

# To cope with violence, schools divide and conquer

## Our view:

**"Schools within schools" detect cliques, ease alienation.**

In the aftermath of the grisly Columbine High School shootings, security consultants have done a brisk business selling surveillance cameras, metal detectors and guard services to the nation's schools. Some firms that had no school business a decade ago now see it accounting for 20% of sales. Yet one year into this period of supposedly heightened safety, students feel far from reassured.

Six in 10 high school students say they believe a violent event on the scale of Columbine could occur at their schools, according to Sunday's USA Weekend survey of 129,593 students in grades 6-12.

That fearfulness, which belies the fact that school violence has declined since 1993, is strong despite the presence of metal detectors in 15-30% of high schools with a population over 1,000. And there's the use of security cameras in about half of primary and secondary schools, according to government statistics and a survey by *Security Magazine*.

If anything, jail-like security measures may be a detriment. Kids in schools with the most hardware report feeling the least safe, according to University of Maryland researchers. Nationally, only one in five students thinks metal detectors make schools safer, according to USA Weekend's survey.

But with less fanfare, a more promising approach is emerging — one that relies not on hardware but on managing big schools differently.

Increasingly, high schools today are huge. So huge that kids feel adrift in a sea of thousands of peers. Administrators barely know students' names, let alone the trouble some may be plotting.

At Columbine, for instance, with 1,870 students, the killers in trench coats obsessed aloud about guns and wrote about death in essays. Yet that behavior, along with vicious antagonism between athletes and kids in trench coats, went unchecked.

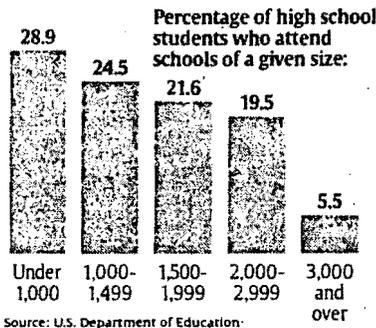
Since 1990, the number of high school students in institutions with enrollment over 1,000 has risen to 71% from 64%. The big schools are better able to offer advanced-placement courses and expensive equipment for activities. Yet a U.S. Department of Education analysis shows that where students are grouped in smaller numbers, ideally from 400 to 800, alienation problems decline and students' sense of security increases.

Since the early '90s, administrators seeking that level of intimacy have been experimenting with "schools within schools." They separate students into small groups for their whole year, expand extracurricular activities, and set regular, often weekly, meetings between students and administrators.

The success has been remarkable: Paterson High School, an institution of 2,000 in

### Bigger, not better

The proportion of high schools that have enrollments above 1,000 has risen to 40% from 34% in 1990. More on today's high schools, by level of enrollment:



By Genevieve Lynn, USA TODAY

*Edue - Small Schools*

a low-income part of Baltimore, separated students into five "academies," each with a separate principal, class schedule, and entrance, in 1995. Where 45% of teachers rated violence among students a big problem before the change, only 4% did so afterward.

Newman Smith High School, an institution of 2,000 in Carrollton, a Dallas suburb, began in 1997 assigning students in groups of 12-15 to an adviser who will meet with them regularly until graduation. It also added disciplinary supervision: Fighting incidents have dropped 58% and disrespectful behavior has dropped 36%, according to Principal Lee Alvoid.

Adlai Stevenson High School, an institution of 3,800 kids in the well-to-do Chicago suburbs, broke into three "houses" in 1993. Freshmen in groups meet weekly with advisers and upperclassmen. Most sports don't cut players. Fifty-five percent of students now play sports, up from 46% in 1993, and club participation has grown.

The revelations about teen alienation and cliquishness that followed Columbine and other shootings have given the school-within-a-school movement a boost. Last year, schools showed heightened interest in a National Association of Secondary School Principals program that guides them in breaking down their own campuses, a spokeswoman said. Since 1996, 1,500 schools have joined the program.

The U.S. Department of Education began four years ago to award small stipends to schools that use such reforms to improve academic achievement and well being. And urban school districts, including Chicago and Philadelphia, have moved aggressively to break big schools into small units.

The next big step could come in California, where school officials will consider this August whether to apply the school-within-a-school reforms statewide.

Columbine itself hasn't yet joined the trend, concluding the move would limit students' choice of classes, spokeswoman Marilyn Saltzman said. But it has added occasional meetings between freshmen and upperclassmen.

Installing cameras and metal detectors may be easier, but it misses the point. The real lesson of the Columbine massacre is about alienation.

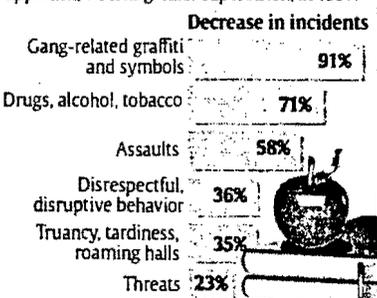
The killers were angry outcasts. Their anger simmered, largely unnoticed by administrators overseeing Columbine's sea of students. And finally it boiled over in a tragedy that marked a turning point for the nation.

In a smaller school, the tragedy might have been averted. And for countless other alienated teenagers with less sociopathic tendencies, smaller schools surely offer a better chance for help.

*This is the first of two debates on the anniversary of the massacre at Columbine High School. Thursday: Columbine's impact on gun control.*

### Before and after

Newman Smith High School in Texas saw a dramatic improvement in behavior after instituting the school-within-a-school approach, with its greater supervision, in 1997:



Sources: Newman Smith High School

By Suzy Parker, USA TODAY

## The 'big picture'

**Another view:  
True reform calls for commitment  
from administration and faculty.**

By Patrick McQuillan

While I support the idea of creating smaller schools, school reform is a process fraught with political, philosophical, and personal tensions.

With this reality in mind, I offer the following cautionary lessons based on the experience of schools in Providence, R.I., Portland, Maine, Boston, Denver, New York and Fort Worth that have attempted to reform themselves: Administrators must be committed to change and must keep reform ideals in the forefront of their schools' work. Where administrators left schools in mid-reform, changes lost momentum and focus.

That said, administrators cannot — indeed, must not — be the only ones driving reform. Ultimately, teachers make reforms work (or fail). Yet enlisting faculty commitment can be difficult. In many schools, teachers are wary of administrators, suspicious that their real goal is resume-building, not reform.

Moreover, to participate in reform, staff must assume additional responsibility. Training and rewriting of curricula take time and effort. Top managers need to promote trust

throughout the school and give staff time to do the work that change demands.

School reform is a political process. To design a program, staff it and set a curriculum is to enact power. Further, most schools serve multiple constituencies — advanced-placement programs, special education and a range of extracurricular offerings, to name a few.

Changing any aspect of school life can impact such constituencies, for better or worse, whether intended or not. Reform efforts must therefore be sensitive to potential inequities and work to be broadly inclusive so people feel a part of this process.

Creating a new program is stressful. It is even more stressful if in practice the program looks very different from what its creators had in mind. Typically, such disjunctures reflect differences in interpreting program philosophy. Even though the day-to-day needs of running a new program will demand attention, educators cannot forget the "big picture." Some time must be spent forging an understanding and commitment to shared ideals and practices.

Don't forget students. Listen to what they have to say about the program, and expect to have to educate students about the ways in which reforms are designed to help them.

*Patrick McQuillan is a professor of education at the University of Colorado at Boulder.*

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**VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT IN SMALL, SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOLS**

**January 12, 2000**

Washington, D.C. – Reiterating the importance of ensuring a world-class education for all America’s students, Vice President Gore today heralded a \$120 million investment to create smaller, safer and better high schools that will be included in the Administration’s budget for Fiscal Year 2001. The Administration’s Small, Safe and Successful High Schools initiative exemplifies the Vice President’s commitment to reforming the American high school.

“Small schools can provide personal attention to meet the varied needs of all our children, helping both those who are struggling and those who are excelling to achieve their full potential,” said Vice President Gore. “Tragic incidents of school violence make it clear that many of our teenagers need more attention than large high schools can give them. We must help working families struggling to give their children attention and direction, by ensuring that our public high schools offer connections to caring adults as well as academic challenge.”

The Vice President announced that the Administration will invest \$120 million in fiscal year 2001 in the Small, Safe and Successful High Schools initiative to help local school districts create smaller, more engaging learning environments for America’s high school students. The program would offer competitive grants to school districts to create smaller schools or break up larger schools using strategies such as establishing autonomous schools-within-schools, forming career academies, restructuring the school day, teacher advisory programs and other innovations that allow schools to ensure that every student receives personal attention and academic support to achieve high standards. In addition to being smaller, good high schools have a clear focus on student success: innovative, engaging and challenging curriculum integrated around a coherent focus; teachers working together to meet the needs of their students; strong leadership; the involvement of families and community; and technology to enhance achievement. Federal funds to create smaller schools could be used for planning and implementation costs, including costs to reorganize schools, train teachers, renovate facilities and provide extended learning time and support services for students.

Incidents of school violence, like the recent tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, are causing serious alarm among parents and students who are unsure what has caused such tremendous alienation and aggression in some of our teenagers. In addition to the need for more parental involvement and stricter discipline policies, many educators are pointing to a systemic problem -- the model of the American high school.

In response to these concerns, Representative David Obey (D-WI) included \$45 million in the FY 2000 budget to create smaller high schools. This new Administration initiative will build on Rep. Obey’s down-payment by proposing a \$120 million investment in Small, Safe and Successful High Schools for FY 2001.

Since the end of World War II, the number of schools nationwide has declined seventy percent, while average enrollment has grown fivefold. There are more than 12,400 three and four year high schools in the United States. More than seventy percent of students in these schools attend a school with more than 1,000 students, and enrollments of 2,000 and 3,000 are common.

Research backs up the conventional wisdom of parents that smaller schools are safer and more productive because students feel less alienated, more nurtured and more connected to caring adults, and teachers feel that they have more opportunity to get to know and support their students. Smaller schools also have better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems. Research also shows that small schools can offer a strong core curriculum and, in most cases, a level of academically advanced courses comparable to large schools.

“As our economy changes, so must our schools. It’s time for the large, factory-like high schools of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to make way for the smaller, more flexible and innovative institutions that will mark the 21<sup>st</sup> century” Gore said.

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# BIGGER ISN'T BETTER

*Smaller Schools Can Stem Violence and Boost Student Performance*

BY ANDREW ROTHERHAM

The murders and woundings at high schools in Colorado and Georgia this spring have sent politicians in Washington scurrying for new ways to stem violence in schools. Proposals range from posting the Ten Commandments in classrooms to beefing up the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, which researchers and state and local officials say accomplishes neither of its stated goals.

Lost in the din was a thoughtful idea from Vice President Al Gore that didn't seek to lay blame for school violence and didn't make promises Washington couldn't keep. Instead, Gore quietly called attention to the connection between school size and school safety.

