

Education Q's and A's
February 23, 1998

1. What is Ed-Flex?

Ed-Flex is a demonstration program, started in 1994 under the Goals 2000 Act, that allows states to waive many of the requirements of federal education programs if these requirements interfere with state and local efforts to improve education.

In exchange, the state must show that it has a solid approach to education reform, and is also willing to waive its own rules and regulations for schools if they interfere with the school's approach to improving education.

2. How many states are currently involved?

Currently participation is limited to 12 states: Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Vermont.

3. What Federal Education Programs are included in Ed-Flex? For which programs can waivers be provided?

Waivers can be provided for the following programs:

- Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (helping disadvantaged students meet high standards)
- Eisenhower Professional Development Program (teacher training)
- Safe and drug-Free Schools and Communities Program
- Innovative Education Strategies Program (general support to school reform)
- Emergency Immigrant Education
- Perkins Vocational Education Act

Waivers cannot be provided for Civil Rights legislation and for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4. What kind of requirements are likely to be waived?

Most of the waivers are of three kinds:

1. Permitting schools to use funds from the Title 1 program (which provides extra help to low income students) to improve teaching and learning for all students in a school, rather than tracking the funds only to eligible students. Current law already allows schools to use their funds for "schoolwide" projects if 50% of the students in the school are eligible. With waivers, schools with as few as 30% of their students eligible have been able to do this. As a result, federal funds can be used for activities such as training all teachers in the school in proven methods, or implementing effective reforms for the entire school.

2. Permitting school districts to use funds from the Title 1 program to assist schools that would

otherwise be ineligible because they do not have enough low income students to qualify. These waivers permit a school district to provide help to students who need it, even though the school wouldn't normally be eligible to receive the funds. These waivers are typically granted when the difference in the proportion of low-income students in eligible vs. Ineligible schools is small.

3. Permitting a school district to use teacher training funds (from the Eisenhower Professional Development program), which are reserved for math and science, to train teachers in other subjects--such as writing, history or English--if there is a need for training in these areas.

Other waivers that have been granted pertain to administrative requirements, such as reporting when changes are made to a school district's budget for a federal program.

5. Why is the President proposing to expand this program?

The President is proposing to expand this program to all states because he believes it is a good way to give schools more flexibility while holding them accountable for the results they achieve in terms of student learning.

In order to participate in Ed-Flex under the President's proposal, a state will have to hold schools accountable for results, by setting high academic standards, testing to see if students are meeting the standards, issuing school report cards and taking steps to intervene in schools that do not make progress.

6. How is this different from a block grant?

We believe this approach is better than most block grant proposals we have seen:

- This proposal keeps existing federal programs in place, so they can serve the specific purposes they are designed to address, such as providing extra help to disadvantaged students (Title 1), keeping our schools and communities safe and free of drugs (Safe and Drug Free Schools Program), or training teachers (Eisenhower Professional Development Program). However, it gives states, school districts and schools complete flexibility in how to achieve the results.
- It promotes accountability. States would be required to issue school report cards, so parents can tell if the school is making progress in improving academic achievement. And the state would have to do something to help those schools that need it.

7. What about states that don't participate in Ed-Flex?

The states that don't participate in Ed-Flex--and the school districts in them--can apply directly to the Secretary of Education for the same waivers that could be granted by states under Ed-Flex.

8. What else has the Administration done to give greater flexibility in the use of federal education funds to states, school districts and schools?

Expanding Ed-Flex is part of a long-standing effort by the Clinton Administration to reinvent federal education programs. Since the 1994 enactment of Goals 2000, the Education Department has cut elementary and secondary program regulations by 69%, administered new programs such

as Goals 2000 and School-to-Work without any new regulations; provided waivers to federal education requirements for the first time in history in order to allow states and school districts to use federal education funds in a manner that best support their education reforms. Since 1994, the Education Department has provided nearly 250 waivers to school districts in 49 states. In an additional 140 instances, no waivers were necessary for school districts to carry out the desired activities. Twelve states--Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Vermont--already participate in Ed-Flex.

ED FLEX WAIVER EXAMPLES

Question: What is the significance of ED FLEX?

Answer: While most federal education laws currently allow states and schools to apply to the U.S. Secretary of Education for waivers from federal program requirements, ED FLEX gives states, directly, that authority to waive requirements for school districts and schools.

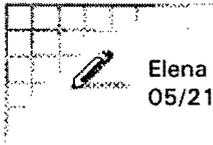
Question: What are examples of the kinds of waivers available under ED FLEX?

Answer: (1) The State of Texas has used ED FLEX authority to grant 179 waivers to local school districts to allow them to use federal funding that was previously targeted only for poor children (Title I) to, instead, benefit all the children in the school.

(2) Ohio granted waivers under ED FLEX to allow school districts with fewer than 35% of their students in poverty, which is the current requirement, to receive federal support under the Title I program.

