor—your life has been changed by the way computers work.

And this means that it's not only necessary to be able to know certain things, you've got to have these learning skills that kids get in grade school to keep on learning for a lifetime. It is profoundly important.

And we do need what the Vice President has called a revolution in education. But it's not a revolution to find something that doesn't exist. It's a revolution to take what works here and put it everywhere. That has always been the great challenge of American education. It's just that we weren't sure what it was we wanted to put everywhere. Today, we are.

And again I tell you, there will never be a better time economically to do it, and we don't have any excuse not to do it, because we know what works. After 20 years, we know what works.

Last year, Dick Riley and I sent Congress an educational accountability act that would fundamentally change the way we spend the \$15 billion we give to our schools, not to take it away from our commitment to helping lower income communities and kids but to say we're going to invest in what we know works, and we're going to stop investing in what we know doesn't work. It would essentially require States that take Federal money to do what you have done in Kentucky, to identify low performing schools, to develop a strategy for turning them around, based on a set of standards and an accountability mechanism.

It would require the ending of so-called social promotion but, again, not branding the children failures. It would require that only if you also had after-school, summer school, tutoring, the support services necessary for the children to succeed. And it would empower parents, by encouraging more parental involvement in schools and guaranteeing report cards to the parents on school performance, not just the students' performance, compared to other schools.

It would provide funds to make sure that all teachers are trained in the subjects they teach—which is going to become a huge problem when all these math and science teachers retire in high school, getting people who are actually certified and trained to teach the courses they're supposed to be teaching—and provide more support for school districts for extra training.

I've asked Congress to double our investment in the education accountability fund to help people turn around low performing schools or shut them down. And I've asked Congress to double our investment in after-school and summer school programs.

The Federal Government, when I became President, was spending nothing on these programs. Then we—I got an appropriation for \$1 million, and then \$2 million, and then \$40 million, and then \$200 million. Then it's \$400 million this year—\$450 million. And I'm trying to get \$1 billion. If we get \$1 billion, we can provide summer school in this country to every student and every poor, low performing school in the United States of America. That is very, very important.

So to make this strategy work, we've got to have the courage to do what Kentucky is doing, to identify the schools that aren't performing, not where the students are failing, where the schools are failing the students. The grown-ups have to take responsibility for this. Then we can help to turn them around. Today I am directing—that's a misnomer, because we agreed in advance, Secretary Riley—to begin to provide an annual report, national report on low performing schools, to tell us for the first time how many of our Nation's public schools are failing, where they're located, what the States are doing to turn them around.

Second, as we press Congress to pass our accountability legislation, we must ensure that the States do what they're supposed to do under existing laws. Therefore, I'm directing the Secretary to send teams to States to make sure they're meeting their responsibilities on low performance schools, to work with States to apply the kind of successful strategies that have worked here, to identify Federal resources like these after-school grants which States can use to turn the schools around.

I never cease to be amazed when I go places that there are people that literally don't know we have this money there for them. I'll bet you there are people that need this teacher money that haven't applied for it. And I nearly know there are people that need this after-school money that haven't applied for it, because we have grown this program very fast in response to a clear national need.

These actions will help us to spread the lesson we have learned during these last 7 years. In education, investment without accountability can be a waste of money. But accountability without investment is a waste of effort. Neither will work without the other.

Ten years ago, when things looked pretty grim for public schools, before a lot of these reforms got underway, the late head of the American Federation of Teachers, Al Shanker, who was a great friend of mine and a very vigorous advocate of high standards and accountability, said something to his fellow teachers that I thought was very moving. He said, we have to be willing to tell the American people the bad news about our

public schools so that when the schools begin to turn around and we have good news to report, they will believe us.

Well, today here in Kentucky and in other places across America, there is good news to report. The American people believe that. But they expect us to keep at it until the good news is the real news in every single school in this country.

Thank you. Thank you for what you have done to help make that happen. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Cecil, parent, who introduced the President; Stuart Silberman, superintendent of schools, Daviess County; Gov. Paul E. Patton, and his wife, Judi, Lt. Gov. Stephen L. Henry, and former Gov. John Y. Brown of Kentucky; State Attorney General A. B. Chandler III; State Treasurer Jonathan Miller; State Speaker of the House Jody Richards; Mayor Waymond Morris of Owensboro; Diane Embry, principal, and Crystal Davidson, teacher, Audubon Elementary School; former Gov. John Waihee of Hawaii; and former Senator Wendell Ford and his wife, Jean.

Statement on World Press Freedom Day

May 3, 2000

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, I want to salute journalists in every country who dedicate their lives—and risk their lives—to increase our understanding of the world and to shine a spotlight in support of truth and accountability.

This past year around the world, from Colombia to Chechnya to Sierra Leone, more than 30 journalists were killed, many more were imprisoned, and more than 100 nations still exert forms of harassment that inhibit press freedom. Right now, Governments in Iran and Serbia are cracking down on journalists, closing news organizations, and trying to block a public dialog that is so essential to human rights and freedom.

As a nation long blessed with liberty, the United States has a responsibility to stand with those who are upholding the values we cherish, to speak up for press freedom, and to speak out against repression so that journalists can do their jobs without risk or re-

straint, and citizens have the knowledge they need to exercise the power of self-government.

Statement on the Death of John Cardinal O'Connor

May 3, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Cardinal O'Connor. For more than 50 years, he reached out with uncommon fortitude to minister the needs of American Catholics. From his first Philadelphia parish to soldiers on the battlefield, from the carnage of Bosnia to the tragedy of AIDS, he also sought out and served those most in need. His lifelong journey of faith was our Nation's blessing. From his distinguished career as a Navy chaplain, to his determination to give voice to the poor and marginalized in New York and across America, the courage and firm faith he showed in his final illness inspired us all.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and all who loved him.

Executive Order 13153—Actions To Improve Low-Performing Schools

May 3, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2000 (as contained in Public Law 106-113), and in order to take actions to improve low-performing schools, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Since 1993, this Administration has sought to raise standards for students and to increase accountability in public education while investing more resources in elementary and secondary schools. While much has been accomplished—there has been progress in math and reading achievement, particularly for low-achieving students and students in our highest poverty schools—much more can be done, especially for low-performing schools.

Sec. 2. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. (a) The Secretary of Education

("Secretary") shall work with State and local educational agencies ("LEAs") to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for providing technical assistance and other assistance to States and LEAs to strengthen their capacity to improve the performance of schools identified as low performing. This comprehensive strategy shall include a number of steps, such as:

(1) providing States, school districts, and schools receiving funds from the school improvement fund established by Public Law 106-113, as well as other districts and schools identified for school improvement or corrective action under Title I of the ESEA, with access to the latest research and information on best practices, including research on instruction and educator professional development, and with the opportunity to learn from exemplary schools and exemplary State and local intervention strategies and from each other, in order to improve achievement for all students in the low-performing schools;

(2) determining effective ways of providing low-performing schools with access to resources from other Department of Education programs, such as funds from the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, the Reading Excellence Act, the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, the Class Size Reduction Program, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, and to make effective use of these funds and Title I funds;

(3) providing States and LEAs with information on effective strategies to improve the quality of the teaching force, including strategies for recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in high-poverty schools, and implementing research-based professional development programs aligned with challenging standards;

(4) helping States and school districts build partnerships with technical assistance providers, including, but not limited to, federally funded laboratories and centers, foundations, businesses, community-based organizations, institu-

tions of higher education, reform model providers, and other organizations that can help local schools improve;

(5) identifying previously low-performing schools that have made significant achievement gains, and States and school districts that have been effective in improving the achievement of all students in low-performing schools, which can serve as models and resources;

(6) providing assistance and information on how to effectively involve parents in the school-improvement process, including effectively involving and informing parents at the beginning of the school year about improvement goals for their school as well as the goals for their own children, and reporting on progress made in achieving these goals;

(7) providing States and LEAs with information on effective approaches to school accountability, including the effectiveness of such strategies as school reconstitution, peer review teams, and financial rewards and incentives;

(8) providing LEAs with information and assistance on the design and implementation of approaches to choice among public schools that create incentives for improvement throughout the local educational agency, especially in the lowest-performing schools, and that maximize the opportunity of students in low-performing schools to attend a higher-performing public school;

(9) exploring the use of well-trained tutors to raise student achievement through initiatives such as "America Reads," "America Counts," and other work-study opportunities to help low-performing schools;

(10) using a full range of strategies for disseminating information about effective practices, including interactive electronic communications;

(11) working with the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), to provide technical assistance to BIA-funded low-performing schools; and

(12) taking other steps that can help improve the quality of teaching and instruction in low-performing schools.

(b) The Secretary shall, to the extent permitted by law, take whatever steps the Secretary finds necessary and appropriate to redirect the resources and technical assistance capability of the Department of Education ("Department") to assist States and localities in improving low-performing schools, and to ensure that the dissemination of research to help turn around low-performing schools is a priority of the Department.

Sec. 3. School Improvement Report. To monitor the progress of LEAs and schools in turning around failing schools, including those receiving grants from the School Improvement Fund, the Secretary shall prepare an annual School Improvement Report, to be published in September of each year, beginning in 2000. The report shall:

(a) describe trends in the numbers of LEAs and schools identified as needing improvement and subsequent changes in the academic performance of their students;

(b) identify best practices and significant research findings that can be used to help turn around low-performing LEAs and schools; and

(c) document ongoing efforts as a result of this order and other Federal efforts to assist States and local school districts in intervening in low-performing schools, including improving teacher quality. This report shall be publicly accessible.

Sec. 4. Compliance Monitoring System. Consistent with the implementation of the School Improvement Fund, the Secretary shall strengthen the Department's monitoring of ESEA requirements for identifying and turning around low-performing schools, as well as any new requirements established for the School Improvement Fund by Public Law 106-113. The Secretary shall give priority to provisions that have the greatest bearing on identifying and turning around low-performing schools, including sections 1116 and 1117 of the ESEA, and to developing an ongoing, focused, and systematic process for monitoring these provisions. This improved compliance monitoring shall be designed to:

(a) ensure that States and LEAs comply with ESEA requirements;

(b) assist States and LEAs in implementing effective procedures and strategies that re-

flect the best research available, as well as the experience of successful schools, school districts, and States as they address similar objectives and challenges; and

(c) assist States, LEAs, and schools in making the most effective use of available Federal resources.

Sec. 5. Consultation. The Secretary shall, where appropriate, consult with executive agencies, State and local education officials, educators, community-based groups, and others in carrying out this Executive order.

Sec. 6. Judicial Review. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 3, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
11:45 a.m., May 4, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the
Federal Register on May 5.

**Executive Order 13154—
Establishing the Kosovo
Campaign Medal
May 3, 2000**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including my authority as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Kosovo Campaign Medal. There is hereby established the Kosovo Campaign Medal with suitable appurtenances. Except as limited in section 2 of this order, and under uniform regulations to be prescribed by the Secretaries of the Military Departments and approved by the Secretary of Defense, or under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary of Transportation with respect to the Coast Guard when it is

not operating as a service in the Navy, the Kosovo Campaign Medal shall be awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who serve or have served in Kosovo or contiguous waters or airspace, as defined by such regulations; after March 24, 1999, and before a terminal date to be prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

Sec. 2. Relationship to Other Awards. Notwithstanding section 3 of Executive Order 10977 of December 4, 1961, establishing the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and section 3 of Executive Order 12985 of January 11, 1996, establishing the Armed Forces Service Medal, any member who qualified for those medals by reasons of service in Kosovo between March 24, 1999, and May 1, 2000, shall remain qualified for those medals. Upon application, any such member may be awarded the Kosovo Campaign Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal or the Armed Forces Service Medal, but no person may be awarded more than one of these three medals by reason of service in Kosovo, and no person shall be entitled to more than one award of the Kosovo Campaign Medal.

Sec. 3. Posthumous Award. The Kosovo Campaign Medal may be awarded posthumously to any person covered by and under regulations prescribed in accordance with the first section of this order.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 3, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
11:45 a.m., May 4, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the
Federal Register on May 5.

Remarks at Central High School in Davenport, Iowa

May 3, 2000

Hello. I think we should give Barb Hess another hand. She did a good job on her speech. [Applause] And your principal, Mr. Caudle, give him another hand. [Applause] And your great Governor, Governor Tom Vilsack, I'm glad to be here with him. Thank

you. I also want to thank the Jazz Band and the Marching Band for playing. You did a great job today. Thank you very much.

I am glad to be here. I want to say I appreciated meeting at least two of your student leaders, Kelly Witt and Ricky Harris—thank them for—[applause]. And I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson, Attorney General Tom Miller, Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge, and the director of education, Ted Stilwell for joining us today. And, Mayor Yerington, thank you for welcoming us back to Davenport. And the other Quad City mayors are here: Mayor Leach of Moline; Mayor Ward of East Moline; and Mayor Mark Schwiebert of Rock Island. I think I pronounced that properly, and if I didn't he can reprimand me later. [Laughter]

I'd like to thank your superintendent, Jim Blanche, for making us welcome here. And since we're here for construction purposes, to talk about better school buildings, I'm glad to be joined by the president of the Building and Construction Trades Union, Mr. Ed Sullivan. So thank you all for making me feel welcome.

I love this community. I came here in late 1992 on a bus with Hillary and with Al and Tipper Gore right before our election. Then I came back in 1993 after the terrible flood, and I watched you come back from that. And today I want to talk about another kind of building.

I'm in the process of going around the country for 2 days—we just left Owensboro, Kentucky. And I want to do two things. I want, first of all, to make this trip an opportunity to show America how good the young people of our country are, and how much they are learning in our schools, and how bright their future is. But the second thing I want to do is to point out what challenges are still out there if every young person in America is going to have a world-class education.

And one of the things that we know is that you are not the only group of young people in school facilities that are either overcrowded or too old or both. And if we want learning to occur, we have got to give all of our students the facilities they need.

Now, this is a beautiful old school. It's even older than the high school I went to,

which was built in 1917. I've been to the top floor. I've seen the physics lab. I went into a biology class. I went underneath the bleachers here, in the locker room. I saw where you have your meals in the cafeteria, which was built in the '85 extension. And I have been given a briefing by your principal on how you're going to handle the modernization.

But what you need to know is there are people all over this country who are in situations even more severe. In the city of Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. In the city of New York there are still buildings heated in the winter with coal-fired furnaces, where people literally shovel coal into them like they did a hundred years ago.

We have school buildings so old they can't be hooked up—they cannot be wired to the Internet. The Vice President and I have worked for 6 years to connect every classroom in America to the Internet. When we started, 16 percent of the schools were connected and 3 percent of the classrooms. Today, 95 percent of the schools and almost 75 percent of the classrooms are connected.

But believe it or not, there are some which literally can't take a connection. And I saw some of your classrooms here today that have severe limits on what can be done in terms of electricity provision.

So what's all this got to do with what we're doing now? Well, when I became President, we could never have thought of doing anything for school construction or school modernization or repairs because we had a big deficit. Today, we're in the midst of our third budget surplus. By the end of this year we will have paid off \$355 billion of our national debt. And I'm proud of that.

We are in the midst of the longest economic expansion in history. And the big question before the voters this year, and all the adult citizens of America that you young people can have an impact on—and some of you are old enough to vote now—is what are we going to do with our prosperity? So we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest female unemployment in 40 years and the lowest African-American and His-

panic unemployment ever recorded, so what are we going to do with it?

A lot of times, in free societies, when times are good, people do nothing. They just sort of hang around and enjoy it. That would be a terrible mistake, because we still have challenges. And one of the challenges we have—and everyone of you know it's true—education is more important than ever before. It's more important to you, and it's more important to your country.

We live in an information economy where what you know and what you can learn will determine in large measure the shape of your adult lives and the kind of lives you'll be able to give your own children. So one of the things that we have to do with our prosperity is to ask ourselves—let's take an inventory—where are we not giving our young people a world-class education? Why are we not doing it? And what are we to do about it?

Because if we can't do this now, if we can't make uniform excellence in education a reality in America now, at this time of historic prosperity, we will never get around to it. So we have to do it now.

One of the things that we ought to do is to make sure that we can put all our kids in facilities that are modern enough that they can be hooked up to the Internet, that people can learn, that we can do what we need to do here, not just the science classes, not just the labs but all the classes.

Let me just give you an example. I just talked to Senator Harkin about this before I came in, because he got some money for Iowa to do this; the first Federal money ever to help in school construction he got on the basis of a pilot project for Iowa. And now you heard the Governor say the State's putting money in. But 4 years ago, when we started to talk about this, the Government said it would take \$112 billion to modernize schools for all of our kids. Today, they say it will take \$322 billion.

The engineers of our country, the people charged with building things, a couple of years ago evaluated all of what we call America's infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our railroads, our ports, our airports, our water systems. You know what? They said the worst system in the world that we had, the worst one in our country, was our school

buildings, that they are too old and not ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I have been to schools, elementary schools, in Florida—I went to a little town in Jupiter, Florida, and went to one elementary school. There were 12 housetrailer out behind the school, because the kids were so numerous, the school district had grown so much, that they couldn't go in there. Even in this school, where you've got a lot of rooms, you have a lot more students here than the school was built for. And it's one of the things the teachers talked to me about today.

So, why am I here? Because I hope that America will see this problem and this opportunity through you and your school, thanks to our friends in the media. And because I have given the Congress now for one more year, my proposal, which basically would say: One of the things we ought to do with our prosperity is to help build or massively overhaul 6,000 schools, and we ought to give the States enough money to repair another 5,000 schools every single year for the next 5 years. The students of this country and their families deserve it.

Back in 1907 this high school was called, I quote, "a high school for the future." Back then the population of Davenport was 39,000, about a third of what it is today, and Central High had half the number of students it does now. It was a high school for the future. You have some new renovations planned over the next 2 years, which I hope will make it a high school for the future again. But I want every single school in America to be a school of the future. You need it. You deserve it. And if the Congress will pass my proposal, we will help you get it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:27 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara Hess, teacher, who introduced the President; Henry L. Caudle, principal, Kelly L. Witt, student body president, and Frederick L. (Ricky) Harris III, senior class president, Central High School; Gov. Tom Vilsack and Lt. Gov. Sally Pederson of Iowa; Mayor Philip Yerington of Davenport, IA; Mayor Stanley F. Leach of Moline, IL; Mayor Bill Ward of East Moline, IL; and Mayor Mark W. Schwiebert of Rock Island, IL; and Jim Blanche, superintendent, Davenport School District.

Remarks at the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 4, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, after Tom and Milo talked, I don't know that I need to say much of anything. I thank you for what you said and for the example you have set. And I want to say a little more about Milo and this school in a moment. I'd like to thank my friend Bruce Vento for not only doing a superb job in representing the people of his community and, indeed, the people of Minnesota in the United States House of Representatives but also being a wonderful friend and adviser to me these last 7 years and a few months. You should be very proud of Bruce Vento. He's a very, very good man. Thank you.

When Lieutenant Governor Schunk told me that she was going to visit every school district in Minnesota, I was wishing I were the Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota. That sounds like a good job to me. I thank you. And Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here today. It's good to see you again, and it's good to be back in your community.

There are a number of other people I would like to acknowledge, and doubtless I will miss some, but I'd like to thank Education Commissioner Jax for being here; and Superintendent Harvey; Majority Leader of the Senate Roger Moe. The mayor of Minneapolis I think is here, Sharon Sayles Belton; former Attorney General Skip Humphrey. I'd like to thank State Senator Ember Reichgott Junge, a longtime friend of mine, and former State Representative Becky Kelso, who were the original cosponsors of the charter school legislation. The Charter Friends National Network director, Jon Schroeder, who drafted the original Federal charter law, which we adopted. The Center for School Change director, Joe Nathan, a longtime personal friend of mine with whom I worked for many years.

And I'd like to acknowledge some people who came on this tour with me, some of whom who have been very active in the charter school movement for a long time: the president of the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington, Will Marshall; the president of the New Schools Venture Fund, Kim

Smith; the policy director of the National Urban League, Bill Spriggs; and a longtime friend and city council member from New York City, Guillermo Linares. And they're over here to my right. They've come a long way to be with you, to see this first charter school in the United States. So I hope you'll make them—[applause].

When I was listening to Milo Cutter and Tom Gonzalez talk first about this school, how it got started, what its mission is, and then hearing Tom talk about his life and how his then-girlfriend and present wife got him into this school, it reminded me of all the struggles that I have seen the charter school movement go through throughout the United States and reaffirm my conviction that every effort has been worth it.

There are a lot of people here in this room who have devoted a lot of their lives to trying to help young people in trouble. I was delighted to hear Milo mention Hazel O'Leary's support for this school. She was my first Energy Secretary. And I want to thank, in particular, one person who's made an extraordinary commitment to helping young people lead the lives of their dreams and avoid the lives of their nightmares, my good friend Supreme Court Justice Alan Page, who's out here. Thank you, Alan, for everything you have done.

The idea behind charter schools is that not all kids are the same. They have different needs. They have different environments. But there is a certain common level of education that all kids need, no matter how different they are. And that it would be a good thing to allow schools to be developed which had a clear mission, which could reach out to kids who wanted to be a part of that mission and who could achieve educational excellence for children who otherwise might be left behind or, to use Tom's phrase, might fall through the cracks.

It is true that when I ran for President in 1992, Minnesota had the only public charter school in the country, this one. And so when I went around the country talking about charter schools, most people thought I had landed from another planet, because most people hadn't been here. Most people still haven't been here to this school. But I knew it was an idea that had enormous prom-

ise. And some of the people involved in this enterprise have been working with me for years on educational matters when I was the Governor of Arkansas.

I also knew that if Minnesota was doing it, there was a pretty good chance it was a good idea, since the State already had some of the best performing schools in the United States. And I think the State and this community deserve a lot of credit for the general direction of education reform and rising test scores. Minnesota really is about to become Lake Wobegon, where all the children are above average. [Laughter] And that's good for you. Good for you.

I'm here today because I want all of America to know about you, and through you, to understand what might be done in other communities with the charter school movement, to give all of our children the education they need and the education our country needs for them to have in a 21st century information economy.

This is a good time for us to be doing this. Our economy is in the best shape it's ever been. We have been working for 20 years on school reform; no one can claim anymore they don't know what works. We now have enough evidence that the charter school movement works if it's done right, as it has been done here. And we have the largest and most diverse student body in our history, which means there are more different kinds of people that may learn in different ways and have different personal needs, but they all need—I will say again—a certain high level of educational attainment.

The strategy that clearly works is accountability for high standards, with a lot of personal attention and clear support for the education mission of every school. We've tried to support that now for 7 years. The Vice President and I have supported everything from increasing Head Start to smaller classes in the early grades to funds to help all of our States and school districts set high standards and systems for implementing accountability for those standards to opening up the doors of college to more Americans.

Here in St. Paul, our movement to put 100,000 teachers on the streets—in our schools, I mean—has led, I think, to 23 more teachers being hired. And here in this city

the average class size in the early grades is 18. If that were true in every place in America, the children would be learning and all of our third graders would be able to read, more of them would stay in school, fewer of them would drop out, more of them would do well. So I want to congratulate you on making good use of that, as well.

We've also tried to make sure all of our schools were wired to the Internet. We're going to do a little work on the Internet later this morning. When the Vice President and I started and we got the so-called E-rate passed in Congress, which allows lower income schools to get subsidies to be wired and to use the Internet, to access it, there were only 16 percent of the schools and 3 percent of the classrooms connected. Today, 95 percent of the schools and almost 75 percent of the classrooms are connected. And I think by the end of this year, certainly some time next year, we will have every classroom in America, certainly every school, connected, except those that are literally too old and decrepit to be wired. And unfortunately, there are some, and I've been out on another crusade to try to build new school facilities and have the Federal Government help in that regard, too.

But we've come a long way. And yet, we know that there are still schools which aren't performing as they should. Even though test scores are up, even though college-going is up, we know that there are schools which aren't performing. And I wanted to come here today because of what you've done, because you've proved that charter schools were a good idea.

As I said, when I started running for President, there was a grand total of one charter school—you. You were it. Now there are over 1,700 in America. And we have invested almost half a billion dollars since 1994 to help communities start charter schools. That's why there are over 1,700, and I'm proud of that.

And this is actually National Charter School Week, which is nice for me to be here by accident in this week. And I can say that—you know, my goal was to at least fund 3,000 or more by the time I left office. And I believe we are going to meet that goal, and one

of the reasons is that you have set such a good example.

Now, what I want to talk about today is how the charter schools work a little—I want to say a little about that. And then I want to answer—if you'll forgive me for doing it, since you don't have this problem—I want to answer some of the critics of the charter school movements who say that not all the schools have worked.

Schools like City Academy, as I said, have the flexibility to reach out to students who may have had trouble in ordinary school experiences. At the same time, very often we see charter schools provide an even greater atmosphere of competition that induces kids to work harder and harder to learn. Studies show that charter schools are at least as racially and economically diverse as the public schools, generally. And here in Minnesota, they're more diverse than average schools.

Surveys show the vast majority of parents with children in our 1,700 charter schools think their children are doing better academically in those schools than they were in their previous schools. There are long waiting lists to get in most charter schools all across the United States.