"We've done some things wrong in education, and here's one of them: herding all students ... into overcrowded, factory-style high schools," Gore said. "When teachers and principals must practice crowd control, it becomes impossible to spot the early warning signs of violence, depression, or academic failure — and it becomes even harder to do something about it." He pointed out that Washington could play a role by helping localities make their schools smaller, more personal, and more community-oriented.

Gore's idea didn't materialize out of thin air: A growing body of research suggests that smaller schools work better. Gore is the first national politician to recognize that in addition to yielding academic benefits, smaller schools might be one of the best ways to deal with disaffected young people.

## When Bigger Isn't Better

"Bigger is better" has been a defining slogan of the American Century, and schools have been part of the trend. Since the end of World War II, the number of schools nationwide has declined 70 percent while average enrollment in schools has grown fivefold. Today more than 25 percent of American secondary schools enroll more than 1,000 students, and enrollments of 2,000 and 3,000 are common. New York City has nine schools with more than 4,000 students. JFK High School in the Bronx enrolls 5,300.

The thinking was that due to economies of scale, large schools would offer more extracurricular opportunities, more diverse curricula, and generally more resources to students. Intuitively, this makes sense. But research shows, and the public seems to understand, that when it

comes to school size, smaller is better.

According to researchers, oversized schools are a detriment to student achievement, especially for poor children. Such schools may be more economically efficient and may offer students more of everything, but those factors haven't translated into more successful students. In fact, the research is fairly clear on this point: Smaller schools promote learning. And contrary to prevailing wisdom, research shows that small schools can offer a strong core curriculum and, except in extremely small schools, a level of academically advanced courses comparable to large schools.

Other research shows that students from smaller schools have better attendance records and that when students transfer from large schools to smaller ones their attendance improves. Smaller schools also have lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems. A 1992 study by researchers Jean Stockard and Maralee Mayberry stated that "behavior problems are so much greater in larger schools that any possible virtue of larger size is canceled out by the difficulties of maintaining an orderly learning environment."

In a 1996 study, researcher Kathleen Cotton discovered that students in large schools do not participate in extracurricular activities at a greater rate than students in small schools. In fact, Cotton found that students in smaller schools were more likely than large-school students to be involved in extracurricular activities and to hold positions of responsibility in these activities. Nor are larger schools necessarily more efficient. A 1996 study by Valerie Lee and Julie Smith found that large schools are actually more expensive because their sheer size requires more administrative support. Those added layers of bureaucracy, in turn, translate into less flexibility and innovation.

## Second Thoughts in Suburbia

Other research suggests that economically advantaged students can thrive in large schools. The problem is, economically *disadvantaged* students are the ones most likely to be concentrated in oversized schools. In any event, the shootings at Columbine High School in suburban Denver and Heritage High School in suburban Atlanta are giving suburban parents second thoughts about large local schools, no matter what research says about their children's prospects in them.

One suburban parent with a daughter in a large school recently told me she would readily trade some extracurricular activities for smaller school size if the change meant that "teachers and counselors have more daily contact with the kids."

Her response shouldn't come as a surprise. A 1997 study of charter schools by the Hudson Institute asked parents why they chose such schools for their children over traditional public schools. Fifty-three percent cited the schools' small size. It was the most common response, ranking ahead of higher standards, educational philosophy, greater parental involvement, and better teachers. It is also telling that urban parents, whose children are those most likely to attend excessively large schools, are also the parents most likely to express dissatisfaction with their public schools.

While researchers don't agree on the ideal size, the general consensus is that the top limit is between 300 and 400 students for elementary schools and 1,000 students for secondary schools. Most researchers also agree that any school with enrollment above 2,000 is much too large.

### The Proper Federal Role

In his State of the Union address, President Clinton again called on Congress to pass school construction legislation. Rising enrollment, aging buildings, federal mandates, and deferred maintenance have combined to create an infrastructure crisis in school districts. Clinton proposes to use interest-free school bonds, subsidized by

federal tax credits, to stimulate school construction and repair. After bitterly opposing Clinton on this score for several years, congressional Republicans have indicated they will offer a competing proposal.

School construction is an important issue that demands national attention. But before Democrats and Republicans rush to outspend each other on bricks and mortar, they should heed Gore's sound advice and use a school-construction bill to address the issue of school size.

Washington shouldn't micro-manage local decisions about individual school design. On the other hand, taxpayers have a right to expect that their tax dollars are being spent in ways that help children. The sensible approach is to include broad guidelines in school-construction legislation that encourage building designs that maximize benefits for kids. And as Gore proposes, school districts that plan to build smaller schools or subdivide large schools into smaller units should be first in line for funding. Finally, Washington should collect more data and sponsor more research on the effects of school size.

Every aspect of our education system should be designed to facilitate high academic performance. School buildings are no exception. In the coming century, schools should be smaller, more autonomous, more flexible, more accountable for results — and above all, safer. Gore's proposal points us in the right direction. ♦

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*Andrew Rotherham is director of the Progressive Policy Institute's 21st Century Schools Project.*

# THE DANCE OF DENIALS

*There Must Be an Immediate Cease-fire in the Marketing of Violence to Children*

BY JOE LIEBERMAN

Over the last decade, our society has sporadically engaged in a debate on whether the entertainment media harm our children with their violent and sexually graphic movies, music, video games, and television. This maddeningly repetitive debate might be called the dance of denials: Hollywood's standards plummet, advocacy groups and political leaders alternately express outrage or appeal for restraint, industry leaders claim there is no evidence that their products have negative effects, more violent and prurient products get sold, and little changes except for the profit margins.

But the school massacre in Littleton, Colo., coming on the heels of the other school shootings, has momentarily halted this fruitless dance and, I hope, fundamentally

shifted the debate. Now the question most Americans seem to be asking is not whether the romanticized and sanitized vision of violence the entertainment media present to our kids is in fact harmful, but what we as a national family are going to do about it.

This consensus is reflected in public opinion surveys conducted in the wake of Littleton. They indicate that a clear majority of Americans are worried about the media's impact on kids. For example, a NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that 79 percent believe that the influence of violent and sexually explicit media is serious problem.

Of course, there are still doubters and naysayers, mostly in the entertainment industry, who insist on denying the evidence — the persuasive weight of scien-

## Looking for classroom resources, software, or testing resources?

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### When It Comes to School Size, Smaller Is Better

By Andrew Rotherham

In his State of the Union Address last month, President Clinton again called on Congress to pass school construction legislation. As a result of rising enrollment, aging buildings, federal mandates, and deferred maintenance, the nation's schools face an infrastructure crisis. Mr. Clinton is proposing interest-free school bonds subsidized by federal tax credits to address the problem. And, after several years of bitter opposition, Republicans in Congress have unveiled a competing proposal. Clearly this is an important issue, but before politicians from both parties rush to outspend each other they should discuss the long-ignored issue of school size.

As a result of rising enrollment, aging buildings, federal mandates, and deferred maintenance, the nation's schools face an infrastructure crisis.

In many areas of American life, a defining mantra of this century has been "bigger is better." Education is no exception and actually has typified this trend. During this century, the size of schools has grown tremendously, particularly in urban areas. Nationwide since World War II, the number of schools declined 70 percent while average size grew fivefold. More than one in four secondary schools nationwide enrolls more than 1,000 students, and enrollments of 2,000 and 3,000 are not uncommon. In New York City, there are nine schools with more than 4,000 students; John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx enrolls 5,300.

The thinking behind large schools was that bigger meant more extracurricular opportunities, a more diverse curriculum, and more resources for students as a result of economies of scale. Intuitively, this makes sense; however, a growing body of research and public opinion indicates that it is misguided and that, when it comes to school size, smaller is actually better.

Most important, research now shows that oversized schools are actually a detriment to student achievement, especially for poor children. Even assuming that larger schools did equate to more fiscal efficiency, diverse curriculum, and extracurricular activities, those factors have not translated into better student achievement. In fact, the research is pretty clear on this point: Smaller schools help promote learning. And, contrary to the prevailing wisdom, research shows that small schools are able to offer a strong core curriculum and, except in extremely small schools, a comparable level of academically advanced courses.

Additional research has shown that students from smaller schools have

better attendance, and that when students move from large schools to smaller ones their attendance improves. Smaller schools also have lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems. A 1992 study by Jean Stockard and Maralee Mayberry stated that "behavior problems are so much greater in larger schools that any possible virtue of larger size is canceled out by the difficulties of maintaining an orderly learning environment."

According to researcher Kathleen Cotton, larger school size hasn't translated into more extracurricular participation. In a 1996 study, Ms. Cotton found that in smaller schools students are more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities and to hold positions of responsibility in those activities. Moreover, she found that as school size increases, opportunities for participation increase as well--but not proportionately.

Nor are larger schools more efficient. A 1996 study by Valerie Lee and Julie Smith reported that large schools are actually more expensive because their sheer size requires more administrative support. More important, additional bureaucracy translates into less flexibility and innovation.

Taxpayers have a right to expect that their tax dollars are being invested in effective, research-based ways that maximize the benefit for children.

Research shows that economically advantaged students can achieve in large schools. Paradoxically, it is underprivileged students who are likely to be concentrated in oversized schools.

Education researchers are not the only ones picking up on these problems--parents get it, too. When asked in a 1997 study by the Hudson Institute why they had chosen charter schools instead of traditional public schools, 53 percent of parents cited small school size. It was the most frequent response, ahead of higher standards, educational philosophy, greater parental

involvement, and better teachers. It is also telling that urban parents, whose children are most likely to be in excessively large schools, are also the parents most likely to express dissatisfaction with their public schools.

There isn't agreement about what school size is ideal, although the consensus of researchers is that no school should serve more than 1,000 students and that elementary schools should not exceed 300 to 400 students. There is also a general acknowledgment that the huge 2,000-, 3,000-, and 4,000-student schools now in use are much too large.

As a policy matter, the federal government can't and shouldn't get involved in specific decisions about individual school design. On the other hand, taxpayers have a right to expect that their tax dollars are being invested in effective, research-based ways that maximize the benefit for children. Congress should include broad guidelines in any school facilities legislation to encourage construction and renovation designs that benefit kids. Districts building smaller schools or converting existing oversized schools into smaller ones should be given priority for this funding. And the federal government should collect more data and sponsor more research on this issue.

Some congressional Republicans will continue to balk at any federal involvement in school construction, and others will object to attaching any federal guidelines to funding. Liberal Democrats will cringe at even common-sense standards being attached to federal money flowing to a favored constituency. They are both wrong. Federal resources are needed to address the facilities crisis that public schools are facing, but should be invested in the most effective way possible.

All aspects of our education system should be designed to facilitate high academic performance; school buildings are no exception. Smaller, more autonomous, flexible, and accountable schools should characterize education in the next century.