(3) The Eisenhower Professional Development program was designed to help improve the skills of math and science teachers. A consortium of school districts in Edinboro, Pennsylvania wanted to focus the funds to train teachers in other subjects such as reading and social studies. (Students in these schools were already above national norms in math and science.) Waivers allowed the local schools to focus the funds on where the academic needs were the greatest. (In this case the consortium applied to the Department, but this is another example of the type of waiver being given in ED FLEX states.)

CURRENT ED FLEX STATES: Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Vermont.



Elena Kagan
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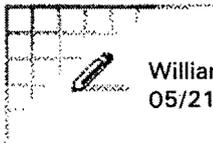
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To: Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Draft Q's and A's

----- Forwarded by Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP on 05/21/97 04:00 PM -----



William R. Kincaid
05/21/97 03:36:11 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc: Michael Cohen/OPD/EOP

Subject: Draft Q's and A's



Elena WVAQA.SA WCONSL.Q ..

Attached are two documents containing the text of most of the education Q's and A's that we would like to include in the President's briefing book for tonight. I may be sending you a few more later this afternoon, and I plan to put them in more of a logical order and consistent format. Please let me know if these look ok.

Thanks.

IDEA and Discipline

Q. I am concerned about keeping our schools safe and disciplined. I understand that the new special education law (IDEA) just passed by Congress still makes it difficult to discipline disruptive students who are disabled. How can the other students learn if teachers can't maintain order?

A. First, let me point that the federal special education law, first passed in the 1970's, has been essential for providing education opportunities for children with disabilities. Before that law was passed, many children with disabilities were denied an education. Since the law was passed, educational opportunities for children with disabilities have increased dramatically, because the law guarantees an education to these children. This is a good thing, because the education of every child is important, because education is the way for for all of our people to become productive and independent citizens. I am proud to be able to sign, next month, the bill continuing this law in effect.

Second, I agree that it is very important for all children that classrooms be orderly places where children can learn and teachers can teach. While maintaining the responsibility to provide children with disabilities with a free and appropriate education, this new bill strengthens the ability of teachers and principals to deal with disruptive or dangerous students, including those with disabilities. It does this by:

- making it easier for principals to remove children with disabilities who bring a gun, weapon or drugs to school, or who pose a danger to themselves, their teachers or their classmates from the classroom, while continuing to provide them with an education in another setting.
- making it easier to address a child's behavior problems early on -- before they get out of hand -- by requiring that these be considered in the development of an Individual Education Plan, and by making the regular classroom teacher a part of the team that develops the plan.

Finding the right balance between the protection of individual rights and the needs of a larger group is often a difficult issue. I am pleased that the Congress, with an overwhelming bipartisan majority, has found a way to strike that balance.

Goals 2000 and School-to-Work Controversies

Q. Aren't these tests just another version of your Goals 2000 program, in which the federal government promotes outcomes-based education, politically-correct history, and a federal takeover of our schools?

A. No. Goals 2000 provides federal support for state and local efforts to raise academic standards in the basic skills and core academic subjects, and for local, bottom up efforts

to improve teaching and learning. There are no federal standards or curriculum, and no requirement for outcomes based education or any other particular approach.

With regard to a "federal takeover" of local schools, that simply isn't accurate. Goals 2000 supports local control, not federal control. You don't have to take my word for this. Harrison County and some 40 other school systems in West Virginia have received Goals 2000 funds. You should ask teachers, principals, school board members or parents in those communities if Secretary Riley and the U.S. Department of Education, have come in and set their curriculum or otherwise tried to tell them what to do.

The national tests we are discussing today are focused on basic reading and math skills that all students should master. They are not part of Goals 2000 in any way, and you don't have to give the tests in order to keep receiving Goals 2000 funds. However, I believe every states should participate in Goals 2000 and in these tests. They are both ways of helping our students reach for the highest possible standards.

Q. The School-to-Work program has been somewhat controversial in West Virginia. Is it true that School-to-Work tracks kids into inferior programs of study with low academic standards and requires them to make job decisions in elementary and middle schools?

A. No. The School-to-Work Program is designed to give students the academic and on-the-job-training to prepare them for high skill jobs and further education. School-to-Work does not in any way track students into certain career paths, nor limit their options. It gives students and parents information and opportunities to explore a wide range of career options, and it helps make sure that students learn basic and advanced academic skills that will prepare them either for work or for college.

Testing and Standards Issues

Q. Do you believe students should be required to pass these tests in order to be promoted to the next grade level?

I believe that if we set standards for students, they should be required to meet the standards in order to be promoted from elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, and before graduating from high school. When I was Governor, we required students to pass an 8th grade test before moving into high school. While some students had difficulty passing the test the first time, almost everyone did ultimately. We gave extra help to students who needed it, including summer school. And over time, the percentage of students who passed the test on the first time increased, as students, teachers and parents came to understand how well the did mattered.

I believe every state should require students to meet standards before they move on. Every state gives their own tests, in addition to these national tests. Each state will need

to decide what the best combination of tests would be.

Q. You say these are "national, not federal" standards and tests. What exactly does that mean, especially since the U.S. Department of Education is going to develop them?

A. It means that while the federal government will fund the development of the tests, it is not in charge of what the tests measure, when they are administered, or how they are used in schools and communities around the country.