Now, does that mean every charter school is a stunning success? No. But I don't think that anyone can cite any endeavor of life where everybody is doing a great job. The idea behind the charter schools was never that they would all be perfect, but that because they were unlike traditional schools they had to be created with a charter and a mission that had to be fulfilled. If they were not successful in that mission, they could be shut down or changed, or the children could go somewhere else.

And so that they would be under a lot more—pressure may be the wrong word—but the environment would be very different—that if they didn't work, the kids wouldn't be stuck there forever, that there would always be other options, and that they, themselves, could be dramatically transformed.

Now, the one problem we have had is that not every State has had the right kind of accountability for the charter schools. Some States have laws that are so loose that no matter whether the charter schools are doing

their jobs or not, they just get to stay open, and they become like another bureaucracy. Unfortunately, I think even worse, some States have laws that are so restrictive it's almost impossible to open a charter school in the first place.

So the second point I want to make to the people, especially to the press folks that are traveling with us who have to report this to the country, is that not only has this first charter school in America, City Academy, done great, but Minnesota's law is right. You basically have struck the right balance. You have encouraged the growth of charter schools, but you do hold charter schools responsible for results. That's what every State in the country ought to do.

And I think, indeed, we should build the level of accountability you find here in the charter school system into all the schools in our system. That's what I'm trying to get Congress to do. Bruce and I have been working for a couple of years on an educational accountability act, which basically would invest more money in what we know works and stop investing money in what we know doesn't work, the kind of direction taken not only by the charter schools but by this State, in terms of standards, accountability, not having social promotion but not blaming kids for the failure of the system, permitting after-school, summer school programs, and real support for people like you.

Unfortunately, this week the Congress is—the majority is trying to pass legislation that neither puts more money or more accountability into the system. But I'm still hopeful that we'll be able to pass a good bill that really works before we go home.

Let me finally say that there are some people who criticize charter schools by saying that even though they are public schools, they amount to draining money away from other public schools. That's just not true. You would be in school somewhere. And if you were, whether your school was doing an effective job or not, the tax money would be going there. The charter school movement, if it works, can help to save public education in this country, by proving that excellence can be provided to all children from all backgrounds, no matter what experiences they

bring to the school in the first place. That's what this whole thing is about.

My goal is to get more money and more people involved in the charter schools movement, to break down the walls of resistance among all the educators to it, and to get community people all over the country more aware of it. Today we are going to release about \$137 million in grants to support new and existing charter schools in 31 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. I am going to ask the Secretary of Education today to develop guidelines for employers and faith-based groups so that they will know how they can be actively involved in supporting the charter school movement.

While charter schools have to be non-sectarian, there is a role, a positive role, that faith-based groups can play. And employers, we find around America, increasingly are willing to provide space and other resources to help charter schools get started. In nearby Rockford, Minnesota, for instance, there is the Skills for Tomorrow School, sponsored jointly by the Teamsters Union and the Business Partnership. Union, corporate, and small business leaders have helped to develop the school. They also provide students with internships and take part in judging whether they have met their academic graduation requirements to ensure that they have the skills they need to succeed. I think the guidelines I'm calling for today will get more businesses and more faith-based groups involved in the charter school movement.

We have learned now for 7 years that charter schools will work if you have investment and accountability, and if you make them less bureaucratic and more mission oriented. I'm very proud of the fact that in our administration the Secretary of Education has reduced the regulatory burden on local schools and States in administering Federal aid by about two-thirds, while we have doubled the investment in education for our schools.

And I'm very proud of the fact that long ago, even though I wasn't given the privilege of coming to this school, I heard about Milo; I heard about the City Academy; I heard about the charter schools movement. I talked to Joe Nathan. I talked to Ember about it and a number of other people. And I ran for President in 1992 pledging that if the

people voted for me, we would have more of these schools. And over 1,700 schools later, thanks to your example, my commitment, I think, has been fulfilled and American education has been advanced. I only hope that my presence here today will help to get us to 3,000 and will help to get us to the point in America where every school operates like a charter school.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Tomas Gonzalez, 1994 graduate, who introduced the President, and Milo Cutter, founder and director, City Academy; Lt. Gov. Mae Schunk of Minnesota; Mayor Norm Coleman of St. Paul; Christine Jax, commissioner, Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning; Patricia Harvey, superintendent, St. Paul School District No. 625; State Senate Minority Leader Roger D. Moe; former Minnesota State Attorney General Hubert (Skip) Humphrey III; and State Supreme Court Justice Alan Page.

Webisode Chat With Tracy Smith of Channel One in St. Paul

May 4, 2000

Ms. Smith. So now we're going to go live, to the live webcast. So everyone out there watching us on your computer, thank you so much for joining us. Welcome to everybody. Thank you, City Academy. And thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Tracy. Are we ready to start?

Ms. Smith. We are ready to start.

The President. Well, let me begin by thanking Channel One and the Channel One schools and all those who are taking part in this Presidential Webisode Chat.

This has a rich history, really. Fifty years ago and more, President Roosevelt used the radio to bring democracy into the homes of the American people, with his Fireside Chats. Thirty years later, President Kennedy regularly used televised press conferences to do the same thing. And I think it's quite appropriate to use this newest medium of communication to answer more questions from more students. And I think we ought to get right to it.

All of you know that I'm speaking to you from the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was the Nation's first charter school. I believe in these schools, and I've tried to promote them and want to do more, and that's why I'm here.

The most important thing that we can do today is to reach out and answer questions from the students of America, so let's begin. How do you want to do it, Tracy?

Education and Moving Out of Poverty

Ms. Smith. Well, our first question is actually from Amy, who is from City Academy—we do have it in the computer here; it's question number zero—which is, what more can education do to improve people's lives and move them out of poverty?

The President. Well, I think the obvious answer is just to look at the difference in the job prospects and the income prospects of people who have education and people who don't. Education in this economy, where we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, if you have enough education you have almost 100 percent guarantee that you'll have a good job and you can move out of poverty.

But it is, by and large, necessary to do more than graduate from high school. Most people, to have good job prospects, need at least 2 years of college. And I have worked very hard in the last 7 years to open the doors of college to everyone. We've increased the Pell grants. We've made student loans less expensive. And we have given a tax credit worth \$1,500 a year to virtually all Americans for the first 2 years of college. So the most important thing for you to know is, you'll get out of poverty if you have an education, but you need more than high school.

Technology in Education

Ms. Smith. All right, great. A tech question, of course, since we're talking to a bunch of techies out there. This is question number 200: Mr. President, my math teacher uses technology to teach us every day. Do you think this is an important part of learning?

The President. Yes. I don't think it's a substitute for knowing the basics, but it facilitates learning.

And one of the things that we know now—and I bet a lot of you here at City Academy have learned this—one of the things we know now is that people learn in different ways. And sometimes, like in grade school, some kids will be identified wrongly as being slow learners or maybe not very smart when in fact they learn in different ways. We know that some kids learn by repetition, doing basic math on a computer, better. Some kids learn by listening better. Some learn by reading better. So I think that's important.

But the main thing that technology is going to do for education is something entirely different. Look at this. We've already got over 2,000 questions. We're talking to people all over the country here. Because of technology, we can bring what's in any textbook, anyplace in the world, not only to a place like the City Academy in St. Paul; we can bring it to poor villages in Africa, in Latin America, in east Asia. Technology can enable us to bring all the knowledge stored anywhere to anybody who lives anywhere, if they have the computer—the poorest people in the world. And so it is going to be, I think, the most important fact about education for the next 20 or 30 years.

Government Initiatives in Computer Availability

Ms. Smith. I guess the followup question to that is question number 721: Mr. President, how can the Federal Government help provide enough money to have enough computers in school for everyone to be able to have access to a good computer?

The President. Well, let me tell you what we have done. In 1996 we passed something in Congress called the Telecommunications Act. And Vice President Gore led our fight to require in that law something called the E-rate, the education rate, to guarantee that all schools and libraries could afford to logon to the Internet. It's worth over \$2 billion a year in subsidies to schools. That's why 95 percent of our schools are hooked up now to the Internet, connected to the Internet, because they can afford it.

I have also worked very hard to try to get the Government to give all the computers we could to schools and to go out and work with the private sector to get more com-

puters in the schools. Frankly, the big issue now is making sure that the teachers are well-trained to maximize the potential of the computers and the educational software. You know, most teachers will tell you that in every school, there are always a few kids that know more about all this than the teachers do. So what we've had to do is to go back and re-emphasize training the teachers.

And let me just say one other thing. I believe that the next big move will be to try to make personal computers in the home available to more and more people who can't afford them now, lower income people.

When Tom was up here talking earlier, he said he was born in Mexico. I went to a school district in New Jersey where most of the kids are first-generation immigrants. And the school district, with Bell Atlantic, put computers in the homes of more and more of the parents so they could talk to the principals and the teachers during the day. And it had a dramatic impact on the learning of the kids and on reducing the dropout rate. And the kids, of course, could then use the computers at home as well.

So I think that's the next big frontier. Can we make the use of the computer as universal as the use of the telephone is today? I wish I were going to be around, but I think that's a big frontier the next President should try to cross.

Ms. Smith. This is question number 2,173. We are getting a lot of questions today. This is from Lawrence, from Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The President. I've been to this school. This is the town that Hillary and I were married in. I lived there when I went home to Arkansas and taught in the university.

School Violence

Ms. Smith. All right. He's in the seventh grade, and he wants to know what you plan to do about making students feel safer in today's classrooms.

The President. Well, first of all, I think the only way to make you feel safer is to try to make sure you are safer. But you should know that, in spite of these horrible examples of school violence we've seen—we just celebrated the anniversary of Columbine; we had

the terrible incident in Arkansas and Mississippi, Oregon, lots of other places—that, overall, school violence has gone down. And I think the main thing you have to do is to keep guns and weapons out of schools, to try to keep people off the school grounds that don't belong there, and to have a zero-tolerance policy for guns in the schools and for violence.

Then I think it's also important to have positive ways of dealing with conflict. I think there need to be peer mediation groups in schools. I think students need to have access to counselors and, if they need it, to mental health services. I think that we have to teach young people that there are nonviolent ways that they can resolve their legitimate conflicts, and there are nonviolent ways they have to get their anger and frustration out.

So I think there's partly a law enforcement strategy to keep guns and knives and other weapons out of the hands of kids at school, to keep people off the school grounds who shouldn't be here. Then I think there has to be a positive human development effort to get people to adopt nonviolent strategies for dealing with their anger, their hurt, and their conflicts.

Education Infrastructure

Ms. Smith. Let's do 201. This is from Elena—I hope I'm saying that right: President Clinton, do you think that the physical condition of a school building has an effect on learning in the classroom?

The President. Yes, I do. If it's bad enough—in two or three ways. First of all, I think if a school is in terrible physical condition, when children go through a school every day, if the roof is leaking and the windows are broken and it's stiflingly hot—I mean, young people are not stupid; they're smart. They say, "Okay, all these politicians and teachers say we're the most important people in the world. If we're the most important people in the world and education is the most important thing in the world, why are they letting me go to school in this wreck of a building where I'm miserable?"

The second problem is, it's actually harder to teach in difficult physical facilities. I was at a school—actually, a very beautiful school yesterday in Davenport, Iowa. It's 93 years

old. And there are rooms in that building where there were no electrical outlets in the walls, and there are all kinds of problems there. It's a magnificent building. They shouldn't tear it down, but they need to modernize it.

And so I do, I think it makes a big difference. That's why for over 2 years now I've been trying to get Congress to adopt a plan to let the Federal Government help build 6,000 new schools and help repair 5,000 more every year for the next 5 years, because it's a terrible problem. The average school building in Philadelphia is 56 years old—65 years old—in New Orleans, over 60 years old. In New York, there are school buildings that are heated still by coal-fired furnaces.

And also, there are all these overcrowded schools. I went to a little grade school in Florida with 12 housetrailer out behind it to house the kids—12—not one or two. So yes, I think it makes a big difference.

School Uniforms

Ms. Smith. Let's go to—here's one I know you have an opinion about—2,987. This is Brandon: What do you think about school uniforms?

The President. I support them in the early grades. I think—and I'll tell you why. I have been a big supporter of school uniforms—well, I support them for high schools, too, if people want them. But let me just say, we have a lot of evidence that particularly in elementary and junior high schools, school uniforms perform two very valuable functions: They promote discipline, and they promote learning. Why? Because in the early years, school uniforms remove the economic distinctions between kids.

I went to a junior high school out in California, in the third-biggest school district in California, where they have a school uniform policy. And I had an inner-city young boy talking and a young girl who was probably upper middle class. And both of them loved the uniform policy, because they said it removed the distinctions between kids, and it removed the pressure to try to show where you were in some economic or social hierarchy by what you were wearing.

But I also can tell you, there is lots and lots of evidence that it reduces conflict and

violence and promotes an atmosphere of discipline among younger people. So I think—you know, I really think that having that policy is good. I've seen it all over America. I've done everything I could to promote it. I've been ridiculed and attacked and made fun of for promoting it, but I believe in them. I think they do good. I do.

Ms. Smith. We've done lots of stories on that. I don't think every kid in America agrees with you, but—

The President. I know they don't. [Laughter] You ought to see my mail about it. [Laughter]

Community Service

Ms. Smith. Question number 296. This is from Melinda, from Dublin High School. We don't have where Dublin is.

The President. Ohio, I think, isn't it?

Ms. Smith. Is it Ohio?

The President. I think so.

Ms. Smith. Very good. Do you believe that students should be required to do community service as a part of their core curriculum?

The President. Yes. That's the short answer. I do. Maryland is the only State now that requires community service as a requirement. To get a high school diploma in Maryland, at some point you have to do some community service.

You know, I've been a big supporter of community service. I founded the AmeriCorps program, and now 150,000 young people have served their communities and earned some money to go to college through various AmeriCorps projects. We started a program called America Reads. There are now people from 1,000 different colleges going into the grade schools of America, helping make sure all of our third graders can read—and a lot of retired groups, too.

I believe community service is one of the most important things that happens in America to bind us together across the lines that divide us. And in 1987, 13 years ago, I was on a commission on middle schools which recommended that community service be made a part of the curriculum. So I've been a believer of this for a long time.

I would leave it to the schools or the school districts to decide what the young people should do. But I think it does us all good to get out and deal with people who are drastically different from ourselves and who—no matter how bad we think our lives are, there is always somebody with a bigger problem and a bigger need and a bigger challenge. And I just think it's good for people to serve other people in the community. So I would make it a part of the curriculum. I would.

Educational Opportunities for the Disadvantaged

Ms. Smith. Okay, this is 3,348, from Mission Junior High, in Texas: What is being done to ensure that economically disadvantaged students are provided the opportunities for higher education?

The President. Good question. Let me give you all the answers. This has been a big priority of mine. Here's what we've done. Since I've been President, we have increased the number and the amount of the Pell grants, which is the scholarship the Federal Government gives to the poorest students. We have also changed the student loan program, so that it's now cheaper to take out a loan if you get one of the so-called direct loans, issued directly from the Federal Government. The interest rate is lower. And then when you get out of school, if you take a job that has a modest salary, you can limit your repayments to a certain percentage of your income. It's saved, in 5 years, \$8 billion in student loan costs for America's students.

We've raised the number of work-study positions from 700,000 to a million. And we passed the HOPE scholarship. That's the biggest deal. It's a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, and then also for the junior and senior year and for graduate schools you get a tax break. And I'm now trying to get Congress to adopt a law which allows people to deduct up to \$10,000 in college tuition from any tax burdens they have. So I think that will help.

If that passes, I think we can honestly say that income is not a barrier to going to college. Between the scholarships, the loans, the work-study programs, and the HOPE scholarship tax credit, which 5 million families have already used, that's why college-going—

67 percent of the high school graduates in America are now going on to college. And I want to get it up as close to 100 as we can get it. So if you have any other ideas in Mission, Texas, let me know. But we've done a lot on this, and I think it's very important.

Quality Teachers

Ms. Smith. Question 4,641, this is Mike from Buffalo: What do you think the Federal Government can do to attract quality teachers to inner-city public schools?

The President. Well, we've got a little program we started a couple of years ago—this is a really good question—where based on the old health service corps idea, where we would pay off people's loans to medical schools if they'd go practice medicine in isolated, rural areas or inner city areas.

So we have a small program now to say to young people, if you'll go back and teach in an inner-city school where there is a teacher shortage, we'll pay off your college loans. And I think that will help. I would like to see that program dramatically expanded.

I think the other thing is, though, we're going to have to pay these young people more if we want them to do that. In the next few years we could have a real problem with teacher shortage, because we've got the largest student body in American history. You finally—all of you are bigger than the baby boom generation I was a part of, for the last 2 years. We have about 2 million teachers slated to retire over the coming 5 to 8 years. And we have a greater need for teachers than ever before because our student bodies are more diverse, in terms of language and background and culture.

So I think the States and the Federal Government are going to have to look at this. I'm trying to put 100,000 more teachers out there now in the early grades. I know the Vice President has said that he believes we ought to have—the Federal Government should help the States and school districts hire 600,000 more over the next 4 years after that. But this is going to be a big issue.

My own view is, the best way to get young people to go into the inner cities, though, is to defray the cost of their own education—say, if you teach for 2, 3, 4 years, you get

this much knocked off, because I have found that there is a great desire, again, for community service. And there is a lot of interest in doing this if we can make it reasonably attractive.

Home Schooling

Ms. Smith. This is Brenna, from Lamar: President Clinton, what are your views on parents home schooling their children?

The President. I believe two or three things about home schooling. I've had a lot of experience with this, because I was a Governor at a time when this was being debated around America. I think that States should explicitly acknowledge the option of home schooling, because it's going to be done anyway.

It is done in every State in the country, and therefore, the best thing to do is to get the home schoolers organized, if they're not organized in your State, deal with them in a respectful way and say, "Look, there is a good way to do this and a not so good way to do this, but if you're going to do this your children have to prove that they're learning on a regular basis. And if they don't prove that they're learning, then they have to go into a school, either into a parochial or private school or a public school. But if you're going to home school your kids, the children have to learn. That's the public interest there."

And that's what we did in Arkansas. The Home School Association strongly supported it, accountability for what their children were learning. There will always be, in any given State, a certain percentage of people, normally a small percentage, for reasons of personal values or educational philosophy will want to do that. And most of the time they're very dedicated parents, deeply committed to what they're doing. And I can tell you this: It's going to happen regardless, so it's better to have laws which have standards on it.

From my personal point of view, I never—it wasn't an option in our family, but if it had been I wouldn't have done it because I wanted my daughter to go to school where she would be exposed to all different kinds of people and see how the larger society worked and be a part of it. But I think that

we should explicitly make that option available; we should respect the people who choose it, but we ought to say, "If you do it, your children have to demonstrate that they know what they're supposed to know when they're supposed to know it."

Ms. Smith. Just an update, we've received more than 10,000 questions so far. Pretty good.

The President. I need to give shorter answers. [Laughter]

Goals of Education

Ms. Smith. Question 4,154, this is Howard from Providence: Do you consider the goal of public education to be to make someone ready for employment, practical, or to make someone a well-rounded, enlightened individual?

The President. Both. That is, I think—when I say ready for employment, if you're talking about getting through high school, I've already said I don't think that will make most people ready for employment.

We live in a world in which what you know is important, but what you're capable of learning is even more important, because the stock of knowledge is doubling once every 5 years, more or less. So I think that being able to be a useful member of society is important. But I also think being able to be a good citizen and having a liberal arts background is important. So I think we should pursue both.

I've never thought of education as purely a utilitarian thing, just something that is a meal ticket. It also makes life more interesting. All these young people here—you know, if you develop the ability to read and to think and to feel comfortable with ideas and emotions and concepts, it makes life more interesting. It makes your own life more fulfilling. So I think education should both prepare you for the world of work and help you live a more fulfilling life and be a better citizen.

Standards Tests

Ms. Smith. Okay, this question 5,492. This is Eliza from New York: How can the testing system be changed so that teachers are not pressured to the point that they are cheating for the kids? Don't you see it as a flaw in

the system more than in the teachers? I guess they're talking about high-stakes standards testing.

The President. Yes, well, here's the problem. First of all, I think that it is almost unavoidable, if you believe as I do, that there has to be some measure at some point along the way in school of whether young people have actually learned what their diplomas say they have learned. And what I think is important—the way—I can tell you how it can be changed so that the teachers aren't pressured to cheat. You can have one or more second chances.

Ms. Smith. So if you fail a test—

The President. Yes, yes. Let me give you an example. In Chicago, for example, which most people believed a few years ago had the most troubled big-city school system in the country, they adopted a no-social-promotion strategy. And if you didn't pass the exams and make appropriate grades, you couldn't go on. But they gave 100 percent of the people a chance to go to summer school and do well. As a result of that, today, the Chicago summer school is—listen to this—it's the sixth-largest school district in America, just the kids going to summer school. But as a result of that, there aren't very many people who are held back, and that dramatically reduces the tension to cheat.

I think an even better system is to make sure that all the kids who are having trouble, and particularly all the schools that are low performing, have really rich and substantive after-school programs, weekend programs, as well as summer school programs, so that the tests measure whether the children are learning.

Look, we know nearly—literally right at 100 percent of the people can learn what they need to know to go from grade to grade. You know, this whole business that all children can learn is not just a slogan. So I think it's very important not to blame the children when the system fails them.

So the answer is—to reduce the tension to cheat, is to have a lot of second chances but to make sure that when a young person is told you get to go on because you learned something, that the stuff has really been learned.

Education Then and Now

Ms. Smith. We want to squeeze in just one more question, question 249, from Leah in Cybervillage: Mr. President, how would you compare your education in grade school to public education today?

The President. Well, first of all, in many ways, it's better today, although one of the things I will say is I was very blessed; I had great teachers. I had—my sixth grade teachers, Kathleen Scher, was typical of the teachers of the early—the first 50, 60 years in this country. She was a lady who—she never married; she lived with her cousin. They were both teachers, and they lived to be 90 years old. And I corresponded with her until she died. She came to see me once a year. We were friends, and she was a great, devoted teacher.

The discrimination against women in the workplace in the first part of this century worked to drive the smartest and most gifted and most dedicated of public servants among women into the classroom. They were teachers and nurses—women—because that's what they could do. And the end of discrimination among women, which has been a great thing for women, has given women lots of other options.

But I had good teachers. So that's the good thing I will say about that. I was very fortunate and blessed. But I went to segregated schools, which I resented at the time. I knew it was wrong, before the civil rights movement. And it's better today that we have a diverse student body, and we're all learning to live together and work together in school.

There were no computers, although we read a lot. And at the time, it was assumed that most people would not go to college, instead of that most people would. So in that sense, I think things are better today.

Now, violence was having a fist-fight on the playground. Nobody had a gun. So there was less fear. The only thing you ever had to fear was whether somebody that hated you was going to beat you up. You never had the fear that somebody would pull a knife or a gun. So I'd say those were the differences.

But if you look, on balance, we're better off today than we were when I was in grade school. We just have to deal with today's challenges. There will never be a time that's

perfect and without challenges. But we're better off being integrated than segregated. We're better off with the new technology. We're better off with the assumption that we ought to try to prepare every kid and give every child the chance to go to college. That's my view.

Ms. Smith. As you see from the number of questions, we could do this all day, but we're out of time.

The President. These are great questions—I mean, great.

Ms. Smith. Aren't they great? There are so many, one after the other.

The President. I wish that they all had yes/no answers; I'd just run down. [Laughter]

Ms. Smith. You know what, they can all E-mail you, right? [Laughter] Just kidding.

Well, I want to thank you so much for being here, Mr. President. This was a treat. I want to also thank the distinguished guests that were here, thank City Academy, thank Yahoo! for providing this chat auditorium, and of course, all of the students across the country who logged in and participated in this. Sorry we couldn't get to all of you. Great questions.

The President. Thank you. Great job. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:13 a.m. in gymnasium at the City Academy and was broadcast online via the Internet. In his remarks, the President referred to Tomas Gonzalez, 1994 City Academy graduate. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Reforming America's Schools in Columbus, Ohio

May 4, 2000

[Barbara Blake, principal, Eastgate Elementary School, welcomed participants and outlined improvements in student performance at her school. She then introduced the President, noting that she had requested information on educational reform from him while he was Governor of Arkansas.]

The President. Thank you very much, Ms. Blake. I guess I should begin by saying I'm certainly glad I answered that letter—[laughter]—so many years ago. I want to thank you

for welcoming me here. And thank you, Mayor Coleman, for your leadership and for welcoming me also. Thank you, Superintendent Rosa Smith; Representative Beatty; City Council President Habash; House Minority Leader Ford. I'd like to thank the leaders of the Columbus and Ohio Education Association, John Grossman and Gary Allen, who are here. And I'd like to thank all of our panelists who are here.

I have been on a tour these last 2 days to highlight the good things that are happening in education in America, to highlight the reforms that make these good things possible, and most important, to highlight the great challenge before the United States today to turn around all low performing schools and give all of our children a world-class education.