Building and renovating schools in a vacuum will not strengthen America's public school system. But adequate resources are as important to effective schooling as high standards for students and teachers and strong accountability. Too often in Washington, debates are framed purely in quantitative terms. We certainly need to build more schools, but in many cases, not simply more of the same.

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Andrew Rotherham is the director of the 21st Century Schools Project at the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President

For Immediate Release

May 16, 1999

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE  
GRACELAND COLLEGE, LAMONI, IOWA  
Sunday, May 16, 1999

President Clinefelter; faculty and staff; family and friends -- it is an honor to be with you to mark this special day. And congratulations to you, the distinguished Class of 1999.

In his invocation this morning, Dr. French shared these powerful words: "Train up a child in the way they should go, and when they are old, they shall not depart from it."

With a proud tradition of career-based education, I know your years at Graceland will strengthen your livelihoods. And I know quite a few of the parents here are happy about that.

Here at Graceland, you also understand that the education we provide is a profound expression of who we are as a people. This is more than a college; it is a community -- of faith, of family, and of shared purpose. As it is written, "to be learned is good if you harken unto the councils of God." And you do.

Today, I want to talk about how we can give millions more American families the extraordinary opportunity you have had: to obtain a world-class education, and the chance to reach for your dreams.

We've seen some positive changes in our schools in recent years: higher standards; tougher curricula; signs of improved academic performance; greater accountability; and local officials taking tough action to turn around their schools. We're fighting right now to raise standards higher still, and hold our schools accountable for real results, ending social promotion the right way.

I'm proud that President Clinton, Secretary Riley and I are helping to lead these changes. But our country's future depends on going farther -- much farther -- in the new century ahead.

In order to stay first in the world economically, we must become first in the world educationally. Aren't the reasons obvious?

How long can we continue generating one-third of the world's economic output if one-third of our students continue to fail in meeting the most basic world reading level?

How long can we expect to continue to be number one in high technology jobs if we continue to be last in the percentage of bachelor's degrees and graduate degrees awarded in science?

How long can we stay first in making new discoveries if we stay dead last out of all countries surveyed in physics?

How long can we continue to lead the world in the number of cars and trucks produced if we continue to follow behind 18 other nations in 12th grade math?

The solution is obvious: to keep the best GDP, we need the best SAT's. And to strengthen our national character, our schools must insist on high standards that demand not just excellence in skills but

also excellence in citizenship, morality, and character.

In order to meet our needs for a dynamic future, we need to shake up the status quo.

I make you this promise today: together, we will bring truly revolutionary change to America's schools. Let's make the next decade America's education decade.

I want to work with parents and teachers to change the whole way we approach learning in this country. Education should start earlier, last longer, and extend through college and throughout our lifetimes. Education should be more individualized, using new technology to match learning to the pace of each child. Education should connect parents to their children's schools and teachers. Education should teach basic skills, and also the good character and values we need for our families to be strong. Education should no longer be just a period in our lives, but a way of life in the 21st Century.

There are three reasons why this challenge is more important than ever before.

First, family life in America is changing. In seven out of ten households, both parents are at work all day. The average two-parent family works almost 500 more hours a year than they did a generation ago.

A generation ago, only seven percent of America's families were single-parent families; the number has almost quadrupled today, to 27 percent. Only about half of all families eat together every day - far less than two decades ago.

What these parents often lack is that most precious of all commodities: time with their children; time to teach them right from wrong; time to pass on their best values.

And even when there is time, challenges to the strength of the family remain. Too often, even when they are under the same roof, a televising set or a video game comes between parent and child.

Lacking guidance from parents, some children fall prey to a culture of chaotic values - a culture with too much meanness, and not enough meaning.

It's not enough just to be in the same house. You have to talk -- a lot. A virtual dead-beat dad isn't much better than a real live dead-beat dad.

Of course, family and faith must be the primary answer. But our schools can be an important part of the solution. Our schools must make parents feel that they have a place and a role, and must make it easier, not harder, to raise safe and strong families.

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There is a second reason we must revolutionize education: our economy is changing. We are in the early stages of an accelerating information revolution that is completely transforming the nature of work and the way we live our lives. Already, nearly 60 percent of companies say they are facing a shortage of the well-educated, skilled workers they need. Two in five manufacturing companies say they can't expand precisely because their workers don't have the right education and skills.

Last month, I met a businessman in Waterloo who was trying to hire new employees. He told me he needed people with technical degrees who could run computers and highly sophisticated machinery - and who could complete training courses in microbiology. I asked him: what do you make? And his answer was: pudding.

Pudding.

In the 21st Century, you need more education to make pudding competitively.

Need any more proof? It's in the pudding.

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There is a third urgent reason for change in education. Because of all the new students, the needs of our schools are growing dramatically.

I'm a part of the Baby Boom generation -- known as the largest generation in American history. When we flooded into America's schools a half-century ago, there were portable classrooms -- Quonset huts left over from World War Two. And there was a shortage of well-trained teachers.

But for the returning veterans, sacrifice did not end on the sands of battle. After winning the war, they came back home and won the peace. After saving Private Ryan, they saved public education. They built new schools and hired new teachers in record numbers. They passed the G.I. Bill. They made the Baby Boomers not just the biggest, but the best-educated generation ever, and we've been reaping the benefits ever since.

But guess what? Last summer, we learned from the Census Bureau that the generation of young people moving through our schools has just passed the Baby Boom; they are now the largest generation in history. The record they set last fall will be shattered every fall for the next ten years. And once again, American students are crammed into overcrowded classrooms, like sardines in a can. Teachers are overburdened. Textbooks are out of date and in short supply. Facilities are falling down.

So now it's our turn to accept responsibility. Will we do it?

We must. Together, as a nation, let us again make the necessary sacrifices to make the largest generation in history the best-prepared and best-educated in our history.

Today, I want to present seven ideas to meet this challenge -- to revolutionize American education for the 21st Century.

First, we must begin at the beginning -- by making high-quality pre-school fully available to every family, for every child, in every community in America.

We now know that the early years of life are critical to a child's development, and have a lifelong impact on a child's well-being. Research also shows us that the right kind of start - through quality pre-school -- can lead to higher IQ's, higher reading and achievement levels, higher graduation rates and greater success in the workplace. I am proposing to enable every state in America to develop and expand the voluntary pre-school programs working families need.

Of course, parents are the first and best teachers. And we should say to families across America -- including every middle class

family: we will help you insure that your child gets the right start toward a bright future.

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Second, in the 21st Century, we must improve teacher quality and elevate the teaching profession, by setting high standards for teachers and giving them the intensive support they need to succeed. And then we need to reward them for excellence.

This whole process must begin with more respect, honor, and appreciation for America's teachers. Teachers have one of the hardest jobs in America. When I see politicians bash our teachers, I have to wonder: how long would they last in a classroom with twenty-five 14-year-olds?

We need to attract a new generation of teachers to the profession. Let's put America's brightest and most dedicated young people to work changing the lives of the children who need it most. Today, I propose the creation of a new 21st Century Teachers Corps -- open to talented young people across the country. Under this plan, if you agree to spend four years teaching in a school that needs your help -- and if you pass a rigorous exam before you set foot in the classroom -- we'll give you up to \$10,000 to pay for college. And for those willing to switch careers for teaching, we'll give you a \$10,000 bonus and pay for the training you need to get into the classroom.

We should give all teachers the smaller classes, modern school buildings, good working conditions, and the real role in decision-making they need. But the best teachers will tell you: we must also raise standards for teachers. We should treat teachers like professionals -- we should pay them like professionals -- and we should hold them to high professional standards.

You had to pass tests to be here today; every new teacher should also have to pass a rigorous test before they set foot in the classroom -- a test that also measures their knowledge of the subject they will teach.

Every new teacher should have the mentors and professional support he or she needs to make the transition into teaching. And all teachers should have access to regular training and professional development and visits to the classrooms of master teachers.

Every new teacher should be required to meet tough standards before becoming licensed or tenured -- with evaluations by teams of accomplished teachers and administrators to make sure they know their subject well, and can teach it well. The granting of a teaching license should be followed by rigorous but fair performance evaluations. And every five years, those evaluations should be used to determine whether a license is renewed.

No teaching license should be a lifetime job guarantee -- but we should give all our teachers the support and training they need to succeed.

I urge faster but fair ways to identify, improve -- and when necessary -- remove low-performing teachers. While we know the vast majority of teachers are doing a good job, we know there are some teachers who aren't. And they need to be removed -- fairly, but quickly.

And if teaching is to be a true profession, we must reward good teaching. We should provide bonuses to master teachers, and those who become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We should provide bonuses to all teachers in schools where

students have made significant gains consistently measured over time. And we should help teachers, administrators, and others test new ways of rewarding individual teachers, and groups of teachers, whose students make significant gains, based on valid measures and objective criteria.

Consider this: the new student boom means that we will hire 2.2 million new teachers in the next decade. If we set a national goal that every one of those teachers will be tested, trained, skilled in the newest technology, and willing to make teaching a career, we could dramatically improve our schools right away.

\* \* \*

Third, we need a renewed focus on discipline, character, the right values, and safety -- and we need more parental involvement in our schools.

My heart, and that of America, aches for the families of Columbine High School. We've all searched our souls in the aftermath of this tragedy. And unfortunately, as we know, it was not an isolated incident. In an average year, up to 6,000 American students are expelled for bringing a gun to school.

Obviously, we need to do more to make our schools safe. So today, I propose the creation of second-chance schools -- where kids headed for trouble, and those caught with guns, can receive the strict discipline and intensive services they need. For all schools, there should be a simple policy toward guns: zero tolerance, period. All schools should be gun-free, drug-free, and safe and secure.

We should increase our commitment to after-school care this year, so children have a place to learn in those afternoon hours when most juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, alcohol and drug use occur.

In many schools, teachers feel that discipline has eroded in part because of a lack of support and understanding from parents, and poor communication between parents and teachers about what standards are appropriate and how they should be enforced.

So today I want to propose that we try something new: parents, teachers, and students should all meet together at the beginning of the year, on the first day of school, to agree upon and sign a strict, fair discipline code. Employers should be required to give time-off for these meetings. All parents, teachers, and students should know all the rules -- and the punishment for breaking those rules. That first meeting can also be a chance to encourage regular trips to the school all year long -- and I believe attendance at that first meeting should be a requirement.

If we want parents to be more involved, we must help them have the time to do it. We should extend the Family Leave law, so parents can take time off work to attend not only the beginning-of-the-year meeting, but all parent-teacher conferences -- without fear of losing their jobs. Either we're serious about this or we're not.

Then let's get a commitment from schools to add civic and character education courses -- to teach students that the same values they learn in good homes apply in our schools and in our society.

\* \* \*

Fourth, we should commit ourselves to fundamentally changing the American high school. I envision a new American high school -- with smaller classes, smaller schools, and principals with the power to

*Gore*  
*Carolan*  
*Speck*

lead.

