

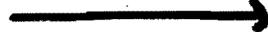
WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

8:30 a.m.

DATE: 2/9/97

ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 2/10/97

SUBJECT: Remarks to Maryland State Legislature

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McCURRY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BOWLES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McGINTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McLARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NASH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PODESTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	QUINN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MATHEWS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RASCO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RAINES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	REED 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOSNIK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	LEWIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EMANUEL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YELLEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIBBONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STREETT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HALE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPERLING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HERMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HAWLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGGINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WILLIAMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HILLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RADD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
KLAIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Waldman</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BERGER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Elena Kagan</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LINDSEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

Comments to Eli Attie.

RESPONSE:

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
MARYLAND STATEHOUSE, ANNAPOLIS, MD
Monday, February 10, 1997

Acknowledgments: Gov. Parris Glendening; Lieutenant Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend; Speaker Cas Taylor; President of the Senate Mike Miller; Sen. Barbara Mikulski; Sen. Paul Sarbanes; Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (represents Annapolis); Rep. Ben Cardin (served as Speaker of this body); Rep. Al Wynn and Rep. Elijah Cummings (both served in this body); President of Maryland State Board of Education Christopher Cross; State Superintendent of Education Nancy Grasmick.

I'm pleased to be here today, in the building that served as our nation's first peacetime capitol, to talk about one of the greatest challenges in our peacetime history: preparing America for the 21st Century, and ensuring that all Americans have the tools to make the most of their lives.

It is appropriate that we gather here today, at an important turning point in our history. It was in this statehouse that George Washington resigned his commission as General of the Continental Army -- in fact, it was right down the hall in the Lieutenant Governor's office that Thomas Jefferson wrote General Washington's words of resignation. It was here that the Treaty of Paris was prepared and ratified -- ending the Revolutionary War, and beginning the greatest experiment in democracy and opportunity the world has ever known.

As a country, once again, we face a moment of peace, prosperity, and extraordinary opportunity -- having won the Cold War, reversed the tide of crime and welfare and budget deficits, and built the strongest national economy in a generation. Thanks to Governor Glendening's leadership, there is much to celebrate in Maryland as well: unemployment is at a six-year low. Family incomes here have risen to fourth in the nation. Maryland's welfare rolls have dropped almost a quarter since 1995. Student achievement has risen, with more schools meeting the high standards Maryland had the courage to set.

But today's peace and prosperity is not something we can rest on -- it is something we must build on. That is why I stood before the Congress last week, and issued a call to action. For the first time in decades, we are strong enough to truly prepare ourselves for the 21st Century -- to help all our people seize the promise of the global economy, the Information Age, and life-enhancing new technology. But if we do not all take responsibility, and rise to this challenge -- if we do not summon the energies of all our people, from our statehouses to our schoolhouses, from our homes to our houses of worship -- we could lose this opportunity to shape our future.

That is why I am here today -- with a message I will carry not just to this state legislature, but to other state legislatures, communities, and forums in the months to come. To prepare America for the 21st Century, I am asking for a new kind of partnership -- with the people in this chamber, and people all across America. The era of big government is over. But the era of big national challenges is not. And while national leadership can point the way -- while national leadership can remove some of the barriers that had prevented our states and our people from solving their own problems -- the real responsibility is one we all share. As President, I am prepared to point the way -- to shine a light on what is working -- and to leverage the efforts of

all Americans to meet our challenges. But you must be prepared to work with me, to seize this moment of opportunity while America stands strong enough to do so.

Today, I want to talk about what we must do in two critical areas: giving our children the best education, and breaking the cycle of dependency by moving millions from welfare to work. Taken together, these issues are at the core of what we must do to prepare America for the new Century. We must help everyone have the tools to succeed in this knowledge economy -- and that means high-quality education and training. And we must make sure everyone willing to use those tools -- everyone willing to work hard and take responsibility -- has a chance to do so. Education reform and welfare reform are about bringing all Americans to the starting line of this new economy, and then making sure they are ready to run the race.

Our number-one priority -- the high threshold of the future we must cross -- must be to ensure that all Americans have the best education in the world: that every 8-year-old can read; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old can go to college; and every adult can keep learning for a lifetime.

Education has always been the heart of opportunity in this country. As we prepare for unimagined new work and careers, the best investment we can make is not in land or factories or equipment, but in our minds -- the one asset we can carry with us no matter what the future holds, so we can make and remake our lives at every turn.

We must never forget that one of the greatest sources of our strength throughout the Cold War was a bipartisan foreign policy. Because our future was at stake, politics stopped at the water's edge. Now we need a non-partisan commitment to education -- because education is the critical national security issue for our future, and politics must stop at the schoolhouse door. That is why America's states and businesses, parents and teachers must work with us, above and beyond the old divisions, to renew our schools -- and I am pleased that a number of parents, teachers, and business people could join us today.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a ten-point plan, a Call to Action for American Education [hold up booklet], that describes the steps we must take -- and the State of Maryland is already doing many of the right things. We must help every child to read by the third grade -- and I am pleased that the University of Maryland at College Park has already pledged more than 2,300 students to work as reading tutors over the next five years. We must expand public school choice -- as Baltimore City is doing through its new charter schools. We must rebuild crumbling schools -- a priority for Governor Glendening as well.

We must open the doors of college wider than ever before -- and I am pleased that the Governor is proposing state HOPE scholarships to open the doors to college. They will complement my national HOPE Scholarships to make the first two years of college as universal as high school -- a \$1,500 tax credit for the first two years of college and a \$10,000 tax deduction for all college costs, plus expanded IRA's to save for college and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years. We must give more of our workers the ability to learn and to earn for a lifetime through my G.I. Bill for Workers -- transforming the tangle of federal training programs

into a simple skill grant that goes directly into workers' hands.

We must teach our children to be good citizens as well as good students -- and thanks to Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, you have begun a comprehensive, statewide program of character education. You have developed a statewide code of discipline, and are removing and helping disruptive students, so all our children have a chance to learn. You have heeded my call to promote community curfews, as part of your plan to prevent youth violence. Again under the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, Maryland is the only state in America that requires community service to graduate from high school, with the first class of those seniors graduating this year.

My education plan is a comprehensive one. But any education plan can only be as strong as the things our children learn each day. That is why our success depends upon holding our students to the highest standards -- making sure they learn the basics that will be the foundation of success in the 21st Century. When 40% of our fourth graders do not read as well as they should -- when students in Germany or Singapore learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth each year, while our students often race through 30 to 35 without really learning them at all -- we are not doing what we should to prepare our children for a knowledge economy.

Let's understand why these basics are so important. The point is not merely to teach our children facts and figures, but to teach them the ability to think and reason and analyze -- to give them the tools and skills that will serve them in jobs and careers we cannot even contemplate today.

Maryland is making a good start. You have developed clear standards for what our children should learn by the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades, in particular in reading and math, and clear tests to measure them, school district by school district, and school by school. You are holding schools accountable for making the grade, rewarding excellence, and intervening in schools that are not performing. Because you have set high standards, Maryland has seen five years of steady, sustained progress in meeting those standards.

But Maryland, and all states, must do more. To compete and win in the 21st Century, we must have a high standard of excellence that all states can agree upon. That is why, in my State of the Union address, I called for national standards of excellence in the basics -- not federal government standards, but national standards, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the 21st Century. I called on every state to test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math by 1999, to make sure these basic standards are met.

We already have widely-accepted, rigorous national standards in both reading and math -- and widely-used tests based on those standards. In reading, Maryland and more than 40 other states have participated in a test called the National Assessment of Educational Progress -- which measures the state's overall performance against a high national standard of excellence. In math, tens of thousands of students across the country have already taken the Third International Math and Science Study -- a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era. Last month, I visited Northern Illinois, where 8th grade students from 20 school

districts took that test, and tied for first in the world in science and came in second in math. We know it is the right standard -- and we know our children can meet it if they are challenged to do so.