Yesterday morning I was in western Kentucky in the little town of Owensboro, which has had extraordinary success in turning around its lowest performing schools. In 1996, the State identified 175 of them. Just 2 years later, 159—over 90 percent—had improved beyond the goals the State set for them. In the little school I visited, where two-thirds of the children were eligible for free and reduced lunches, in 4 years they had recorded the same sort of improvements that you mentioned here, on a trend line, which proves that income and station in life are not destiny, that all of our children can learn, that intelligence is equally distributed. And that means the grownups among us have a big responsibility to give every single one of these kids, like those beautiful, bright-eyed kids that I saw in this school—and I just shook hands with every one of them—have a chance to live up to their dreams.

Then after I left Kentucky yesterday, I went to Davenport, Iowa, and I visited a 93-year-old high school finally beginning to get the renovations it needs so that students have the learning environment they need. Some of those school rooms didn't even have electrical outlets in the wall. And believe it or not, it was even hotter in the gym there than it is here today. [Laughter] So I'm just as cool as a cucumber now.

This morning I was in the Nation's first charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota, which is providing an excellent education to stu-

dents who were not succeeding in other public schools. That was the first charter school in the country, established in 1992. They were basically schools within the public school system set up by teachers and parents and citizens with a specific, definite mission, and schools that can be shut down if they fail in that mission.

There was one in the whole country, that one I visited today, in '72. We've invested \$500 million since then, and there are now 1,700, providing excellence in education to special needs of the people and their communities. And while I was there, I actually had a Webside Chat on the Internet with students all across America about the challenges in education. And in a matter of about 20 minutes, they sent me over 10,000 questions. [Laughter] So don't let anybody say the young people of America are not curious. They could ask faster than I could answer.

I really can think of no better place to wrap up my tour than here in Columbus, which has had a long history of educational intervention and innovation and excellence. In 1909, Columbus opened the Nation's very first junior high school. And now, again, you're on the cutting edge of reform and improvement.

I'm here today primarily not to talk but to listen to the panelists here about what you're doing right. But I want to say, for the benefit of the country and through the press who are here, that this community has implemented high academic standards and assessments to see if the students and the schools are meeting those standards. They've given students help to meet those standards, from after-school programs to smaller classes. Their strategy, which is our strategy in the Clinton-Gore administration, of investing more and demanding more, is working.

Now, you heard our principal talk about the advances. Just in the last 3 years, the test scores have skyrocketed, and the test scores themselves have gone up more than 200 percent. But I don't know if you listened to that—the percentage of students doing an acceptable job—listen to this—in one year—she talked about 2 years ago and last year, not this year—in one year went up almost 500 percent in reading, over 300 percent in

math, and 300 percent in science—in one year. All children can learn.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the teachers who I also met outside and to those of you who work to improve the quality of the teacher corps. Listen to this: More than a third of these teachers have a master's degree and over 10 years' experience teaching. I understand your peer assistance and review program is helping both new and veteran teachers to do better by learning from each other, something I very much believe in.

And this is very important: You have cut the attrition rate of first-year teachers by 40 percent. This is terrifically important because we have so many teachers who will be retiring in America in the next few years, and we have the largest number of students in our schools in history. So reducing the attrition rate is a big deal and something you should be very proud of.

While there is still more work to be done here and, indeed, in every school in the country, you have proved that with the right ideas and the right tools, you can do what needs to be done.

Since 1993, our administration has worked hard to make education our number one priority, not just in a speech but in reality. And I must say, I don't know that I have ever been more touched by anything I have ever seen in any school in my life as I was when I looked up—hanging from the ceiling on the corridor when I came down here—and you had put up a history of what our administration had done since January of '93 in education. I was completely blown away. I dare say that outside of Hillary, the Vice President, and Secretary Riley, you now know more about what we have done than anybody else in America. *[Laughter]*

But let me just briefly review a couple of the things that I think are important. When I came in office, we had a \$295 billion deficit. Interest rates were high. Unemployment was high. We had to get rid of the deficit. We had to keep doing things. We got rid of hundreds of programs. And as we turned a deficit into 3 years of surpluses, now this year we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt, well on our way to getting America out of debt entirely, for the first time since 1835.

We have doubled our investment in education and training. And I think that's very important.

But we also said to people that got Federal aid to education, "If you want this Federal aid, you have to have high standards for what your children should know." We've given the States the resources they need to help schools implement those standards. We've required States to identify their low performing schools and come up with strategies to turn them around.

We've helped to reduce class size in the early grades with our program, now in its third year, to provide 100,000 new, highly trained teachers in the first 3 grades. I'm happy to say that 55 of those teachers are now in Columbus, 2 here at Eastgate. And this community has taken the average class size in grades one through 3 from nearly 25 down to 15. That is, doubtless, one reason you're seeing these big improvements in students' performance, and again I applaud you for that.

When I became President, there was no Federal support for summer school programs. All these studies would show the kids that were having trouble learning forgot a lot of what they did learn over the summer. And then the teachers would have to spend 4, 6, sometimes as many as 8 weeks reviewing what was done the year before, before they could even start on what they were being held responsible to teach in the new year.

We went from a \$1 million program in 1997 to \$20 million in '98, to \$200 million in '99, to \$450 million this year. And my budget asks for a billion dollars. If the Congress will give it to me, we will be able to guarantee summer school opportunities to every student in every low performing school in the entire United States of America. It is terribly important that we pass this.

What you have done here—I know that 30 fourth graders in this school participate in such programs. I said summer school; I meant after-school, although the funds can also be used for summer school. I just came from Minneapolis, where a third of all their students are now in summer school programs, in the entire school district. Why? Because they have so many people who are

coming from other countries whose first language is not English. They would never even have a chance to not only master the language but learn what they need to learn if summer school weren't made available to them. So the after-school and the summer school programs are important.

We're trying to build or radically overhaul 6,000 schools and to modernize another 5,000 over the next 5 years—5,000 a year. We now—when I became President, we had only 3 percent of our classrooms and 16 percent of our schools connected to the Internet. Today, we have nearly 75 percent of the classrooms and 95 percent of the schools with at least one Internet connection with the E-rate, which the Vice President pioneered, that gives a \$2 billion subsidy so that poorer schools and poorer communities can afford to have their schools log on to the Internet.

So we're working on it. I have sent Congress an education accountability act that basically seeks to ratify what you're doing. It says: Set high standards; enforce them. End the practice of social promotion, but don't punish the kids for the failures of the system. Give after-school programs; give summer school programs. The kids can learn. We see it here. Have a system that works. And I hope that this will pass this year.

And let me just make two final points. As your principal said, I've been working at this a long time. I've been in a lot of schools, and I never get tired of going into them. I've shaken hands with a lot of kids, and I'll never get tired of shaking hands with them. They make us all perpetually young.

But I can tell you this: There is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1979, when Secretary Riley and I started in education reform. And there is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1983, when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued and when Hillary and I passed our first sweeping reforms at home in Arkansas.

We know what works. You're seeing what works in this school. What does that mean? It means again that the adults among us no longer have an excuse not to give these opportunities to every child in America, because now we know what works.

The second thing I'd like to say is, with the strongest economy in our history, the great test the American people face this year in the elections—and those of us who are elected officials—and as citizens is, what is it that we mean to do with this prosperity? If we're not going to do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We're in the best shape economically we've ever been in. We can afford to do it, no matter what anybody says. And I think we ought to get about the business of doing it.

So that's why I came here, why I wanted to hear from all of you. And what the purpose of this panel is, is to sort of fill in the blanks of my remarks here so that we will have a clear sense of how far you've come, how you did it, and what we need to do from here on out.

Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to begin by asking your superintendent to speak a little, maybe in a little greater detail than I did in my remarks or even than Principal Blake did in hers, and talk about how did you decide to do what you're doing and what exactly are you doing to turn around low-performing schools? That's the big issue in the whole country.

And let me just make one other comment. I've been in hundreds of schools in so many States. Nearly every problem you could ever dream of in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. The real problem with American education is we never get our solutions to scale; that is, we don't take what we're doing really right for some people and keep on at it until it's being done for everybody, for all the kids.

And there seems to me to be a real systematic effort here. So that's what I would like for you to talk about, Dr. Smith, in whatever way you want.

[Rosa A. Smith, superintendent, Columbus Public Schools, described the district's strategy to improve its schools.]

The President. Yes, give her a hand. [Applause] That's great. Let me just emphasize one thing she said because, unless you've heard people say these things a lot, it would be easy to miss. She said that there were

three clearly defined goals, and then the second point she made I think is very important. She said, "We are using a research-based approach." That means—that's a nice way of saying what I said in more crude language, that you don't have to sort of fire a shotgun at this problem anymore. It's not like we don't know what works. There is lots and lots of research available today as a result of the serious efforts of the last 20 years.

And one of the reasons that we have not had the kind of systematic results that we're seeing here around the country is that people don't take the research and really act on it. And it's interesting, because there is hardly any other endeavor of your life that you would ignore that in. If you were starting a business and 15 people had succeeded doing a certain thing and 3 people had failed doing the reverse, you wouldn't say, "Well, I think I'll see if I can't make money doing what the three did. I think I can do it a little better."

So I think that Columbus deserves a lot of credit. I'd like to follow up by asking your principal, Barbara Blake—you've been a principal for a good while. As you pointed out, you wrote me when I was Governor and asked me about some of the things we were doing. Why do you think what you're doing now is working so much better?

[Ms. Blake attributed the improvement to smaller class size and mentor support for teachers.]

The President. Just to give you some idea of what she said, I went through those numbers a minute ago, but I can't think of how you could possibly explain a 500-percent increase in the percentage of kids reading at the appropriate level in a year other than more individual attention by someone who is a good teacher and knows how to do it.

And let me say, in this little class I visited in Kentucky yesterday, this elementary school class, all the kids and I took turns reading a chapter from the wonderful book "Charlotte's Web." And I made every child read a couple paragraphs. And some of those paragraphs are pretty tough for kids in the third grade, you know, and they all got through it. In 4 years, they had almost a tenfold increase. And you'll do even better than

that, at the rate you started. So I think this is very important. I think the smaller classes really do amount to something.

I'd like to ask Heather Knapp to speak next. She is a teacher at East Linden Elementary, and she was hired with the help of our class size reduction funds as a first grade teacher. And she teaches a class of 18 first graders, along with a 25-year veteran of the Columbus Public Schools, Karen Johnson. And you, too, have, I understand, a large immigrant population in your school. So I'd like for you to talk a little about what the impact of children whose first language is not English is and the educational process and what you're doing.

[Heather Knapp said that reduced class size enabled teachers to work with students in small groups and on a one-to-one basis and spend time helping them to assimilate.]

The President. My notes—and they're not always right, but they usually are—my notes say that if you didn't have these class size reduction funds to hire more teachers, that you and your team teacher, Ms. Johnson, would be each teaching, separately, first grade classes with more than 30 students in them. And if that's true, there would be no way in the world you could deal with all these children whose first language is not English.

Ms. Knapp. No.

The President. Yes, that's pretty straightforward. *[Laughter]*

Ms. Knapp. As a first-year teacher, I believe, no. *[Laughter]*

The President. I think many Americans have no idea just how diverse these student bodies are now. Like I said, I just came from Minneapolis/St. Paul. We think about that as sort of the capital of Norwegian America. And it still is. But there are children in the Minneapolis/St. Paul school district, combined, with native languages in excess of 100, counting all the people who come from the different African and Southeast Asian peoples who are there. And the same thing is happening all over America.

Now, a lot of these kids, once they're here for about 18 months, if they good basic grounding, start to do very well indeed. And since we're living in a global economy in an

increasingly global society, this is a great advantage for the United States. We should be thrilled by this. This is going to put us in a very good position to do very well when all these children get out of school. Ten years, 20 years, 30 years from now, our country will be the best positioned country in the entire global society if, but only if, we take care of these kids now.

Sometimes people back in Washington ask me why I spend so much time on this. You know, when Barbara introduced me, she said, "the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces" and all that. I think this is a national security issue for America. I think it's an important part of our long-term security. So I want you to keep plugging.

I'd like to ask the president of the Columbus Education Association now to talk a little bit about your teacher development strategies. Everybody who becomes a teacher knows that he or she is not going to become wealthy, but it's important to pay them enough so that they can afford to stay. But it's more than pay. People also want to feel that they're doing their job well. Most people like to get up in the morning and look forward to going to work and believe that what they do is important and know they're doing it well. And that feeling is more important for teachers probably than any other single group in our society.

So I'd like to ask Mr. Grossman to talk a little bit about how this peer assistance review program works and how it contributes to teacher quality.

[John Grossman described how the peer assistance review program provided mentors for support, training, and evaluation of first-year teachers, in partnership with the union, administrators, and Ohio State University.]

The President. Let me just follow up on that a little bit. Again, this is one of those issues—it's very hard—for example, we've got all these folks here who are reporting on this today, and it's very hard to have a blaring headline across the Columbus paper tomorrow, with an exclamation point, "Columbus Committed Only To Use Research-Based Strategies!" or "Peer Review and Assistance the Main Thing!" It doesn't have the edge,

like "Clinton Robs a Liquor Store!" or something. *[Laughter]*

As a result of that, we often overlook what matters most. But let me just tell you this. We forget how much our teachers need support and training and the time and resources to do that. I think a lot of times we just assume that, well, if you went through school and you got good grades in math and you went to an education college and you took those courses, well, obviously you can teach math. We forget, unless we've actually seen how hard they work, how much time it takes for these teachers just to get through the day, to deal with the children, give them as much individual attention as possible, give the tests, grade the tests, deal with all the other stuff they have to deal with.

I can only tell you, most people believe the United States military is a pretty efficient operation, and we fought an air war in Kosovo and didn't lose a single pilot. But let me tell you, we did lose pilots. They didn't die in that war; they were pilots that die every year in the military training of the country. And we spend a lot of your tax money just training people relentlessly, over and over and over again. We don't assume that some people are smart and some people are dumb and some people can do it and some people can't. We assume in the military that the people we accept and the people we train are capable of doing the mission that they are assigned. We don't even assume that you're either a born leader or not, and if you're not born one, you can't lead. We train people to lead, too, in the military, and they lead. And a lot of people who would never be picked as leaders, the whole time they're born until the time they join the military, wind up performing superbly.

If you look at the best run companies, they invest huge amounts of time and money in developing the capacities of their people. And we have never done this for our teachers in the sort of systematic way that we should, setting aside the time we should, investing the money in it we should. And again, it's a very hard thing for—the mayor can run for election, somebody can run for the school board, or somebody can run for President, and it's the last thing you'll ever see them say, because you can't turn it into a headline

with an exclamation or a 30-second television ad. But it matters.

That's why I wanted John to talk about it. It is so important. And it means something to the teachers. It's a way of reaffirming their significance and their capacity to grow in satisfying their own intellectual hunger. Any time you think training doesn't matter for education—suppose I would say to you, I've got a way to give you a bigger tax cut; we'll cease all training operations in the military, and we'll just take smart people and see how they do? *[Laughter]* So this is very, very important. And I thank you for that.

Mr. Mayor, tell me, what has the mayor got to do with the schools here? *[Laughter]* What is it you're trying to do?

Mayor Michael B. Coleman of Columbus. I'm asked that question often, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

The President. They ask me, too, all the time. *[Laughter]*

[Mayor Coleman discussed the city's efforts to create and fund quality after-school programs.]

The President. Let me just say, I think that—first, I think you're to be commended, and I assure you that I will be fighting as hard as I can to get the appropriation doubled again. But as I said, in 1997, I got a million dollars out of the Congress to plan for a Federal after-school program. And then we went from \$20 million to \$200 million to \$450 million in 3 years. And we estimate that if we can get up to a billion dollars a year in Federal support for after-school, at least we'll be able to give cities like Columbus enough money to target all the schools where either the performance is the most disappointing or you have the highest percentage of low income kids.

But I think you will want to do more than that, and you'll probably have to make a case to the business community and others that it's a good economic investment for the city. But again I'll say, particularly if you have a lot of immigrant children, it's really important. These kids need as much time as they can to master the language so they can begin to learn all the other things they need to learn. And they just cannot do it in the regular day, in the regular school year.

And I'll do what I can to help you. But I think you deserve it. I think you've made the right decision about what's best for you.

Mayor Coleman. Thank you very much.

The President. I would like to call on a parent now, a stakeholder in this enterprise. Linda Hoetger—is that right? I studied German in college. *[Laughter]* Linda and her husband, Ray, have four sons, all in the Columbus public school system. Both of them volunteer to work in the school system. And their 9-year-old son at East Columbus Elementary School got a Federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to start an after-school program. So I'd just like for her to talk to us about her work in the after-school program at her son's school. How does it work; how did it start; what does she do; what is your view of the role of parents in this?

But I would really like to begin just by thanking you and your husband for your support for the schools and for your willingness to give your time. I'd like for you to talk about what you do.

[Linda Hoetger described her experiences as a volunteer for the after-school programs, offering students tutoring and standardized test preparation services.]

The President. Is all the after-school work at the school where you work designed toward helping prepare them for the test or giving them homework assistance? Are there any other kind of things—

[Ms. Hoetger said the program also offered violence prevention classes.]

The President. I think this is really important. If I might just say, again, I've talked to a lot of young people in a lot of schools about violence, obviously because of all the very high profile tragedies we've had in our schools.

But I think it's worth pointing out that in spite of those high profile tragedies, gun violence in America is down 35 percent since 1993. And violence in the schools has declined. And I think one of the principle reasons is involving more young people in peer programs and training more young people—*young people, like the rest of us—people model the behavior they see, either at home*

or they learn on television or in some other way. People are not born knowing how to resolve their anger, their frustration, their conflicts in a non-violent way. And if they don't have models, if they have either destructive models or no models at all, you run the risk of having a higher incidence of violence. So I wanted you to talk about this because I also think this is very important.

Again, the more diverse the student body becomes, the more likely there are to be moments when people who won't understand each other because their backgrounds will be so different, their experiences will be so different. And when those moments come it's very, very important that young people at least have been given a chance to know that there's some other way to resolve their differences—also that they don't have to bury them, because that also becomes a big problem. I mean, a lot of these kids that do really bad things are too far gone when the times they do it, but it's only after years and years and years and years of internalizing things that had they not been buried, the children might have been saved.

So I think that you deserve a lot of credit for that, too, and I think that should be a part of every school's effort, and I thank you for it.

I want to now talk to Laura Avalos-Arguedas, who is an AmeriCorps volunteer with the City Year program in Columbus. She was born in Costa Rica and moved to the United States when she was 6 years old. She graduated from Grandview Heights High School in 1998 and began a 2 year volunteer program in City Year, where she tutors four first grade students in reading at the Second Avenue Elementary School. So I'd like for her to talk about that.

And I just want to say, I don't know that I have done anything as President that I'm any more proud of than establish the AmeriCorps program. We've now had over 150,000 young people like Laura spend 1 or 2 years in this program, working in communities—sometimes in their home communities, sometimes half a nation away—and at the process, earning money for college. In the first 4 years of AmeriCorps, we had more people than we had in the first 20 years of

the Peace Corps. And it's just been an amazing thing.

So I'd like for you, Laura, to talk about why did you decide to become a volunteer in the City Year program, and how do you feel about the mentoring you're doing and the relationships you're building with the students? And do you think it's improving their learning?

[Laura Avalos-Arguedas described her experience with the City Year program and commented on how popular the after-school program was with students.]

The President. Mr. Mayor, I think if she had 140 kids show up with 7 corps members, she just made the strongest case for your after-school initiative. *[Laughter]*

Mayor Coleman. I think she has.

The President. I think you need to make her witness A in your—

Ms. Avalos-Arguedas. We have to cut down.

[Mayor Coleman pointed out the growing need for more after-school programs.]

The President. I want to go now to a product of another program I'm very proud of that I did not start. It existed in the Government when I became President, but we have dramatically expanded it. It's called the Troops to Teachers program, where people who have served in the military, when they retire or when they leave the military, then move into teaching. And in an environment in which a lot of our kids come from difficult home situations, I think that the Troop to Teachers program has made a big impact in a lot of places.

Eastgate Elementary has a teacher who came out of 20 years in the Air Force, Darrell Bryon. He's here with us today. And I'd like for him to talk a little bit about what made him decide to switch careers. He doesn't look old enough to have been in the Air Force 20 years. I don't know if he was honest about his age when he joined. *[Laughter]* And he teaches a fourth-fifth grade split class. I'd like for him to talk a little bit about how his previous experience helps him in the classroom.

Mr. Bryon.

[Darrell Bryon explained how his military experience helped to prepare him for the demands of teaching.]

The President. When you told that story about your student sort of talking back to you, I thought to myself, his training in the military has qualified him to be a teacher; his experience as a teacher may have qualified him to be President. [Laughter] So I can really identify with that.

Harry Truman once said that being President was a job in which you spent most of your time trying to talk people into doing things they should do without your having to ask them in the first place. [Laughter] But I thank you for your dedication.

Let me now call on Shirley Goins, who is a teacher in the Monroe Middle School, a sixth-grade teacher. And she has worked as a teacher for 30 years. She's taught at Monroe the last 18. And Monroe recently instituted a school uniform policy which required the children to wear white shirts and blue bottoms, and the parents of the students supported it.

When I started supporting these several years ago, some people derided me as being for a little idea that a President shouldn't be paying attention to, but I was inclined to disagree. And I would like for Shirley to talk a little bit about why her school adopted this policy, and what its effect on discipline and academic achievement and the way the students relate to each other has been.

[Shirley Goins described how the uniform policy helped students to focus on their work, rather than being distracted by frivolous clothing styles.]

The President. That's great. You know, when I started—my wife is the first person who ever talked to me about school uniforms. She's always been for them. She's a fanatic supporter of—now, I guess now that she's a candidate for office, I shouldn't use the word "fanatic." [Laughter] Subject to being used against her, I suppose. But we talked about it a lot for young kids.

And the first place I went to explore this was Newport Beach, California, which is the third biggest school district in California. And when the junior high schools adopted it out there, the middle schools, they did it in self-

defense, because they had a lot of gangs. So they picked colors to dress in that would protect the kids. All the gangs wore red and blue, so all the uniforms were something other than red and blue. And then all the schools got to pick their own colors and do whatever they wanted.

But I had two children talking to me about it, one young man who came from a difficult circumstance who told me it was the first time he felt safe walking to school in 2 years, and one young woman who was in a much better situation economically, where she said she felt like she had been liberated, that neither she nor her classmates could look down on or feel looked down on as a result of the clothes they wore. They were no longer distracted, and they felt good. They were looking forward to going to high school where they wouldn't have to do it anymore, but they thought it had really calmed the atmosphere in the school and that learning had increased and discipline problems had decreased. I thought it was a very interesting.

Between Hillary and those kids, I've been pretty well sold on it ever since. [Applause] Yes, one person agrees with me in the crowd. [Laughter] Is this a school-by-school option in the Columbus school district?

Ms. Goins. Yes, Mr. President, it is not required. It is a school community decision with parents.

The President. Now, how many schools have uniform policies in this—

Ms. Goins. Mr. President, I cannot answer that question. [Laughter]

The President. Does anybody know? Are there others? But there is more than one?

Ms. Goins. There are others. There are several—many, I would say.

The President. I think, by the way, that's a good decision. I think if you have it district-wide, then you've got to—there you go, good for you, looks great. That looks great. I think you either have to—if it's going to be a district-wide decision, it's got to be handled just the way it would be school by school. It's a very delicate thing. It only works if the parents are for it—and if the kids buy into it. Even if they have reservations, they've got to buy into it. So it's better not something that somebody like me decides is the right thing to do.

What we tried to do is to show people how to do it, including how districts have dealt with the families who couldn't afford to buy the uniforms, where they got the money, how they did all that sort of stuff. But I do think it has some merit.

[Ms. Goins concurred that parents and students needed to agree on the policy.]

The President. Now, what school do you represent in your uniform?

Student. I represent Columbus—

The President. Good for you. That's a great looking uniform. Thank you. I have been hissed and cheered by students talking about this. [Laughter]

Mayor Coleman. You're only going to be cheered here in Columbus, Mr. President. [Laughter]

The President. Is there anything else anybody would like to say? Is there anybody in the audience wants to ask anybody on the panel a question? Yes, sir?

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering if Al Gore, if he becomes the next President, will be continuing your policies and ideals, because they are excellent.

The President. Yes, he actually—he's been outlining his education program, and I would say that there are a couple of areas, obviously, because he can look ahead 4 years beyond what I can argue for. One of the things that he believes, in addition—he has supported our educational accountability fund that I just explained and all these things I talked about. And he's going to have—he's actually giving a whole speech tomorrow on teacher quality, which I hope you will follow. He's been working very hard on it and talking to people around the country, educators and others.

In addition to that, in the primary, he came out for a program to add another several hundred thousand teachers, federally funded, to the 100,000 that we've already provided. We're very concerned that over the next decade another 2 million teachers will retire as the number of students continues to swell. And so we think it—you know, I agree—but he came and talked to me about this. He didn't—it was entirely his idea, not mine. But he said, "I think I'm going to go out there and advocate that we take a certain percent-

age of this surplus and just dedicate it to helping the communities hire teachers." Once we get the 100,000 in there, so we know we can get an average class size of 20 in the early grades, the rest—we're just going to be killing ourselves to get properly qualified teachers in the classroom because people retire.