The tests will be based on the existing National Assessment of Education Progress, which is already used in more than 40 states. The content for these tests -- the reading and math skills they measure -- have already been determined by outside groups of teachers, curriculum specialists and others, and by agreement of state education officials. These content frameworks for reading and math are widely accepted and are based on widespread input, and strong state involvement. They truly are national standards, built from the bottom up. And they are challenging for our youngsters. The new tests I have proposed will measure the same math and reading skills that NAEP already measures.

The federal government will pay for the development of these tests, just as it helps pay for other research and development in education and other policy areas, and just as it has paid for the National Assessment of Education Progress for almost 30 years. Providing good information and good tools to improve our schools has long been part of the federal government's role in education, and should remain so.

Vouchers

Q: I think voucher programs provide an opportunity to some parents they otherwise would not have -- to send their child to a private or parochial school. What is your position on school vouchers?

A: I believe there are better ways to provide greater school choice to students and their families. One very good way is to have every state pass a charter school law that allows parents and teachers to start new public charter schools that stay open only as long they do a good job. In fact, I have proposed nearly doubling the charter school start-up program (to \$100 million next year) to help start 3,000 charter schools over the next several years.

While I support public school choice, I oppose federally funded tuition vouchers for private elementary and secondary schools. I also oppose state funded and locally funded vouchers, which take money away from public schools.

Budget-Related Questions

Q: Why doesn't the budget plan include help for school construction?

A: This is a critical need, and I have proposed a plan for jump-starting State and local school construction and renovation efforts. Unfortunately, there was considerable resistance in the budget negotiations to including it in the agreement. I am disappointed that it could not be included.

- We should remember that if we failed to reach agreement on a balanced budget plan, that would have made local school construction efforts more difficult, by raising interest rates.
- On balance, the agreement was a tremendous success on education overall.
- Within the context of the agreement, I will continue to look for opportunities to address this problem.

Q: Won't Your HOPE Scholarship plan cause college tuitions to go up even more than they already have been?

A: Actually, Federal aid does not seem to have much of an effect on tuition costs. When Federal college aid was rising in the 1970s, real college tuitions remained fairly steady. But when real Federal aid dropped slightly during the 1980s, that is when tuitions rose most sharply. One study suggests that is partly because colleges are trying to provide aid to the lowest-income students, and to do that they increase tuition for everyone else. By restoring the Federal government's commitment to financial aid -- for both low-income and middle-income families -- we are helping to reduce one of the pressures that increases tuition and fees.

Q: Will the IRS be looking at my grades to see if I'm eligible for the HOPE Scholarship??

[NOTE: On Sunday, Frank Raines told CNN that “we think that having the IRS trying to enforce grades may be going a little too far, and we’re going to try to find a way to simplify the program.”]

A: The IRS would not be looking at student transcripts. But I do want to make sure that we are not only helping people pay for college, but also that they have an incentive to work hard once they are there. A new study from Georgia State University suggests that the grade requirement in Georgia’s HOPE Scholarship plan has helped some of the borderline students, those who started out very close to the B average, to perform better in college.

I have gotten some feedback about the grade requirement in my HOPE Scholarship plan, and Secretary Riley and Secretary Rubin will be working closely with Congress to make sure that we encourage students to work hard, but that we do it in a simple way, without imposing any undue burdens on taxpayers or colleges.

Q: DOES THE BUDGET AGREEMENT CUT STUDENT LOANS?

A: No, it will not affect student loan borrowers in any way. There are some savings to taxpayers that we can achieve by making government more efficient and reducing subsidies to middlemen -- something that I proposed in my Budget in January -- and the negotiators agreed to some of those changes to help bring the deficit down by \$1.7 billion. But the agreement makes it clear that there can be no cuts in benefits or availability of loans. (And colleges may continue to choose to participate in the Direct Loan program or the guarantee system).

Q: WITH THE TAX CUTS, WILL THERE BE ANY MONEY LEFT FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

A: The budget agreement includes *the largest increase in our investment in education in 30 years, and the largest single boost in college aid since the G.I. Bill*. It includes:

- **Roughly \$35 billion in tax cuts for higher education**, consistent with the HOPE Scholarship and \$10,000 tax deduction.
- **Pell Grant Expansion**. Includes the largest increase in two decades -- a funding boost of 25%. The maximum award will reach \$3,000, an increase of \$300. In the 1998 budget alone, an additional 348,000 students will receive grants: 130,000 young people from moderate-income families, and 218,000 low income students over the age of 24.

- **Technology Literacy.** Double funding to help ensure that computers are in every classroom, every classroom is connected to the Internet, all teachers are trained, and that high quality software and on-line resources are available to help schools integrate technology into the curriculum so that students can become technologically literate.
- **Head Start.** Continued expansion toward my goal of 1 million kids in 2002.
- **America Reads.** A child literacy initiative consistent with the America Reads Challenge, to mobilize volunteers to help every child learn to read well and independently by the end of third grade.
- **Job Corps and other Job Training.** A 12% increase for job training programs, including continued expansion of Job Corps

Q: WHY HAVE COLLEGE TUITIONS BEEN GOING UP?