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

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

To anyone who says that in a country as big as America, we can't possibly have common national tests in the basics, I say: from Maryland to Michigan to Montana, reading is reading and math is math. We have plenty of standardized tests in America today; what we need are tests that reflect standards -- and they are two very different things. If we are serious about holding our children to the highest standards, every state in America must take up our challenge, and test our children in the same rigorous way.

If anyone understands the importance of high standards, it is the businesses that will depend upon our children in the 21st Century. They know that only by ensuring that we have the best-educated, the best-trained, the best-skilled workforce in the world can we compete and win. **Today, I am pleased to announce that National Business Roundtable is endorsing our call for national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Together with America's parents, teachers, and lawmakers, they will join our crusade to make American education the best in the world.** I want to offer a special word of thanks to Norman Augustine, CEO of Lockheed Martin and head of the Business Roundtable's Education Task Force, who has done so much to help reform Maryland's schools.

To reach high standards, we must also have the best teachers. For years, educators have worked to establish nationally accepted credentials for excellence in teaching. Just 500 of these teachers have been certified since 1995. My new budget will enable 100,000 to seek national certification as master teachers. We should reward and recognize our best teachers -- quickly and fairly remove those few who don't measure up -- and challenge more of our finest young people to consider teaching as a career.

Raising standards will not be easy. Some of our children will not be able to meet them at first. But good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching we must make, and which schools need to improve. We're not doing right by our students when we set low

expectations. For too long, too many students have moved through our schools who could not read and write at the most basic levels. That is why, in addition to the 4th and 8th grade national tests we are urging, states should develop their own comprehensive benchmarks of what student should know to move up in school, and to graduate from high school. It's time to put an end to social promotions, and make sure a high school diploma really means something -- not to put our children down, but to lift them up.

Throughout my career in public life -- as a Governor, and as President -- I have worked harder on education than on any other issue. That is because renewing education, raising our standards, and lifting up our schools is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare for the 21st Century -- to promote opportunity, demand responsibility, and build community. Nothing will do more to open the doors of opportunity to every American. Nothing will do more to awaken a sense of responsibility from every American, as they work to make the most of their education. And nothing will do more to build a strong, united community of all Americans -- for if every American has the tools to succeed, we can move forward together, as one America.

When it comes to providing the tools to succeed, our other great challenge is helping to move the permanent underclass into our growing middle class. Working together, we ended the old welfare system. Over the past four years, we worked with 43 states to launch welfare reform experiments, moving a record 2.25 million people off our nation's welfare rolls. Here in Maryland, you used your waiver to move 51,000 people off the welfare rolls in the past two years alone -- placing a special focus on teen parents by linking benefits to school attendance, breaking the cycle of dependency and making responsibility a way of life, not an option. You have answered my call to revoke driver's licenses from those who don't pay child support, to demand responsibility from all parents. Now we have enacted landmark national welfare reform, to make responsibility a way of life all across America.

That legislation brought an end to the old welfare system -- but it was really a new beginning. Now that we have demanded that those on welfare take responsibility, we must all take responsibility to see that the jobs are there, so people on welfare can become permanent members of the workforce. Our goal must be to move two million more Americans off welfare by the year 2000.

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

The most direct and effective steps must be taken by the states. The legislation we passed gives states the authority, for the very first time, to take the money that had been used on welfare

checks, and subsidize private sector paychecks. Missouri began doing this under one of our waivers -- and it is working. Now I challenge every state to follow their example. Use the new flexibility you have been given. Turn those welfare checks into paychecks. There is no better way to find jobs for welfare recipients, or to keep them employed.

Second, I urge you to use the money saved from welfare reform to make sure that even more people can move from welfare to work. I know that Maryland has taken its considerable savings from its own welfare reform efforts, and put them into a special "rainy day" fund to create jobs and move people from welfare to work. If welfare reform is to succeed, all states should use those savings on efforts such as child care, wage subsidies, employment incentives, and other ways to help create private sector jobs for welfare recipients.

I also applaud Maryland for using its own money to continue providing benefits for legal immigrants -- even after the federal bans have taken effect. That's the right thing to do, but you shouldn't have to bear that burden alone. That is why every state and every Governor, Republican or Democrat, should join with me to get Congress to restore basic health and disability benefits when misfortune strikes immigrants who came to this country legally, who work hard, pay taxes and obey the law. To do otherwise is simply unworthy of a great nation of immigrants.

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

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

Together, we must seize this moment of opportunity, and prepare our people for the changes and challenges of a new century. Together, we must renew our basic bargain of opportunity, responsibility, and community, and give everyone the tools to make the most of their own lives. If we rise to that challenge, we will enter the 21st Century full of new promise and possibility, for all who share a stake in the American dream.

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

Belin
2/2 pm
VLS/MS

Q & A's for Testing Proposal

I. Goal of Proposal

Q. How did the President arrive at this decision to call for this voluntary national test?

- ▶ These tests target the basics -- reading well by grade 4 and mastering the basics of math and algebra by grade 8. The American public accepts that reading is the cornerstone of all future learning, and math is the cornerstone of preparing students to go to college and succeed in many other courses, fostering the nation's future economic growth.
- ▶ But the standards movement needs a jolt to inject rigor into the system -- quality of state standards is uneven, and only 12 states have benchmarked to world-class standards (AFT report).
- ▶ Public consensus on importance of standards of excellence in education: 48 states have developed or are developing their own academic standards. Currently, we have no way to compare how students are doing in Tennessee to how students are doing in Maine. Parents want to know.
- ▶ The test is VOLUNTARY, but we're urging every state and district to do it. Since many Americans move from district to district, and even state to state, a voluntary national test can help provide parents and schools a common basis on which to evaluate student achievement in these critical areas.

Q. What is so important about these tests?

- ▶ The public understands that if you can't read independently by the 4th grade, your learning will be undermined in all academic subjects for the rest of your school career. And, if you haven't mastered the basics of arithmetic and moved into algebra, geometry, and problem solving by the end of the 8th grade, you will be at a disadvantage when it comes to taking more challenging courses in high school and succeeding in high school and college.
- ▶ President Clinton is absolutely committed that every child should read independently by 4th grade and be internationally competitive in math by 8th grade.
- ▶ The assessments on which these national tests will be based reflect broad consensus in the nation. Both the Third International Mathematics and Science Study

(TIMSS) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have gained professional and public regard as true measures of excellence. The new tests would be similar to these tests but designed for individual students to take and administered and scored locally.

- ▶ This test will reaffirm the importance of ALL American children being able to achieve these standards, and the test results will help states and districts identify areas of the system that need improvement if all children are to have the opportunity to do so.

Q. What kind of effect do you see this having?

- ▶ This will be the jolt needed for raising standards in our schools to inject rigor and provide a benchmark for schools, communities, and states to learn how well their students are performing on a national and international basis.
- ▶ These tests provide concrete examples of what are meant by national standards of excellence in education.
- ▶ President Clinton challenges all states to get their students ready for the new assessment in 1999.
- ▶ TIMSS provides new insights into teaching and achievement in American education. This effort will help make the results more useful in all classrooms that participate.

Q. How will schools, communities/districts, or states be expected to use the results?

- ▶ It is up to local school boards, communities and states to determine how they will utilize results of this test.
- ▶ The federal government is not dictating a course of action and will not collect individual test results.
- ▶ The test will provide parents, teachers, principals, communities, and states with a benchmark to find out how their students are performing compared to national and international achievement standards.
- ▶ This test will let every parent know how his or her child is doing compared to national and international standards of excellence and let every teacher know whether students are being adequately prepared to succeed in the future.
- ▶ As soon as tests are administered, the questions will be made public and put on the

Internet and available for public use so parents and teachers can use them as guides in improving teaching and learning.

- ▶ By focusing on high standards in reading and math for all students, this test is consistent with the America Reads Program and other programs, such as Title I, which respond to the needs of children in low-income areas.

Q. Didn't President Bush propose a national test that Congressional Democrats opposed? How is this proposal different from that proposal?