And so I think you could feel every confidence that he would support the things that have been done, but that he would build on them and do better. That's what I think will happen.

[A participant said a student had commented that the President would be a tough act to follow.]

The President. Well, I appreciated his saying that. But the truth is that the country is changing a lot economically, and let me try to put this education issue that we've been talking about here into the larger context.

When I became President in 1992—and the people of Ohio were good enough to vote for me and the Vice President—the big issue was how could we turn the country around. The economy was in a shambles. The crime was exploding. The welfare rates were exploding. Things didn't seem to be working. And so in the last 7 years, I've tried to look to the long-term challenges of the future, but first we had to get the ship of state righted. Things had to be working.

Now, you're not very cynical anymore about whether you can actually make things better. I mean, if you look at—you know, we've gone from a big deficit to a big surplus. We're paying down the debt. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. The welfare rolls have been cut in half. Crime is down to a 25-year low. Poverty is at a 20-year low; African-American, Hispanic unemployment the lowest ever recorded; female unemployment the lowest in 40 years.

I say that to say, nobody questions whether we have the capacity as a people to improve. Nationwide, reading and math scores are up about a grade level. But in places where there's been a sharp focus on results and on turning around low performing schools like Columbus, the results are much more dramatic, but they're up. We have—90 percent

of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time. We've—all the environmental indicators are better.

So the question that the country faces now is a very different question than it faced in 1992. The question we face now is, what is it that we propose to do with this moment of unprecedented prosperity? The question, by the way, also is not whether you're going to change. The world is changing so fast, America will change. It will change just as much in the next 4 years as it has in the previous 4 and the 4 before that. So the question is not whether you're going to change. The question is how you're going to change.

You know, if the Vice President were running for President and he said, "Vote for me; I'll do everything Bill Clinton did," I wouldn't vote for him, because the world's going to be different. That's not—his message is that, "Look, this approach works, so we ought to change by building on it. And here's how I'll build on it. I don't think we ought to abandon the approach in economics and education and health care and welfare reform and all these issues, but we're going to have to change." And my take on this as a citizen, as well as somebody with some experience now in these affairs, is that the way to decide what direction you want to take is to first ask yourself, where would you like to go?

I remember one of the funniest things Yogi Berra used to say is that we may be lost, but we're making good time. [Laughter] I mean, you've got to ask yourself, where would you like to go? Now, my opinion is—and again, it's not going to be on my watch, but my opinion is that for the first time in at least 35 years, since we had this kind of economy again—which basically came apart in the Vietnam war and the civil rights crisis and a lot of other problems we had in the country in the 1960's—this is the first time we've had since then to say, okay, here's where we want to go, and here's what we're going to do to get there.

So my view is, one of our goals ought to be to guarantee that every child in this country will have access to a world-class education; that everybody will be able to afford to go to college if they're otherwise qualified; that poverty among children can be elimi-

nated within through the tax system and other supports; that every working family ought to be able to at least have access to affordable health insurance; that we will deal with the challenges that the aging of America—when the baby boomers retire and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security—we will act now, not then, to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit that's voluntary for the seniors—big challenges.

On the environmental front, we have to tackle this whole issue of global warming. You're all in here fanning yourselves; the truth is that the climate of this Earth is going up at a very difficult rate. Now that may seem like an obscure issue, because Columbus is way inland, but it's not going to be very funny if the polar icecaps keep melting and the oceans rise and the sugarcane fields in Louisiana and the Florida Everglades were buried and the agricultural production of America starts to go north and the whole framework of life here is changed—and people in Africa start getting even more cases of malaria and children dying from dehydration. This is a big issue.

So that's what I gave my State of the Union about. But I think what all you need to decide as citizens is, what do you want for your kids? What do you want for your families? What do you want for your future? Where do you want to go? Then you have to say—8 years ago, I wouldn't have believed that we could write the future of our dreams. But now I know America can work.

So again, it's kind of like school reform. We don't have an excuse anymore for not saying what would we like America to be like when our children are our age. Because we know we can make America better now. We don't have an excuse; we know that. So every one of you—I wish you'd go home and take a piece of paper and say, what would I like America to look like in 10 years? And then, how does America have to change—not whether, but how—to get there?

That's how you'll know who to vote for. That's how you know what ideas you think work. To ask yourself, where do you want to go? And my earnest plea to the American people this year is to do that, so we can take

on these big challenges, because that's what I've been working for. I've been working for the day that when I left office, this country would have both the self-confidence and the capacity to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we can do it now. That's what I think we ought to be doing.

[Dr. Smith and Mayor Coleman thanked the President for his participation.]

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at Eastgate Elementary School. In his remarks, the President referred to State Representative Joyce Beatty; City Council President Matthew D. Habash; State House Minority Leaders Jack Ford; and Gary Allen, vice president Ohio Education Association. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on Legislation on Trade
With the Caribbean Basin and Africa
May 4, 2000**

Today's vote is a key milestone toward enactment of legislation that will launch a new era of cooperation between the United States and our partners in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. This important measure will strengthen our economic partnership with these nations, lower trade barriers, help developing nations to lift their people out of poverty, and create a more secure world. I congratulate those Members of Congress who have worked hard to reach agreement on this bill. I look forward to signing this historic legislation into law upon final passage.

**Message on the Observance
of Cinco de Mayo, 2000
May 4, 2000**

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

This annual celebration of the Mexican Army's triumph at the Battle of Puebla reminds us all of Mexico's long-standing commitment to the ideals of freedom and self-determination. United by our common convictions, the United States and Mexico have long enjoyed warm ties of friendship and mutual respect, and in recent years, our two na-

tions have worked hard to cultivate this increasingly close partnership. From the arts to business to education to the environment, citizens of the United States and Mexico are gaining a greater understanding and a new appreciation of each other, increasing our prospects for a future of peace and prosperity.

We must continue working to open new bridges of friendship and cooperation. This is a promising time for the Americas, and we have an historic opportunity to build our collective economic strength, improve the well-being of our people, and advance the movement toward democracy of all the nations in our hemisphere. As we celebrate Mexico's valiant fight for independence, let us rededicate ourselves to the principles that inspired the Mexican patriots who fought at Puebla and strive together to forge a brighter future for all our citizens.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

Bill Clinton

**Proclamation 7303—National
Day of Prayer, 2000
May 4, 2000**

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Throughout our Nation's history, Americans have come before God with humble hearts to ask forgiveness, to seek wisdom, and to offer thanksgiving and praise. The framers of our democracy, on a quest for freedom and equality, were fueled by an abiding faith in a just and loving God, to whom they turned often for guidance and strength.

Succeeding generations of Americans, striving to preserve that freedom in the face of challenges posed by enemies abroad or conflict at home, also turned their hearts and minds to God in prayer. Today, whether celebrating the special moments in our lives, searching for strength and meaning in the face of problems or grief, or simply giving thanks for the blessing of a new day, Americans continue to use the powerful medium of prayer.

Now more than ever, Americans treasure our religious freedom, which embraces the many diverse communities of faith that have infused our society and our cultural heritage through more than two centuries. Millions of Americans gratefully sustain the tradition of prayer in churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and other houses of worship across our country.

And we continue to rely on our faith as a pillar of strength, even in this era of unprecedented peace and prosperity. We pray for the spirit of reconciliation, so that we may overcome the divisions of race, religion, culture, and background that have scarred our society in recent years. We pray for the spirit of compassion so that we will reach out to others who have not shared equally in this world's bounteous blessings—those here at home who struggle for economic and educational opportunity and those around the globe whose lives have been darkened by the shadows of poverty, oppression, natural disaster, or disease. And we must always pray for wisdom—the wisdom to raise children with strong values and loving hearts; the wisdom to live in harmony with our environment and to preserve its health and beauty for the benefit of future generations; and the wisdom to keep America the world's greatest hope for freedom, peace, and human dignity in the 21st century.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-307, has called on our citizens to reaffirm the role of prayer in our society and to honor the religious diversity our freedom permits by recognizing annually a "National Day of Prayer."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 4, 2000, as a National Day of Prayer. I encourage the citizens of this great Nation to pray, each in his or her own manner, seeking strength from God to face today's challenges, seeking guidance for tomorrow's uncertainties, and giving thanks for the rich blessings that our country has enjoyed throughout its history.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 5, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 8.

Memorandum on Additional Guidelines for Charter Schools

May 4, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Education

Subject: Additional Guidelines for Charter Schools

My Administration has taken landmark steps to help State and localities improve educational opportunities for students by providing much needed resources to reduce class size, improve teacher quality, and expand summer school and after-school programs. Last year, for the first time ever, the Federal Government provided funds to States and localities specifically to intervene and assist low-performing schools. This year, our School Improvement Fund will provide \$134 million to States and localities to help them turn around low-performing schools. In addition, through the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Goals 2000, States have developed standards and accountability systems to identify schools that are low performing. Already, we are seeing results from this focus on standards-based reform and greater investment, including a rise in test scores among our most disadvantaged students. Nonetheless, much work remains to be done. In too many communities, predominately low-income communities, there is still a shortage of high-quality educational opportunities available to students.

One of the most heartening educational developments during my Administration is the extraordinary growth of public charter schools. In 1992, just before I took office, there was only one charter school in the country, City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since then, because of strong leadership at the local, State, and Federal level, the number of charter schools has exploded and it is now estimated that there are more than 1,700 charter schools nationwide. The Federal Government has invested almost \$400 million in charter schools since 1994,

and advocates of charter schools credit this investment for the remarkable growth of charter schools. The Budget that I sent to the Congress this year will provide \$175 million for charter schools in FY 2001. By next year, the charter school program will have helped nearly 2,400 charter schools since its inception, supporting my Administration's goal of creating 3,000 public charter schools by 2002.

Charter schools are a vital engine of school reform because they promote accountability for results, competition, and choice within the public school system. Unlike vouchers, which do nothing to increase the number of high-quality educational options for students in a community, charter schools allow local community groups, teachers, or parents to open public schools that meet their needs. And, unlike vouchers, charter schools do not drain taxpayer dollars from the public school system and are accountable to the public for results. Because charter schools are truly community-based schools created by local communities to address their own particular needs, it is essential that all institutions in a community understand how they can play a role with regard to charter schools. Every entity that can play a positive role in school reform needs to be engaged in ensuring that children and parents have high-quality public schools and choices among those public schools.

Among the community institutions that can provide important support for the goals of charter schools are local faith-based and business institutions. Both have resources that can support the efforts of charter schools to create high-quality, innovative learning environments that serve all children and help them to meet high standards.

Faith-based and community-based organizations play an important role in feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and educating our children in communities around this Nation. Already many faith- and community-based organizations partner with government at the Federal, State, and local level to help our Nation's families. Under my Administration, faith-based organizations have also become eligible to receive Federal funds in an array of social programs on the same basis as other community-based organizations, consistent

with the constitutional line between church and state. For example, States can use their welfare reform funds to contract with faith-based organizations on the same basis as other nongovernment providers to provide services such as job preparation, mentoring, childcare, and other services to help families moving from welfare to work. The 1998 Human Services reauthorization similarly allows faith-based organizations to provide services under the Community Services Block Grant to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and help low-income families become self-sufficient.

Vice President Gore and I support such efforts and believe we can do even more to increase the valuable partnership role religiously affiliated and community-based organizations can play in addressing some of the most important issues facing our families and communities. My Administration has proposed to increase the involvement of such organizations in education, housing, community-development, criminal and juvenile-justice programs, in breaking the cycle of teen pregnancy, promoting responsible fatherhood, and helping families move from welfare to work. To help support these worthy causes, my Budget will provide tax breaks to encourage all Americans to give to charity.

Schools and faith communities should be reaching out to each other, in ways consistent with the Constitution, to support their common goals for children and families. There are successful partnerships between public schools and faith communities across the Nation in after-school programs, school safety, discipline, and student literacy. These range from mentoring programs jointly run by schools and interfaith groups to statewide summits on the role of faith-based groups in college preparation. In 1995, we sent every school district in the country the guidebook *Religion in the Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*. Last December, building on those principles, I announced a comprehensive set of guidelines to be mailed to every public school in the Nation and to leading religious organizations encouraging greater cooperation, within constitutional limits, between public schools and community groups, including faith-based organizations. The guidelines emphasized both the protection of

private religious expression in schools and the prohibitions against coerced student participation in religious expression. These guidelines were the culmination of my Administration's 4-year effort to forge consensus on the role of religion in the schools.

Likewise, business institutions have proven themselves to be valuable partners in helping schools and school districts better prepare students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be part of the 21st century workforce. Over the last 2 decades, businesses have played a leadership role at the local, State, and national levels in supporting the need for school reform and advancing the standards-based movement. Although school-business partnership can be little more than a donation, there are many examples across the country of businesses that are working actively with schools to help improve the quality of public education. In these partnerships, businesses are working to help bolster school curricula, train teachers, implement technology effectively, offer mentors and tutors to students, and provide lessons in management and leadership. If this Nation's public schools are to offer the kind of high-quality education that prepares students for the world of work and active citizenship, then businesses must play a key role in this process.

Businesses have much to offer the charter movement. Because charter schools are exempt from many regulations governing traditional public schools, they have more freedom to develop innovative educational programs and to partner with business institutions in creative ways. Currently, there are over 100 employer-linked charter schools in operation across the country. These schools vary from those offering very focused career preparation, to those that incorporate modest exposure to jobs, careers, and employers. What they share in common are innovative environments that offer work-based and career-focused educational experiences for students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

But I believe that businesses can do more to work with charter schools to develop stimulating educational environments that prepare our students for the challenges of the workforce in the 21st century. I especially believe that employer-linked charter schools

offer a new range of possibilities for those students who are not finding success in our more traditional public schools.

Accordingly, because there is still a great deal of confusion about how different entities can be involved in the charter movement, I direct you to work together with the Department of Justice to develop guidelines to be released prior to the 2000-2001 school year to help faith-based and other community-based and business institutions understand the role they can play in the charter school movement. Public charter schools must be nonsectarian and nondiscriminatory in their admissions and practices. In addition, as with other public schools, a charter school should not offer opportunities for the commercial exploitation of its students and/or its mission. However, there are numerous ways that faith-based groups and employers can play a positive role in creating and supporting public charter schools, just as other community organizations do. These guidelines would augment the existing guidelines for public charter schools and the guidelines for religious expression in public schools that I released in December.

Increasing the quality of education in this country for disadvantaged students is a national priority but requires the active involvement of every affected community. In economically distressed communities, faith-based organizations and business partners can play critically important roles in providing needed support services and job-focused experiences for students who too often lack either. Ensuring that faith-based and business institutions can play a vigorous role in expanding educational opportunities while respecting the separation of church and state and the limitations on commercial involvement in schools is an important step to providing high-quality educational experiences for all children.

William J. Clinton

**Exchange With Reporters Prior to
Discussions With Prime Minister
Yoshiro Mori of Japan**

May 5, 2000

The President. Good morning.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 24, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

The Grand Hyatt Hotel
Washington, D.C.

2:14 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary, that was a good speech --(laughter) -- and fully illustrated Clinton's third law of politics, which is, whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high position. (Laughter.) Their objectivity is stunning. (Laughter.)

I thank Secretary Riley and all the people at the Department of Education for the work that they do. Stan Ikenberry, I'm glad to be here today, with all of you. President Knapp, thank you for your moving remarks about the HOPE Scholarship. You all laughed when Barry said he was making a great sacrifice by going to the Aspen Institute, but in Georgia, that's what they think. (Laughter and applause.)

President-elect Myers, and to my friend Barry Munitz -- you know, we're all in a lather up here in Washington these days about campaign contributions; everybody hates them, but nobody wants to go to public funding. So we seem destined to some period of hand-wringing. And since we're in a spirit of full disclosure, I have to tell you that in addition to my coming here today, I received a gratuity, which I intend to disclose before the whole world. I complimented Barry on his watch, and he gave it to me. (Laughter and applause.) And, cravenly, as we politicians are, I took it without blinking. (Laughter.) He swears it cost \$18.00. (Laughter.)

But I'll tell you why I bragged on it -- and all of you more or less of my age group can identify with this -- look how big

the numbers are, I can -- (laughter.) It's the first watch I've ever seen I don't need glasses for. The more expensive they are, the smaller the numbers get. (Laughter.) So, thank you, Barry.

I would like to begin today, if I might, with a very personal and serious word. This is the first opportunity I have had, really, to say something publicly about the death of Al Shanker yesterday, one of the greatest educators of the 20th century in this country. He was my friend for many years. I considered him my colleague. He believed that all children could learn -- with high expectations and high standards, high-quality teaching and high accountability. He literally lived a life that was nothing less than a crusade, with intense passion and power. And I know that all of you will join me in wishing his wife and his family and the members of the American Federation of Teachers the best, and giving them our sadness and our thanks for a remarkable American who did his job very, very well.

I also want to come here to thank you. Secretary Riley said, in his inimitable way, that this is a big day for us -- and this is a big day for us -- starting with the community colleges and their trustees and then going to this organization which represents, I thought at last count, almost 1,700 two- and four-year colleges and universities. Your views matter, your voice is heard, and your endorsement of our college opportunity agenda, including the HOPE Scholarships, the tax deduction for tuition and the large increase in Pell Grants will help to bring that opportunity into reality, and to fulfill my dream of opening the doors of college to every single American who wants to go. Thank you very, very much. I'm grateful to you. (Applause.)

This is a remarkable time in the history of our democracy. At the end of the Cold War we find ourselves as the world's remaining superpower, with a special responsibility to try to shape the future in a way that will advance the cause of peace and prosperity. We find our own economy strong and growing, producing more jobs in the last four years than in any comparable term in our history, with record numbers of new businesses being formed each and every year.

We know that this is a time of enormous change, but the impulse to satisfaction I'm sure is great. Normally, when democracies have times this good, one of two things happens -- sometimes both at the same time -- people get very self-satisfied and begin to relax, and, therefore, miss the underlying currents of what

is really going on for the future; or they become too easily preoccupied with small matters and begin to divide among themselves over things that bring them down, instead of lift them up. We must give in to neither impulse.

Because the growth of the global economy and the absolute explosion in scientific and technical information associated with the Information Age give us an opportunity -- but not a guarantee, an opportunity -- for undreamed of new jobs and careers, for greater knowledge and understanding, not just for greater material wealth, but for enhancements in the quality of lives for families and communities, it is literally true that in the era toward which we are moving more people than ever before in all of human history will have a chance to live out their dreams. But it is also true that the chance cannot be realized unless we give them the power to make the most of their own lives. So this is no time to rest.

Four years ago, we knew we couldn't rest, and we set about laying the foundation for progress by changing the economic policy of the country to focus on investing in our people, getting our fiscal house in order, emphasizing science and technology and opening the doors of trade with the rest of the world. We changed our social policy, centering it clearly on family and community and focusing on action instead of rhetoric. The result is that we've had marked drops in crime, the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the country, the Family and Medical Leave law, action to stop teenagers from being exposed illegally to the sales and marketing of cigarettes, and a number of other initiatives.

Our foreign policy has begun to articulate the world that we want to make, working in an interdependent way with allies and friends of like mind throughout the world not only to advance the cause of peace and freedom and prosperity, but to stand up against the new threats to our security.

Along the way, we have fought -- and I hope largely resolved -- the battle that has dominated America for nearly 20 years now over what the proper role of our nation's government should be. You hardly hear anyone saying anymore that government is the enemy.

It was interesting -- in the last couple of days Hillary and I went to see -- or brought in the movie, because we have a theater at the White House -- it's the best perk of the job, I think -- (laughter) -- but we had about all the seriousness we could stand, and we watched that movie, "Dante's Peak," about the volcano exploding. And I couldn't help thinking, you know, the hero works

for the U.S. Geological Service, and his life is saved in the end by a contraption developed not here at home for uses on the ground, but by NASA for use in space. And I thought, the government is not the enemy. The role of the government is to create the conditions and to give people the tools to build strong lives and families and communities and a strong nation -- and to give people the chance to live out their dreams.

Now that that foundation has been laid, and now that I believe we have also moved away from the very dangerous rhetoric of the last several years that seeks to divide us against one another based on our racial or ethnic or religious or other differences, toward an understanding that it is actually a great Godsend for us to be the world's most multiethnic, multiracial, multireligious democracy, we now can actually seize the opportunities that are before us. But the first and most important thing we have to do is to recognize that, beginning at the beginning, our education system will not provide us the opportunity to do that unless we change it.

For the beginning years we have to raise standards. For our colleges and universities, which are plainly the finest in the world, we simply have to make sure that the access is there for everyone who should go to have a chance to go.

The main point I want to make is that we actually are in a position now to mold our future untroubled by war abroad or disruption at home in a way that is very, very rare in human history. We have no idea how long this moment of tranquility will last. We have no idea how long we will be fully free to wake up and say, what am I going to do today, without being impinged upon by some external force that will shape us.

I was interested when the Secretary talked about Abraham Lincoln and the land grant. I used to teach at a land grant school, so I like that. But it's interesting that President Lincoln signed that land grant bill during the Civil War. And Lincoln once said during the Civil War -- he gave a statement today that I would be ridiculed nationwide if I said -- he said, my policy is to have no policy; I am controlled by events. Well, of course, he did have a policy -- he had the most important one of all -- I'm going to hold this Union together if we all have to die to do it, including me. That was his policy. But he also told an important truth. When the wheel runs off and things fall apart, you are to some extent controlled by events.

Today in a rare moment, America is not especially controlled by events, but we cannot be unmindful of the larger historical trends which will shape our future. And it is the moral obligation of every person in a position of responsibility in the United States to take this opportunity -- not to lay down on the job and not to fall into mindless debates, but to lift our sights and our visions to take advantage of this rare moment and make the most of it. And we could do no better than to give our people the finest set of educational opportunities in the world and to make sure every single one of them has those opportunities. (Applause.)

I was encouraged by the report I got out back, very brief, about the words that Senator Lott said earlier here today. During the Cold War we had a bipartisan foreign policy, because -- literally because the future of the country was at stake -- everybody agreed we'd like to fight with you and we'd like to kick you out if you're not in our party, but politics should stop at the water's edge.

Today, in the Information Age, politics should stop at the schoolhouse door, because our security depends upon our ability to give all our people the finest education in the world. (Applause.) My shorthand expression for what we're trying to do -- and you will all recognize there are many other things at stake -- is that we have to create an America in which every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, and every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime. My balanced budget makes an unprecedented commitment to these goals -- \$51 billion next year. But far more than money is required.

Three weeks ago at the State of the Union I issued a call to action for American education based on 10 principles necessary to prepare our people for the 21st century. First, we have to set world-class standards for our schools and develop a system of accountability, beginning for the first time with national standards-based reading tests in the 4th grade and math tests in the 8th grade.

Second, we have to make sure we have the best teachers in the world.

Third, we must make sure that every child can read on his or her own by the third grade. I see my friend the President of the Miami-Dade Community College out here, the largest community college in our country and one of the most diverse student bodies.

Forty percent of the 8-year-olds in this country cannot read a book on their own -- 40 percent. And we have to do better than that if we want all of our children to be in two- and four-year colleges when their time comes.

Fourth, we have to make sure parents are more deeply involved in a constructive way in their child's learning from birth. The First Lady and I are going to host a conference on early childhood learning and brain development in the spring here.

Fifth, we have to give parents more power to choose the right public schools for their children and encourage school reforms like charter schools that set and meet high standards.

Sixth, we should encourage the teaching of character education in our schools -- and Secretary Riley has done a marvelous job of that -- and promote order and discipline at the same time by supporting local school initiatives, like school uniforms or truancy enforcement or curfews, and demanding zero tolerance for guns and drugs. I have seen in the most difficult neighborhoods in this country that children do not have to put up with violent, disruptive and destructive school environments. There are schools that are succeeding against all the odds. And if some can, all can. And until they all do none of us should be satisfied.

Seventh, we should support school construction at the national level. I believe, for the very first time -- because we have record numbers of school populations now, for the first time we've got a group bigger than the baby-boomers coming through, and the schools are growing at record rates while their facilities are deteriorating at record rates.

Eighth, we should make sure that learning is available for a lifetime by transforming what can only be described as a tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly to workers. People who need and are eligible for federal training help, nearly all of them live within driving distance of a community-based educational institution that can give them what they need. And we do not need a lot of federal programs to get between them and those institutions. I have been trying for four years to pass this program. I hope you will help me get this done in this session of Congress, to create a new G.I. Bill for America's Workers that simply gives people a skill grant and lets them take it to the institution of education nearest them most able to meet their needs.

Ninth, we are determined to connect every classroom and library in this country to the Internet by the year 2000 and we're making good progress on that. But finally, and the thing that you have endorsed today, is our effort to meet the last goal, to throw open the doors of college to all people who are willing to work for the opportunity.