We've done some things wrong in education, and here's one of them: herding all students in a 25-square-mile area into overcrowded, factory-style high schools. When teachers and principals must practice crowd control, it becomes impossible to spot the early warning signs of violence, depression, or academic failure - and it becomes even harder to do something about it.

We should provide incentives to create smaller high schools. And for those that have already gotten too big, let's break them down by creating smaller "schools within schools."

Classes are also way too big. Teachers need fewer students in each classroom so they can pay close attention to each one. We should begin with a national commitment to reduce class size to an average of 18 students in the early grades -- and then aim at average class sizes of twenty students or less across all grades. This will be a major commitment, but it will be worth it, because it will give all our students the individual attention they need to succeed.

And we should empower principals, advised by teams of teachers, to hire their own staffs, regardless of seniority, and manage their own budgets. This would enable schools to choose teachers that fit the mission and approach of the school, including teachers who have entered the profession through high-quality alternative certification pathways. It is time to focus on results, not just process -- on measured competency, not check marks from gatekeepers.

\* \* \*

Fifth, we need an aggressive plan to turn around every failing school in America. Most schools are doing pretty well, and we know how they can improve. But there are too many school districts in America where less than half the students graduate, and where those who do graduate aren't ready for college or good jobs. And that should be recognized for what it is: a national emergency.

Every state and every school district should be required to identify failing schools, and work to turn them around - with strict accountability for results, and strong incentives for success. And if these failing schools don't improve quickly, they should be shut down fairly and fast, and when needed, reopened under a new principal with a full peer evaluation of every teacher, intensive training for those who need it, and fair ways to improve or remove low-performing teachers.

We need to make summer school much more widely available, to give extra help to kids who need it -- and I urge serious consideration of the model set by Mayor Rich Daley, the President of Chicago's Board of Education, Gery Chico, and Chicago schools chief Paul Vallas. We need to follow the leadership of the late John Stanford of Seattle and affirm that every child can learn -- and will learn.

Parents should have more choice in their children's public schools -- especially those whose children are stuck in low-performing schools. We need more public school choice, and more competition -- to apply the pressure that will improve all schools. And of course we must reject the false promise of siphoning public school funding away to private schools. That would only make things much worse.

Let us realize that education is the greatest anti-poverty program, the most powerful anti-discrimination strategy we could ever have. Every child in America must have full opportunity -- regardless of race, creed, or national origin.

We should be proud that the gap in high school completion between blacks and whites has now been virtually eliminated. But the drop-out rate among Hispanic Americans is far higher -- with barely half finishing high school, and far fewer going on to college. We need to continue our aggressive plan to reduce the Hispanic drop-out rate. And we should challenge every state and school district to cut in half the achievement gap between rich and poor, and between racial and ethnic groups in the next decade.

\* \* \*

Sixth, we should realize that the technological revolution makes possible an instructional revolution -- where we can replace standardized textbook learning with individualized learning matched to every child's pace and potential, and learning style.

For the first time, 21st Century technology will soon free us from the search for one curriculum that fits all. In the high technology school of the future, the ultimate class size will be one -- because even if there are eighteen or twenty others in that room, there will be an unprecedented, until now impossible, degree of individual attention. If we use it right, higher technology can mean the same basic knowledge for all, but higher individual achievement for every child.

The power of computer technology is now doubling every 18 months. The cost reductions -- 30 percent a year -- are startling, and they will continue. Let's put that power to work for our children's education. For example, costs for special education have been rising dramatically; we can use technology to manage those costs, while providing a better education for every child with special needs, and doing a better job of helping states bear the burden.

But when we talk about technology in education, let's remember: teachers can't take advantage of it unless they have training in how to use the technology. And when we talk about individualizing education, let's remember that teachers need less paperwork, not more. We should focus on results, not process and documentation. We have to expand teacher training in how to use the power of the Internet and the newest and best educational software -- and make sure it is available to every school, rich or poor.

So we must quickly finish the job of wiring every classroom and library in America to the Information Superhighway, and teach kids how to use it safely and well. America was the pioneer of universal education; now America must become the pioneer of universal computer literacy. Let us set a goal that every child will be computer literate by the eighth grade. But let us also always remember that technology is worse than worthless unless it is coupled with the right values.

I also propose today that we establish a program of home e-tutors, by creating a nationwide army of volunteer on-line tutors and mentors, carefully screened for safety and qualifications.

\* \* \*

Seventh, we must give every family the ability to save and pay for their children's college education, and to continue their own education throughout their lifetimes. We have made progress, but much more is needed.

We help people save for retirement tax-free, and help them pay their mortgages tax-free. Now we must help them save tax-free for one

of the biggest expenses most families will ever face in life -- sending a child to college.

We must start by helping families meet the costs of tomorrow by saving today. I propose a National Tuition Savings program, bringing together programs in more than thirty states, and helping the other twenty states to create them for the very first time. Many of these programs let families invest their money in special accounts, which grow tax-free. We should increase access to these programs, allow each parent's savings to be used in any participating state, and use incentives to encourage states that do not have the programs to create them. Under this plan, if you make small, regular contributions to the program after your child's birth, you'll be able to afford college tuition -- with protection from taxes, inflation, and rising college costs. This program will also be available to grandparents who make contributions after the birth of a grandchild. Tipper and I are expecting our first grandchild at the end of next month -- and we would love to participate in this program.

Next, we should encourage employers to help employees save tax-free for college and job training. In the coming months, I will lay out my plan to create new 401 (j) accounts that let you save for job training, education, and lifelong learning, and let those savings grow tax-free. You could use this account for yourself, your spouse, even your child's college tuition. This will be a powerful new tool to help people save for learning.

\* \* \*

These are my ideas for revolutionary change in our schools. It is an agenda that is ambitious, but responsible. Every one of these proposals will be fully paid for, within a balanced budget. They will bring about revolutionary progress. Some say that there is no national role in helping communities improve their schools. I say that education is our number-one national priority for investing in the future. And we must take dramatic steps to help states and communities provide a quality education for their children.

I want our nation to act on the wisdom you understand so well here at Graceland: that the quality of American education is a powerful, if unspoken, expression of our values. As such, our schools must be orderly and disciplined, modern and in good repair, and committed to excellence.

In the education decade to come, let us strengthen our schools, to strengthen our families. Let us renew education, to renew opportunity. It will not be easy; the steps I have outlined are just the beginning. But this much I know: if it is a decade shaped by your experience, sustained by your faith, built on the hard lessons you have learned at Graceland, it will be the best decade this nation has ever known, and a great beginning for the 21st Century.

Congratulations, and Godspeed as you begin your wonderful journey.

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**Al Gore invites you to  
join his campaign to  
Revolutionize American Education**

## **AL GORE'S PLAN TO SAVE OUR SCHOOLS**

Thursday, December 16, 1999

Reforming our schools is an urgent national priority that requires a national strategy. Al Gore knows that no issue is more important to ensuring that all Americans can succeed in the global economy. While Al Gore firmly believes that education is a state and local responsibility, he understands that in the new economy education must be a national priority that requires national leadership. Some candidates for President would turn their back on public schools, while others have decided that school reform does not require national attention. But Al Gore knows that if America is to succeed in the 21st century, all our children need a world class education.

Over the last seven years, we've taken important steps to begin the process of improving our schools.

We've helped states and communities set high academic standards for students,  
 We've set important goals like helping every child learn to read by the end of the third grade, and holding schools accountable for results,  
 We've given communities the money to begin hiring 100,000 qualified teachers over the next six years to help reduce class sizes in the early grades,  
 We've dramatically increased the number of charter schools,  
 We've provided more choice in our public schools,  
 We've dramatically increased accountability and,  
 We've opened the doors of college to millions of Americans.

But we must do much more.

Education for all remains a cornerstone of our democracy - our greatest tool to instill hope, fight poverty and eliminate intolerance. If we want to make sure no child gets left behind, we must act decisively to fulfill that promise for all of our children.

Al Gore believes if we are going to truly reform our schools, we need to invest more, not less. Vice President Gore is proposing to devote \$115 billion of the budget surplus to create an Education Reform Trust Fund which will fund new education investments: including universal preschool; reforming the American High School and smaller schools and smaller classes; high quality teachers, and fixing failing schools. But more money is only part of the solution, we also need to demand more from our students, our teachers, and our schools. That is why Al Gore's education plan includes a set of new challenges to improve educational performance.

As President, Al Gore would do more for education, and demand more in return:

### **Do More for Our Students, Teachers, and Schools**

**Smaller Schools and Smaller Classes:** Research shows that small schools can offer a strong core curriculum and a level of academically advanced courses comparable to large schools. Small schools also have better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems. Al Gore envisions a new American high school with smaller classes, smaller schools, and more individual attention for each student for each student to help our teenagers get on the right track and make our schools better and safer.

*County Press Paper*

Al Gore is proposing incentives to create smaller high schools. Under the Gore plan, grants would be made to schools or districts that have a strategy to build new, small high schools -- less than 600 students -- or break up existing schools in innovative ways, including autonomous schools-within-schools, career academies, charter schools, or smaller classes. Funding would be provided to states who will make grants to local school districts, partly through a competitive process, while ensuring that high need communities receive a fair share of funding. School districts receiving funding will also develop strategies to hold all students to high standards, including providing qualified students in every high school with the opportunity to take Advanced Placement courses. He is also fighting to reduce class size to a national average of eighteen students in the early grades, and has set a national goal to reduce the average class size to twenty students in all grades.

**After School For Every Student In A Failing School:** Al Gore is committed to dramatically increasing funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which supports the creation and expansion of after school and summer school programs throughout the country. Experts agree that school age children who are unsupervised during the hours after school are far more likely to use alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, commit crimes, receive poor grades, and drop out of school than those who are involved in supervised, constructive activities. Al Gore has already fought hard to increase investment in after school from \$1 million in 1997 to \$453 million in this year's budget. The Gore plan will dramatically increase funding for this initiative to help working families ensure that their children are getting extra help in a safe place in the critical after-school hours. This initiative will also help make available high-quality after-school help and instruction for every student in a failing school while states and school districts are taking aggressive steps to turn that school around.

**21st Century National Teachers Corps:** To help ensure we have more high quality teachers as we enter the new millennium, Al Gore is proposing to create a 21st Century National Teacher Corps. The Teacher Corps would eventually help 75,000 talented people each year become teachers in high-need schools. This includes providing college scholarships to 60,000 young people annually who commit to teach in high-need schools for at least four years as well as bonuses and training for 15,000 mid-career professionals to become teachers every year. These scholarships will be awarded through local public-private partnerships.