- ▶ The President agreed with former President Bush that a national assessment might be a good idea. He took issue with the other proposals in America 2000 such as using public taxpayer dollars for private school vouchers which would not move the country in the right direction.
- ▶ The President supports public school choice, and the 1997 education budget includes \$51 million to support innovative new schools created by parents, teachers, and community leaders. And the 1998 budget will double this investment.
- ▶ Former President Bush's America 2000 called for American Achievement Tests, a voluntary nationwide examination system based on five core subjects. The plan was never implemented. President Clinton's proposal tests students on areas where there is a national consensus on standards of excellence. In other content areas, consensus has not yet been reached, which is why it is critical for local school districts and states to continue their work on standards in these areas.

Q. Won't this proposal add to the testing burden students face?

- ▶ This proposal should not significantly increase the testing burden on students. In 1990-91 GAO found that testing took up only about 7 hours for the average student out of an approximately 1080 hours in the classroom. An additional 2 hours of testing in only two grades would amount to only 9 hours out of the school year in these 2 grade levels.
- ▶ By comparison 43 percent of 4th graders watched television 4 or more hours daily. The addition of 2 hours for testing during the school year is minimal (.2 of 1 percent of the school year).
- ▶ Moreover, if they choose, states and districts may use this test as a supplement or replacement to parts of their existing testing program if given the opportunity to participate in benchmarking against national and international standards.

- ▶ The benefit is well worth the small amount of additional testing time. Parents, districts, and states can use the test to compare how well students are performing compared to national and international benchmarks.

Q. Does this proposal mean that state education reform efforts have not been successful and the federal government has to step in?

- ▶ Over the past 5 years, states and local districts have been moving forward on standards at a rapid rate. Almost all states have content standards, and 45 states have statewide assessment systems.
- ▶ By independent judgment, the quality of state standards is uneven, and most do not compare to national and international benchmarks of excellence. The special report by Education Week gave only 22 states A's and 13 states B's for their standards and assessments. A recent AFT report says only 12 states have tried to compare their standards to the high expectations of nations with top-performing students.
- ▶ There are disparities between state and national evaluations of whether a student is proficient in the basics. For example, Louisiana reports that 85 percent of its fourth graders are proficient in reading, although on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 15 percent of its students scored at the proficient level.
- ▶ A national test will provide a common basis on which to evaluate achievement of students in these critical subjects.

Q. What will happen to students who fail?

- ▶ The uses, and consequences, of this test are entirely under state and local control.
- ▶ What we are doing here is merely providing reliable instruments for measuring our efforts to achieve high standards in reading and math in the U.S.
- ▶ Testing will occur early enough in students' educational development to allow time to help them overcome difficulties and guide students toward eventual success. In addition, other federal programs, like Title I, will provide additional assistance to foster success.
- ▶ If a student fails this test, it says more about the failure of some systems to educate than the failure of the student. States and districts can use information about

student failure to identify areas of the system that need to be improved if all children are to have the opportunity they deserve.

- ▶ The U.S. Department of Education will work with states and school districts and provide resources to help them prepare their schools, teachers, students and parents to understand the level of mastery of the basics expected on this test.

Q. Why these subjects and grade levels?

- ▶ Reading and math are two of the most basic skills necessary to perform academically and to succeed as a productive and contributing member of the workforce and society. We have proposed reading in the fourth grade— the primary skill to acquire in the early years of school is the ability to read well and independently. Children spend a major portion of the first years of school learning to read so that they are then able to read to learn in all other academic subjects. If students fall behind in reading, it often has the effect of causing them to fall behind in school generally. There is a strong correlation between low reading skills, falling behind in school, disruptive behavior, and dropping out. Mastering reading opens the opportunity to successfully learn all other subjects.

- ▶ We have proposed a test in math in the eighth grade because the ability to perform basic mathematical skills is critical to enrolling in algebra— a prerequisite for college and for getting a job in today's high skill environment. Advanced math is the gatekeeper in high school for career and college choices in a technological age. Taking algebra and geometry is a strong predictor for whether the student will take the sequence of rigorous high school courses needed to be prepared to attend and succeed in college.

Q. What is the relation of this to Goals 2000?

- ▶ There is no relationship between choosing to participate or not participate in these tests and having access to U.S. Department of Education funds for Goals 2000 or any other program.
- ▶ Goals 2000 funds should be used by states and local schools to raise and meet their own local and state academic standards. For Goals 2000 to be successful, the quality of standards and the accuracy of measuring student achievement is essential.
- ▶ The Department of Education will continue to upgrade the testing instrument and

will revise it annually to ensure that it reflects national and international expectations of achievement.

Q. What is the relationship between this test and the America Reads Challenge?

- ▶ This test helps support the America Reads Challenge: President Clinton is absolutely committed to the notion that children should be able to read independently by the 4th grade.
- ▶ The America Reads Challenge mobilizes parents, teachers, reading specialists, tutors, Americorps, college students, early childhood programs, libraries, and senior citizens to help give parents the tools to improve their child's reading, and this test lets parents know how their children are doing.
- ▶ America Reads will give grants to local reading partnerships to help low-achieving students get after-school, weekend and summer help to read better. America Reads will provide extra support to communities where children may not at first be reaching standards of reading proficiency.

Q. What is the relationship between this test and other federal efforts to improve math education?

- ▶ This test builds on existing federal efforts to improve math education and provides the necessary check to see whether efforts are succeeding, the stimulus for continuous improvement.
- ▶ In the past decade, the federal government has spent millions of dollars to strengthen math and science education. Programs such as Goals 2000, Title I, and the Eisenhower Professional Development Program reinforce effective innovation in teaching and learning. The National Science Foundation also supports significant activities to enhance math and science education. **Statewide, Urban and Rural Systemic Initiatives** are designed to encourage higher standards and facilitate cooperation among states, cities, school systems, and other organizations in order to systemically improve science, mathematics, and technology education. The National Science Foundation's **Teacher Enhancement Program** supports the development of effective approaches and creative materials for the continuing education of elementary, middle, and secondary school mathematics and science teachers. The **Instructional Materials Development Program** fosters the design and creation of materials that address the new curricular standards in mathematics and science and enable all students to acquire sophisticated content knowledge, higher-order thinking abilities, and problem solving skills.

- ▶ These efforts have helped improve math education for many students throughout the nation. NAEP results show slow but steady progress in math achievement since the early 1980s. At the same time, the TIMSS study indicates that we must do more to bolster curriculum and instruction in math if American students are to be competitive with their peers around the world.
- ▶ President Clinton has issued a "First in the World Challenge" to states and communities across the United States to administer the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) test to their students in the next 2 years. States and districts that take up the challenge will help prepare their students for the new assessment in 1999.

II. Questions about the President's motives and putting the proposal together

Q. Why is the President proposing this national test in reading and math at this time?

- ▶ We are at a critical juncture in our nation's history—our schools will be a key factor in how we perform in the global economy. As we head toward the 21st century, our students must be able to demonstrate excellence in the basic skills of reading and mathematics.
- ▶ The President has determined that although there is wide public acceptance of the need for national standards of excellence in education, the system needs a jolt and a quality control check to ensure that students are being prepared to succeed in the Information Age and global economy.

Q. The President is the leader of the free world yet he seems to be running for school board chairman. Given the fact that the federal government has little if any role in elementary school education, isn't this really an over-reach?

- ▶ The President is playing precisely the role in education that presidents should play—that is, he is exercising national leadership on an issue of critical importance to families, schools, and the development of the nation.
- ▶ If our students are going to be able to compete in an increasingly global economy, they must be able to measure up to international standards of achievement. This test provides us with a means of comparison as we strive towards standards of excellence.

Q. Isn't this just a way for the President to create a "legacy" for himself since he failed to get national health insurance passed? Why should people take this idea seriously when the federal government right now plays such a minor role in financing education?

- ▶ This is an issue that has always been closest to the President's heart. President Clinton has long been involved with the need for the nation to set standards of excellence in education, first as a governor and a leader of all the governors, and now as president.
- ▶ Over the past 4 years, President Clinton has galvanized activity throughout the nation on setting challenging standards for children and helping students achieve to those high expectations. Forty-eight states have developed or are in the process of developing their own academic standards, and most are also developing assessments to measure whether students are reaching the goals. Public consensus on the importance of national standards of excellence for education is broad and deep.
- ▶ This is part of a comprehensive strategy that President Clinton is pushing forward to improve our schools and make it possible for students who study hard and make the grade to go to college. This is not a legacy for the President, but one we will all achieve for the nation if we work together.