As the Secretary said, we have always expanded education. He began with Abraham Lincoln, and we might have begun with Thomas Jefferson, who advocated even as he advocated buying Louisiana -- for which I'm very grateful; otherwise I wouldn't be President -- (laughter) -- and America becoming a continental nation, that we should educate all of our children. Thomas Jefferson even advocated the education of every single child, boy or girl, of slave families in America. And we know from the beginning that it was the education of our leaders that gave them the vision to chart the course that has brought to this day.

I do believe, based on the sheer economic realities and the need for greater understanding of our interdependence in the world in which we're living that we have to make the first two years of college as universal as a high school education is today. Fifteen years ago, the typical worker with a college degree earned 38 percent more than a high school graduate; today, it is 69 percent. Two years of college alone means a 20-percent increase in learning and a quarter of a million dollars more in earnings over a lifetime.

Now, over the past four years we have put in place an unprecedented college opportunity strategy: Student loans provided directly to people who need them and that enable people to repay those loans as a percentage of their income. AmeriCorps, which has already helped 70,000 young people earn their way through college by serving their communities and their country. Two hundred thousand more students in Work Study as a result of last year's budget, and a very large increase in Pell Grants last year, taking the maximum grant to \$2,700 and expanding the number of people eligible.

The plan I have put before the Congress in my balanced budget would expand work-study again so that one million students will be able to work their way through college by the year 2000. We want 100,000 of these new work-study students to join our America Reads efforts to help make sure all our 8-year-olds can read independently by the year 2000.

I know that more than 80 college presidents have already

committed thousands of their work-study students to work as reading tutors. I thank those of you who are here leading this effort, many of you on the front row here, and I'd like to ask all the rest of you to join us. Go back home, look at how many people you've got in work-study, see how many you could allocate to this effort.

We're going to have about 35,000 AmeriCorps students trained especially to train tutors. We're going to challenge the parents and the schools to open up to make sure we can get these volunteers in there to teach these kids to read. We cannot expect the schools to operate efficiently if children have to leave the third grade not even being able to read. They will never learn what they need to know. And college students will relate well to these young kids and have a chance to literally revolutionize future learning in America.

A lot of these children are not just poor kids, they simply -- many of them come out of cultures where their first language is not English and they did not learn to read properly. We should not let them go past the 3rd grade without knowing we have all done everything we humanly can to make sure that they can read independently. So I thank those of you from the bottom of my heart, who have volunteered already, and I ask the rest of you to join in that crusade. We need you and it will make all the difference.

Finally, let me say we have got to do more in other areas. For three years in a row now we've expanded Pell Grants for deserving students. But our budget this year, our balanced budget contains the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in 20 years. We are adding \$1.7 billion in grants, a 25-percent increase, which will make 348,000 more students eligible -- many of them older students -- and will increase the maximum grant to \$3,000. And for 4 million low and middle income students the budget will cut student loan fees in half.

But if we're truly going to set a new standard, a 14-year standard, we've got to do more. That's why I have proposed America's HOPE scholarship based on the Georgia pioneering program; two years of a tax credit of \$1,500 for college tuition, enough to pay for the typical community college. We know it will work because of the testimonial you have already heard from President Knapp.

Second, I propose a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school to help families send children

or parents to college, or to graduate, or medical school, or any other education after high school.

Third, I proposed an expanded IRA, expanded in terms of eligibility, in terms of who can save and in terms of purpose, so that families can save tax free to pay for education. Together these proposals mean that a family could save money for college tuition and never pay a penny of taxes on it. For example, families could put up to \$2,000 of income into the IRA each year without paying taxes, then withdraw up to \$10,000 a year for tuition and deduct that from income so that there will not be any taxes when they're paid out.

Cutting taxes to help people pay directly for college has never been done before on a national level. But we have cut taxes for years to help people buy a home or invest in a business because that's the way we felt we could encourage people to invest in their future and build the American Dream. And it has worked.

In the last four years we have seen homeownership rise to a 15-year high, and if the rate of increase continues by the year 2000 more than two-thirds of Americans will live in their own home -- an all-time record. In the last four years we have seen in each successive year a record number of new businesses formed in America. Today we ought to have that same kind of encouragement to invest in education, an even more important investment for the future. And I think that it is highly appropriate to adopt this device to achieve that goal.

Let me assure you, the Treasury Department is committed to working with the Department of Education and all of you to make this tax plan work. The IRS will not interfere with the affairs of educational institutions. We are committed to making this simple and straightforward for the academic community and especially for the students of every age. The plan will give families the power to choose the right education for themselves and the flexibility to decide the best way in which to pay for that education.

Now, just think about what this could mean. A young person who can't afford tuition or whose family can't afford it can now go down to a local community college right away and sign up if they meet the standards, because the HOPE Scholarship will pay for it. Someone with a new family who is worried about college costs down the road can multiply his or her savings power by putting tuition money in an IRA tax-free every year while the children are growing up. Then, when they're 40 and worried they might need more

education to move ahead, but can't spare time off from work, not only can they withdraw from the IRA for the kids, but the parents can to part-time, or at night. But all can go to college without tax consequences.

My plan is simple: \$1,500 a year tax cut for individuals to pay for college for two years; a \$10,000 a year tax deduction for families for any year of tuition after high school; an expanded IRA to help families save tax-free for education, plus the more and larger Pell Grant scholarships for deserving students, 300,000 more work-study positions, AmeriCorps, the Direct Loan Program.

This plan will throw open the doors of college and give every American the great chance to make the most of the world that we are moving into. College is opportunity for tomorrow. And creating that opportunity is our responsibility today.

I thank you again for your support of this plan. As we work in the weeks and months ahead to craft a bipartisan balanced budget, your endorsement today will be an historic element in making sure that this will be part of the ultimate budget plan. We need a balanced budget, but it has to reflect our values and it has to pave the way to a better future.

Today, we have committed to expanding educational opportunities by enacting the Hope Scholarship tax cut, the college tax deduction, the Pell Grant increases, the work-study increases. I thank you for standing with us. You are standing for opportunity for generations to come in a way that will change America forever for the better.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

2:40 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Raleigh, North Carolina)

For Immediate Release

March 13, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE JOINT SESSION OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATURE

House of Representatives Chamber
Raleigh, North Carolina

11:09 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Lt. Governor Wicker, Speaker Brubaker, Senator Basnight, the other state elected officials who are here; my good friend, Governor Hunt; Mayor Fetzner. I'd like to thank those who came down here with me today. I brought some of the members of your congressional delegation home -- they don't need to hear this speech, they've heard it before, but I was glad to have them here in moral support-- Congressman David Price; Congressman Bob Etheridge, your former superintendent of education; Congressman Mike McIntire; and Congresswoman Eva Clayton. I thank them for coming. (Applause.)

I also want to say I'm glad to be joined today by your neighbor, the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, former governor of South Carolina -- (applause) -- and by our new Secretary of Defense, Bill Cohen of Maine. We're glad to have him with us today, too. Thank you, Secretary Cohen, for coming. (Applause.)

I was glad that you mentioned my Chief of Staff, Erskine Bowles. He wouldn't come here with me today because he was afraid all of you would think that he was shirking his duties and not at work. But let me tell you, he is doing a magnificent job. I'm very proud of him. I couldn't believe it when he agreed to come back to Washington and take this job -- especially because I knew it would cost him a small fortune. And he reminded me that his father used to tell him, once you have the tools you've got to spend some time to add to the wood pile. So he's up in Washington adding back to the wood pile. And you should all be very proud of him. He is a remarkable man. He's doing a good job. (Applause.)

I'd also like to thank the other North Carolinians on my staff -- two of the three of them are here today. Doug Sosnik, my former political director and senior counselor, is not

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Patricia Spender

here; but my Director of Communications, Don Baer, is here; and Charles Duncan, the Associate Director of Presidential Personnel. They both came home with me and they were glad to have the excuse to come home. And I appreciate their being here and their service.

I was told that this was the first time a sitting President has addressed the North Carolina State Legislature. If it's not true don't disabuse me now, because I'm about to say something here. (Laughter.) And I am very honored to be here. Even more important, I've spent a little time here over the years and I am honored and mildly surprised that you are here, because it's tournament time and you've got four teams, as usual, in the tournament. (Applause.)

You may know that I am something of a basketball fanatic. And you may know that one of my most memorable basketball experiences -- I once saw North Carolina and Kentucky play in the Dean Dome, and the car that I came in was towed. (Laughter.) But I had so much fun at the ball game I would have walked all the way back to Arkansas after it was over. (Laughter.) I make it a point never to take sides in basketball games unless my home team in Arkansas or my alma mater, Georgetown, are playing. But I am looking forward to the day when the great Dean Smith breaks Adolf Rudd's record. (Applause.)

There is much for the rest of the nation and especially the rest of the South of to admire in North Carolina -- the determined and visionary leadership that has characterized this state for many decades in education and economic development, in bringing harmony among peoples of different backgrounds.

When I was a young man, I followed the work here of then-Governor Terry Sanford who later became my friend and colleague. Eighteen years ago, when I first started my career as Governor of Arkansas, my best mentor and friend was Jim Hunt. And he is still my mentor and friend. Dick Riley were laughing with Jim Hunt -- we were together 18 years ago as the governors of Arkansas, South Carolina and North Carolina, and we were laughing that Jim was probably the only one of us who could still get elected governor in our home states after 18 years. (Laughter.) And I applaud him on that.

It was in Chapel Hill that the cornerstone was laid at our nation's first publicly funded university, in Kitty Hawk where man first took to the skies. And today, North Carolina is an aeronautics and an air travel hub center for millions of people. Your state universities receive the highest level of funding for research and development in the nation. You have connected more of your communities than any other state in the country to the Information Superhighway -- something I'm trying to do for every classroom and library in America by the year

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2000. The Research Triangle has one of the highest per capita concentrations of Ph.D.s in the world, and you are clearly one of America's most dynamic centers of economic activity.

The most important thing about all this is not for me to brag on you, you know that already, but to emphasize the main point: These things do not happen by accident. They are the product of vision and disciplined, long-term effort.

Now, our country faces the challenges of a new century -- a whole new economy, a whole new way in which people will work and live and relate to each other here at home and around the world. It is driven by information and by technology. Its best hopes may be undermined by its darkest fears, by the old demons of racial and religious and ethnic hatreds, by terrorism and narco trafficking and organized crime.

This new time that we're moving into that, coincidentally, will be part of a new century and a new millennium, will give more people in this state and this nation the chance to live out their dreams than at any period in human history if we take advantage of it to seize our opportunities and deal with our challenges.

There is unprecedented peace and prosperity now. And it has been very rare in our country's history -- you can go back and find maybe a couple of other examples when we've had real security, a feeling of prosperity, and yet, a whole lot of challenges before us. Usually when people feel secure and relatively prosperous, one of two things happens -- neither of them very laudable, but it's part of human nature -- we either get sort of happy and self-satisfied and don't do anything, or because we are not gripped by big differences, we fall out with each other over small things and petty things make us less than we ought to be.

The point I want to make today is that we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be divided among ourselves about small things. For we have been given an opportunity almost unique in American history to fashion a future that will embrace everybody. And we cannot and dare not blow that opportunity.

If you look at where we are now, you can see the vistas of the future. Our economy produced 12 million jobs in four years -- never happened before in a four-year period. We've had constant decline in crimes. We've had the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in American history in the last four years. In North Carolina, you've seen the unemployment rate drop to 4.2 percent -- 75,000 people off the welfare rolls; 350,000 new jobs. That's going on all over America. But you know that we have more to do.

I have been going around the country to the Michigan and the Maryland state legislatures -- today the Vice President

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is in California speaking to the state legislature as I am here with you -- because I know that to achieve the vision that we share for America we all have to do our part. I've said many times that the era of big government is over. Your federal government is now 285,000 people smaller than it was the day I took office. It's the smallest its been since President Kennedy was in office, in real terms. As a percentage of the civilian work force, the federal government is now as small as it was when Franklin Roosevelt was sworn into office the first time before the New Deal.

But the challenges we face are still very big, indeed. If they cannot be solved by government alone, and especially by the federal government, obviously, a new partnership is required. And new efforts, new activity, new responsibility is required of people at the state level, at the local level and in their private lives. The biggest challenge we face today, I believe, is the challenge of creating a world-class education system that embraces every child that lives in this state and in this nation. And this must not be a political football.

In the Cold War, because we knew that communism threatened our existence, it became commonplace that politics would stop at the water's edge. And the Democrats and the Republicans would fight like cats and dogs over whatever it was they were fighting about, but when it came to standing up to the threat of communism we were together. If the President of one party went abroad on a mission of world peace, he was never criticized back home by members of the other party because politics stopped at the water's edge.

I think we understand today intuitively that education holds the key to our future in the 21st century. And I believe politics must stop at the schoolhouse door. (Applause.)

When I was governor, a long time ago now, North Carolina already had the highest percentage of its adults in institutions of higher education of any state in the South. The economy was growing and it was diversifying, and yet you still had more success in maintaining manufacturing jobs than any state in our region, and indeed, in the country. You know all this. Last year you had the biggest increase in 8th grade math scores, I noticed, in the country. I was in Michigan and I said that they had had the second biggest increase in math scores, and the minute I got in the car Governor Hunt made sure I knew who was number one. (Laughter.) So I knew that.

The Governor chose to be sworn in at the Needham Laughton High School, his old school, to make clear that school standards and teaching excellence will be his top priorities. But with all the progress that we have made, you know we've got a lot more to do.

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Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills -- 89 percent. Today, even though over 80 percent of our children are graduating from high school, more than half -- or about half the people entering the work force are not prepared with these skills. We all know that is true.

For 20 years, inequality among working Americans grew. In the last few years it started to shrink -- in the last couple of years -- as we've gotten -- more and more of our new jobs are becoming higher-wage jobs and as growth and productivity are permitting wages to rise again.

Many people, just a couple of years ago, were saying, well, is the middle class vanishing in America, will it always be squeezed, are we going to create a country with a huge number of people that are very well off and an even much larger number of people that are poor, with a smaller middle class. We've seen in the last few years that that does not have to happen. We can begin to grow the middle class again with productivity and growth and the right kinds of new jobs, but we have to be able to provide the people with the skills to hold those jobs if we're going to maintain a high-wage, high-growth, high-opportunity society in America in the 21st century. And our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply cannot do that.

That is why our number one priority has to be to make America's education the best in the world. We have to have a nation in which every 8-year-old can read independently, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college and every adult American can keep on learning throughout an entire lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a 10-point call to action for American education that describes the steps we have to meet. First, we have to make sure the all of our children come to school ready to learn. Our balanced budget will expand Head Start to a million children. But we all must do more, and a lot of that has to be done at the state level. And I hope every state in the country is looking closely at the Smart Start program in North Carolina. (Applause.)

The idea of having all elements of a community in a community nonprofit environment working on not only education, but health care and parenting skills and child care, trying to give our poorest children a coherent early childhood is terribly important. Scientists have discovered that learning begins in the earliest days of life. And now we have to explore how parents and educators can best use these findings.

On April 17th, the First Lady and I will host the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning in Washington, and I want Smart Start to be an important part of what is considered there.

Let me just give you one simple example of the scientific findings. Over half of the capacity of the brain to absorb and to learn and to grow, the capacity is developed in the first four years of life. In the first four years of life, if a child has parents who understand this and who constantly -- whether they have a Ph.D. or they were high school drop-outs -- but who constantly work at nourishing the child's learning capacities, that child will get 700,000 positive contacts.

But in the typical experience of a child with a single parent, let's say, with very little education and no self-confidence about parenting and no training and no understanding, and a sense that no difference can be made, and the child that's left in front of the television in the first four years, that child will get 150,000 positive contacts -- a more than four-to-one difference.

Now, you tell me what the future is going to be life for them. Smart Start can change that. And our cooperative efforts can change that. But we have to understand that we have totally underestimated the impact of this whole thing. And the new scientific findings impose upon all of us a heavier responsibility than we have ever had for developing the capacities of our children in their earliest years. So I look forward to that. (Applause.)

I believe we have to do more to give constructive alternatives, creative alternatives for our young children in our public schools. I favor public school choice. I've been a pioneer supporter of the charter school movement. I think that it's important to open schools that stay opened as long as they do a good job, but only as long as they do a good job. And I know that this afternoon, your State Board of Education has the opportunity to open more charter schools than any state has ever opened at one time, to foster innovation and competition and renewal. I hope the Board will take that step today, and one more time, North Carolina will be in the vanguard of a movement you can be proud of. (Applause.)

We have got to have a commitment to rebuild our schools and give our children the facilities they need to learn in. We have the largest number of children in public schools in history. The Secretary of Education never gets tired of reminding me, since I am the oldest of the baby boomers, that our generation has finally been eclipsed in numbers by the people that are in the public schools today. We also have the physical facilities in many of our schools deteriorating at a rapid rate. So, for the first time in history, I have proposed a program that will enable us at the national level to support local efforts to

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increase their investment in the physical facilities of the schools by making sure that the interest rates are lower and the costs are lower in the places where the need is most critical.

I'm going to Florida after I leave you, and tomorrow morning, I will be at a school where there are 17, I understand, according to my briefing -- 17 trailers for classroom space around the existing school facility in a modest-sized community in Florida. That is not an atypical experience in many of our states.

We have to meet our national goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. We have to open the doors of college to all. North Carolina pioneered, with your network of four-year and two-year higher educational institutions, pioneered the idea that education ought to be a lifetime experience and that the doors ought to be open to everyone.

In the last four years, we have lowered the cost and improved the reach of the student loan program, added 200,000 slots to work-study, opened up almost 70,000 slots for college through the national service program, AmeriCorps. We have worked very, very hard, but I think we have to do more.

It is clear to me -- if you look at the job profile, where 89 percent of the new jobs will require more than a high school education, we have to make two years of education after high school -- the 13th and 14th grades -- just as universal in America by the year 2000 as a high school diploma is today -- every bit as universal. (Applause.)

To achieve that our balanced budget plan proposes a \$1,500 HOPE Scholarship -- a tax credit that reflects the cost of the typical community college tuition in America, modeled on Governor Zell Miller's HOPE Scholarship program in Georgia. We propose to give people a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any education after high school; an expanded IRA that you can withdraw from tax-free if the money is used to pay for higher education; and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years, along with another 100,000 work-study slots. That will help North Carolina, and it will help America.

Finally, let me say on this subject, we know we have to make sure learning continues throughout a lifetime. We know that we have older and older students going back to community colleges, changing their careers and getting new careers and opening up new vistas. We have a federal response which I think is totally antiquated. There are at least, conservatively speaking, at least 70 different federal programs that were developed with the best of intentions to try to help to pay for various training programs for people who lose their jobs or people who are grossly underemployed.

I have proposed for four years -- with a Democratic Congress and with the Republican Congress -- getting rid of these programs and putting the money in a pot and sending a skills grant to an unemployed person or an underemployed person who has qualified for any of them, and let them go to the nearest community college or four-year college if it's the appropriate one -- whatever is nearest and best to get their education. We do not need a lot of government intermediaries here. People know -- people know what they need. They're capable of making a judgment.

In a state like North Carolina and most places in the country, nearly everybody's within driving distance of a community college that works. And that's -- I call that my G.I. Bill for America's Workers. And if you could prevail upon your legislators to support it, I would appreciate it. I've been trying for four years to pass that thing. I would appreciate it. (Applause.)

I think the most important thing we have to do is to make sure that our children have met certain national standards in basic courses. In 1989, when President Bush and the governors met at the University of Virginia, I had the honor of being the Democratic governor chosen to try to write the nation's education goals. And at the time we always assumed that out of those goals there would come national standards and a system, a nationally recognized system of testing our children to see if they met those standards.

Well, that hasn't happened yet. And as a result, we still don't know. We don't really know whether every child in every classroom knows what he or she needs to know when he or she needs to know it in math and in basic language skills. I have challenged every state in this country to adopt high national academic standards, not just in math and language, but in other areas as well, to participate nationally by 1999 in an examination of 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math so that we can see how every child is doing in meeting those basic standards.

Now, this is, I know, somewhat controversial. There are people who have actually argued that you couldn't possibly have a national examination reflecting national standards in a country as diverse as America -- as if it's some sort of plot, as if math is different in Raleigh than Little Rock; or any board of education could rewrite the rules of algebra for Alaska as opposed to Florida. I think that is inherently implausible.

When you compete here in North Carolina for a new high-tech plant, when the Research Triangle finds some new breakthrough, you do it based on an international competition -- you have to win based on standards that are imposed. We have to be willing to hold our children to the same standards and to hold ourselves to the same standards.

Governor Hunt told me today that he will endorse our call for national standards and a testing plan. North Carolina, therefore, would be the third state to do so. The Republican governor of Michigan joined in, along with his legislative leaders, just a few days ago.

But let me say what I think we need to do. A lot of you know a lot about this. We have some standardized tests in America, but we don't have any tests to nationally accepted standards. The closest we have is the so-called NAEP test, the National Assessment of Education Progress. But, as all of you know, it only is given to a sample of students in various districts. There is no examination in America which says, here are the standards that everyone should know in language or math, and here is a test which reflects those standards; and it doesn't matter whether you're first or last in your class, it matters whether you get over this bar. If you're first in your class and nobody is over this bar, nobody know what they need to know. If you're last, but you're over the bar, you're still going to do okay in this old world.

I think that is very important. We all need to know that. We all need to know that. You know -- and let me also say that I know it won't be easy, because some of our kids won't do all that well at first. If you saw the State of the Union address you know that I introduced two students from 20 school districts in Northern Illinois who took the Third International Math and Science Survey and the 20 school districts up there tied for first in science and second in math in the survey, with Singapore for first. But if they had finished dead last I would have been equally proud of them because they were willing to actually hold themselves to international standards of achievements and measure themselves.

And this is where we need all of your help. I'm convinced that one of the reasons that we've never done this in America is that we were afraid if the news was bad we wouldn't know what to do about it. And I think that in so doing we have sold our children short. All the evidence is, all the scientific evidence is, all the anecdotal evidence is that almost all of our children, without regard to their race, their income and where they live, can learn what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy. And when we do not hold them to high standards because we are afraid that in the beginning they won't meet them, we are selling their futures down the drain and we are insulting them, because they can meet these standards.

What we have to be willing to do is to say, okay, we'll have these exams, we'll hold people to high standards; some people won't make it first; we don't want to punish people, we want to lift everybody up; but we can't know how to lift people up unless we know where we start.

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When I go around the world people find it unbelievable that we have no national standard in America to tell our parents and our school leaders whether our children know what they're supposed to know in the basic skills that are necessary to learn all the other more sophisticated things we want people to know.

And I tell you, I believe in the kids of this country. I have been in schools in circumstances where it would be unthinkable that people could learn -- because of crime in the neighborhoods and because of poverty in the neighborhoods. And I have seen children performing at very high levels, meeting standards that would be acceptable in anyplace in the entire world. And I am tired of people telling me that there is some reason we shouldn't have that opportunity given to every American child. We are not protecting our children by denying them the chance to develop their God-given capacities to measure up to what they need to know and do, to do well in the future. And we ought to stop it and do better. (Applause.)

Now, on a lighter note, you may wonder why the Secretary of Defense is here with me today. (Laughter.) Before I came down here, Senator Helms asked me to tell you that he is not the guard that Jesse once said I would need to come to North Carolina. (Laughter and applause.) Ever since I got a Chief of Staff that does not speak with an accent, we've been getting along a lot better, Senator Helms and I. (Laughter.)

There is another reason that the Secretary of Defense is here today. We want to set an example -- we want to set an example, we think we ought to start the standards movements with the schools that we run at military bases. At 66 schools across our country and 167 more around the world, our Department of Defense educates 115,000 of our children every year. The Department of Defense runs a school system as big as that of the state of Delaware. And I met some of the children, some of the teachers and some of the parents out at the airport when I came in today.

Sixteen of those schools are at Camp LeJeune and Fort Bragg, right here in North Carolina, and nearly 8,000 students attend them. It's important that we give these children the best possible education, too -- especially these children, because their families sacrifice, they live far from home, they often risk their lives for their country. It's important, too, because these students come from every racial and ethnic background. They move from place to place as their parents are transferred from base to base.

Because of this mobility, no groups of students better underscores the need for common national standards and a uniform way of measuring progress than this group. If standards can work in these schools, they can work anywhere.

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So I am pleased to announce today that, with the strong support of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of Defense schools have stepped forward to ask that their students be among the first to take the new tests when they become available. The Secretary of Defense and the secretary of Education Riley have both committed their work.

Starting in 1999, students and classrooms, from Wiesbaden Air Force Base in Germany to Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, to Camp LeJeune will learn the same rigorous material and take the same national tests as students throughout this state, and I hope throughout our entire nation. We can make our public schools just like our military, the best on Earth, if, like our military, we are willing to adhere to high, rigorous standards for all people, regardless of their background. That's what we ought to do.

And I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. (Applause.)

Let me also say that we know we have to do more work to prepare all of our students. And the Department of Defense is being directed today through its school system to use every resource to prepare the students for 1999 when the new math and science tests -- or math and reading tests are ready.