**Triple The Number of Charter Schools By 2010:** Charter Schools help expand parental choice within our public school system. Al Gore believes we should triple the number of high quality and accountable public charter schools

available to students. As a complement to his smaller schools and classes proposal, this initiative would help create schools that are not only smaller, but have a common mission; teacher, parent and student buy-in; and increased autonomy.

**School Construction:** For students to learn, schools must be well-equipped and able to accommodate smaller class sizes. In 1998, the American Society of Civil Engineers said that school buildings represent the nation's most pressing infrastructure need. To address this critical need, Al Gore will fight to pass the Administration's school construction initiative. This proposal would provide federal tax credits and other financial support as incentives to help states and local school districts to build and renovate public schools. Half of the bond authority will be allocated to the 100 school districts with the largest number of low-income children, and the other half will be allocated to the states.

**GoToCollege.com:** Provide grants to high-need school districts so disadvantaged students can have subsidized access to Advanced Placement courses as well as SAT and achievement test preparation courses online.

**Reaffirm Commitment to IDEA:** President Gore will reaffirm the importance of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by making a substantial increased investment in this program, which ensures that children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate education and has opened the doors of public schools to children with special needs. His administration will help states and school districts provide high quality education for all students, including students with disabilities.

#### Demand More from Our Students, Teachers, and Schools

**Higher Standards, Higher Pay for Teachers:** This initiative would award competitive grants to high-poverty urban and rural school districts to help them attract and retain high-quality teachers and principals through better pay and higher standards. In order to receive funding, partnerships involving school districts, local businesses, and teacher's unions, would take aggressive steps to raise teacher standards and provide professional development and intensive support to help all teachers and principals succeed. Participating partnerships would agree on steps to reward good teaching, provide mentors for new teachers and principals, recruit talented new teachers, and adopt faster, but fair ways to identify, improve, and when necessary remove low performing teachers. School districts would require rigorous peer evaluations to identify potential master teachers, provide advice and extra help to all teachers, and identify those few who should be placed into a program to improve, or when necessary remove low-performing teachers. Under this proposal, all teachers in participating school districts would receive up to a \$5,000 salary increase. Master teachers, reaching an advanced professional standard, would receive an additional \$5,000 salary increase – for example, given to those who get advanced certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification or those who pass a rigorous peer evaluation demonstrating high-quality teaching based on clearly defined and objective standards. Al Gore believes that teachers should be treated and paid like professionals, and held to high professional standards. No teaching contract or license should provide a lifetime job guarantee, but we must provide all our teachers the intensive support and training needed to succeed.

**Raising Standards for All Students.** Al Gore will fight to raise standards for all our students. As part of this effort, he will challenge all states to institute a

high school exit exam and provide incentives to reward those states that adopt these tests. These exams would be developed by the state, and tied to state standards and accountability systems. Twenty six states now have high school exit exams. The Gore plan will also provide states a bonus for improved student achievement measured by NAEP.

**Keeping Kids in School:** As President, Al Gore will challenge every state to raise their compulsory school age to 18 and provide matching grants to help those states that meet this challenge while adopting aggressive, proven strategies to prevent students from dropping out of school.

**Require Rigorous Tests For All New Teachers:** According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, one of the most important factors in improving student achievement is the knowledge and skills teachers bring to the classroom. Yet numerous teachers teach subjects for which they lack adequate preparation, with fully one quarter of secondary school teachers lacking even a minor in their main teaching field. Students in schools with the highest levels of poverty, those who often need the most help from the best teachers, are most likely to be in classrooms with teachers who are not fully qualified: for example, in schools with the highest minority enrollment, students have a less than 50 percent chance of having a math or science teacher with a license and degree in the field. The Gore plan will require states, as a condition of receiving federal money, to test all new teachers for subject matter knowledge and teaching skills before they enter the classroom.

**Turning Around Failing Schools:** Every state and every school district should be required to identify failing schools, and work to turn them around - with strict accountability for results, and strong incentives for success. And if these failing schools don't improve quickly, they should be shut down fairly and fast, and reopened under a new principal with a full peer evaluation of every teacher, intensive training for those who need it, and fair ways to improve or remove low-performing teachers. States and school districts that turn around failing schools should receive performance bonuses recognizing their achievements and rewarding their hard work. The Gore plan will also increase investment in after school to ensure that every student in a failing school has access to extra help.

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**MEMORANDUM**

*Edie -  
Small Schools*

**TO: Interested Parties**

**FROM: Congressman Baron Hill** *BPH*

**RE: Clinton Administration Small, Safe, and Successful High Schools Initiative**

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I was pleased to hear Vice President Gore's recent announcement of the Administration's Small, Safe and Successful High Schools initiative. This initiative seeks to make our schools better by focusing on reducing their size. I am very glad Vice President Gore and others have been raising the national profile of this issue.

Since I entered Congress last year, I have been talking about school size. I have been working very hard to bring the benefits of smaller learning communities to the attention of my colleagues and constituents. Enclosed are some materials about this effort and a bill I introduced early last fall, the Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act, H. R. 3044.

A growing body of research points to the academic and social benefits of teaching our children in smaller schools. As I understand the Administration's Small, Safe, and Successful Schools initiative, local school districts could use competitive grant money for the purposes proposed in H. R. 3044--the planning, development, and implementation of smaller learning communities.

I look forward to working with you on this important area of education policy and would appreciate your keeping me informed about your work on this matter. I would be pleased to share with you the extensive research I have done on this issue.

## Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act (H. R. 3044)

### Congressman Baron Hill (IN-09)

Since World War II, educators have followed the rule that bigger schools are better. Experts have assumed that bigger schools are superior because they offer students more courses, more extracurricular activities, and save school districts money.

The statistics on schools size show how dramatically this "bigger is better" approach has changed the way we educate our children. In 1930, there were 262,000 elementary, middle and high schools in America, while today there are only 88,000 schools. In 1930, the average school had 100 students, while today's average school has 510 students.

Many education experts today, however, are questioning this "bigger is better" approach to education. New research is showing that children do better academically and socially in smaller schools that are closer to their homes and their parents. In addition, smaller schools appear to have higher attendance rates and higher participation in school activities.

Students who come from more disadvantaged economic and educational backgrounds show the greatest achievement gains in smaller schools. Larger school size tends to stratify students into different tracks which are often based on children's educational and social backgrounds.

The *Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act* provides grants to school districts that want to develop a school size reduction strategy. It supports school districts that want to reduce the size of their school units, either through new building space or through "schools within schools."

### **The Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act:**

- authorizes flexible challenge grants to local school districts (local education agencies - LEAs) to develop and implement plans to create smaller schools. LEAs with well thought out plans to create smaller schools or "schools within schools" could receive grants of up to \$2 million.
- provides a clear and simple application and reporting process that holds LEAs accountable for how they spend the grants, but keeps paperwork and administrative costs to an absolute minimum.

# Congressional Record

## OUR SCHOOLS ARE TOO BIG AND TOO IMPERSONAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, last April, shortly after the terrible tragedy that occurred at Columbine High School in Colorado, I spoke with my freshman colleague from the State of Washington (Mr. BAIRD). My colleague from Washington is a trained psychologist, so I asked him for his thoughts about the Columbine tragedy. Since Mr. BAIRD is a trained psychologist, I was expecting a long academic explanation using lots of psychological terms regular people do not understand. Instead, he had a simple solution, an explanation. He looked at me and said, "Baron, our schools are too big, and these kids do not know one another."

The Columbine tragedy and other recent events of violence in our schools have made all of us take a serious look at our children, our schools, and ourselves. These recent tragedies have forced us to think about how we educate our children and how we can make our schools safer and better.

This is a personal issue for me, for my wife, Betty, is a middle school teacher, and my youngest daughter is in the eighth grade at a public school in my hometown of Seymour, Indiana. I do not believe that there is one easy solution to all of the problems our schools and our children face today, nor do I believe that we politicians in Congress could pass some law that would solve every school's and every child's problem. I strongly believe that the people who work with children every day, the parents, the teachers and local school administrators, are in the best position to make decisions about their schools.

But this week I am introducing a bill that I hope will make some small contribution to addressing a problem that I and other people have been talking about for many years. It is a problem that the recent episodes of school violence in Colorado and Georgia and other places around the country have once again brought to the forefront of our national debate. It is the problem that my colleague Dr. BAIRD was talking about.

Our schools are too big and too impersonal. Too many of our children wake up every day and go to schools that make them feel disconnected and detached from their teachers, their parents and their communities. The goal of my bill that I am introducing, the Smaller Schools Stronger Communities Act, is to make our schools smaller and to help parents, teachers and administrators and students strengthen the sense of community that many of our schools today are lacking.

My strong feelings about this issue come from my own experience growing up in southern Indiana. When I was growing up in Jackson County, there were more high schools than there are today in towns like Tampico and Clear Spring and Cortland. There were high schools that local kids attended and local families supported. These communities were proud of their schools. Their schools brought people together and helped keep their towns strong and vital places to live.

These schools were the hearts of the communities, and when we consolidated, when school consolidation forced their high schools to close, it tore the heart out of these communities. These high schools along with thousands of other smaller schools around America were closed because for many years educators have followed the rule that bigger schools are better. For a long time we all assumed that bigger schools were better because they could offer students more courses, more extracurricular activities, and could save school districts money.

The statistics on school size show how dramatically this bigger-is-better approach has changed the way we educate our children. In 1930 there were 262,000 elementary, middle and high schools in America. Today there are only 38,000 schools. In 1990 the average school had 100 students. Today's average school has 500 students.

Some education experts are now arguing that school consolidation has gone too far. More and more educators today believe that our children do better academically and socially in smaller schools that are closer to their homes and their parents than in the big schools with thousands of students. Because many schools have become too big, they sometimes harm the students they are supposed to be helping. Many students in big schools never develop any meaningful relationships with their teachers and never experienced a sense of belonging in their schools.

When I start looking at the issue of big schools, I was surprised to find that some of the biggest critics of big schools are high school principals. The men and women who run our high schools, who work with our teenagers every day, say that schools are too big and too impersonal. In 1966 the national association of secondary school principals released a report criticizing the bigness of today's high schools. The principals recommended that the high school of the 21st century be much more student centered and personalized.

Here is what the high school principals said: students take more interest in school when they experience a sense of belonging. Some students cope in large impersonal high schools because they have the advantage of external motivation that allows them to transcend the disadvantage of school size. Many others, however, would benefit from a more intimate setting in which their presence could be more readily and repeatedly acknowledged. Experts have found that achievement levels in smaller schools are higher especially among children from disadvantaged backgrounds who need extra help to succeed.

A recent study of academic achievement and school size concluded that high schools and smaller schools perform better in course subjects of reading, math, history, and science. Students in smaller schools also have better attendance records, are less likely to get in fights or join gangs. A principal of a successful small high school recently wrote that small schools offer what metal detectors and guards cannot, the safety and security of being where you are well known by the people who care for you the most.