Q. Did the President consult with any education experts before he decided to make this proposal and if so who? Who are the people behind this new proposal?

- ▶ The President regularly consults with parents, teachers, principals, college presidents, and a variety of education experts as part of his comprehensive strategy in education. Secretary Riley made the call for reading more than a year ago. The READ*WRITE*NOW program and America Reads Challenge are both focused on making sure that students read well and independently by 4th grade. Both programs involve families, teachers, and community members in student learning, and this test will allow parents, teachers, and reading tutors to see whether their efforts are succeeding.
- ▶ TIMSS was a major effort of the Education Department in coordination with 40 other countries, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Science Foundation. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), a Netherlands-based organization of ministries of education and research institutions in its member countries, came to a consensus about what students need to know and be able to do in math and science in order to succeed in the global economy and the technological age.

III. Getting Teachers and Schools Ready

Q. How will you ensure that teachers are prepared to help students meet these high standards?

- ▶ The President has confidence in the nation's teachers and schools to achieve these goals, but he also understands that they will need support and assistance.
- ▶ The President has made a high-quality teaching force a key priority. Both the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and the report of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study conclude that much more is required to prepare and support teachers to enable them to teach to high standards. The President recognizes these challenges and has called on the states and local school districts to support teachers in their efforts.
- President Clinton has directed the U.S. Department of Education to focus on the most effective strategies to address the challenges in improving teaching quality and accountability, including recruitment, alignment with challenging standards, professional development, and rewards for excellence.
- The Department will provide fiscal support for these efforts through its programs, including Eisenhower Professional Development, Title I, and Goals 2000 funding, as well as by helping to identify and share best practices in the field.
- The Department is also providing teachers with materials that they can use as tools to prepare their students to meet these high standards. For example in reading, the Department has launched the America Reads Challenge and summer reading materials for Read*Write*Now! that teachers and families can use to develop young children's reading skills and their enthusiasm for reading. Additional expanded items to the national assessment will also be available to teachers to use in their classrooms to diagnose problems early.
- President Clinton has also challenged states and communities across the country to administer the TIMSS test to their students in the next 2 years. Those that do so will help prepare their students and teachers for the new assessment in 1999.

Q. If you have a national test for students, why not a national test for teachers?

A. We are not advocating a national test for teachers, but we are supporting voluntary board certification through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and other measures to upgrade teaching quality.

- We hope to encourage and support the board certification of over 100,000 master teachers, at least one teacher in each school.
- We are also supporting national accrediting organizations and encouraging states in their efforts to align their teacher entry examinations, licensing, and certification

requirements with the challenging standards that they are developing for their students.

Q. How can you have these types of tests when students in poorer schools don't get the trained teachers and other resources they need to be able to meet these standards? What is the administration doing to help poor schools to get ready for these tests? What will you do to help schools that do badly on these tests?

- ▶ The proposal recognizes that these tests will show the shortcomings in schools and curriculum and identify students and schools that need extra help. If the test identifies failure, it will be the failure of systems to educate, not students to learn.
- The President and the Secretary are committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to be successful learners. Through Title I and other elementary and secondary programs, the federal government targets additional funds to districts and schools that lack the resources to meet the needs of their students, particularly students with needs that may cost more to meet. Goals 2000 seeks to make challenging standards an achievable reality for all students. The America Reads Challenge will build on these efforts by supporting 30,000 reading specialists as they mobilize a million volunteers to enable 8-year-olds in the country to read independently by the 3rd grade. The National Science Foundation has focused attention on urban and rural school systems in its efforts to upgrade math and science teaching.
- At the present time, many schools offer children, especially disadvantaged students, a "dumbed-down" curriculum focused only on the most rudimentary skills. A watered-down curriculum denies children the challenge of meeting high expectations. Research by cognitive scientists over the past two decades tells us that in fact all children engage in higher-order thinking from the very beginning and can and will learn basic skills better if given more challenging material.
- Parents need to know how well their children are progressing in school and whether they will be ready for higher level work. Students' grades are not an accurate measure for parents, particularly in poor communities. On average, "A" students in high-poverty schools in math perform about as well as "C" students in low-poverty schools on the same math test, suggesting that students in high-poverty schools are neither exposed to nor held to the same high standards as their more advantaged peers

IV. FEDERAL ROLE AND STATE RIGHTS

Q. The President says that he does not intend to take power from local school

boards yet this seems to be the first step toward a national curriculum?

A. No. The President's proposal is entirely consistent with the limited role of the federal government in education—one of leadership and support for states, communities, educators, and parents in providing the best education for their children. It also does not specify curriculum and instruction, matters for states and communities to decide.

Enabling teachers and parents to gauge how well their children are performing against national and international benchmarks provides them with a powerful tool in their efforts. Such benchmarks offer a North Star to guide improvement in areas where there is consensus on what should be learned. These tests will be administered and scored locally.

Q. Isn't this a vote of no-confidence that our public schools can't even teach the basics and the federal government has to step in?

A. Not at all. We know that many schools are successfully teaching the basics and challenging coursework in communities across the country. We also know that other schools are performing not as well and that all schools need to accelerate the pace of improvement and support all students in learning more. Our proposal offers individual communities and schools the opportunity to measure the performance of individual students against standards that are recognized as challenging nationally and internationally.

This will suggest to local communities where their students are excelling and where they need to make curriculum and instruction more challenging. As in the case of Northbrook, Illinois, it will show where they are doing it right. For individual families, such an assessment will let them know whether their children are on the right track and where they need extra help. This is a vote of confidence that when given good information, schools and families will act on it.

Q. Will this proposed national test take the place of state tests that are already being administered? If so many states are already giving these types of test, isn't this national test redundant?

A. This short assessment is not a substitute for the tests states and local districts are developing; rather it is designed to supplement and anchor state and local assessments to national and international benchmarks for student performance. Indeed the assessment will be offered by test publishers and used by states and communities in conjunction with their own tests. It will provide two points of comparison, one for fourth grade reading and one for eighth grade math, without adding measurably to testing burden.

Q. You seem to be saying that the federal government knows more about improving education than Governors, and you seem to be implying that state standards aren't strong enough and that the federal government has to step in?

A. No one governor or one state has the resources or capacity to develop this kind of internationally benchmarked assessment. Only the U.S. Department of Education has the capacity to regularly benchmark student performance with other countries.

The assessment is being offered as a support for state and local efforts to develop challenging standards and assessments by offering an external benchmark for student performance. State assessments vary widely in how they define proficiency for their students, according to an analysis of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results and states' own assessments. The Southern Regional Education Board compared the percent of 4th graders scoring at the proficient level on NAEP with the percent each state reported for its state assessment and found wide variation, with the states generally scoring lower on NAEP. For example, under 35 percent of 4th graders in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Wisconsin qualified as proficient on NAEP, while over 80 percent scored at the proficient level on their respective state assessments. (Southern Regional Education Board, 1996).

Q. Are these tests voluntary for states, districts, students? If they don't participate, will they lose funds? Even though you say these are voluntary, won't you be tying federal funding or other strings to these tests making them essentially mandatory?

A. These tests are completely voluntary for states and districts and are not tied to any federal program or funding. Districts will not lose funds if they choose not to participate. As these tests would be locally controlled, school districts would make provisions for families to opt out of participation, if they so desire.

Q. How many states and districts do you think will choose to use this test? Have you spoken to many already? What kind of response are you getting?

A. The Department intends to pay for the test administration in the first year to encourage states, school districts, and schools to participate. Some states and locals may choose to adopt this as their own assessment system, others may choose to supplement assessments they are developing in additional grades and subject areas. The American public sees the need for an external benchmark for performance; Six in 10 Americans (61%) say academic standards are too low in their own local schools. The public by a wide margin (87%) favors setting "higher standards than are now required about what students should know and be able to do" in "math, history, English and science for promotion from grade to grade." (Gallup, 1995).