Let me mention one other thing that I think is very important, and it goes well with a lot of what you are doing here with your pre-school years and your early years. It is appalling to me that 40 percent of America's 8-year-olds cannot read a book on their own. But it's true. And the rest of this stuff is just sort of whistling the breeze if people can't read. So we have launched the America Reads Initiative, through the Department of Education, to mobilize an army of a million reading tutors, properly trained, to help make sure that by the year 2000 every 8-year-olds can read independently.

Thirteen North Carolina college presidents have pledged to commit a portion of their work-study students to serve as tutors, and I thank them for that. We're going to have 300,000 new work-study students over a four-year period. If we can put at least a third of them into reading instruction for our young children, we'll be a long way toward those million volunteers.

We ought to be clear about something else, too -- and here's something that I really take my hat off to Governor Hunt for. We cannot expect our children to meet high standards unless we demand that our teachers meet high standards. We have to do whatever is necessary to make sure that they do.

Last year, the report of Governor Hunt's National Commission on Teaching and America's Future laid out a blueprint for the road ahead. And all of you have together across party

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lines to develop a comprehensive legislative agenda that implements the report's recommendations. We have to start by recognizing and rewarding our best teachers. We all know what a difference a good teacher can make in the life of a child. I know what a difference my teachers made in mine.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, led by Governor Hunt, has encouraged teachers all over the country to improve their skills and seek certification as master teachers. North Carolina already has more certified national teachers than any other state in the country. And the Governor was kind enough to bring five or six of them out to the airport to meet me, and they were not ashamed of the fact that they had been board-certified master teachers.

Over 20 percent of all the teachers that have been certified are here in North Carolina. That's the good news. The bad news is that only about 500 teachers have been certified. In our balanced budget plan, there's enough money to help 100,000 teachers achieve this important credential. Now, the states need to do things like North Carolina has and offer to pay -- the Governor's plan would pay master teachers another 12 percent more. You have to encourage people. But we need 100,000 at least, because what we really want is at least a board certified master teacher in every single school building in America. If you get one in every single school building in America, we know from the research that they will change the education environment and help lift the standards that other teachers achieve and help to lift the quality of teaching in all the classrooms.

So that is one of the things that we're trying to do in our budget. But again, I'd say that we are following your lead and especially the years and years and years that Governor Hunt has put into this. In April, Secretary Riley will hold a national forum on attracting and preparing teachers with 50 of our nation's best teachers and thousands of others. And we are going to have to do more to encourage our brightest young people to become teachers.

Finally, we also have to make sure, as the Governor said, that while good teachers get a raise, the truly bad teachers who can't measure up should get a pink slip. We have to do that in an expeditious and fair way. Today, that is too time consuming and costly. In some states, it can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. That same money could be and should be used to reward good teachers and to train those who are trying to improve their skills. We can change this, as they have in Cincinnati where school boards and teachers unions have worked together in partnership to find more efficient and fair ways to remove teachers who should leave the classroom. Encouraging teachers is not easy or cheap, but again, I say, we know what a phenomenal difference it makes.

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Finally, to elevate teaching, I think we have to reform the way we spend money in our schools and give parents the tools to demand more accountability. Today, the Vice President is discussing that at the state legislature in Sacramento, California. His reinventing government initiative has helped us to shrink the national government to the smallest it's been in three decades and to take that money and invest it in education, invest it in technology, invest it in transportation, invest it in growing the economy and building a better future. We have to have the same sort of national effort to analyze the way expenditures are made in public education throughout America, so that we can support those who are committed to reducing unnecessary bureaucratic expenditures and increasing expenditures on children and teachers and learning.

Yesterday I did a town hall meeting, with 35 children, on drugs. And I asked all these kids -- and some of these kids had been on drugs and were off drugs, a couple of these kids were in treatment, some of them had been in families of gang members who had been involved in drugs, and then some of them had never used drugs. It was a whole panoply of kids. But I went through child after child after child, and I asked them to tell me about their circumstances. And they all said, we need mentors, we need programs we're interested in. And one after another they kept telling me about how their school had had to abandon its music program or its art program, its physical education programs, its intramural athletic programs -- all the things that happen after school or on weekend that keep kids involved in positive things.

We have to understand that however much money we have for our schools we have to make sure we are spending it first and foremost on instruction and, secondly, on ways designed to give the children the best chance to live productive, wholesome, good, constructive lives -- and that ought to be a national effort as well.

We have found phenomenal amounts of money that we could redirect in the federal government to reducing the deficit or investing in our future simply by slowly, but deliberately, eliminating hundreds of unnecessary programs, thousands of unnecessary regulations and reducing -- without running people off -- just slowly reducing the size of government until we have got it to the point where I mentioned to you earlier.

And we have to work on that in our schools because we cannot afford to waste a single dollar when it comes to these children's future. And it is folly to believe that we're not paying for it when we take these kids away from a chance to have a full, wholesome experience and to be in those schools after school hours or before school hours and doing things in addition to their academic learning. So I hope you will support that. (Applause.)

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Let me just say one final word in closing about another big job we have to do together. We have to finish the work of welfare reform. In the first four years of my presidency, we gave waivers from federal rules to 43 states to do all kinds of things to help move people from welfare to work. We now know that partly because of the growing economy, partly because of state welfare reform efforts, and partly because of a 50 percent increase in child support collections nationwide, the welfare rolls went down by 2.6 million in four years -- a record number.

Then the Congress passed and I signed the welfare reform bill, which says there will still be a national guarantee for poor children for food and medicine, but there's a limit to how long an able-bodied person can be on welfare without going to work. And we're going to give it to the states and let the states decide how to design their plans to move people from welfare to work.

Well, what I want to tell you folks is that this is like that old country singer, Chet Atkins, used to say, you've got to be awful careful what you ask for in this old life, because you might get it. And now you've got it. And here is what you have: In order to meet the demands of the law that was supported by almost every governor and every state official in the country, we must move about another million people from welfare to work. Now, keep in mind, when we reduced the welfare rolls by 2.6 million some of those were children -- only about a million of those were people moving from welfare into the work force. So we moved a million people in four years when the economy created almost 12 million jobs. We have to move another million in the next four years because of what the law says, whether the economy creates jobs or not. And it is your responsibility to design a plan to get that done.

Now, I want to help. And I have proposed federal legislation to give a tax credit of 50 percent for up to \$10,000 in salaries for people who hire people specifically off welfare. I have proposed to give extra cash to high-impact, high-unemployment areas so people can do public service work, community service work, if necessary.

But there are more things you can do. Your work first program here in North Carolina is encouraging private employers by subsidizing paychecks and holding job fairs. These are the kinds of things we have to do everywhere. But you really need to look at how your program works. And you need to look at whether you have a system for challenging private employers to look at the incentives that are available. And you need to figure out how many people every country is going to have to move from welfare to work in order for you not to have a train wreck at the end of the next four years.

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Every state has to do this. And it's going to have to be done county by county, community by community. Because I'm telling you, everybody that ever said people who are able-bodied on welfare ought to have to work now has a moral obligation to make sure that the people who have been told they have to work actually have jobs so they can work. We have to do that. (Applause.)

Let me just say -- I have been to a lot of states and looked at a lot of programs. In Missouri, they go to employers and say, we'll give you the welfare check for up to four years if you need it; but you have to pay people \$1.75 over the minimum wage and we'll give you the welfare check as an employment-in-training supplement. And you can have it for a slot, but not for a particular individual, for up to 10 years if you'll just keep being part of our program. So they've got a lot of employers -- small, medium and large -- who are part of that.

You have to do something like that to do something for the employers who are not taxed. Community nonprofits and religious organizations can hire a lot of people from welfare into their ranks, and have a lot to do with integrating their families into the mainstream of life in North Carolina. But they have to have some incentive to do so.

The second thing I would urge you to do is to make sure that as you realize savings from people moving from welfare to work, I think you can meet your goals better if you turn around and invest at least the initial of those savings back into the transition. We did a good job of adding \$4 billion to child care for people moving from welfare to work. But we still may not have enough child care to do the job. And we know that is a huge barrier. You cannot ask people to hurt their kids when they go to work. And a lot of folks entering these entry-level jobs don't make much money. Now, we can carry them over with Medicaid health insurance for their kids for a while -- they've got to have the child care.

This bill gives you a lot of flexibility and now you have to design this program. I would just implore you to really get down to brass tacks, get the facts: How many people does North Carolina have to move from welfare into jobs in four years? How many is that per county? How many is that per community? What are the tools we have? Who have we asked to do the job?

I believe that the private sector is anxious to be asked to participate in this. I believe they want to end the permanent underclass in America and help people move into the thriving, growing middle class. But we have to do it in an organized, disciplined way state by state. We're going to do our part, but we need you to do yours.

Finally, let me say that it is obvious from looking at education that we have to have a new partnership in America. Washington can lead the way, but the work has to be done by all Americans. North Carolina has led the way for a long time.

I was smiling today when I got up and I thought about coming down here, and I thought about the first time I was ever in a meeting with Governor Hunt and Governor Riley -- 18 years ago -- we were all much younger then. And we had this idea that all the southern states would reach the national average in per capita income and have all these great opportunities for our people if only we could have an education system that was as good as anyplace in the country and it would reach everybody, without regard to race or income.

And, ironically, the mission that many of us who are southerners have carried for 20 or 30 years in our hearts is now the mission of America in a global society dominated by information and technology. And it is within our reach, literally, to give every single child in America the greatest future in human history if we create the conditions in which we can flourish -- that's partly our job, through national defense and meeting the security challenges and providing a good economy -- but also having the tools.

We cannot guarantee the future for any child, but we can give every child the tools to make the most of his or her own life. That is now America's mission. It is a mission this state has pursued for a long time. If you will lead the way, America's best days are still ahead.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

12:00 Noon EST

3/5/97 4:30pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
ADDRESS TO THE MICHIGAN STATE LEGISLATURE
STATE CAPITOL
LANSING, MICHIGAN
MARCH 6, 1997**

Acknowledgments: Mr. Speaker, Governor Engler [more to come]

I am especially honored to become only the second sitting President ever to have addressed this legislature. Ninety years ago, Teddy Roosevelt, on his way to give a speech at what was then Michigan Agricultural College, now Michigan State, stopped here to address a joint session of the Michigan legislature at this same rostrum. You have since renovated this building to restore the charm and artistry that was in place when Roosevelt visited. In 1907, America was at the dawn of the Industrial Era. This building had only been wired for electricity two years before. And President Roosevelt went from here to the college campus in a brand new automobile, built by a Lansing company that was then just 10 years old. This year, Oldsmobile celebrates its centennial.

This too is a rare moment in American history. Peace and prosperity abound. We have just completed four years where we produced more new jobs than in any other presidential term in our history. And we are looking toward a world that is full of exciting new opportunities -- a true Age of Possibility. Only a few times before -- after World War II and at the start of this century when we were entering the Industrial Era as a powerful and wealthy country at peace -- have we experienced anything like this. We have an incredible responsibility -- in America and in Michigan. Thanks to the hard work of all of you here and across the state, your unemployment rate has literally turned around -- from 7.4 percent in 1993 to 4.7 percent today. You have added more than 380,000 new jobs. Your welfare rolls have dropped 30 percent. And student achievement has risen as more schools are meeting the high standards you have set. Things are good and getting better.

But this is a time for us to build a new century. We cannot afford to squander it, in complacency and division. That is why I am pleased that a Republican Governor and a bipartisan state legislature have invited me here today. For we will meet our new challenges only if we reach across party lines -- acting together, Democrats and Republicans, people from every point on the political spectrum, coming together as One America.

The message I bring today is the same one I carried to the Maryland legislature last month -- the same one I will carry to other state legislatures, communities, and forums in the months to come. I am asking for a new kind of partnership -- with the people in this chamber, and people all across America. The era of big government is over. But the era of big national challenges is not. And while national leadership can point the way, the real responsibility is one we all share.

Today, I want to talk about what we must do in two critical areas where the responsibility rests at least as much with you as with the national government: giving our children the best education and raising standards so our children master the basics, and breaking the cycle of dependency by finishing the job of welfare reform, and moving millions to work. Taken together, these issues are at the core of what we must do to prepare America for the new Century. We must help all Americans have the tools to make the most of their own lives in this knowledge economy -- and have the opportunity to do so.

As I said one month ago in my State-of-the-Union Address, we must never forget that one of the greatest sources of our strength throughout the Cold War was a bipartisan foreign policy. Because our future was at stake, politics stopped at the water's edge. Now we need a non-partisan commitment to education -- because education is the critical national security issue for our future, and politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

What we must do is to prepare our children and all our people to know what they must know to navigate the world ahead. Between 1992 and 2000, 89% of the new jobs created in this economy will require post-high school levels of literacy and math skills. But only half the people entering the work force are prepared for those high-paying jobs. Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work.

That is why our number-one priority must be to make our public education the best in the world. Our goals must be: every 8-year-old can read; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old can go to college; and every adult can keep learning for a lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a ten-point plan, a Call to Action for American Education [*hold up booklet*], that describes the steps we must take -- and the State of Michigan is already doing many of the right things.

Many of those points relate to what we must do for our people before they start school, and how we help them in college and beyond. We must begin with the youngest children, by expanding early childhood learning. We must open the doors of college wider than ever, making the 13th and 14th years of college as universal as high school is today. In my balanced budget plan, I have proposed education tax cuts to help more families afford the fine colleges such as those here in Michigan. We must give our workers the ability to learn and to earn for a lifetime through my G.I. Bill for Workers -- transforming the tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly into workers' hands.

But today, I want to spend special time talking with you about what we must do to prepare our students in our schools for the 21st Century.

We must rebuild our nation's crumbling schools; we cannot raise our children up in schools that are literally falling down.

We must harness the forces of technology, connecting every classroom in America to the Internet by the Year 2000. [*Thank freshman U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow, who has helped lead efforts*]

And our schools must teach discipline and character -- and serve as safe havens for our children. So I have proposed funding 1,000 new community schools programs across this country to help keep our school doors open after school, on the weekends and in the summer.

We must recognize that the best schools are only as good as the teachers in their classrooms. For years, educators have worked to establish nationally accepted credentials for excellence in teaching -- through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, headquartered in Detroit. Michigan has the third highest number of board certified master teachers in the country. My new budget will enable 100,000 teachers across America to seek certification as master teachers.

We need a strong system of public education that gives parents and communities more freedom and flexibility in education. We should work together to give parents more choices of what public schools their children attend, and help teachers, parents, museums, and others create new public charter schools. I have proposed doubling the size of our public charter school program to \$100 million. We can help charter schools set an example for expanding accountability in public education by holding them to the same state and national standards we expect of all schools, making sure they are open to children from all backgrounds, supporting those that work, and shutting down those that are not up to standard.

All of this is important. But the most basic thing we can do -- the most important thing we must do -- is to make sure that all our children master the basics that will be the foundation of success in the 21st Century.

When 40% of our fourth graders do not read as well as they should -- when students in Germany or Singapore learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth each year, while our students often race through 30 to 35 without really learning them at all -- we are not doing what we should to prepare our children for a knowledge economy.

Let's understand why these basics are so important. The point is not merely to teach our children facts and figures, but to teach them the ability to think and reason and analyze -- to give them the tools and skills that will serve them in jobs and careers we cannot even contemplate today. We are not doing right by any of our students when we set low expectations. We must put an end to social promotions, and make sure education means something.

We must have a high standard of excellence that all states can agree upon. That is why, I have challenged our country to meet national standards of excellence in the basics --not federal government standards, but national standards, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the 21st Century. I am calling on every state to test every 4th grader in reading and

every 8th grader in math by 1999, to make sure these basic standards are met.

We already have widely-accepted, rigorous national standards in both reading and math -- and widely-used tests based on those standards. Michigan and more than 40 other states have participated in a test called the National Assessment of Educational Progress -- which measures the state's overall performance against a high national standard of excellence. Just last week, we released the annual assessment of math performance, and it shows that across the country our 4th, 8th, and 12th graders are doing better. Michigan's score was among the most improved in the nation.

Tens of thousands of students across the country have also taken the Third International Math and Science Study --a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era. The headquarters for that test is just down the road at Michigan State. I want to thank Dr. William Schmidt at Michigan State for his leadership of this important study, and I am pleased that he is here with us today.

Unfortunately, the current tests don't provide scores for individuals; they only measure how an entire area is doing. What we need are tests that will measure the performance of each and every student, and each and every school. That way, parents and teachers will know how every child is doing compared to students in other schools, other states, and other countries.

That is why I am presenting a plan to help states meet and measure the highest standards. Over the next two years, our Department of Education will support the development of new tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math to show how every student measures up to the existing, widely-accepted standards. The tests will be developed by independent test experts in consultation with leading math and reading teachers. The federal government will not require them, but these tests will be available to every state that chooses to administer them.

I am pleased that today Governor Engler has endorsed our plan to test all 4th graders to make sure they are meeting the challenge in reading and all 8th graders to ensure they are measuring up in math. We have plenty of standardized tests; now it is time to test for standards. Together, we are saying, this is not about partisanship. There is no Democratic or Republican way to teach. There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading and math is math. If we are serious about holding our children to the highest standards, every state in America must put politics aside, work in a bipartisan fashion, take up our challenge, and test our children in the same rigorous way.

Raising standards will not be easy. Some of our children will not be able to meet them at first. But good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching we must make, and which schools need to improve. We are not talking about winners and losers; we are not talking about tearing anyone down, but about lifting them up. But you cannot lift them up if you don't know what the score is.

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Our responsibility must be to do what we can so our children can meet these standards.

When it comes to reading, I want to remind everyone that this past August, during my train trip in Wyandotte, with the help of two elementary school students, Justin Whitney and Elizabeth Schweyn [SCHWINN], I announced our America Reads Challenge. We set a goal of mobilizing a million volunteer tutors to help every 8 year old read independently. We will use 11,000 of our AmeriCorps members to mobilize this army -- and we should enlist at least 100,000 college work study students to join in this effort. [possible Michigan college presidents announcement] You here have already launched a similar statewide tutoring effort. Let's make sure that every child can say what Justin and Elizabeth said after they read *The Little Engine that Could*: "I read it myself." They showed us that when our students are held to high standards they can excel. I am pleased that Justin and Elizabeth are able to join us here today.

And I want to do more to help our young people be ready to be tested in math. Today I am directing the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to identify and coordinate resources throughout the Federal government and through the non-profit and private sectors that can be used to help students meet the math standards. I am also directing them to find ways to help our young people do better and learn more science. The entire national government can be a vital resource as educators in every community work to teach young people these skills. Let me give you one example. Today, the federal government has some of the world's most esteemed laboratories and research institutions -- we should make sure that every high school math and science teacher has easy access to this world of learning through the Internet. As our entire nation works to lift students and raise standards, everyone has a responsibility -- and we will do our part.

Throughout my career in public life --as a Governor, and as President --I have worked harder on education than on any other issue. That is because renewing education, raising our standards, and lifting up our schools is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare for the 21st Century --to promote opportunity, demand responsibility, and build community.

When it comes to providing the tools to succeed, our other great challenge is helping to move the permanent underclass into our growing middle class. And here, too, the only way to do it is by reaching across party lines and working together, Democrats and Republicans, national government and state government, business and labor and religious institutions.

Working together, we ended the old welfare system. Over the past four years, we worked with 43 states to launch welfare reform experiments, which helped move a record 2.25 million people off our nation's welfare rolls. Here in Michigan, a strong economy and your efforts have helped move more than 208,000 people off the welfare rolls, a 30 percent drop. You have also realized a 21 percent increase in child support collections. These are all accomplishments you can be proud of.

But this is not the end of welfare reform, it is a new beginning. Now that we have

demanding that those on welfare take responsibility, we must all take responsibility to see that the jobs are there, so people on welfare can become permanent members of the workforce. Our goal must be to move people from welfare to work so that two million more Americans are off the welfare rolls by the year 2000.

I have challenged the nation's businesses to join in this effort, and I have offered a plan to help them: Tax credits and other incentives for businesses to hire people off welfare; incentives for job placement firms and states to create more jobs for welfare recipients; training, transportation, and child care to help people go to work. I urge Michigan's businesses, non-profits, and religious organizations -- large and small -- to heed this important call. Each and every one of us must fulfill our responsibility -- indeed, our moral obligation -- to make sure that those who now must work, can work.

The most direct and effective steps must be taken by the states. The legislation we passed gives states the authority, for the very first time, to take the money that had been used on welfare checks, and subsidize private sector paychecks. Missouri began doing this under one of our waivers -- and it is working. Now I challenge every state to follow their example. Use the new flexibility you have been given. Turn those welfare checks into paychecks. That is what we need to do to help welfare recipients find jobs and keep them.

Second, I urge you to use the money saved from moving people from welfare to work to make sure that even more people can make that transition. Your model program, Project Zero, is a good example -- investing in child care and transportation with the goal of getting everyone on welfare to earn a paycheck.

Finally, I urge every state and every Governor, Republican or Democrat, to join with me to get Congress to restore basic health and disability benefits when misfortune strikes immigrants who came to this country legally, who work hard, pay taxes and obey the law. To do otherwise is simply unworthy of a great nation of immigrants.

We passed historic welfare reform -- giving states the authority and flexibility they had asked for for years. We were right to do it. Now states must live up to their responsibility, and help us finish the job.

On education reform, on welfare reform, on all our major challenges -- let us build new partnerships across old lines of responsibility. Preparing for the 21st Century is not a job for any one level of government alone. Many of our greatest challenges do not fall under the authority of Washington, nor should they. They do not fall under the authority of state capitals like Lansing, nor should they. The power to solve our problems rests with all levels of government, and all sectors of society -- and that is where we must forge our solutions as well.

Together, we must seize this moment of opportunity, and prepare our people for the changes and challenges of a new century. Together, we must renew our basic bargain of

opportunity, responsibility, and community, and give everyone the tools to make the most of their own lives. If we rise to that challenge, we will enter the 21st Century full of new promise and possibility, for all who share a stake in the American dream.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/5 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 3/6 10:00am

SUBJECT: Math Standards Directive

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McCURRY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BOWLES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McGINTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McLARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NASH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PODESTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RUFF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MATHEWS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SMITH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RAINES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	REED →	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOSNIK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ECHAVESTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	LEWIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EMANUEL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YELLEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIBBONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STREETT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HALE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPERLING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HERMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HAWLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGGINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WILLIAMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HILLEY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RADD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
KLAIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Affie</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BERGER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Glynn</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LINDSEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Comments to this office

RESPONSE: _____

March 6, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE:
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

SUBJECT: Preparing Students to Meet National Standards of Excellence in Eighth Grade Math and Improving Math and Science Education

Since the early 1980's, U.S. elementary and secondary school students have begun taking tougher courses, and we are starting to see the results. National Assessment of Educational Progress scores have improved in math and science, with gains in mathematics equal to at least one grade level. On the SAT, average math scores are at their highest in 25 years, even as the number and diversity of test-takers have increased. However, the eighth-grade results of the 41-Nation Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS), released this fall, show that the U.S. is below average in math and just above average in science. That isn't acceptable; in this technology-rich information era, our students need to perform much better in both subjects, but especially in math, if they are to excel at higher level math and science courses that are the gateway to college and to citizenship, productive employment, and lifelong learning.

The first step in raising achievement is lifting expectations and setting high standards for what students should know and be able to do. TIMSS, our National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics give us a solid framework to build on. Last month, to help parents and teachers learn who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need to improve, I asked the Secretary of Education to develop a voluntary national test for individual eighth-grade students based on widely-accepted, challenging national standards in mathematics. The national test will be available to states and local school districts to give to their students in the spring of 1999, and will measure whether students have reached a high level of mathematics proficiency.

The primary responsibility for achieving high standards rests with students, teachers, parents, and schools in local communities across America. However, it is imperative that we work to ensure that federal resources support student success as well. We must ensure that federal programs, research, and human resources are used as effectively as possible to help improve teaching and learning.

Therefore, I direct the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, together with other agencies identified in cooperation with the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Domestic Policy Council, to develop an action strategy for using key federal resources to assist states and local school systems prepare students to meet challenging math standards in eighth grade, and for involving the mathematics, scientific, and technical communities in support of these efforts.

The action strategy should include recommendations for the use of federal resources to help states, local school districts and schools to improve teaching, upgrade curriculum, integrate technology and high-quality instructional materials into the classroom, as well as motivate students and help them understand how math concepts are applied in the real world. The strategy should identify significant federal programs, activities, and partnerships available to improve teaching and learning, ensure that these resources are appropriately focused on helping students reach challenging math standards, and determine how these resources can best support state and local reforms. In developing this strategy, the inter-agency group should review the current status of improvements in math education, and identify and address critical areas of need, drawing on research and input from educators and professional organizations.

Because teaching and learning in math and science are so integrally related, and because success in both subjects is vitally important in this information era, the working group should also review how federal resources and partnerships with other organizations can help improve student achievement in science.