The bill that I am introducing, the Smaller School Stronger Stronger Communities Act provides grants to school districts that want to develop school size reduction strategy. This bill does not introduce a new mandate or try to micromanage local education authority. It simply supports education leaders in school districts who decide they want to implement a plan to reduce the size of their school units either through new building space or through schools within schools.

I hope this bill will encourage local school districts to take a look at this idea and perhaps think about ways they can make their schools smaller and to find ways to help students feel connected again to their schools and their communities and their parents. This bill and the academic research I have been discussing here today make a very simple point about our schools, our kids, and ourselves. Our lives are better when we feel connected to the people we live and work with.



# Education on a smaller scale is an advantage

When I was growing up in Jackson County, there were more high schools than there are today. In towns like Tampico, Clear Spring and Cortland, there were high schools that local kids attended and local families supported. These communities were proud of their schools. Their schools brought people together and helped keep their towns strong and vital places to live. When school consolidation forced their high schools to close, it tore the heart out of those communities.

These high schools, along with thousands of other smaller schools around America, were closed because for many years educators have followed the rule that bigger schools are better. For a long time we all assumed that bigger schools were better because they could offer students more courses, more extracurricular activities and could save school districts money.

The statistics on school's size show how dramatically this "bigger is better" approach has changed the way we educate our children. In 1930, there were 262,000 elementary, middle and high schools in America, while today there are only 88,000 schools. In 1930, the average school had 100 students, while today's aver-

age school has 510 students.

Some education experts are now arguing that school consolidation has gone too far. More and more educators today believe that our children do better academically and socially in smaller schools that are closer to their homes and their parents than in big high schools with thousands of students. Because many schools have become too big and bureaucratic, they sometimes harm the students they are supposed to be helping. Students get lost in larger schools and spend their days lost in "a cloak of anonymity," where they do not interact with anybody outside their small group of friends. Many students in big schools never develop any meaningful relationships with their teachers and never experience a sense of belonging in their schools.

Recent research on school size and academic achievement shows that larger schools tend to "stratify" students. In large schools, the

top academic students and the star athletes develop personal relationships with the teachers, coaches and administrators and their grades and attendance are strong. The other 70 to 80 percent of the students never develop close relationships with the adults in

their schools and their academic performance suffers. Most high school students do not know a teacher they can go to when they have a problem or need a letter of recommendation for a job or for a college application.

Experts have found that achievement levels in smaller schools are higher, especially

among children from disadvantaged backgrounds who need extra help to succeed. A recent study of academic achievement and school size concluded that high school students in smaller schools perform better in the core subjects of reading, math, history and science. Students in smaller schools also have better attendance records

and are less likely to get in fights or join gangs. A principal of successful small high schools recently wrote that small schools "offer what metal detectors and guards cannot — the safety and security of being where you are well known by people who care for you."

All of this academic research makes a very simple point about our schools, our kids, and ourselves — our lives are better when we feel connected to the people we live and work with. It is painful to think about all of the children in America who wake up every day and go to schools that make them feel disconnected and detached from their teachers, their parents and their communities. I believe this sense of disconnection contributes to horrible incidents of school violence such as the recent shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo.

There is not one easy solution to all of the problems our schools and our children have. But I believe we can help out our parents, teachers and kids by making our schools smaller and helping them create a sense of community and connection that we took for granted in previous generations.

BARON  
HILL



Ninth District  
Congressman

---

**... educators today believe that our children do better academically and socially in smaller schools that are closer to their homes and their parents ...**

---

New Albany Tribune 8/6/99 A4

BARON P. HILL  
5TH DISTRICT, INDIANA

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES,  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION, AND CREDIT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS,  
OVERSIGHT, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1409

1208 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5315

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
1201 10TH STREET, SUITE 107  
JEFFERSONVILLE, IN 47130  
(812) 288-3999  
(800) 892-3232

# Smaller Schools are Better!

## *Become an Original Co-Sponsor of the "Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act"*

Dear Colleague:

Since World War II, educators have followed the rule that bigger schools are better. They have assumed that bigger schools are superior because they offer students more courses, more extracurricular activities, and save school districts money.

The statistics on schools size show how dramatically this "bigger is better" approach has changed the way we educate our children. In 1930, the average school had 100 students, while today's average school has 510 students.

Many education experts today, however, are questioning this "bigger is better" approach to education. New research is showing that children do better academically and socially in smaller schools that are closer to their homes and their parents. In addition, smaller schools appear to have higher attendance rates and higher participation in school activities.

Students who come from more disadvantaged economic and educational backgrounds show the greatest achievement gains in smaller schools. Larger school size tends to stratify students into different tracks which are often based on children's educational and social backgrounds.

The ***Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act*** provides grants to school districts that want to develop a school size reduction strategy. It supports school districts that want to reduce the size of their school units, either through new building space or through "schools within schools."

If you would like information about the advantages of smaller schools or would like to be an original co-sponsor this bill, please contact Martin Kifer at 5-5315.

Sincerely,



BARON P. HILL  
9TH DISTRICT, INDIANA

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES,  
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(812) 288-3999  
(800) 892-3232

September 29, 1999

## STUDENTS NEED TO FEEL "CONNECTED"

### *SUPPORT THE SMALLER SCHOOLS, STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT*

For a long time, our approach to schools has been "bigger is better." In 1930, the average school had 100 students, while today's average school has 510 students. Some education experts are now arguing that school consolidation has gone too far. More and more educators today believe that our children do better academically and socially in smaller schools that are closer to their homes and their parents than in big high schools with thousands of students.

Because many schools have become too big and bureaucratic, they sometimes harm the students they are supposed to be helping. Students get lost in larger schools and spend their days lost in "a cloak of anonymity," where they do not interact with anybody outside their small group of friends.

Experts have found that achievement levels in smaller schools are higher, especially among children from disadvantaged backgrounds who need extra help to succeed. Students in smaller schools also have better attendance records and are less likely to get in fights or join gangs.

This academic research makes a very simple point about our schools, our kids, and ourselves -- our lives are better when we feel connected to the people we live and work with. I believe that a sense of disconnection contributes to horrible incidents of school violence such as the recent shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

The **Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act** provides grants to school districts that want to develop a school size reduction strategy. It supports school districts that want to reduce the size of their school units, either through new building space or through "schools within schools."

If you would like information about the advantages of smaller schools or to be an original co-sponsor of this bill, please contact Martin Kifer at 5-5315.

Sincerely,



BARON P. HILL  
9TH DISTRICT, INDIANA

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
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(800) 892-3232

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-1409

September 27, 1999

## **SUPPORT SMALLER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS!**

*BE AN ORIGINAL COSPONSOR OF THE  
SMALLER SCHOOLS, STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT*

When I was growing up in Jackson County, Indiana, there were more high schools than there are today. In towns like Tampico, Clear Spring, and Cortland, there were high schools that local kids attended and local families supported. Those schools brought people together and helped keep their towns strong and vital places to live. When school consolidation forced their high schools to close, it tore the heart out of those communities.

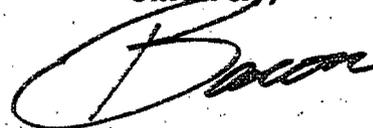
These high schools, along with thousands of other smaller schools around America, were closed because for many years educators have followed the rule that bigger schools are better. For a long time we all assumed that bigger schools were better because they could offer students more courses, more extracurricular activities, and could save school districts money.

We need to rethink our assumptions about larger schools. New research shows that achievement levels in smaller schools are higher, especially among children from disadvantaged backgrounds who need extra help to succeed. This academic research makes a very simple point about our schools, our kids, and ourselves--our lives are better when we feel connected to the people we live and work with.

The *Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act* provides grants to school districts that want to develop a school size reduction strategy. It supports school districts that want to reduce the size of their school units, either through new building space or through "schools within schools." It strengthens our communities by returning schools to the hearts of the places we live.

If you would like information about the advantages of smaller schools or to be an original cosponsor of this bill, please contact Martin Kifer at 5-5315.

Sincerely,





## NEWS

# Congressman Baron Hill

[www.house.gov/baronhill](http://www.house.gov/baronhill)

*9th District, Indiana*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Angela Belden, 202/226-6856  
Friday, November 19, 1999

### **HILL SMALL SCHOOLS CONCEPT ACCEPTED BY CONGRESS**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— For some time, Congressman Baron Hill has been saying that when it comes to our schools, bigger is not always better. Today, Hill applauded the United States Congress for agreeing with him. The end-of-the-session spending bill passed by the House of Representatives contains funds to help local school districts make their schools smaller.

“Reducing the size of our schools has been at the top of my agenda this year,” Hill said. “I am very pleased that my smaller schools concept is now on the Congress’ agenda too.”

“School size reduction is one of the many positive educational achievements in this bill,” said Bruce Reed, President Clinton’s Domestic Policy Adviser. “I am very proud of the leadership Congressman Hill has taken in pushing the smaller schools concept. This initiative takes an important step in creating learning environments where kids feel safe and connected to their teachers, parents, and communities.”

The Omnibus Appropriations Agreement (H.R. 3194) passed in the House of Representatives today, contains a \$45 million appropriation to the Department of Education to promote smaller schools. The Department would distribute grants to local school corporations that want to reduce the size of their high schools. Earlier this year, Hill introduced a bill (H.R. 3044), the “Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act,” with both Democratic and Republican support, that proposed a similar concept.

“The tragedy at Columbine and other recent violent events at our schools have forced us to think about how we educate our children and how we can make our schools safer and better,” Hill said. “Many of our schools are too big and too impersonal.”

Hill said there is not one easy solution to all of the problems our schools and our children have. He says, however, that making our schools smaller will help parents, teachers and students create a sense of community and connection within their schools.

# Washington Times

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1999

## Congress seeks to shrink size of U.S. high schools

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congress has decided that President Clinton's push for smaller class sizes is not enough — that America also needs to shrink many of its high schools.

A provision in the \$390 billion, end-of-the-year budget bill sets aside \$45 million for school districts to create programs and make physical changes at large high schools so students attending them have a more intimate experience.

"Smaller is better," said Rep. Baron P. Hill, Indiana Democrat and the program's author, who added that smaller spaces "create this feeling that kids know their teachers . . . and that they feel connected again."

Education Department officials say it will take months to set up the program. But as they envision it now, by the end of next year, school districts will be able to apply for grants to redesign space to create smaller "schools within schools."

Districts also could use the money to experiment with different schedules, research how other large schools create intimate settings or start new programs such as "career academies" that put students in touch with career mentors.

"We regard it as a very significant amount of money," said Mike Cohen, assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education at the Education Department. "It can focus the attention on educators all over the country — it can help them think why it's important to create smaller high schools."

More than one in 10 of the nation's high schools have enrollments of 1,500 or more, according to the National Center of Education Statistics. Mr. Hill and others believe that "learning communities" of 600 students or fewer are ideal.