Q. Can parents choose for their children not to be tested?

A. As these tests would be locally controlled, school districts would make provisions

up to local -
but they generally don't
let kids opt out of tests

for opting out for families.

Q. Won't this lead to a national curriculum? Doesn't this undermine the work states and districts have already done to develop their own standards and assessments?

A. The assessment is not a national curriculum. A curriculum specifies what subject matter is going to be covered, when it will be taught, and often how it will be taught. The assessment only sets a goal. Its value to parents, teachers, and students is measuring the performance of individual students benchmarked against national and international standards. It would provide states and locals with an independent check on the quality and rigor of their own tests.

Q. Will the federal government require teachers to teach to a specific curriculum? For example, will teachers teach either phonics or whole language when it comes to preparing for the reading section of this test?

A. No. Curriculum is a state and local matter. The national and international assessments from which the tests derive broadly cover curriculum that are used across our country and in other countries as well. They take a balanced approach in testing the kinds of skills students will need to be successful in reading and math and school generally.

Q. So you say participation in this test is voluntary. That's fine for now, but what will you say next year or two years from now? Isn't this the first step to the federal government setting standards and requiring tests?

A. States and locals would decide if they wished to use these tests, just as they make decisions about other assessment programs such as the state NAEP. The tests would provide states and locals with an independent check on the quality and rigor of their own testing programs. There would be nothing to compel states and locals to participate, ever, other than responding to the desire of parents, local educators, and communities to know how well their students are performing.

Q. If there is such a need for a new test, why are the test publishers not developing such a test? Why does the federal government need to get involved?

A. The federal government needs to support the front-end work of test development that would be linked with assessment programs the government already funds. The two tests to which the assessment will be tied, the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Third International Math and Science Study are accepted as providing national and international standards for student performance at critical transition points in reading and math. This linking is a logical extension of the work the U.S. Department of Education has undertaken to provide valid and accurate assessments that will be of use to

parents, communities, and states.

V. Test Quality and Fairness

Q. Who determines the standards -- the knowledge and skills -- that will be measured by this test?

A. The knowledge, skills, and abilities measured in this test will be based on well developed content frameworks already in use at the national and international levels. In the case of reading, we will use the framework developed by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). It was developed through a national consensus effort in which ideas were sought from hundreds of individuals involved and interested in this country's reading education. The mathematics framework of the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) was similarly developed at the international level. Both frameworks are based on challenging content.

Q. How will we know that these tests are fair? For example, how will we know that these reading tests are "good?" How will we know that they balance whole language and phonics? How will we know that these tests are not culturally biased or too politically correct?

A. As with any standardized test, during the test development stage, a considerable amount of time will be spent on the review and revision of the items by teams of successful math and reading teachers and content experts. They will focus on curriculum relevance, as well as cultural bias. Then using large samples of students, the test will be undergoing rigorous field testing to determine the technical soundness of the items, and to verify the absence of subgroup bias through statistical tests. With regard to political correctness, an independent Board is proposed to oversee the development and implementation of the test.

Q. How does this test compare to the types of tests that most students take now? Will the test be multiple choice, true and false, and fill in the bubble? Or will it require students to write?

A. These tests will represent state-of-the-art testing standards. That is, they will include both multiple choice and constructed response items (e.g., items requiring students to produce their own answers). Specifically, the test will include about 80% multiple choice and about 20% constructed response questions. At least one of the constructed response items will require an extended response. Additional constructed response items will be available to teachers to integrate in their instruction and use in diagnosing potential learning problems.

VI. Technical Questions about the Proposal

Q. Why will these tests be challenging? Are they better than the other tests being used by schools across the country? Who says?

The reading test will be based on the NAEP reading framework. This framework represents the agreement among teachers, educators, reading researchers, and representatives of the business committee. Over almost two years, this national consensus was built based on the best practices at the school level and the most recent developments in reading research. The framework developers emphasized reading performance, that is, they wanted to know what successful readers are able to do. They believed that a variety of approaches and programs can produce good readers and did not emphasize any one approach over any other. The framework emphasizes "reading literacy" and mastery of the basics. Successful readers know how to read and understand what they have read.

The mathematics test is based on the international framework and benchmarks set by the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The TIMSS was developed through a consensus process of more than 40 countries examining what they expected their students to know and be able to do at the end of 4th, 8th, and 12th grade. The mathematics challenge is based on the 8th grade, but naturally reflects what is expected up to that point and what should naturally follow throughout a student's education.

The challenge levels have been set by examining how thousands of students actually performed on the 8th grade test. It sets the international benchmark for what 8th graders should know and be able to do by looking at what they are actually able to do.

Q. Does the test tell if students can spell, construct a sentence, or use a comma?

The reading challenge is looking at a 4th graders ability to read. There are many parts to being literate, including writing, spelling, grammar, and punctuation that are taught and measured in the Nation's classrooms. The reading challenge is focused on one aspect of literacy - reading - because we know it is the key to future learning. Without the ability to read and to read well, no student can succeed. Specific assessments to diagnose a student's reading difficulties would remain a responsibility of local schools and teachers.

Q. Will nonpublic school students be included?

A. Yes, at the option of the nonpublic school. The test will be available to non-public schools as are any released items produced with Federal funds. Similar to NAEP and TIMSS, we will work with non-public school organizations and interest groups to ensure comprehensive distribution of the test along with training and scoring guides. In addition, after each administration, the test (along with answers, scoring guides and other materials) would be released to the press and placed on the Internet for access by anyone. People who home school their children could give the released test to their children if they wanted to and score it themselves.

Q. How does the test differ from the current NAEP and TIMSS tests?

A. The test will differ from NAEP and TIMSS in several ways. *First*, not every student takes every item on the NAEP and TIMSS tests. Students' knowledge and abilities are sampled across books containing different sets of items. In the proposed test, all students would take every item on the test, and each student would take the exact same test booklet. *Second*, the proposed tests will yield an individual score—NAEP and TIMSS can only produce reliable group estimates (e.g., state and national data) about student performance. *Third*, all items from the proposed test will be released annually following each administration. NAEP and TIMSS typically release only a few items following each administration. The rest of the items are retained for future assessments. And *fourth* the new assessment would provide teachers with materials to help their students prepare to meet the challenging standards of the test.

Q. Will children with disabilities and limited English proficiency be included in these tests?

A. Yes. Consistent with civil rights requirements that apply to most schools that would participate, reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or with limited English proficiency would be provided by school administrators of the test. These responsibilities will be specifically addressed in the development and distribution of the test. Such accommodations may include extended response time for students with disabilities or access to an English dictionary for the math test for students with limited English proficiency.

Q. When will these tests be ready? Who will develop them? Who will administer them? How will they be made available to states and districts? Why aren't they available now?

A. The new test will be developed during 1997 and 1998 with a full administration planned in the spring of 1999. The development of the test will be funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. A public or private organization will be competitively selected to develop the test and make it available to test publishers and schools for their use. It is also expected that a representative, independent Board, including successful local math and reading teachers, parent representatives, and state and local leaders, will be created to advise on the development and implementation of the test.

Regarding administration, the test will be made available through school district and state testing coordinators. It would also be used by test publishers for obtaining recent national norms in reading, or national and international norms in mathematics. The test will be administered and scored by local teachers using training guides and scoring guides provided by the test developer.

Q. How will you protect the privacy rights of individual students? Will the Federal government keep a record of how students do on these tests?

A. Individual results of the tests will not be reported to the Federal Government. The test users will have the responsibility for test administration, scoring, analysis, and reporting of this new test. Thus, state directors, school districts, and schools will be expected to follow their local laws and regulations, as well as the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, regarding privacy rights of individual students. Also, at the national level, when separate studies are conducted to link student responses on the new test to NAEP and TIMSS scores, special Federal confidentiality laws apply. All government and contractor employees who will work on these studies will be sworn to uphold confidentiality and are subject to criminal penalties if they fail to do so. Persons who violate the confidentiality law by disclosing the identifies of any respondent are subject to penalties, including fines and prison terms. In addition, it should be noted that the Federal Government does not retain names of any students once linking procedures (e.g., to teacher, school, or other tests) have been completed at the local level.