A: Between the 1990-91 academic year and the 1995-96 academic year, overall price inflation was only 17 percent, but the average tuition and fees at public colleges increased by 31 percent and at private colleges increased by 33 percent. Some of the increase is the result of research and staffing costs that increased faster than inflation. At the public colleges, funding from State legislatures did not grow as fast as costs did. And at private colleges, while tuition went up, so did financial aid that the college was providing (in other words, not everyone was actually paying the full tuition and fees).

Q: WHAT IS THE READING PROGRAM THAT WAS INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET DEAL?

A: The agreement includes my plan to help make sure that every child learns to read well and independently by the end of third grade. Secretary Riley and Harris Wofford, the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, will be working with Congress on some of the details. What I have proposed includes:

- **America's Reading Corps:** 25,000 reading specialists and 11,000 AmeriCorps members serving as recruiters and coordinators, to enlist an army of one million volunteer tutors.
- **Parents as First Teachers:** Grants to foster effective programs that help parents help their children to become successful readers (e.g. HIPPY).
- **Head Start expansion.**

Q: DOES TUTORING MAKE A DIFFERENCE? AREN'T TEACHERS MOST IMPORTANT.

A: Even the best teachers will tell you that some children need extra help outside the classroom hours in order to catch up. And the research shows that tutoring programs that provide consistent help, with trained tutors, can make a big difference. For example:

--In Simpson County, Kentucky, 25 AmeriCorps members helped second graders jump 3 reading levels in one year

--At Hands on Atlanta, in the first three years of AmeriCorps involvement, the schools have seen an 11 percent increase in performance on national standardized tests in reading and in math, and 25 percent fewer discipline problems.

--At Reading One-to-One in Texas, with just a semester of tutoring, children improve one full reading level.

Q: How will these tests affect students who participate in home schooling?

A: In a legal sense, it will not affect those students at all. No student in a home school will be required to take these tests, though they will be able to if they want to. Every parent will have access to the tests on the Internet each year, so if they want to see for themselves how well their students are measuring up against these standards, they can find out.

Q. One of your goals is to make sure every 12 year old can log on to the Internet. I

don't want my 12 year old to see some of the pornography on the internet. What are you going to do about that?

Answer: I am committed to ensuring that our children do not get exposed to indecent material and will take all constitutional measures to make sure that they don't. I signed the Communications Decency Act and we are currently defending that law in court. If the Act is invalidated, I will carefully consider alternative routes to the same goal. We are also exploring a V-chip for the Internet that will help parents screen out this kind of material.

File:
Education - Q+A
cc: Mike Cohen

DRAFT

→ Mike -
good answers.
BR

Responses to questions posed by Chairman Goodling

HOPE Scholarships

Will the Internal Revenue Service collect report cards in the same manner they obtain written reports to verify other tax data?

No. The IRS will not collect student transcripts or student grade point averages. A simple, non-intrusive procedure will be used to provide students and the IRS with the information they need to administer the tax credit. As currently envisioned, colleges would simply check a box on an information report for each student indicating whether the student meets the requirement for a B minus average. Schools that do not use this system would obtain the Secretary of Education's approval of their alternative systems.

How will the federal government know if a student has a "B" average?

The standard for evaluating whether a student has a B minus average will be established by the Department of Education, working with the higher education community. These standards will accommodate institutions that do not use traditional grading systems.

Will your proposal give the U.S. Department of Education extended authority in private postsecondary education matters?

No. The proposal will use existing law -- the Higher Education Act -- to determine whether a postsecondary institution's courses qualify for the tax credit or deduction.

Will this proposal encourage grade inflation by linking an arbitrary "B" average to the \$1,500 tax credit?

This proposal is based on a successful program in Georgia. There has been no evidence of a grade inflation problem since that program began four years ago.

Professors already withstand pressure to raise grades for students who need to maintain a high grade point average in order to get into graduate school or get scholarship aid. We believe that the B minus grade point average required for a student to be eligible for a second \$1,500 HOPE scholarship tuition credit will not put significant additional pressure on professors to increase the grades of their students.

Some might argue that the wide availability of the HOPE scholarship tuition credit makes it different from other grade pressures. We think this is an overstatement. A student's grade point average is relevant only in the second year for which a \$1,500 HOPE scholarship tuition credit is claimed. In addition, there are a number of variables that influence whether a student will claim the credit. Thus, it will be difficult for most instructors to know whether the grade they give to a student will affect the student's (or the parents') taxes. Ultimately, professors need a grading system that is equitable for all students, not just those with particular incentives.

The purpose of the B requirement is to give freshmen an additional incentive to work hard, because students who get off to a good start are most likely to finish college successfully.

How will your plan prevent further tuition inflation which could result by schools raising tuition to capture new funds?