Educators say large high schools can reduce safety, hurt student achievement and make students feel isolated.

In Oregon's Salem-Keizer School District, where all five public high schools have more than 1,800 students, Kathleen Hanneman said problems range from crowded hallways to students with learning difficulties not getting the help they need.

"We're spread thin in counseling," said Miss Hanneman, director of secondary education.

Rep. Brian Baird, a Democrat from Washington state who is a co-author of the legislation, said he went to a 500-student high school where almost everybody knew everyone else. Joining sports teams and the band was a cinch.

"A big school is an overmanned society. People are expendable," Mr. Baird said. "In a small school, you matter."

He talked with a fellow Democratic freshman, Mr. Hill, who since January had been gathering research showing students in small schools perform better.

"I didn't think there was any way I was going to get this passed the first time out," Mr. Hill said. "It was a surprise, but it was a good surprise."

for smaller schools

30 November 1999

Messenger-Inquirer

ROCKPORT -- A spending package passed by the U.S. House of Representatives this month included funding designed to help local school districts make their schools smaller.

The \$45 million was included at the urging of U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, an Indiana Democrat whose congressional district includes Perry and Spencer counties.

"The tragedy at Columbine (the Colorado high school where two students opened fire on classmates earlier this year) and other recent violent events at our schools have forced us to think about how we educate our children and how we can make our schools safer and better," Hill said in a statement. "Many of our schools are too big and impersonal."

Under the bill, the funding will be distributed by the Department of Education to local school corporations that want to reduce the size of their high schools.

"This initiative takes an important step in creating learning environments where kids feel safe and connected to their teachers, parents and communities," Bruce Reed, domestic policy adviser to President Clinton, said in a statement.

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5TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Gannett News Service

November 20, 1999, Saturday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: Pg. ARC

LENGTH: 195 words

HEADLINE: Initiative for smaller schools included in budget bill

BYLINE: PAUL BARTON; Gannett News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- The year 2000 omnibus-spending bill includes a program directing the U.S. Education Department to promote the creation of smaller local schools -- an initiative advocated by Rep. Baron Hill, D-Seymour, Ind.

Hill introduced legislation last month calling for the Education Department to offer more incentives to creation smaller schools in response to the April massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado, where 15 died, and similar violent events at other schools across the nation.

A version of his legislation was included in the giant spending bill that passed the House Thursday and the Senate Friday.

Hill thinks smaller schools would create more of a sense of community among students and result in less alienation.

Budget negotiators included \$ 45 million for the Education Department to use in promoting the smaller-school idea.

"The tragedy at Columbine and other recent violent events at our schools have forced us to think about how we educate our children and how we can make our schools safer and better," said Hill, a first-term member. "Many of our schools are too big and too impersonal."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 22, 1999

# Hill introduces smaller schools initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Indiana's Ninth District Congressman Baron Hill says that when it comes to school size, bigger isn't necessarily better. Perry County's voice in the House of Representatives recently introduced his first major education bill last week. Nearly 150 middle school students from southern Indiana were on hand.

The *Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act* would provide grants to school districts that want to develop a school size reduction strategy. It supports school districts that want to reduce the size of their school units, either through new building space or through "schools within schools."

Under Hill's proposal, local school superintendents who want to reduce the size of their schools

could receive a grant from the Department of Education to develop and implement their smaller school plan. School districts could receive a one-time grant of up to \$2 million.

"When I was growing up in Seymour, there were more high schools than there are today," Hill said. "Those communities were proud of their schools. The schools brought people together and helped keep their towns strong and vital places to live."

Hill said school consolidation brought about a "bigness" factor that forces many students to attend schools that make them feel disconnected and detached from their teachers, parents and communities. He introduced the smaller school bill to encourage school districts to create strategies that reduce the

size of their schools and give students a stronger sense of community.

"The tragedy at Columbine and other recent violent events at our schools have forced us to think about how we educate our children and how we can make our schools safer and better," Hill said. "Many of our schools are too big and too impersonal."

Hill said he has found many school principals support his initiative. He quoted a principal of a small high school as saying small schools "offer what metal detectors and guards cannot - the safety and security of being where you are known well by people who care for you."

Hill cited research that illustrates how much schools have grown in size. In 1930, Hill said,

there were 262,000 elementary, middle and high schools in America, while today there are only 88,000 schools. In 1930 the average school had 100 students. Today, the average school has 510 students.

Hill's research shows children can achieve more in a smaller school than in a larger school. His findings show students in smaller schools perform better in the core subjects of reading, math, history and science.

"This bill and the research I have collected make a very simple point about our schools, our kids and ourselves," Hill said. "Our lives are better when we feel connected to the people we live and work with."



Ninth District Congressman Baron Hill, left, listens to Corydon Junior High School Principal Mark Eastridge speak at a Washington, D.C., press conference on Oct. 7. Hill asked students from the Corydon and South Central junior highs to join him when he introduced an education bill called the "Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act."

*Corydon Oct 20 P2*

# Junior high students get up-close look at government

By RANDY WEST  
Editor

Students from two fairly small junior high schools, Corydon and South Central, had an experience earlier this month that they'll never forget.

They got up very early on Thursday, Oct. 7, flew to Baltimore, got on a bus for Washington D.C., and took part in Ninth District Congressman Baron Hill's televised press conference calling for legislation to make schools smaller, safer and more personal.

It was Hill's first major piece of education legislation.

In the wake of the Columbine High School massacre and other recent school shootings, Hill has introduced a bill called the Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act. It would provide grants to school districts that want to develop a school-size reduction strategy through new building space or "schools within schools."

"When I was growing up in Seymour," the first-year Congressman said, "there were more high schools than there are today. They were high schools that neighborhood kids attended and local families supported. Those communities were proud of their schools. The schools brought people together and helped keep their towns strong and vital places to live."

Corydon Junior High School

Principal Mark Eastridge, who was invited to speak at the press conference, echoed those comments. He said the opportunity for the students, their chaperones and teachers to see how a live press conference works in a garden outside the Capitol in Washington D.C., — and then be a part of it — was "very special, something you normally don't get to see."

And, perhaps even more important, it all reinforced what Eastridge and his staff tries to do at his relatively small school: foster good relationships between students, faculty and parents, so "people get to know each other as people."

Corydon eighth graders Kimberly Spieth and Jessica Pack and South Central seventh graders Jenny Babcock and Brittany Tuell also spoke, and then TV and newspaper reporters asked other students for their comments following the press conference.

The students toured the Capitol Hill, watching the U.S. House of Representatives at work, and peering into the Senate chamber.

During their four-day whirlwind tour, they also spent a good deal of time on a special guided tour of the Gettysburg Civil War battlefield. Corydon Junior High students and teachers are all involved in a multi-discipline, in-depth study of the Civil War period of American history.

Eastridge said the new Holocaust Museum in Washington was "absolutely overwhelming." Some

students took it in stride and some took it to heart, the principal said. As for Eastridge, he just tried to go through it without crying.

The photographs of innocent Jews being executed on the edge of a pit by Nazi soldiers, the infamous gas chambers, and Jewish prisoners packed in train cars were all very powerful, he said, but it was the film stories of the survivors who stayed alive because close family members, usually mothers and fathers, who had given their morsels of bread or kept hope alive so their children might live, that were particularly wrenching, Eastridge said.

"I was crying when I came out," he said.

The students toured a new outdoor exhibit dedicated to the famous words of inspiration and lasting legacy of Depression-era president Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It features large granite figures of people doing things like listening to his "fireside chats" or lining up in soup lines.

The teachers bought many books and artifacts that they can use in their thematic instruction program on the Civil War, as well as the new daily 20-minute silent reading program that everyone, students and teachers alike, are responding to well, said Eastridge.

The group of 80 children and parents plus eight chaperones returned home late Sunday, Oct. 10.

## Hill Introduces Smaller School Initiative

Bigger is not always better. That's why Ninth District Congressman Baron Hill said about our schools as he introduced his first major piece of education legislation. Hill filed his new bill, the Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act last Thursday. He unveiled the bill in Washington, joined by nearly 150 middle school students from southern Indiana.

The Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act would provide grants to schools districts what want to develop a school size reduction strategy. It supports school districts that want to reduce the size of their school units, either through new building space or through "schools within schools". Under Hill's proposal, local school superintendents who want to reduce the size of their schools could receive a grant from the Department of Education to develop and implement their smaller school plan. School districts could receive a one-time grant of up to \$2 million.

"When I was growing up in

Seymour, there were more high schools than there are today. They were high schools that neighborhood kids attended and local families supported," Hill said. "Those communities were proud of their schools. The schools brought people together and helped keep their towns strong and vital places to live."

Hill said school consolidation brought about a "bigness" factor that forces many students to attend schools that make them feel disconnected and detached from their teachers, parents and communities. He introduced the smaller schools bill to encourage school districts to create strategies that reduce the size of their schools and give students a stronger sense of community.

"The tragedy of Columbine and other recent violent events at our schools have forced us to think about how we educate our children and how we can make our schools safer and better," Hill said. "Many of our schools are too big and too impersonal."

Hill said he has found many school principals support this

initiative. He quoted a principal of a small high schools as saying small schools "offer what metal detectors and guards cannot—The safety and security of being where you are known well by people who care for you."

Hill cited research that illustrates how much schools have grown in size. In 1930, Hills said, there were 262,000 elementary, middle and high schools in America, while today there are only 88,000 schools. In 1930, the average school had 100 students. Today the average school has 510 students.

Hill's research shows children can achieve more in a smaller schools than in a larger school. His findings show students in smaller schools perform better in the core subjects of reading, math, history, and science.

"This bill and the research I have collected make a very simple point about our schools, our kids, and ourselves," Hill said. "Our lives are better when we fell connected to the people with whom we live and work."

Crossville 10-13 p. 1

# OPINION

A4 • SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1999

Madison

## School plan makes sense

Congressman Baron Hill has introduced his first major piece of education legislation since being elected to Congress. And it sounds like a good idea.

Hill is proposing legislation called the "Smaller Schools, Stronger Communities Act".

The bill would provide grants of up to \$2 million to school districts that want to develop a school size reduction strategy.

We believe smaller, community-based schools provide children with a better learning atmosphere. The legislation could help some school districts achieve

that goal.

Years ago, educators felt the need to consolidate smaller schools into larger facilities. Economics drove those decisions, and at the time it made sense.

Today, however, there's been a shift in thinking. In education, small is good. But reversing direction is costly - prohibitively costly in some cases.

Hill correctly stated that it's the "bigness" factor that forces some students to feel disconnected and detached from their teachers, parents and communities.

Smaller, local schools certainly would enhance community pride.

Here's a staggering fact that illustrates

how the face of education has changed. In 1930 there were 262,000 elementary, middle and high schools in the United States. Today there are 88,000 schools with an average attendance of about 500 children.