Q. Will this test be administered every year?

A. Yes, the test will be administered annually.

Q. Who will pay for the development of the test? Who will pay for administering the test? Who will pay for analysis and interpretation of the test?

A. The U.S. Department of Education will support the development of the test. In 1999, the Department will reimburse states, districts, schools, testing companies and others who wish to administer the new test. After 1999, it would fund continued development, as well as provide the technical support and assistance needed to continue annual testing, but the test users would be responsible for the test administration, scoring, analysis, and reporting.

Q. At what level will results be reported? By state? By school district? By individual schools?

A. Results for individual students will be reported to parents, teachers, and schools. Assuming appropriate statistical, methodological, and administrative standards have been upheld, test users at the state, district, and school levels could report on their own data. Test publishers could report national norms, and the Department could report national and state data linked to NAEP and TIMSS.

Q. Will this be some kind of matrix sampling, or will every 4th grader in a participating district be tested? If the latter, will results for individuals be available?

A. The new test will *not* use matrix sampling. In each participating school, individual students will take the same test, yielding individual scores available to the teacher and parent, consistent with applicable privacy protections. There will be a continuation of NAEP and TIMSS each year to norm the results and maintain trend data.

Q. How much additional teacher time will be required to score the tests, and how will this time be compensated? Aren't teachers overburdened already?

A. Some publishers who have been licensed will carry out their own scoring of the core tests. Teachers, in this case, will use guidelines for judging the supplemental questions (which will not count in the scoring of the test). Teachers may use these supplemental items as part of their instructional program.

In other instances the teachers will have the training necessary to score the main body of the test as well as the supplemental items.

The time demands will not be great or excessive under either condition -- and in both conditions the actual activity of scoring should inform the teacher about the strengths and weaknesses of students.

In terms of compensation, this would normally be seen as part of a teacher's regular responsibilities.

Q. Can you trust teachers at the local level to score their own students' tests?

A. If trained, yes.

Q. How will you ensure that there will not be objectionable material (e.g. reading passages) on the test? Will parents be given information about the type of passages and math questions before deciding to have their child participate?

A. The tests will be reviewed by samples of teachers, test experts, and parents prior to delivery. Every test will also be released directly after it has been administered so all parents will have access to prototypic tests. This includes the trial tests given in 1998 which will be released so parents can review these items before the tests given in 1999.

Q. Can districts and schools opt to give the test to only some of their students rather than all?

A. We will strongly urge districts and schools to include as many students as conceivably possible in the administration of the test. We will build in time accommodations for disabled students and whatever accommodations are possible for limited English proficient students (such as English-Spanish dictionaries). Guidelines from test publishers will urge the same thing. We would expect all schools and districts to follow

our guidance.

Q. What is this "independent board" that will oversee the development and implementation of the tests? Who will sit on it and how and by whom will its members be appointed? Is this another NAGB? What will the Board's authority be?

A. Our thinking about the board is only just firming up. We expect it to be made up of at least 51% math and reading teachers, and include parents, and some political and business leaders and some educators other than teachers, including testing experts. We have not settled on who would do the appointing. The board would have advisory authority over the general policies of the development and implementation of the testing.

VII. Budget and Legislation

Q. How much will this proposal cost?

We currently estimate a five year price-tag of about 90 million dollars. Much of this is to pay all the costs associated with letting every fourth grader in America take the reading test in the Spring of 1999, and every eighth grader take the math test that Spring. After 1999 we would pay for development costs and technical assistance but not for the administration of the exam, which will be made available through licensing arrangements to commercial test publishers, states, and others.

Q. Will you need legislation to implement this?

A. The Department has ample authority to conduct this new assessment under its current legislation, however Congress will certainly be consulted.

VIII. Background on Math/Reading

Q. How do our students fare in international comparisons of reading and math? Isn't the reason that our students perform poorly on international comparisons of reading and math because we educate more of our students and have a more diverse student body?

Our students do *not* perform poorly on international comparisons of reading. The recent IEA International Reading Literacy Study found that U.S. fourth and ninth graders are exceeded only by their counterparts in Finland. But given today's literacy demands, the U.S. must do better. The IEA TIMSS study showed that our eighth-graders do perform below average in international comparisons of mathematics. TIMSS data on fourth-grade mathematics performance will be announced in June, 1997.

- In both the reading and math international assessments, virtually all of the nations that participated educate all of their students through the ninth grade. It cannot be

said that at these age levels the U.S. educates more of its students than other industrialized countries. Student diversity is also regarded as a major challenge by teachers in England and Germany. For example, unlike typical U.S. practice, Japanese eighth-grade teachers instruct both high and low achievers in the same classroom.

- The recent TIMSS study comparing our eighth grade math achievement with that of forty other countries reveals the US to be below the international average. We are also underrepresented in the percentage of our students in the international top 10% of achievement. NAEP results do show that the nation has made slow but steady progress in math since the early 1980s, but evidently such progress has not been fast enough to propel us to be among world's highest performers.

- ▶ The federal government is paying for administration of the test in the 1st year.

Maryland Speech Standards and Testing portion

...I have long believed that one of the most important steps we can take to improve education for our children is to set high standards of academic excellence for them to meet, and then measure how well students are meeting those standards. [tests will tell us which students and schools need help, how we have to change teaching methods, etc....]

Maryland has been a leader in this approach, and you should be proud of your efforts. The Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) -- for grades 3, 5, and 8 in core academic subjects -- reflects high standards of learning, and makes clear what students are expected to learn.

Maryland is one of the few states in the country that has made an effort to learn what other countries expect of their students as you developed your own standards. You know that in this global economy nations around the world are setting the standard of excellence our students must reach, just as the finest athletes anywhere in the world define the benchmarks of excellence for our Olympic athletes.

Your performance assessments, among the most highly regarded anywhere in the country, measure what really matters for students to learn rather than what is easy to test.

You know that setting standards and testing students doesn't work like magic. That is why you have been working hard to provide Maryland's teachers with the extra professional development they need to be able to teach to these standards, and to upgrade the curriculum as well.

And you know that accountability is important. I commend your efforts to provide report cards for each school district and school, to hold schools accountable for their performance, and to intervene in schools that are failing if they can't be turned around on their own. The students in those schools deserve nothing less than a first-rate education, and we can't let them down.

The Maryland State Board of Education is now embarked on a significant effort to extend the assessment program to high school students as well. The high school assessments proposed by the Maryland State Board of Education -- a series of ten "end-of-course" exams in core academic subjects -- will measure individual student as well as school performance, will hold high school students accountable for their own learning and encourage them to work hard and do their best, and will once again make the high school diploma mean something.

So I commend you for all of these efforts and the others you have taken to improve education in Maryland. [might want to add sentence indicating that charter school legislation is under discussion, and that President hopes that the state will pass a strong charter schools law -- I am still checking the politics and status of this proposal] As a result of your sustained efforts over the past five years, Maryland schools have shown five years of steady, sustained progress, and stand as a model to the nation.

But you must do more, for your students, their parents and the schools. Last week in my State of the Union Address, I proposed that every state -- including Maryland -- adopt national standards and national tests, for fourth grade reading and eighth grade math. Let me tell you why.

We are a highly mobile society, and students must master the basic skills no matter where they live. If a student doesn't learn to read well by 4th grade, they will fall behind in all of their subjects. And students who don't master algebra by 8th grade won't be prepared for college and high skilled jobs.

While every state, including Maryland, has worked to develop its own definition of what students should know and be able to do with respect to reading and math, at present, no state can compare its standards or its student performance with other states or with national or international benchmarks.

More importantly, no parent has the means to determine if her child is doing well enough against widely (nationally) recognized benchmarks. The state or local test their children takes tells them how well their child performs; but there is no way for a parent to tell how good is "good enough." And, unfortunately, for some (many???) states, the (performance) standard for satisfactory performance is still quite low.

Yet we already have widely recognized and utilized national standards and national tests of student performance, for reading and math.