We are in agreement with a recent report by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress (The Administration's Proposal for a Tuition Tax Credit, February 1997), which concluded that "[t]here is no conclusive evidence that increased government subsidies mean increased tuition rates." The President is sensitive to this concern, however, and has challenged colleges and universities to hold down tuition increases. There are several other reasons to believe that HOPE Scholarships would not lead to tuition inflation:

1. There is no evidence of a problem in Georgia, where the HOPE Scholarship idea began in 1993. There, tuition at public two-year colleges grew by 13% between the 1992-3 and the 1995-6 academic year, compared to a national average of 21%.
2. Community college fees are heavily influenced by the community member who takes just one course at a time. These students are not eligible for HOPE Scholarships. (While many of them would be eligible for the tuition deduction, these students would remain sensitive to price increases).
3. American higher education has become highly competitive, and all but the most prestigious colleges and universities attract students, at least in part, on the basis of price. These pressures, combined with the factors already noted, will operate to keep tuition increases at a minimum.

The higher education community has raised concerns that your proposal will not increase access to higher education for low-income students but will simply subsidize students who would have attended nonetheless. How do you respond to that criticism?

The President's FY 1998 Budget proposes making an unprecedented \$47 billion in student financial aid available to some eight million students, with particular focus on the programs that help the neediest students. For example, the Budget provides for the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years -- nearly \$7.8 billion in funding to serve over four million needy students. The history of the G.I. Bill and other student aid tells us that this increased aid, including the tax initiatives, will expand access to college.

We are not troubled, however, by the prospect that many hard-working Americans will receive assistance even though their children already planned to attend college. These families are struggling to pay tuition, and deserve the help. If the assistance means their children can go to a better college, or can take one more class instead of working, then so much the better.

Welfare-to-Work Jobs Challenge

Are you proposing another job training program on top of the numerous Federal programs already in existence?

No. The Jobs Challenge is not a job training program. It is a three-year capped mandatory spending initiative to complement State efforts to create jobs for welfare recipients and place them in jobs that promote self-sufficiency.

Will this initiative be part of current bipartisan efforts to consolidate and integrate Federal job training and employment programs -- many of which are targeted toward welfare recipients and other economically disadvantaged adults?

The Administration is still developing the details of the proposal but as initially proposed by the President, it is not a job training program. It is a flexible, results-oriented grant to States and cities providing further support to the goals of welfare reform.

As we understand it, your proposal for this program would send funds directly to the largest 100-150 largest cities and urban areas (with high levels of long-term welfare populations) while rural and suburban jurisdictions would have their program funds administered directly by the State -- even if that local jurisdiction has responsibility for administering the overall welfare program. Is this approach overly-complicated administratively and unfair to suburban and rural areas?

The Administration currently is developing the details of the proposal, guided by the principles of streamlined administration. Since the beginning of President Clinton's Administration, we have worked to cut red tape and ease Federal restrictions to promote State and local flexibility. We remain committed to these principles.

School Construction

Is school construction and renovation a federal responsibility, or is it better carried out by states and local communities? Is it important that any new construction program not jeopardize existing federal priorities nor over-stretch the Nation's interest in a focused federal role in education?

School construction is, and will remain, primarily a State and local responsibility, and the vast majority of local school facility needs will have to be met with non-Federal resources. But unfortunately, as recent GAO reports have shown, State and local governments have not been making progress in clearing up the backlog of deferred maintenance that has made many of our nation's schools unsafe and ill-suited to educating our students. We owe our children more.

The purpose of the Administration's limited, one-time effort is to jump-start an increased, sustained level of State and local investment in school infrastructure that will continue after this

one-time Federal initiative ends. Federal leadership in this area will help draw national attention to the need for more substantial investment in school facilities construction and upkeep by States and communities.

Would the proposal effectively reward school districts that have poorly managed their own taxpayers' resources? Nothing we have seen would prohibit the interest subsidy from going to poorly managed school districts.

The proposal will give priority to needy communities that are making the greatest financial effort, relative to their resources, in support of education and that will leverage the most non-Federal resources. Recipients will need to submit acceptable plans for how funds will be used, and to demonstrate that they are increasing the amount of construction activity they carry out with non-Federal resources.

Would the proposal drive up construction costs by imposing costly government mandates -- such as mandating that unrealistically high union wage rates be paid on federally financed projects -- ultimately costing taxpayers more and providing students with less?

As is commonly the case with Federal construction programs, our program would be covered by the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that laborers and mechanics who work on construction projects be paid wages at rates not less than the prevailing wages for the same type of work on similar construction in the locality.

This requirement does not drive up construction costs or mandate unrealistically high wages. Rather, it ensures that Federal construction programs do not have the unintended consequence of depressing construction workers' wages in a locality. Without this protection, local contractors might have an incentive to lower wages in order to become the lowest bidders on federally supported construction projects. Contractors who did not take this action would be at a competitive disadvantage. Because contractors are required to pay only the wages that already prevail in a locality, the requirement does not increase wages or construction costs.

How does the proposal address the infrastructure concerns of rural school districts? Does it ignore rural districts in order to benefit urban schools?

The proposal would not ignore rural schools. Under the State portion of the program, States would receive grants that they would allocate to local communities, including rural districts. States would also have the authority to use their grants to subsidize State bonds or other State-level financing devices, including State revolving funds, that could be particularly beneficial to small, rural school districts that are often not able to float bonds by themselves. The proposed legislation would also require States, in determining how to use their grants, to consider the particular school construction needs of rural communities.