The working group should make its recommendations and submit its action strategy to me within 90 days.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

cc: ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR DOMESTIC POLICY
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Michigan Education

Policy and Political Overview

Education is a highly partisan and contentious issue in Michigan. There are very few issues on which Gov. Engler and Democrat state or national officials agree. Most Democrats believe that the Governor is hostile to public education, and see many of his specific initiatives directed toward that end.

His charter schools initiative is seen as a way of converting previously private schools to charter schools -- thereby enabling them to drain public funds from public schools -- and as a rhetorical tool against public education. In the wake of the recent election which deprived the Republicans of a majority on the State Board of Education (currently 4D's and 4R's), the Governor issued an Executive Order taking policymaking authority away from the State Board of Education and providing it to the State Department of Education, headed by a State Superintendent of Education appointed by the previous, majority-Republican State Board of Education. On Tuesday, the State Board of Education filed suit to block this move. And the Governor's decision to end funding for Adult Education in the state was seen as another step hostile to the public education system.

Below is a summary of key education issues in Michigan relating to your speech and your Call to Action for American Education.

Standards and Tests: Gov. Engler supports your call for national standards and tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, and has already indicated publicly that he wants Michigan to participate in the testing program in 1999. He will reiterate this in his remarks to the legislature before you speak.

On a related issue, Gov. Engler supported the successful move in the last legislature to turn the state's mandatory core curriculum (initially required in 1993 legislation) into a voluntary model. He argues that the state mandated assessment program, aligned with the core curriculum, is sufficient to direct local curriculum, without a curriculum mandate. Democrats opposed this move in the last session, and have introduced legislation this session to provide financial incentives to school districts that adopt the state model curriculum. This legislation is expected to be reported out of the House Education Committee on March 4. It is expected to pass the House, but not the Senate. Gov. Engler opposes this legislation as unnecessary.

Charter Schools: In December 1993, Michigan became the 9th state in the country to enact charter school legislation. After considerable controversy over a local school district's decision to approve a 99-year charter to fund a network of 2,000 home-schoolers (which was ultimately blocked by the former state superintendent of education) and a court decision that this "school" was ineligible for funding, and that the charter school law violated the state constitution because it permitted public funding of non-public schools, this law was modified in January 1995.

The current law permits local school boards, the state board of education, and public colleges to issue charters. Existing private schools can convert to public charter schools. If they do, they must be open to all students, not charge tuition, and they do not "grandfather" in current students. All charter schools must participate in the state testing program, and are accountable for fulfilling their charter and for student results.

Michigan now has 78 charter schools in operation, the third largest of any state. Michigan is receiving approximately \$1.4 million in federal charter schools funding over three years, and Gov. Engler has indicated he intends to seek additional funding in response to your budget request to double federal funding for the charter schools program. The state is also using a portion of its Goals 2000 funds to support charter schools.

The charter school's program has sparked considerable opposition by teacher unions, school boards, and many Democrats. The debate in Michigan over charter schools is dividing more sharply along partisan lines than almost anywhere else in the nation, due to a combination of Engler's personal involvement and the belief that he is attempting in many ways to undermine public education and the way the issue became defined during the controversy over home schoolers.

Opponents of charter schools argue that (1) charter schools divert funds from public school systems; (2) are not accountable to the public—especially those chartered by institutions of higher education rather than elected local school boards; and (3) are less effective than public schools. (A recent evaluation showed that charter schools score lower on state tests than average public schools, though charter school advocates point out that charter schools also serve a larger proportion of low income and minority students.)

Gov. Engler has used your support for charter schools to bolster his own efforts, much to the consternation of many in the education community and Democrats in the legislature.

Accountability: In his State of the State Address, Gov. Engler called for expanded authority for the state to take over academically failing school districts, and has made clear that Detroit is the top of his list for state takeover. Mayor Archer has opposed this proposal, as has the J Caucus in the legislature, on the grounds that problems can better be solved at the local level.

In your speech to the Education Summit at Palisades last Spring, you called on governors to intervene in failing schools. Secretary Riley has reiterated this a number of times, including in his recent State of American Education Address. Gov. Engler has recently quoted Secretary Riley on this issue.

Your speech to the legislature deliberately does not address this issue.

Technology: You will be announcing a Technology Literacy Challenge Fund grant to Michigan of \$8.6 million.

Early Reading: The two distinct initiatives to promote early reading in Michigan. In

September, the State Board of Education and a number of business groups launched Alliance for Children's Education (ACE) focused on recruiting reading tutors statewide, for after-school tutoring very much patterned after America Reads. There is no state funding for this program, though schools can use Goals 2000 and Title 1 funds to support the tutoring effort. The program is still getting underway, and has not achieved much visibility yet. You make general reference to this program in you speech, as part of your overall discussion of America Reads.

Democrats in the House are preparing legislation aimed at improving reading by funding full day kindergarten, reducing class size K-3, providing teacher training, parent outreach, and family resource centers near each school. It is not clear if this legislation will gain any Republican support.

Teaching: Michigan is headquarters for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Detroit) and has the third largest number of board-certified teachers in the country. Several years ago, Gov. Engler succeed in enacting legislation limiting the power of teachers' unions and restricting teachers' right to strike. Michigan has also eliminated certification requirements for principals and other school administrators.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 10, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE MARYLAND STATE LEGISLATURE

State Capitol
Annapolis, Maryland

11:20 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for that wonderful reception. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for what you said. Thank you, Senator Miller, for that 10-year walk down memory lane. (Laughter.)

It is true that when I met his mother I fell in love with her, even before I found out she had 10 kids. (Laughter.) It's not often you meet a person who can elect you if her family votes for you. (Laughter.)

Thank you, Governor Glendening, for your leadership here on so many issues. Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Attorney General Curran, Treasurer Dixon, my old friend, Comptroller Louie Goldstein. I was in the first grade when he became Comptroller. (Laughter and applause.) The walking argument against term limits, you know. It's amazing. (Laughter and applause.)

I'd like to thank so many members of your very distinguished congressional delegation for joining me today -- Senator Sarbanes, and Senator Mikulski; Representative Wayne Gilchrest, your Congressman; Representative Connie Morella; Representative Ben Cardin, Representative Al Wynn and Representative Elijah Cummings.

Now, I know that Ben was formerly the Speaker here, and that Al and Elijah and Connie and Senator Sarbanes were all members of this body. It kind of makes you wonder how Senator Mikulski and Congressman Gilchrest got elected to Congress. (Laughter.) It's obviously a good training program here. (Laughter.)

I'd like to thank the President of the Maryland State Board of Education, Christopher Cross, for being here. When he worked for President Bush, he and I stayed up all night one night, writing the national education goals, which began the process which bring us to this point today. Thank you, sir, for being here. And I'd like to thank your State Superintendent of Education, Nancy Grasmick, for being here.

Then, there are two people who are not here, who are here with us in spirit, and I would like to ask that we all remember them today -- our good friend, Congressman Steny Hoyer and his late wife, Judy, who was one of the finest educators this state ever had. And I know we miss them today. Steny and his family are in our prayers, and we are grateful for the dedication of Judy Hoyer's life to the children and the people of Maryland.

I would also like to say I'm very glad to be here with two members of my Cabinet, Secretary of Education Dick Riley and the Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala. They have served our administration and, more importantly, the American people, exceptionally well, and I thank them for their presence here today.

24th - education wk

3rd - crime

10th - kids health

17th - pensions

MORE

And when I finish talking, if you want anything else, call them.
(Laughter.)

I should also say, since Senator Miller mentioned it, that my college roommate, who lived on the Eastern Shore, Tom Kaplan, is here. And he's still my friend after all these years, which is either a great tribute to his patience or to the roots and values of the people of Maryland. So I'm glad he's here.

I wanted to come here today to talk in greater detail about the issues I discussed in the State of the Union that require us to prepare America for the 21st century. It is important that we gather here at this turning point in our history. It was, after all, in this state house that George Washington resigned his commission as General of the Continental Army. In fact, it was right down the hall in the Lieutenant Governor's Office that Thomas Jefferson wrote George Washington's words of resignation.

It was here that the Treaty of Paris was prepared and ratified, ending the Revolutionary War and beginning the greatest experiment in democracy and opportunity the world has ever known.

Just think what began here in this building. What an experiment it has been. All the turmoil we have survived -- the Civil War, the two world wars, the Cold War, the social upheaval -- all the triumphs of our country in civil rights and women's rights, the environmental movement, workers' rights, bringing in all the immigrants, the explosion in science and technology, the political, the economic, the social achievements of this country. What an incredible experiment it has been since the events of so long ago when the treaty ending the Revolutionary War was signed and ratified here.

At each step along the way, how did we keep growing, how did we overcome, how did we work through, how did we reach higher? We always had responsible citizens. We were always able to come together as one country. And we were always driven by a clear vision.

I would argue to you that we are at another turning point today and we need responsible citizens, a united country, and a clear vision. We face a moment of peace and prosperity, and it gives us an extraordinary opportunity to actually decide what kind of future we want for America in the 21st century, and then go to work to build it. It is very important that we understand that such moments are extremely rare in our history.

We have perhaps had only one before. After World War II, we dominated the world economically. We were the most powerful country in the world militarily. We had some ability to decide our future and, thank goodness, we did the right thing with the Marshall Plan and rebuilding Europe and Japan, our former friends and our former foes. But we were constrained by the Cold War.

At the beginning of this century probably is the time most like this one when we entered the Industrial Era as a powerful and wealthy country at peace. But never have we been quite like this, as the world's only superpower, just completing four years where we produced more new jobs than at any other four-year period in our history, looking toward a world that is full of troubles, to be sure, but so full of explosive opportunities.

We have an incredible responsibility -- we in America and you in Maryland. Thanks to the leadership of your Governor, and the work that all of you have done, unemployment's at a six-year low, things are going well for you here. Your family incomes have risen to fourth in the nation. Your welfare rolls have dropped almost 25 percent since 1995. Student achievement has risen and more schools

are meeting the high standards you have set. We are well positioned.

But it is a moment of choice. We cannot afford to squander this moment in complacency or division. That's normally what happens to people when they sort of get happy and satisfied. They get complacent or they fall out over little things. And this is not a time for us to squander in petty bickering or small ambitions. This is a time for us to build a new century.

We have to meet all the challenges we still have. There are still too many poor children in this country and too many lives of children being lost on the streets of America every day. There are still too many of our areas in our cities and isolated rural areas that have not felt the uplift of the economic recovery. We still have not balanced the budget. We still have not finished all the unfinished business of the Cold War. Not everybody who works hard is feeling the opportunities that are available in America. We have unfinished business.

Then we have new challenges that we have to face. We have to prepare for the aging of the baby boomers. I know I'm the oldest one; that's a self-interest plea here, I think. (Laughter.) We have to prepare for the aging of the baby boomers. We have to make sure that we're ready for this new worldwide competition. We have to meet the new security threats of the 21st century, in terrorism and ethnic and religious and racial conflicts. We have to meet the new environmental challenges of the 21st century, most of which will be global in nature.

So there are challenges out there. But the most important thing is, there are staggering opportunities. More people will have more chances to live out their dreams than any people who ever lived in the history of the Earth if we do the right things. (Applause.) If we do the right things. (Applause.)

We have worked for the last four years essentially to try to make sure America works again, that we are functioning at a reasonable level of proficiency so that we can have the freedom to do that, to shape our future. And we changed the economic course of this country away from supply-side economics to investment economics, to move toward a balanced budget, to reduce the deficit, the interest rates, to expand our trade around the world and to invest in our people. The results have been good.

We've tried to move the debate over social policy in Washington away from rhetoric to reality, centered on families and communities. You've got now five years of declining crime. You've got the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history. You've got real efforts being made through the family leave law and other things to help people succeed in raising their children and in the workplace. We're in a position now to know what works and to know that we can have confidence that if we work together we can make a difference in assaulting our most profound challenges here at home.

We've tried to define the role of government away from the old fight that's dominated America almost ever since World War II, to say government is not the problem, government is not the solution; government's job is to create the conditions and give people the tools to solve their problems and make the most of their own lives. (Applause.)

So now we have this chance. And it's hard when you're not threatened by a foreign enemy to whip people up to a fever pitch of common, intense, sustained, disciplined endeavor. But that is what we must do, my fellow Americans. That is what we must do.

We are strong enough to shape a future that will take advantage of all this life-enhancing technology, of these new

economic opportunities, of the new opportunities we have to build a structure of peace around the world, of the new opportunities we have to put the Information Age at the fingertips of the poorest, as well as the wealthiest children in our country, and we had better do this. Our children and our grandchildren will never forgive us if we blow this chance to make their future the best future -- (applause).

It is obvious that to prepare our people for the 21st century we will need a new, more far-reaching, deeper partnership in America. The era of big government is over, both because we can't go on running national deficits till the end of time and because the nature of our problems requires a different approach. But the era of big national challenges is far from over. It will never be over. And the ones we face are very big, indeed.

National leadership can point the way. It can move barriers out of the way that have prevented our states, our cities, and our people from solving their own problems. But the real responsibilities of building this future are ones we all must bear together. I will do my part. I will do what I can to see that the national government does its part. But, in turn, you must work with me and with others to make sure that we seize this opportunity while we stand strong enough to do so.

Today I want to talk about two critical areas: giving our children the best education; and finishing the job of welfare reform, breaking the cycle of dependency, moving millions of more people from welfare to work. Taken together, these issues really are at the core of our national mission to prepare America for the 21st century.

Everyone must have the tools to succeed in the knowledge economy; that means education and training. Everyone willing to work hard with those tools must have a chance to do so. That means finishing the job of welfare reform. Education and welfare reform are about bringing all Americans to the starting line of the economy, then making sure all of them are ready to run the race. Our number one priority must be to ensure that America has the best education in the world. (Applause.)

I cannot add much to the statement we made so long ago in the National Education Goals seven years ago now, almost eight years ago. But my shorthand statement is every eight-year-old has to be able to read, every 12-year-old should be able to log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old should be able to go to college, and every adult American should be able to keep on learning for an entire lifetime. That should be our goal. (Applause.)

Because our future was at stake in the Cold War, we had a bipartisan foreign policy. Politics stopped at the water's edge. Well, now our future is at stake, in large measure depending upon whether we can give all of our people world-class education. Therefore, we must have a nonpartisan commitment to education, and politics should stop at the schoolhouse door in the 21st century. (Applause.)

It is not enough for members of Congress and members of the state legislatures and elected executives to embrace this commitment. Our businesses, our educators, our parents, all our citizens must make the same commitment. I'm gratified that you have a number of Maryland parents and teachers and businesspeople committed to education here today. I thank them for being here and I thank you for inviting them.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a 10-point call to action for American education, which is embodied in this booklet. And I want to say just a few words about a number of issues today and then focus on one in particular. And I want to thank the State of Maryland for taking the lead in doing so many of the right

things. A lot of you have worked with me going back long years in the past when I was a governor on these educational issues, and I thank you for what you've done.

First, every child has to be able to read independently by the third grade. I'm pleased that the University of Maryland at College Park has already pledged more than 2,300 of its students to work as reading tutors over the next five years. That is a great thing. (Applause.) We're going to use 35,000 of our AmeriCorps volunteers to help to try to mobilize a million of these students. We think we can get at least 100,000 out of the new work-study students approved by Congress in the last budget. Then all the schools have to make use of volunteers once they are trained. But we have to do this.

You just think about it. If 40 percent of our children can't read at grade level, how in the wide world do we expect them to learn algebra, trigonometry, calculus, physics, biology, chemistry. It is very important. Unless we get this done, the rest cannot happen. And it is going to take a national effort of monumental proportions to do it. But we can do it, because the children can do it. The children can do it. They just need for us to do our job and they then will do the rest. So I want you to help us to finish that job. (Applause).

We must expand public school choice. And Baltimore City has done that through its charter schools. We must rebuild crumbling schools. And you heard the Governor say that's a priority for him as well. We must make it possible for all of our children to have access, the same access, in the same time, to the same knowledge. That's what hooking up all these classrooms to the Internet is all about. And I thank Maryland for its commitment to that objective. (Applause.)

In the last four years we have opened the doors of college wider than ever before -- through the direct college loan program and expanded Pell Grants, 200,000 more work-study positions, and the AmeriCorps program. But we have to do more. And I am very pleased, Governor, that you have proposed these state HOPE Scholarships to open the doors of college.

I just came back from Georgia -- Secretary Riley and I went to Augusta -- 230,000 people in the state of Georgia who maintained a B average have had their tuition and their schoolbooks paid for by the state HOPE Scholarship program. In a representative crowd there, I had person after person after person of all ages, telling me, I was a HOPE scholar; I had a chance to go to college; I never could have done it otherwise; I wouldn't have made it otherwise.

There is no better expenditure of our money. It will raise the per capita income of this state more quickly, it will get over inequalities in income groups more quickly, and it will bring people together for a stronger future more quickly than anything else.

So I applaud the proposal you have put before the legislature here, and I also tell you I will do my best to pass our national version of the HOPE Scholarship to give a tax credit of \$1,500 for two years -- that's the typical cost of community college tuition -- and a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of tuition for any education after high school. This will make a difference. (Applause.)

We also propose making the IRA available to more savers, and then let people withdraw from their IRA tax-free if the money is used to pay for education -- and the biggest increase in Pell Grant scholarships for needy students in 20 years. And our G.I. Bill for

America's Workers would take the 70 different federal programs for job training, put them in one block, and send a skill grant to an unemployed or an under-employed worker and say, here, you take it to the nearest institution of education and get the training you need. Nearly every American lives within driving distance of a community college or another community-based university or educational institution that can provide the training today that all people know they need to have a better future.

So we need to do these things together, and they will make a big difference. I also believe we have to teach our children to be good citizens as well as good students. And I'd like to thank the Lt. Governor for supporting the statewide program of character education you have here, to have a statewide code of discipline, to remove disruptive students from the classroom, to promote community curfews. And again, I thank you for being the only state in America to require community service to graduate from high school. You have the first class of seniors graduating today -- that's a good thing. That's a good thing. (Applause.)

To give you some idea how long it takes for some of these things to catch on, 10 years ago, in 1987, the then Republican Governor of New Jersey, and now the president of Drew University, Tom Keane, and I co-chaired a Carnegie Commission study on middle school, and one of our recommendations was that national service should be a requirement for public school students. People should learn that they are connected to others in their community and make it a positive, good, wholesome thing. Only Maryland has done it so far. But I certainly hope -- perhaps my presence here will help -- I hope other states will follow your lead. This is an important part of building a common future for America. (Applause.)

Let me say the most important thing we can do in education is to hold our students to high standards. Children will grow according to the expectations we have of them. They cannot be expected to know what it is they should know, or even how high they can soar until we give them the right set of expectations. When 40 percent of our 3rd graders are not reading as well as they should -- or to put it in plain language, when 40 percent of 8-year-olds cannot read a book on their own that they ought to be able to read, we have a lot to do.

When students in Germany or Singapore learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth each year, while our students typically race through 30 to 35 without learning any in depth in a given year, we aren't doing what we should be doing to prepare them for a knowledge economy that demands that they be able to think and reason and analyze -- in short, demands that they be able to learn for a lifetime of working in ways that have not yet been invented, perhaps not yet even imagined. This is impossible without a good foundation in the basics.

Maryland is making a good start. You've developed clear standards for what children should learn by the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades, in particular, in reading and math, and clear tests to measure them, school district by school district, and school by school. You're holding schools accountable for making the grade, rewarding excellence, intervening in schools that aren't performing. Because you have set high standards, you have seen five years of steady, sustained progress towards meeting those standards.

But Maryland and all other states must do more. To compete and win in the 21st century, we must have a high standard of excellence that all states agree on. That is why I called, in my State of the Union address, for national standards of excellence in the basics -- not federal government standards, but national standards representing what all our students must know to succeed in a new century. I called upon every state to test every 4th grader in

reading and every 8th grader in math by 1999, according to the national standards, to make sure they're being met.

We already have widely accepted rigorous national standards in both reading and math, and widely used tests based on those standards. In reading, Maryland and more than 40 other states have participated in a test called the National Assessment of Education Progress, or all of us educational junkies call it the NAEP test. It measures a state's overall performance against a high national standard of excellence. It's a good test. In math, tens of thousands of students across our nation have already taken the Third International Math and Science Survey, called the TIMSS test, a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era.

As I said in my State of the Union, last month Secretary Riley and I visited northern Illinois, where 8th grade students from 20 districts took the test and tied for first in the world for science, and second in math. We know it is the world standard, and we know the world standard is the right standard to which we should all hold ourselves.

Unfortunately, these kinds of tests -- both the Assessment of Education Progress for the 4th grade reading test, and the Third International Survey in Math and Science for the 8th graders -- do not provide individual scores; they only measure how an entire state is doing. What we need are tests that will measure the performance of each and every student, each and every school, each and every district, so that parents and teachers will know how every child is doing compared to other students in other schools, in other states, in other countries -- not just compared to them, but, more importantly, compared against what they need to know.

It is a false thing to compare all kids against one another unless all children are first held to a high standard. That's what we want to know. That's the only thing that really matters. That is why I'm presenting a plan to help all students in all states meet these standards and to measure them.

Over the next two years our Department of Education will support the development for new tests for 4th grade reading based on the National Assessment of Education Progress, and 8th grade math based on the International Math and Science Survey, to show how every student measures up to existing, widely accepted standards. These tests will be developed by independent test experts in consultation with leading math and reading teachers. The federal government will not require them, but they will be available to every state and every school district that chooses to administer them. I believe every state must participate and that every parent has a right to honest, accurate information about how his or her child is doing based on real, meaningful national standards. (Applause.)

Now, already in the last week I have heard some people saying, sounds like a federal power grab to me. That's nonsense. We will not attempt to require them, they are not federal government standards, they are national standards. But we have been hiding behind a very small fig leaf for very long, and the results are not satisfactory. Anybody who says that a country as big and diverse as ours can't possibly have national standards in the basics -- I say from Maryland to Michigan to Montana, reading is reading and math is math. No school board is in charge of algebra, and no state legislature can enact the law of physics. And it is time we started acting the way we know we should. (Applause.)

There's another thing that will be said, now, and that you will have to confront, because I know how much -- I've been through a zillion state legislative sessions; everybody's got a new idea and everybody wants more money and there's never enough to go

around. And you will be told -- and it is true -- that we have lots of standardized tests. That's true, there are lots of standardized tests, but there is no national test testing the standards. That's a very different thing. There is no national exam given to all of our children that says, here's what a good fourth grader ought to learn.

Keep in mind we don't want Johnny to make a better score than Mary on this test. We want 100 percent of our kids to pass this test. And then, when a lot of them don't, we don't want to give them an F, we want to give them a hand up. We want to say, we haven't done what we should, and we're going to do this. (Applause.)

It is amazing -- you know, we take it for granted we have the best military in the world. Think how silly it would be if everywhere in America where we do basic training, they said, well, you know, Louisiana is a long way from Georgia; we couldn't have possibly have uniform standards for basic training in the military; just sort of come up with whatever you think will be good, and we'll hope it works the next time we're in the Persian Gulf. (Laughter.) You're laughing. That's what we do. And even if you do the very best you can, we don't know the truth. It's wrong for these children not to know the truth. This is not a put-down, now, this is a lift-up.

We've got the most diverse democracy in the world. We have four school districts now where the children's first languages comprise over 100 different languages -- in four school districts in America. Who are we kidding that we're going to create the kind of country we want, where everybody's got a chance to make it, when we haven't even taken the first elemental step to say, here's how everyone should read by the 4th grade, here's the math everybody ought to know by the 8th grade.

There is more to do after that, but let's start with something that really matters. We've never done it. This has nothing to do with local control of education. Secretary Riley has done more to get rid of federal rules and regulations, to give states and local school districts more control without the rules and more flexibility than anybody has in a long time. But no matter how much flexibility you have, sooner or later your children are going to have to face the fact that they either can read or they can't, they either can do math or they can't, they know algebra or they don't. And if we play around with all these games and hide-and-seek excuses, in the end the only people that are going to be hurt are those kids, and the rest of the country will pay the price from now on. And we've got to stop it. (Applause.)

I want to give you two pieces of good news, one of which you can be especially proud of. You all know that the business community has been calling for this for a long time. Governor Glendening was recently with the other governors last year at an education summit in New York with the business community, and they were saying we have to have standards. Today I'm proud to say that the National Business Roundtable is endorsing our call for national tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. They will join our crusade to make American education the best in the world. And I want to thank especially Norm Ogstein, who is the CEO of Lockheed Martin and the head of the Business Roundtable's education task force, and who has done a lot to help you in Maryland with your schools. (Applause.)

Just before the speech today, your State Board of Education Chairman Chris Cross told me that the State Board of Education intends to incorporate these new tests of national standards into your state's program. And I thank you, sir, for that, and I thank you for that. (Applause.)

Let me say that throughout my public career I have been very interested in this whole issue of education. There are lots of other things I'd like to talk to you about today. I hope you will support the work that we are doing with the National Board of Certification for Master Teachers, to certify teachers in educational excellence. Governor Hunt from North Carolina has been working on that for years, and we certified the last teachers -- the first teachers in 1995, but only 500 since 1995. We believe we need at least one master teacher in every school district, hopefully in every school in America -- someone who has been through the special, rigorous program of training and evaluation here so that then that teacher can share what he or she has learned with all the other teachers in the school. Our budget contains enough funds -- and it's a relatively low-cost program -- to provide for another 100,000 master teachers in the next four years. So I hope you will support that as well.