In reading, 40 [check number] states participate in the National Assessment of Education Progress, measuring state performance against a rigorous national standard. The test was designed to reflect what reading teachers and other experts have learned is important for student to be able to do, and to reflect what states generally teach as well.

In math, in 1995 U.S. students participated in the Third International Mathematics and Science a Study, a 41-nation study, including tests given at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels in math and science. In this case, the test measures what an international consensus of educators believes students should learn. And the framework for this test reflects very well the widely accepted national standards developed in 1989 by the

*Del-Ga.
Math is
math, from
Maryland
to Missouri
to Montana.
7th & 8th*

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, used by every state including Maryland. So, for mathematics we have a good measure of rigorous international as well as national standards.

And these tests sets very rigorous performance standards. Nationally, some 40% of the 4th grade students do not reach the "basic" level of performance in reading, which most people consider minimally acceptable. This is not an easy test.

In math, on average, U.S. students performed below the international average at the 8th grade level. Only 45% of our students performed at the international average, and only 5% of our students performed in the top 10% of students internationally. We have a long way to go to reach international standards.

These tests help raise our sights higher. Unlike previous generations of tests of basic skills, they don't dumb down our curriculum or our students.

These widely accepted tests do an excellent job of reporting on state and national education progress. However, they are designed only to be administered to a small sample of students nationally or in each state. Only a few students take them at a time, and no student, and no school, can find out how he or she did.

I believe that every parent ^{it to know} deserves to know whether his or her child is meeting these high national and international standards in the most basic of subjects, reading and math. Students must know this as well, for this is how they can tell if they are on track or in danger of falling behind. But we can't have an honest assessment of our students or our schools unless this information is available for every student and every school.

My plan, announced in my State of the Union Address last week, will address this need, by 1999. The U.S. Department of Education will fund the development of a 4th grade reading test and an 8th grade math test for individual students, based on the existing NAEP and TIMSS tests. The scores on these new tests will be comparable to the scores on the existing tests, so that students can learn how well they perform compared to rigorous national and international benchmarks.

The development work will take two years. Once completed, the tests will be licensed to interested commercial test publishers and states. States and school districts can then purchase these tests the same way they purchase the rest of the tests they use.

No state or local school district will be required to administer these tests ~~in order to receive federal education funds~~. They will not be administered or scored by the federal government.

But I urge every single state to use these tests, not to replace but to supplement and enhance their own testing program. They provide information that is simply essential for students, parents, teachers and the public must have if we are to improve our schools. And this information cannot be obtained in any other way.

Announce: National Business Roundtable Education Task Force, led by Norman Augustene of Martin Marietta, and an important supporter of Maryland's education reform efforts, has endorsed this plan for national standards and national tests.

Challenge: The Maryland State Board of Education to incorporate these tests into the state's overall approach. [Chris Cross, the President of the Maryland State Board of Education (and the President of the Council on Basic Education, a nationally recognized group promoting academic standards and also a former Assistant Secretary of Education in the Bush Administration) is prepared to respond positively]

A CALL TO ACTION FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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- ✓ **Set rigorous national standards, with national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math to make sure our children master the basics.** Every 4th grader should be able to read; every 8th grader should know basic math and algebra. To help make sure they do, the President is pledging the development of national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, and challenging every state and community to test every student in these critical areas by 1999. These tests will show how well students are doing compared to rigorous standards and to their peers around the country and the world. They will help parents know if their children are mastering critical basic skills early enough to succeed in school and in the workforce. Every state and school should also set guidelines for what students should know in all core subjects. We must end social promotion: Students should have to show what they've learned in order to move from grade school to middle school and from middle school to high school. We must make sure a high school diploma means something.

- ✓ **Make sure there's a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom.** In addition to the talented and dedicated teachers already in the classroom, two million new teachers will be needed over the next ten years to replace retirees and accommodate rapidly growing student enrollments. We must take advantage of this opportunity to ensure teaching quality well into the 21st Century by challenging our most promising young people to consider teaching as a career, setting high standards for entering the teaching profession, and providing the highest quality preparation and training. We should reward good teachers, and quickly and fairly remove those few who don't measure up. The President's education budget will make it possible for 100,000 master teachers to achieve national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards over the next ten years.

- ✓ **Teach every student to read independently and well by the end of the 3rd grade.** Reading is the key to unlocking learning in all subjects. While America's 4th graders read on average as well as ever, more than 40 percent cannot read as well as they must to succeed later in school and in the workforce. Research shows that students unable to read

well by the end of the 3rd grade are more likely to become school dropouts and truants, and have fewer good options for jobs. The President's "America Reads" challenge is a nationwide effort to mobilize a citizen army of a million volunteer tutors to make sure every child can read independently by the end of the 3rd grade. Parents, teachers, college students, senior citizens, and others can all pitch in to give children extra help in reading during the afternoons, weekends, and summers. At the same time, schools must strengthen the teaching of reading in the school day, and the President's budget invests more in programs that address reading achievement in school.

- ✓ **Expand Head Start and challenge parents to get involved early in their children's learning.** A child's learning begins long before he or she goes to school. That's why the President's budget expands Head Start to cover one million children by 2002. Parents are their children's first teachers, and every home should be a place of learning. The President and First Lady will convene a Conference this spring to review recent scientific discoveries on early child learning and to show how parents, teachers, and policymakers can use this new knowledge to benefit young children. And in June, the Vice President and Mrs. Gore will host their sixth annual family conference, and focus on the importance of parents' involvement throughout a child's education.
- ✓ **Expand choice and accountability in public education.** The President has challenged every state to let parents choose the right public school for their children. Innovation, competition, and parental involvement will make our public schools better. We must do more to help teachers, parents, community groups, and other responsible organizations to start charter schools—innovative public schools that stay open only as long as they produce results and meet the highest standards. The President's budget doubles funding to help start charter schools so that there will be 3,000 charter schools at the dawn of the 21st Century, providing parents with more choices in public education.
- ✓ **Make sure our schools are safe, disciplined and drug-free, and instill American values.** Students cannot learn in schools that are not safe and orderly and do not promote positive values. We must find effective ways to give children the safe and disciplined conditions they need to learn, such as by promoting smaller schools, fair and rigorously enforced discipline codes, and teacher training to deal with violence. We should continue to support communities that introduce school uniforms and character education, impose curfews, enforce truancy laws, remove disruptive students from the classroom, and have zero tolerance for guns and drugs. We should also keep schools open later as safe havens from gangs and drugs, expanding educational opportunities for young people in the afternoons, weekends, and summers, and providing peace of mind for working parents.
- ✓ **Modernize school buildings and help support school construction.** Just as we face unprecedented and growing levels of student enrollment, a recent report by the General Accounting Office shows that a third of our nation's schools need major repair or outright replacement. To keep children from growing up in schools that are falling down, the Administration has proposed \$5 billion to help communities finance \$20 billion in needed school construction over the next four years.

- ✓ **Open the doors of college to all who work hard and make the grade, and make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as high school.** To prepare ourselves for the 21st Century, we must open the doors of college to all Americans and make at least two years of college as universal as high school is today. The President's HOPE scholarship, a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, would be enough to pay for a typical community college tuition or provide a solid down payment for four-year colleges and universities. The President also is proposing a \$10,000 tax deduction for any tuition after high school, an expanded IRA to allow families to save tax-free for college, and the largest increase in Pell Grants for deserving students in 20 years.

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A CALL TO ACTION FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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EDUC TOP PRIORITY

- take 10 pt plan

- take to the country (legis) - Congress + states

- most sweeping educ. reform & college oppor. agenda ever presented, \$1B

~~What's new~~
ALL LEVELS:

TEACHERS, READING, PUBLIC CHOICE, COMPUTERS, HOPE + GI

NEWS = NAT. TEST

A CALL TO ACTION FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- ① Intl. competitive: 7th vs 8th. 40% can't read
- ② Stds movement - no way to compare across state lines, no indiv. measure
- ③ We'll develop test by 1999, based on widely accepted int. stds.
- ④ AEA → Engler
Shanker
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- ⑤ Consensus - Master the basics
- ⑥ All fronts - reading, teaching, character

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draft 2

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Michael Cohen

SUBJECT: Moving Forward on National Standards

Font
I. Background

Over the past four years there has been considerable activity throughout the nation to set standards of excellence for education. Work on national content standards has been completed in virtually every discipline. With the support of Goals 2000 and new Title 1 requirements, forty-eight states have developed or are in the process of developing their own academic standards, and most are also developing new assessments aligned to these standards. Public consensus on the importance of national standards of excellence for education is broad and deep, and the standards movement has clearly taken hold nationally.