America Reads

Does your proposal ask more of volunteers than they can reasonably be expected to do? What is the advantage of funding training for part-time volunteers, as opposed to improving the reading instruction skills of teachers?

A program for improving the reading skills of children should not be viewed as a choice between funding for tutors and improving skills of teachers -- both are necessary and complementary elements of a successful program. The President's budget increases funding for virtually all of the major Federal programs supporting elementary and secondary education.

There are many examples of programs throughout the country where appropriately trained and supervised volunteers have been able to assist children effectively with their reading skills. Volunteer tutors can give young students something that over-burdened teachers often cannot -- individualized and small group instruction so necessary for some children to achieve reading success. Research has found that tutoring results in improvements in reading comprehension, word recognition, and student attitudes towards reading. By using trained and supervised volunteers, communities will multiply the skills and expertise of their reading specialists by getting many more trained adults to work with students. Of course, to be effective, volunteers must be well trained and supervised, which requires funding. Obtaining funding for these efforts is often difficult for local communities and schools and that is why America Reads has been designed to address and help communities with this effort.

With the federal government already spending \$7 billion on remedial education and \$4 billion on Head Start, why doesn't the literacy proposal re-evaluate ineffective classroom based reading initiatives in these existing programs?

The America Reads Challenge is designed to complement and support existing essential programs so that they can be even more effective. Even when students receive the very best in-class instruction, some will always need extra time and assistance.

Does the Federal government really need another literacy program? How does this program fit into the already existing maze of Washington-based literacy programs?

While other Federal programs -- such as Title I, Special Education, or Bilingual Education -- have a literacy component, their overall purpose is much broader, and they tend to be targeted to particular populations. The America Reads Challenge seeks to provide the foundation for an unprecedented national volunteer effort devoted exclusively to helping children read well and independently by the end of the third grade. The after-school, weekend, and summer assistance will be coordinated with each child's in-school reading program. In addition, Parents as First Teachers grants will help to expand the activities of organizations that assist parents, including those with children in Head Start, who want to help their children become successful readers.

Does your proposal place an appropriate focus on promoting effective family literacy programs which help parents become literate and support the value of education in their child's life?

The America Reads Challenge proposal includes funding for Parents as First Teachers grants, for local, proven programs that help parents who want to assist their children become successful readers. In addition, the President is requesting \$394 million for Adult Education programs -- an 11% increase over FY 1997 -- and \$108 million for Even Start Family Literacy -- a 6% increase. America Reads is not designed to replace or duplicate these efforts, but to augment the family literacy and parenting efforts of Even Start, making Parents as First Teachers programs more accessible and focused on early reading efforts.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 3, 1997

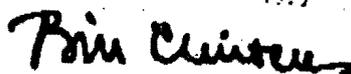
Dear Mr. Chairman:

I enjoyed our recent discussion regarding our common goal of providing educational opportunity for all Americans. You have laid out an impressive and important agenda for the Committee.

As you know, the details of the initiatives cited in your letter of February 4 will be released in the coming weeks. Be aware that we have made several improvements and clarifications to our proposals that serve to address many of the questions you and your colleagues have raised. In addition, I have asked Gene Sperling, my National Economic Advisor, and Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Advisor, to provide specific answers to your written questions.

I look forward to continuing our work together to improve our nation's education system.

Sincerely,



The Honorable William F. Goodling
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
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 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
 3181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
 WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

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February 4, 1997

The Honorable Bill Clinton
 The White House
 Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

There is nothing more important to the future of our Nation than providing the opportunity for a high quality education for all Americans. We believe this can be achieved by working together and building on what we know works: expecting every child to master basic academics; engaging and involving parents; and getting taxpayer dollars to the classroom where they can do the most good. The Committee on Education and the Workforce will be at the center of this effort.

We are sure you agree that the measure of our success on behalf of our children cannot be the number of programs we create or dollars we spend - it must be measured by the academic success and well-being of our Nation's children. On this front, there is much work to be done as you correctly noted in your address tonight. We look forward to working in partnership with you to effectively assist our Nation's parents, teachers, school leaders, communities and States in giving our children the best education possible.

House Republicans have developed an extensive legislative and oversight agenda on education. Our work will begin with a focus on reforming several key laws which expire or are in clear need of reform - IDEA, the Higher Education Act, Job Training, and Juvenile Justice, among others. We are sure you will agree these programs must be our Committee's first priority. We need to look at each and determine what works, and what's wasted, before considering any major new initiatives to expand the Federal role.

First, we intend to reform the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act consistent with the principles of the bipartisan IDEA Improvement Act of 1996, which enjoyed strong bipartisan support. We will continue to emphasize these themes: focusing on children's education instead of process and bureaucracy; giving parents increased participation in decision-making; and, giving teachers the tools they need to teach all children. Both the Senate and House have firmly demonstrated their commitment to providing the funding necessary to educate these children with special needs, without imposing financial burdens on local schools and governments.