But let me say -- I guess you can tell I feel strongly about this, but I have spent a lot of time in our schools, a lot of time listening to teachers, a lot of time listening to parents. I've worked harder on this issue over the course of my public life than anything else because it has a unique role in our history and an even more powerful role in our future. It is, of course, the key to individual opportunity. It is also the key to responsible citizenship. I am convinced it is the key to giving us the understanding we need to live together as one nation in the midst of all of our diversity. It is also the key to maintaining our world leadership for peace and freedom and prosperity. Only if every American has the full use of his or her mind can our country move forward together.

So I hope that all of you will keep this in mind. I hope that you will push this, and I hope you will lead the way. I want to be able to take this crusade across the country and tell people if they don't believe we can do it, call Maryland. You have the courage to do it. Stand up. (Applause.)

Now, let me just say a couple of words about welfare reform, because that's very important. For years and years and years, all the governors -- I was one of them -- said we want more control over the state's welfare system; we want to do that. We could reform the welfare system. We could make it work. We could end the culture of poverty and dependency. Well, you got it. (Laughter.) And this has got to be a focus of your efforts now, because this is very, very important.

We ended the old welfare system basically in two steps. First of all, in the last four years, Secretary Shalala and I worked with 43 of the 50 states to launch welfare reform experiments which, along with a growing economy and a 50 percent increase in child support collection -- something I'm very proud of -- helped to reduce the welfare rolls by 2.25 million; that's the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the country -- an 18 percent drop. You can be proud of that and proud of what you did. (Applause.)

Here in Maryland you did better than the national average. You used your waiver to move 51,000 people off the welfare rolls, and you had about a 25 percent drop. And you can be proud of that. (Applause.)

You also answered my call to revoke the driver's licenses of people who deliberately -- who can and don't pay their child support. And I think that's a good thing. We're going to do more to collect child support. We can move 800,000 more people off welfare tomorrow if people just paid the child support they owe and that they are capable of paying. So I thank you for that. (Applause.)

Now we come to the hard part. The new law, supported by the governors and all state associations, says that every able-bodied person on welfare must move to work within two years; that the states can have a little cushion fund to support those who can't move into the work force either because they're disabled or because the economy is not so hot.

But now, think of this challenge. In the last four years, 2.25 million people moved from welfare to work in an economy that produced 11.5 million jobs. That's a record for any four-year administration. We have to do at least that well in the next four years. That reduced the welfare rolls by about 20 percent, 18 to 20 percent.

So you've got about 10 million people left and about -- maybe a little more than 10 million -- and about 4.5 million of them are adults, and about 4 million, anyway, are going to be able-bodied and able enough to physically work. And then there will be some moving in and out of the work force. There always is, as people retire and all. But through deliberate efforts we're going to have to create at least 2 million jobs. And if we don't do it, what will happen?

Keep in mind, this welfare reform bill has this ringing declaration: Everybody who can work, everybody who's able to work has to take responsibility for their own lives. No more permanent dependency. Full of moral precepts. Well, the morality shoe is now on the other foot. Those of us who supported that, we now have a moral obligation to say, everybody we told, "you have to go to work" actually is able to work. Because if we are not able to do that, then the law's consequence will not be to liberate people from dependency, but to make people who are dying to go to work even worse off just because they couldn't find a job.

This is a serious, stiff challenge. And the challenge is primarily on you and the employer community, which is the way you said you wanted it. But it's there now. You know that great old country music star, Chet Atkins, used to say, you got to be careful what you ask for in this life; you might get it. So here it is. What are we going to do? Is there a way out? Yes, there is. Can we do this? You bet we can. You bet we can. We can do it, but we have to do it together. And we have to do it with discipline.

And we need a plan. And it needs to go down to every community. And we're going to have to ask people to help. And you need to really closely follow your numbers and make sure you're doing what it takes to be done.

How are we going to do it? First, we have to pass the federal program that I recommended, which will give tax credits to private employers of up to 50 percent up to \$10,000 to hire people -- only if they hire people from welfare to work. And then we have to support the provisions of the welfare reform law which continue the health care, continue the nutrition, and provide much more money for child care than the previous law. That's the good news.

This legislation also gives you the authority for the first time to take money that had been used on welfare checks and give it to private employers as a wage or training supplement. Now, this can be very important in convincing nonprofit employers, who don't pay taxes anyway, to hire people off welfare and make an extra effort. All the community nonprofits, every church or other religious organization in the state of Maryland, of any size, without regard to their faith, they're all under an admonition to care for the poor. Now you can say, we'll give you a little money to help if you will do the rest.

Missouri had a program like this in Kansas City, where they gave the welfare check to private employers for more than a year -- they could keep it for a couple years -- as a wage and training premium if they would hire people off welfare. I met a man who had a data processing storage company with 25 employees, and five of his employees he'd hired from the welfare rolls, and he loved it. And they loved it.

And if we can do it, it is better to hire people in small groups or one on one, because you're trying to lift people out of a culture of dependency into a mainstream culture of work. But this man was willing to do that. And they have to pay about \$1.75 above the minimum wage to get the wage subsidy there and to give people a living income. But still it costs them less than the minimum wage to do it.

Florida has just decided to follow suit. And I hope other states will follow that lead. You've got to -- believe me -- to meet these job targets, your employer community is going to need every last option you can give them. And somebody's got to have a plan, I mean a game plan, that challenges every sector and every community to do what has to be done. So I urge you to use the flexibility you have been given to do that.

Secondly, I urge you to make sure that the money you have saved from welfare reform will be used to move even more people to work. I know Maryland has taken its considerable savings from welfare reform efforts and put them into a special rainy-day fund to create jobs and to move people from welfare to work. And that's something other states ought to copy, because if welfare reform is going to succeed in the beginning, all states are going to have use those savings on efforts like child care, wage subsidies, employment incentives, or other ways to create private sector jobs.

Let me just say one other thing. I hope as you do this, you will not forget sort of a parallel population not on welfare, and those are young, single men who are unemployed who are eligible for food stamps but not welfare. Keep in mind, their loss to the work force is an enormous loss to our society. It leads to higher crime. It leads to fewer two-parent families. It leads to robbing them of the potential of what they might become. And a lot of places now are beginning to try to -- instead of talking just about the welfare population -- the young unemployed population so that these young single men can be treated in the right way, too.

And in Missouri, what they did, we gave them a waiver, and they actually took the food stamp payments for the young single men and gave them to employers with the same sort of incentive as the welfare payments for young women going from welfare to work. So I urge you to think about that.

Finally, let me say, what is our vision? I can tell you what my vision -- why do we do all this? Here's my vision. Here's where I hope we'll be in a few years. I hope all over America in a few years, we will have a community-based employment family support system for people who are out of work, and people will come into this system whether they come off the welfare rolls or off the employment rolls through the unemployment rolls, and we won't make a distinction. It will just be good people with kids or without kids, depending, who are out of work who need to get back into the work force. And we'll have a system for moving them back in, and we'll have a system of subsidies for people at the margins so that employers will be encouraged to make that extra effort to restore people to the dignity of work. And meanwhile, we'll always be helping people support their children in fulfilling their first and most important job.

Now, that's my vision. That's what I hope we would get out of this welfare reform effort. But the next two years are going to be critical, because about two years from now, people are going to start running out of their two-year time limit, and then the spotlight will shift from all of them to all of us. And we will be asked, what did we do when the welfare reform bill passed. What did we do to make sure that those we told you have to go to work had the chance to go to work. So I urge you to think about this.

This is exciting, but it's bracing; because our society has never done anything like this before in ordinary times. And I do not believe that when the bill passed, people had really focused on the dimensions of the challenge. I had, and I was willing to make it. I'm willing to try to -- to jump off this cliff, to hold up this high standard. I think we can do this. I think we can develop a work-based society that does not have people trapped in permanent dependence. But it's going to take everybody thinking about it, working on it, and doing things they had not done in the past. And so I ask you to do that. (Applause.)

I just want to make one final point the Governor's already mentioned. I know Maryland is considering using its own money to continue providing some basic benefits for legal immigrants who have lost federal aid now that the federal bans have taken effect. That's the right thing to do, but you shouldn't have to do it all by yourself. That's why every state and every governor -- Republican or Democrat -- I hope will join with us to try to persuade the Congress to restore just the basic health and disability benefits that used to be available until this new law passed when misfortune strikes them. (Applause.)

The argument made by the majority when they passed this was, when an immigrant comes to America, you've got to sign a piece of paper that says you're not going to take public benefits. Now, that's an understandable policy. We shouldn't be inviting people to come here just to get on welfare or to get on Medicaid or Medicare. But we can solve that, and did, by simply saying that every immigrant has a sponsor, and the sponsor's income will be deemed the immigrant's income until the immigrant becomes a citizen. That's the way to solve that.

But if you have all these immigrants coming here, and even before they can become citizens -- suppose an Indian from New Delhi comes to Maryland to develop computer software programs for one of your growing businesses, and stays here three years, and has a one-year-old child and a three-year-old child. What does that person do if he or his spouse gets hit by a car, or is the victim of a crime, or one of the children is born with cerebral palsy, and they don't have regular health care that will take care of all these things.

So what do we say? Tough luck? You had misfortune? Yes, you've worked hard; yes, you've paid your taxes; yes, you've been perfectly legal; yes, you've complied with every provision of the law; yes, you didn't try to sneak in our country, you waited your turn just like everybody else. But I'm sorry. Yes, we took the benefit of your brain. You made us a richer, stronger country. We wanted you in here. You had skills we needed. But I'm sorry. This is wrong, folks. This is unworthy of a great nation of immigrants and we ought to fix it. (Applause.)

When you get right down to it, all this business about education reform and welfare reform, and what do we have to do to prepare our country for the 21st century, and will we have the discipline, strength and courage to take advantage of this unique moment in history -- it really comes down to two questions: What does America mean, and what does it mean to be an American?

America must always be a nation becoming. We're never there; we're always becoming -- becoming a more perfect union, full of new promise for our own people and new hopes for the world. And what does it mean to be an American? We're the ones who have to make that happen.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

12:16 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 18, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD CEREMONY

The East Room

2:10 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much to our Teacher of the Year and all the teachers of the year and their friends and supporters and family members who are here, Senator Glenn, Congressman Chabot, Secretary Riley, and Vice President Gore. Thank you for being such wonderful partners to me.

Dick Riley -- next year, Dick Riley and I will have been working together for 20 years in one way or another, and we're about to get the hang of it. (Laughter.) And I really think he's done a wonderful job as our Secretary of Education. (Applause.)

I want to tell you, this Net Day idea that the Vice President developed -- we were just sitting around talking one day, and I was bemoaning the fact that he was doing some elaborate thing on his computer screen in his office and I still can hardly figure out how to turn mine on. (Laughter.) And we were all laughing about how our children were leapfrogging us in their capacity to deal with computers and one thing led to another and, before you know it, we have a goal that we'll hook up every library and classroom in the country by the year 2000 and then there's going to be a Net Day and, all of a sudden, one day we hook up 20 percent of the classrooms in California. And I never met anybody that was any better at taking an idea and turning it into reality than Al Gore. And this Net Day thing, it's going to revolutionize education in this country because we're not going to stop until we bring the benefits of technology to every single child in this country, and I think it's a wonderful thing. (Applause.)

I could have done without Secretary Riley telling that story that my -- (laughter) -- my 2nd grade teacher did. But I was sitting here -- I have no notes on this, so if mess it up you'll have to forgive me, but the truth is that Sister Mary Amata McGee, whom I found after over 30 years of having no contact with her. She was my second and 3rd grade teacher. I found her in Springfield, Missouri, one night when I came there near the end of the 1992 campaign. I had no idea what had become of her. I didn't know what had happened. So I reestablished my relationship with her.

But she was a little too generous. The truth is, I think she gave me a D in conduct -- (laughter) -- and I think she gave me a D not because I raised my hand but because I spoke whether I was called on or not. (Laughter.)

But if ever you wonder whether what you do matters, after Sister Mary Amata McGee in the second and 3rd grade, there was Louise Vaughn, Mary Christianus, Kathleen Scher, my 6th grade teacher, who was my steady pen pal until she died just a few days before she became 90 years old, when I was governor. And then in the 7th grade, my homeroom teacher was Ruth Atkins. And then there was Miss Teague, my civics teacher in the 8th grade. And Mary Broussard, (names spelled phonetically) my 9th grade English teacher, who was

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the only person in our class besides me that supported John Kennedy over Richard Nixon. (Laughter.) In the 9th grade.

And I could go through my whole high school list of teachers, through my college list of teachers. All the people around here have to put up with stories that I forget that I've already told once about specific verbatim things I remember that my teachers in college said in lectures over 30 years ago.

Now, don't ever think what you do does not matter. I remember them all as if I were sitting with them yesterday. And there are things that each of them gave to me that I am not even aware of today after all these years of having had a chance to think about it.

Every one of you made a decision that you would never be wealthy. (Laughter.) You made a decision that you would give yourselves to the next generation. You made a decision that you would do at work what we're all supposed to do in our families -- that you would always be thinking about tomorrow.

On New Year's Eve, someone asked me, in this meeting I was at, if I had to write a legacy on my tombstone what would it be. And I would say -- I said something like -- I don't remember exactly what I said, but something like that I had the privilege of leading America into a new century and keeping the American Dream alive for everyone, having our very diverse country live together as one America, and maintaining our leadership as the world's greatest force for peace and freedom and prosperity. If you think about that, every single one of those tasks requires that we do a better job of educating more of our people -- every single one.

You look around America today, we have 5.2 percent unemployment; it's a great thing. And it's also entirely misleading. Unemployment is virtually zero for people who have the skills necessary to meet the demands of the emerging economy if they live in a place where investment is coming in. What we have to do is to close the gaps and the skill levels. How do you do that? Give people better education and then provide incentives to invest in the places that have been left behind. The Vice President was in Detroit a few days ago, promoting our empowerment zone concept of trying to build communities and give incentives for people to invest where people are there willing to work and there is no investment.

But the unemployment rate is absolutely meaningless if you're unemployed. If you're unemployed, the unemployment rate is 100 percent. (Laughter.) It's not one or zero or five or -- you know, that's what it is. So we can't create opportunity for all Americans unless everybody first has the educational skills.

We certainly can't learn to live together as one America, with all of this rich diversity we have, without being educated to it. Because for thousands of years, people have lived in tribal patterns that taught them to be suspicious of those that were different from themselves. Among the Teachers of the Year here today, we have an immigrant from Taiwan making a great contribution to the United States. Among the Teachers of the Year today we have a Japanese American whose parents were interned during World War II. My state had one of those internment camps. I've been down there to see it, and I still can't believe my country ever did that. We have African Americans and Hispanic Americans. We have people from different religious backgrounds.

You know that what unites us is more important than what divides us, and, once having recognized that, you know that what divides us makes us more interesting and far better positioned to do well in the world of tomorrow than countries that are less diverse than we are. But we can't learn to do this right unless we can not

only feel our way out of this but think our way out of this. We have to know more than we now know.

And we certainly -- we certainly -- cannot take advantage of the opportunities that are there for us at the end of the Cold War to create a whole new order of peace and freedom and prosperity without much higher levels of understanding.

Or let me put it in another way -- the American Society of Newspaper Editors were here the other day, and one of the editors from out in the country stood up and I thought, you know, I'm going to get a question on whatever is going on in Washington. He said, I got a 10-year-old son in the 5th grade, and he wants to know what your advice is for him for the future. (Laughter.) And it was the hardest question I got asked all day. (Laughter.)

And I said, he should study hard; he should stay out of trouble and not defile his body with drugs or anything else; he should seek out people who were of different racial and religious backgrounds and get to know them and understand them; he should try to learn more about the rest of the world as early as possible -- as soon as possible; and he should begin right now taking some time to serve in his community to help people who needed help. Those are the five things I said. Why? Because I think that will give him a good education and give him opportunity, help us to come together as one America and appreciate our differences, and help us to maintain our leadership in the world. And you're doing that every day. The kindergarten teachers here are doing that.

Now, that's why I look so forward to this every year -- because most of the time, frankly, we just sort of take you for granted, unless we get mad because we don't like the way the test scores come out or the comparative test scores or whatever else. And I think it is very important that we not lose the enormous significance of your collective impact. And I thought I'd stand up here today and try -- and I didn't know if I could do it, but I thought I could -- just remember all my teachers, just to show you the personal impact you have. See, I'll bet you a lot of you could do the same thing I just did, and that's probably why you're doing what you're doing today.

We do have some changes to make, and we do have to recognize that we have to keep moving to lift the standards and we have to realize that there are some senses in which we do what we do very well, and some senses in which we have challenges because we have so much diversity among our children that others don't have. But we can't use that as an excuse; we have to just deal with the facts and believe every child can learn.

At this brain conference yesterday that the Vice President mentioned that the First Lady and I hosted, I was stunned when we had these scientists there talking about 1 trillion networks being developed in the brain.

We've known for a long time -- I was taught in school that we only use a small part of our brain's capacity, but I never understood the extent to which the brain keeps developing all during childhood and how we interrelate to it. But what it convinced me of was what I already believed by conviction, which is that nearly everybody is fully capable of learning whatever they need to learn to get where they need to go.

And that's to me what this whole standards business is about and what the encouragement of all the states to develop standards that are nationally and internationally sound, challenging all the states to join in the 4th grade reading and the 8th grade math tests in 1999 is all about. It's not about another test. It's about saying, we believe all our children can learn, and we believe

children learn according to the expectations placed on them, and our expectations are going to be high.

That's what this is about. And I hope everyone of you will support that because I think it is terribly important.

So far, in only a couple of months, the educational leadership of California has joined Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and the schools of the Defense Department system in endorsing -- in saying they will participate in this standards movement. And I hope every state in the country will say yes before the time comes.

Because we have a record number of students in our schools and they're growing rapidly and now we've got for the first time -- it's rather humbling for me and the Vice President -- we finally have more kids in school than we had during the Baby Boom. (Laughter.) We're going to have to find in the next ten years 2 million new teachers. And that's going to be quite a challenge. And we have to train them for the challenges that they'll face today and the world their children will face tomorrow.

So I want to thank you for your willingness to think about that and for helping to encourage teachers to achieve new levels of excellence. I know many of you are participating in Secretary Riley's national forum, which gives you a chance to share ideas with educators all across the country about the best way to train teachers. This is an issue that is very hard -- it will never make the front page on any day; there will always be something more immediate. But there are very few things that are more important than how we train our teachers, and how we continue to learn as teachers in the classroom and in the schools, and how we can all learn from each other. That's one of the reasons I encourage teachers all over the country to seek board certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

And we now have 500 of these teachers, nationwide. Governor Hunt from North Carolina, who is well-known to many of you, has been working on this as an obsession for years. But in our balanced budget plan we've got \$105 million that would put 100,000 master teachers in our nation's classrooms. And the idea is not really -- it's just like you; you're the Teacher of the Year, but you know, you're really standing in the shoes of every other good teacher in your state. But if you can put this training in the hands of one teacher in every school building in America, which we ought to be able to do with this, it will upgrade the performance of all the teachers in the schools, and it will change the culture of the schools. So I hope you will support that as well.

There are a lot of other things in our education program, but I wanted to focus on those two things, plus our efforts to wire the schools -- to focus just on the public schools today. We're also trying to help the schools that are terribly overcrowded get some financial help so it will reduce the cost of new construction and repair work when the local districts are willing to do their part, and I hope that initiative will pass.

But the main thing I want to tell you is, what you do really matters. It matters to the country as a whole, it matters to individual kids, and if any -- if at all possible, it matters even more now to our society at large than it did when I had all those teachers whose names and faces and voices and manners and stern rebukes I still remember. (Laughter.)

Today we honor especially Sharon Draper. She happens to be one of our nation's first master teachers, and a member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- and I'm especially pleased about that.

For 27 years she has inspired students with her passion for literature and life. The standards to which she holds her students at the Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati are legendary -- so much so that the seniors wear tee-shirts that proclaim, "I survived the Draper Paper" -- (laughter) -- when they finish their senior thesis. I was intrigued when I read that and I asked her for one of those tee-shirts, and I was denied because I haven't yet survived it. (Laughter.)

Her gifted teaching has not gone unrecognized. She received both the National Council of Negro Women Excellence in Teaching Award and the Ohio Governors Educational Leadership Award. She is an accomplished author in her own right. She was honored with the American Library Association's Coretta Scott King's Genesis Award, and it's annual Best Books for Young People Award. She has devoted her career not only to teaching and to writing, but to helping other teachers improve their skills as well.

Sharon Draper is more than a credit to her profession, she is a true blessing to the children she has taught. And it gives me great pleasure now to present her with the National Teacher of the Year Award and ask her to come forward and say whatever she'd like to say. Congratulations. (Applause.)

MS. DRAPER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Secretary, honored guests and my parents -- Victor and Katherine Mills.

I am so proud to be a teacher. I am proud of all the students that I have had -- students whose paths have crossed mine, students whose lives have changed mine. And to all of those students, wherever you are, I want to say, thank you; and I want to say, I love you.

I'm proud of my colleagues, 3 million of us, who strive everyday in the classrooms across this country to make a difference in the lives of the students. This apple, which shines with bright intensity, represents the wisdom of the past, the knowledge of the present and the hope of the future. For it's the teacher who holds up the mirror to the past for us to learn; it is a teacher who takes us through the paths of intricacy of modern life; and it's a teacher who will stand ready in the 21st century to take us to visions as yet undreamed.

I want you to imagine a child -- any child -- every child -- who sits in a classroom today, hopeful, curious, enthusiastic. In that child sits the hope of the future. And it's the touch of a teacher that will make a difference.

Thank you so much. (Applause.)

END

2:30 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 19, 1997

April 18, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Expanding Access to Internet-based Educational Resources for Children, Teachers, and Parents

My number one priority for the next 4 years is to make sure that all Americans have the best education in the world.

One of the goals of my Call to Action for American Education is to bring the power of the Information Age into all of our schools. This will require connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000; making sure that every child has access to modern, multimedia computers; giving teachers the training they need to be as comfortable with the computer as they are with the chalkboard; and increasing the availability of high-quality educational content. When America meets the challenge of making every child technologically literate, children in rural towns, the suburbs, and inner city schools will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge.

I believe that Federal agencies can make a significant contribution to expanding this universe of knowledge. Some agencies have already launched a number of exciting projects in this area. The White House has a special "White House for Kids" home page with information on the history of the White House. NASA's K-12 initiative allows students to interact with astronauts and to share in the excitement of scientific pursuits such as the exploration of Mars and Jupiter and with experiments conducted on the Space Shuttle. The AsKERIC service (Education Resources Information Center), supported by the Department of Education, has a virtual library of more than 900 lesson plans for K-12 teachers, and provides answers to questions from educators within 48 hours -- using a nationwide network of experts and databases of the latest research. Students participating in the Vice President's GLOBE project (Global Learning and Observation for a Better Environment) collect actual atmospheric, aquatic, and biological data and use the Internet to share, analyze, and discuss the data with scientists and students all over the world. With support from the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Defense's CAETI program (Computer-Aided Education and Training Initiative), the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has developed a program that allows high school students to request and download their own observations of the universe from professional telescopes.

We can and should do more, however. Over the next 3 months, you should determine what resources you can make available that would enrich the Internet as a tool for teaching and learning, and produce and make available a new or expanded version of your service within 6 months.

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You should use the following guidelines to support this initiative:

- Consider a broad range of educational resources, including multimedia publications, archives of primary documents, networked scientific instruments such as telescopes and supercomputers, and employees willing to serve as tele-mentors or answer student and teacher questions.
- Expand access not only to the information and other resources generated internally, but by the broader community of people and institutions that your agency works with and supports. For example, science agencies should pursue partnerships with professional societies, universities, and researchers to expand K-12 access to scientific resources.
- Update and improve your services in response to comments from teachers and students, and encourage educators to submit curricula and lesson plans that they have developed using agency material.
- Focus on the identification and development of high-quality educational resources that promote high standards of teaching and learning in core subjects. Of particular importance are resources that will help students read well and independently by 4th grade, and master challenging mathematics, including algebra and geometry, by 8th grade.
- Make sure the material you develop is accessible to people with disabilities. Earlier this month, I announced my support for the Web Accessibility Initiative, a public-private partnership that will make it easier for people with disabilities to use the World Wide Web.

I am also directing the Department of Education to develop a "Parents Guide to the Internet," that will explain the educational benefits of this exciting resource, as well as steps that parents can take to minimize the risks associated with the Internet, such as access to material that is inappropriate for children.

The Department of Education will also be responsible for chairing an interagency working group to coordinate this initiative to ensure that the agency-created material is of high quality, is easily accessible, and promotes awareness of Internet-based educational resources among teachers, parents, and students.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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