Some students, of course, will thrive in any setting, but most will have a better chance at success in a more intimate setting.

We hope Hill's proposal gets the attention of other legislators and is given serious consideration.

It sounds like a wise investment in our children's future.



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## NEWS 8

### Small School Plan

October 7, 1999

Carmel High School has 3,340 students this year, making it the largest school in the state.

For several years Carmel administrators have been discussing ways of creating a smaller feeling in the huge facility. One idea under consideration is creating small schools within the school.

**Dr. William Duke/Carmel Principal:** "I think typically what it means is that you construct yourself or you structure yourself into units of students or groups of students in various ways. It can be done by curricular emphasis or it can be done geographically.

Duke applauds legislation introduced in congress by Baron Hill that would make a one-time-only grant of up to \$2 million available to help large schools reduce their size.

Congressman Baron Hill/(D) Seymour: "There's an abundance of evidence that shows that smaller schools and the students in smaller schools not only do better academically, but they do better socially and so that's the reason I'm introducing the bill."

The money says hill, would come from the National Department of Education's budget.

Hill: "I'm hopeful this is going to gain some momentum. We have 25 co-sponsors on the bill already. Its a bi-partisan bill and so hopefully some time in the future we'll be able to pass it.



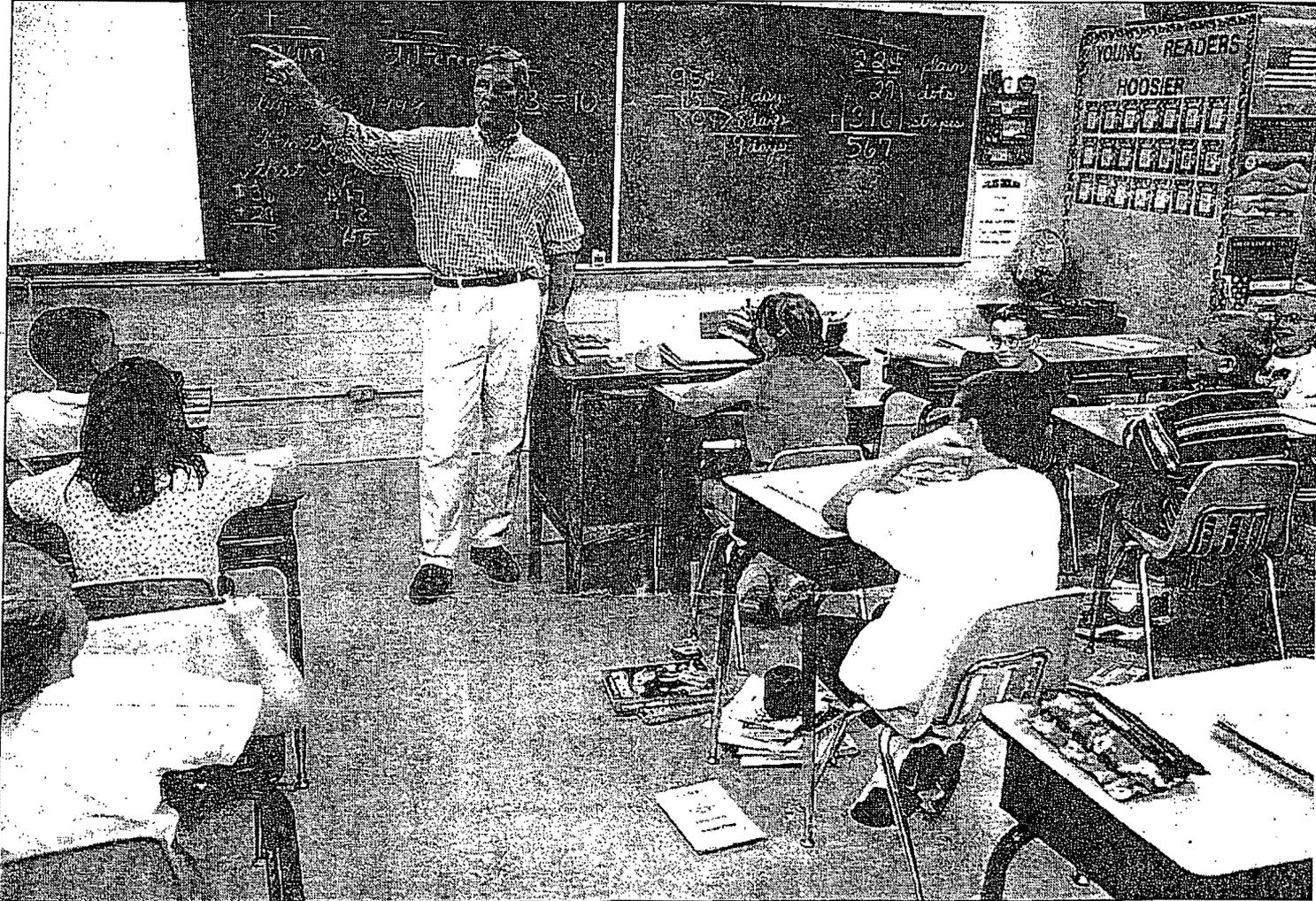
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Weekly News  
8/31/99  
A2

FAXED

# Pointing the way



U.S. Rep. Baron Hill spoke to school children in Mrs. Lockmand's fourth-grade class at Borden Elementary School. Hill was in Borden touting a new small schools initiative he will take back to Congress when they reconvene in a couple weeks.

STAFF PHOTO BY TONY MATKE

**BORDEN**

## Congressman takes time out to teach a few lessons about Washington

Before setting off on his 13-mile and four hour walk from Borden to Salem, Ninth District Rep. Baron Hill visited with kids at Borden Ele-

mentary School.

Borden Elementary Principal Myra Powell said her fourth graders are currently studying state history and the electoral process, and that Hill happily answered a multitude of questions from the students.

Then it was on to the second graders where Powell said Hill read

Miss Rumphius, a book about plants and the environment.

"He was really great and the kids were really excited to have him visit," Powell said of Hill's 40-minute visit.

From Borden, Hill walked 13 miles to Salem where he was expected to visit with constituents at the Washington County Courthouse.

Since Aug. 16, Hill has been using Congress' month-long break to walk over 140 miles throughout the Ninth District. Hill is expected to visit at least 25 cities before the walk is done.

"I really can't think of a better way to spend my time this month," he said.

—Joshua Hammann

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The Cincinnati Enquirer

November 20, 1999, Saturday

*Edvc -  
Small Schools*

**SECTION:** NEWS (WIRE, PAGE 1), Pg. A02

**LENGTH:** 148 words

**HEADLINE:** Small-school plan gets \$ 45M

**SOURCE:** Enquirer Washington Bureau

**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON

**BODY:**

The year 2000 omnibus-spending bill includes a program directing the U.S. Education Department to promote the creation of smaller local schools - an initiative advocated by Rep. **Baron Hill**, D-Seymour, Ind.

Mr. Hill, a first-term member, introduced legislation last month calling for the Education Department to offer more incentives to create smaller schools in response to the April massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado, where 15 died, and similar violent events at other schools across the nation.

A version of his legislation was included in the giant spending bill that passed the House Thursday and the Senate Friday.

Mr. Hill thinks smaller schools would create more of a sense of community among students and result in less alienation.

Budget negotiators included \$ 45 million for the Education Department to use in promoting the smaller-school idea.

**LOAD-DATE:** November 29, 1999

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*Example: House of Representatives*

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counsels people that abortion is even a possibility ... when global population growth is one of the greatest social and economic challenges we face."

Nevertheless, Baird described himself as pleased with his first term in Congress.

He said examples of work by him and his staff include the Columbia River channel-deepening project, aid for victims of residential-area landslides in Kelso, and money for a water-treatment project in Klickitat, as well as efforts to help individuals deal with federal agencies.

Baird was enthusiastic that the budget includes \$ 45 million to help school districts reduce the size of schools or create distinct units within large schools.

The effort was spawned after the shooting last spring at Columbine High School in Colorado.

Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., sponsored the bill after talking to Baird, a clinical psychologist, about the effects of large schools on students.

Baird, a co-sponsor, said, "In smaller schools, a higher percentage of students participate in activities.

In smaller schools they need you for the football team or the band or clubs. You have an identity and a role. In a big school, you are far more likely to fall through the cracks and feel you have no identity."

Baird said that even as U.S. population has grown in the last 70 years, there are 88,000 schools in the country today compared to 262,000 in 1930.

The bill would authorize a system of federal grants to help school districts establish schools or distinct units within schools of about 600 students in high schools and 400 in elementary and middle schools.

The money could be used for hiring additional staff, planning and architectural fees and other expenses but not construction.

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**HEADLINE:** BAIRD ENJOYS HIS JOB, CRITICIZES HIS COLLEAGUES

**BYLINE:** GREGG HERRINGTON, Columbian staff writer

**BODY:**

Federal lawmakers aren't being up front with the American people when they boast about keeping hands off the Social Security Trust Fund, says Rep. **Brian Baird**, D-Vancouver, at the end of his first session in Congress.

Furthermore, Baird said Friday, Congress has a strange way of approving a \$ 390 billion budget.

In the rush to adjourn for the year, lawmakers lumped five separate spending bills into a single document of about 1,000 pages. A few copies were put on tables and already-tired representatives had less than 12 hours to study them.

But despite things about Congress that don't sit well, Baird said Friday he enjoys the job representing the nine-county 3rd Congressional District.

This week, when all the horse trading and arm twisting and calls to President Clinton in Europe had been made, the budget bill passed in the House 296-135, clearing the way for adjournment.

Although he was in the minority on the vote, Baird said he wouldn't go as far as fellow Democratic Rep. David Obey of Wisconsin, who said, "We are going to be haunted by some of the things in this bill. What we are witnessing here is something that is intensely corrosive of democracy."

Baird, after 11 months on the job, was more forgiving.

"I think people worked hard to craft probably the best (budget) bill under the circumstances," Baird said. But he opposed it for three reasons:

"It was completed at 3 a.m. Wednesday and we voted on it less than 12 hours later. It is more than 1,000 pages long. I actually went down and read much of the bill. But my goodness, 1,000 pages ..."

"Second, the Congressional Budget Office, I guarantee you, will come out in a few weeks and report that we are, in fact, borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund. To pass a budget that does that, and pretend it doesn't, is a mistake. We should at least be honest with the American people."

Throughout the congressional session, members in both parties have jockeyed to be seen as doing the most to ensure the future of Social Security.

"The good news," said Baird, "is that we are far closer to a balanced budget than we have been in a long time. The unspent Social Security money is being used today to pay down the national debt. But if anyone says we have not borrowed from the Trust Fund in some way, they are not telling the truth."

Baird said his third reason for opposing the budget was its "linkage of United Nations dues with international family planning. The goal of those who did this was to restrict any agency that even