FJI TO: Barry, Bob, Janet, Jim, Jack K.

MAIL ROOM (202) 312-2277
 EXT. 3122
 SECURITY (202) 312-2272
 OFFICE (202) 312-2272

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Another priority is addressing the serious problem of violent juvenile crime and juvenile delinquency. Our Committee will act on the Juvenile Crime Control and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1997. We will adopt a balanced approach which focuses on: prevention; accountability; and helping young people turn their lives around.

We intend to complete action to reform and improve job training programs for adults. We must help States and communities improve the quality of job training - so it leads to employment for the 21st Century. Our efforts will center around: enhancing individual choice by empowering individuals to select their own employment options and training providers; ensuring that programs provide quality training for the 21st Century; and, making training relevant by driving resources and authority to the States and local communities.

Finally, we want to strengthen opportunities for Americans to get an affordable, high quality postsecondary education. We must work together to keep American higher education first in the world by: making and keeping higher education more affordable; simplifying the student aid system; and stressing academic quality.

While moving forward on our legislative priorities, we have begun an extensive oversight project, "Education at a Crossroads: What Works and What's Wasted." Congress is carefully examining the full extent of federal involvement in education to see how it can be improved to enhance student learning. Young Americans are clearly not performing up to their full academic potential - despite the over 760 federal education programs which span 39 federal agencies at the price of \$120 billion annually. This project will attempt to find out why. We will also work to identify examples of excellence in education and ask how we can better support this kind of positive change.

During the last several months, we have observed with great interest as you have announced and developed your education agenda for your second term of office. We are anxious to study the details of these proposals and to work with you to explore issues that have been brought to our attention about these initiatives.

We in Congress are committed to finding sensible solutions to keep the price of attending college reasonable, and have already held hearings around the country to help us find solutions. While we support and share the intent behind the HOPE Scholarship proposal, we must be very careful that tax policy not be allowed to drive questions about the quality of higher education. There are also other critical questions that need to be answered as we work to expand college opportunities for Americans:

How will the federal government know if a student has a "B" average?

Will the Internal Revenue Service collect report cards in the same manner they obtain written reports to verify other tax data?

SENT BY: ED 'N & THE WORKFORCE ; 2-24-97 ; 5:23PM ;
The Honorable Bill Clinton

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Will your proposal give the U.S. Department of Education extended authority in private post-secondary education matters?

Will this proposal encourage grade inflation by linking an arbitrary "B" average to the \$1,500 tax credit?

How will your plan prevent further tuition inflation which could result by schools raising tuition to capture new funds?

The higher education community has raised concerns that your proposal will not increase access to higher education for low-income students but will simply subsidize students who would have attended nonetheless. How do you respond to that criticism?

You have also proposed to create a new, multi-billion dollar training and work program for welfare recipients. As you know, we worked with your Administration in the last Congress to undertake a comprehensive reform of the federal job training system. This work will continue this year. Several questions about your new proposal arise:

Are you proposing another job training program on top of the numerous Federal programs already in existence?

Will this initiative be part of current bipartisan efforts to consolidate and integrate Federal job training and employment programs - many of which are targeted toward welfare recipients and other economically disadvantaged adults?

As we understand it, your proposal for this program would send funds directly to the largest 100-150 largest cities and urban areas (with high levels of long-term welfare populations) while rural and suburban jurisdictions would have their program funds administered directly by the State - even if that local jurisdiction has responsibility for administering the overall welfare program. Is this approach overly-complicated administratively and unfair to suburban and rural areas?

You have also proposed a new federal program for local school construction. Congress recognizes that many schools desperately need renovation and repair. Your proposal to subsidize local bonds for construction and renovation raises some serious questions, including:

Is school construction and renovation a federal responsibility, or is it better carried out by states and local communities? It is important that any new construction program not jeopardize existing Federal priorities nor over-stretch the Nation's interest in a focused federal role in education.

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Would this proposal effectively reward school districts that have poorly managed their own taxpayers' resources? Nothing we have seen would prohibit the interest subsidy from going to poorly managed school districts.

Would the proposal drive up school construction costs by imposing costly government mandates - such as mandating that unrealistically high union wages be paid on federally financed projects - ultimately costing taxpayers more and providing students with less?

How does the proposal address the infrastructure concerns of rural school districts? Does it ignore rural districts in order to benefit urban schools?

Finally, literacy is a major problem in America. In fact, the federal government already spends over \$400 million on programs to address literacy, and an additional \$14.6 billion on other targeted programs intended to help improve the reading skills of children such as Title I, Head Start and IDEA.

Every child must learn to read as early as possible once they enter school, and literacy must be seen as a family issue, not just the child's problem. We will carefully review all Federal programs, as well as your proposal, to focus federal efforts on what programs and practices work. As part of our review, we will ask:

Does your proposal ask more of volunteers than they can reasonably be expected to do? What is the advantage of funding training for part-time volunteers, as opposed to improving the reading instruction skills of teachers?

With the federal government already spending \$7 billion on remedial education and \$4 billion on Head Start, why doesn't the literacy proposal re-evaluate ineffective class room based reading initiatives in these existing programs?

Does the federal government really need another literacy program? How does this program fit into the already existing maze of Washington-based literacy programs?

Does your proposal place an appropriate focus on promoting effective family literacy programs which help parents become literate and support the value of education in their child's life?

We welcome your support and the expertise of the Administration in answering the many questions we have raised in this letter. We believe you agree that a thoughtful approach is called for if we are to make lasting progress in contributing to a better education for our children.

Beginning with the GI Bill after World War II, and accelerating since the mid-1960's, Congress has enacted hundreds of well-intended education programs. Clearly, some of these

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efforts have been very successful. Other programs have made little, if any, impact on improving student learning.

Before we can seriously consider creating major new programs, we must better understand the impact of federal programs and regulations on how schools teach and how students learn. We must not create programs that lull us and the American public into a false sense of accomplishment. We must not rest until every American child and citizen receives the quality educational opportunity they deserve. We ask you to join with us in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

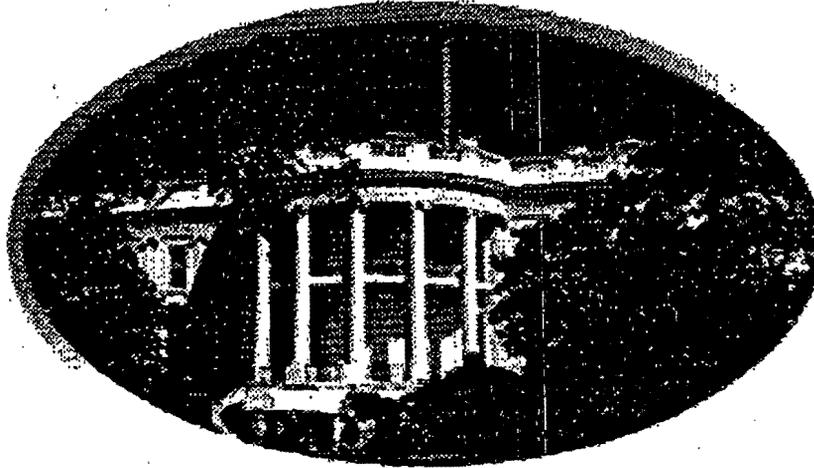
Bill Goodling
BILL GOODLING, Chairman

Pete Hoekstra
PETE HOEKSTRA, Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations

Howard "Buck" McKeon
HOWARD "BUCK" MCKEON, Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education, Training
and Lifelong Learning

Frank Riggs
FRANK RIGGS, Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth
and Families

cc: Richard Riley



Office of the Vice President

Senior Policy Advisor
 Room 271
 Old Executive Office Building
 Washington, DC 20501
 (202) 456-6429 (fax)
 (202) 456-2816 (voice)

TO: Bruce Reed, Mike McCuey, Don Baer,
Mike Cohen and John Schauer

FROM: Elaine Kamarck

DATE: 3/12/97

Number of pages including cover: 2

COMMENTS:

Final version of Education Questions
handout. Has been vetted with NEA,
AFT, DPC, and Department of Education.

Reinventing Public Education

In this year's State of the Union, President Clinton challenged America to adopt tough new national education standards. This is critical to preparing our young men and women—and therefore our country—for the information age economy.

Our public schools must help students to reach these higher standards. But in order to do that, most of the school systems in the country will have to accelerate or begin the process of reinventing their management to help communities get the most out of their tax dollars.

In the coming months, Vice President Gore will travel the country discussing ways in which communities and schools can get the most out of their tax dollars. He will encourage everyone concerned about education—including parents, teachers, school administrators, and the business community—to ask some basic questions about their public schools and school systems. He will also challenge communities and school districts to use these questions as a starting point for conducting rigorous reviews of how well taxpayer dollars are being maximized to help students reach the highest standards.

Nine Questions Parents and Communities Need to Ask About Their Public Schools

- 1) Does my child's school have high expectations for all students and a challenging curriculum to prepare him or her to meet higher academic standards?
- 2) Is my child's school providing opportunities for all students to master the basics like reading well and independently by the end of the third grade? To perform at internationally competitive levels of math by the eighth grade?
- 3) Does my school district or state publish report cards on how well schools and their students are making progress toward high standards and how taxpayer dollars are being spent? How is this information used to make improvements in my child's school?
- 4) What percentage of taxpayer dollars in my school district goes to teaching and instruction? What percentage is spent at the school level?
- 5) What percentage of the people employed in my school district are teachers?
- 6) How does the money spent on administration and other services outside the classroom directly contribute to my child's learning?
- 7) What percentage of the school day does my child's teacher spend teaching or preparing to teach and what percentage does he or she spend on administrative and other paperwork that does not directly benefit my child?
- 8) Does my school district allow me to choose the public school my child can attend?
- 9) Does my state have a law permitting publicly accountable charter schools that provide new choices for students and families within public education? Is my state helping these schools to meet the highest standards of openness, excellence, and accountability and serve as laboratories to share lessons learned with other public schools?