Yet despite this progress, there are significant challenges as well. The quality of the standards being developed by states is quite varied. A recent AFT report indicates that only 15 states have standards that are clear and specific enough to lead to a common core curriculum, and only 12 states have tried to benchmark their own standards to world-class levels. State progress on developing performance standards and assessments is slower than with respect to content standards. No state is able to determine for itself, or assure the public, that its standards are rigorous and up to world class levels.

The state-by-state approach to standards and assessments limits the information available to parents, teachers and students. In particular, the current arrangements make it impossible for anyone to learning how well individual students perform against national or international benchmarks. In short, there is no way for anyone to know if a student who meets a particular state's performance standards is doing well enough in a larger context. This is especially important because states will vary among themselves with respect to the rigor of their performance standards.

Further, there is considerable evidence that even high quality and widely accepted academic standards, such as the national math standards, have not yet penetrated into the classroom in meaningful ways. The recently released TIMSS study of international performance in math and science shows that neither textbooks and other curriculum materials, nor teaching practices, have yet responded to the standards.

This memorandum describes three strategies for moving your national standards agenda forward. It is designed to respond to the challenges indicated above, and to build on and extend significantly the Administration's efforts over the last four

years. While it promotes national level activities -- particularly new national testing -- it is designed to build on and strengthen the work underway at the state level, rather than force states to discard what they have already been doing.

II.

A NAT. BENCHMARK

~~STRATEGY 1: PROVIDING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT BENCHMARKS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS IN READING AND MATH.~~

Proposal: We propose to create new assessments that would provide individual students, and their parents and teachers, with information on how they perform relative to national performance standards in 4th grade reading (as measured by the National Assessment of Education Progress) and international performance standards in 8th grade mathematics (as measured by the Third International Math and Science Study [TIMSS]).

not test to determine whether students have mastered 4th grade reading & 8th grade math.

o **A Focused Effort:** This proposal is focused on reading and math because they are the building blocks of nearly all school learning, and widely accepted as the most basic of basic skills. Fourth and eighth grade are critical transition points in school, and reading well by the 4th grade and mastering math, especially algebra, by the 8th grade, are essential to future academic success. NAEP and TIMSS, while not widely known to the public at large, enjoy bipartisan support in the education and policy communities. We believe this focus approach will minimize political opposition to a federal testing effort.

o **Information for parents, teachers and students on individual student performance:** Once available, these tests will give parents, teachers and students accurate information on student performance against recognized national and international standards. They will be the only assessments that can provide this information -- no state or local testing program can currently provide this information, and no other national efforts are referenced to these recognized standards.

Both NAEP and TIMSS were originally designed to monitor national, state or international performance, not to measure individual student achievement. Therefore, at present, neither NAEP nor TIMSS can provide individual-level scores. Our proposal would be to create individual-level versions of these tests, making it possible for the first time to measure individual students against demanding national or international benchmarks. Our consultations with leading testing experts suggests that creating individual level tests that reflect the performance standards in the current assessments is feasible.

o **A 2-Year Development Period, Led by the Federal Government:** The tests would be developed under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. The contractor is most likely to be a commercial test publisher, or consortium of publishers. The development costs are in the range of \$2-4 million per year, and these costs would

continue as long as the test was made available. The Education Department, the National Science Foundation and perhaps the Department of Defense Dependent Schools could share the development costs. It will take 18-24 months to develop the new tests. If the Education Department begins work immediately, the test could be administered for the first time in the Spring of 1999. No new legislative authority would be required to undertake this work.

To ensure the technical integrity of the work, we would organize a technical advisory committee, or ask the National Academy of Science to provide ongoing assistance.

We will also need to consider ways of reducing our vulnerability to charges of federal intrusion as a result of the federal responsibility for test development. We have considered alternative approaches, such as asking ACHIEVE, the new entity created by NGA and Lou Gerstner after the education summit in Palisades. However, that organization is still not staffed or operating yet, and is not likely to have the technical capacity to undertake this work. Further, reaching an agreement about how to proceed with this work with the Governors and CEO's on the ACHIEVE Board of Trustees is likely to slow down work which is already on a very tight timetable.

Greek { **o National Tests Administered Locally, Supplementing But Not Replacing State and Local Testing Programs:** States and local school districts would be encouraged to administer these new assessments, in addition to their own testing program. The combination of these new national assessments together with state or local testing will provide both performance and diagnostic information for individual students. While the bulk of the diagnostic information would come from state and local testing programs, the new national tests would provide some limited amount as well.

Like most other state and local tests, these new tests would be available from a commercial test publisher. Because these tests perform a unique function not currently filled by the market, we do not anticipate significant opposition from the test publishers.

State and local use of the tests would be voluntary; we advise against requiring their use as a condition of receiving federal education funds. Politically, such a requirement would generate considerable opposition. Further, we think public pressure over time, especially from the business community, is likely to be an effective incentive to state use.

Available on Internet After the first year of test administration, ²⁰⁰⁰ a version of the tests could be placed on the Internet and scored by computer. This means that, in states or school districts not using the test, parents could administer the test to their children at home, and learn how well their children perform against national

and international benchmarks.

o **Testing Related to Other Administration Initiatives:** One advantage of using these particular tests is that they are, or can be, directly tied to other Administration efforts aimed at helping students reach these standards. In particular, the America Reads Initiative is aimed at helping all children reach the NAEP 4th grade reading standard. Having this test available at the individual student level will provide parents, tutors and teachers with an important tool.

There are also efforts underway or planned with regard to 8th grade math. Last week at the First in the World Consortium event in suburban Chicago, you challenged other districts and states to begin immediately to use the TIMSS test, on a sample basis, to benchmark their own standards, curriculum, and teaching practices. The Department of Education and the National Science Foundation are working together to develop a package of resources that can help address curriculum, instruction, and professional development issues in math. And planning has begun among the Education Department, NSF, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy to more carefully coordinate resources from executive branch agencies that can be directed toward improving student performance on the 8th grade TIMSS test.

The focused strategy described above should be complemented by additional efforts that address a broader range of issues. These are briefly discussed below, and can be developed more fully in the near future.

STRATEGY 2: PROMOTING NATIONAL USE OF HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

The focused effort on math and reading should be complemented by one that builds on existing state standards, addresses a broader range of subject areas and grade levels, provides leadership to promote nationwide consensus on what students should learn in core academic subject areas, and assists states in developing and using higher standards to effectively improve teaching and learning.

Proposal: We propose to hold a White House Conference on Standards of Excellence in Education in the Fall of 1997. The purpose of the conference would be to increase the extent to which states adopt and use standards of recognized high quality and to help improve the quality of state academic standards overall. This would be accomplished by identifying and promoting the best designed and most rigorous standards available from anywhere in the country, and by identifying and reporting to states the extent to which there already exists agreement among states on the content standards in core academic subject areas. In addition, the conference should emphasize that to be effective in improving teaching and learning, academic standards must be

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III

lead up
too limiting
highlight progress

placed in a system of aligned assessments, curriculum, teaching practices and professional development programs as a package. Examples of such systems would include Advanced Placement exams and New Standards.

This conference should be conducted in partnership with business leaders, governors and other state officials, and educators, perhaps by working with ACHIEVE. The White House role should primarily be in convening the effort, in challenging others working on standards issues to identify quality standards, and then to help build the consensus to use them more broadly throughout the nation.

STRATEGY 3: LINKING STANDARDS TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL

In your speech to the National Education Summit in Palisades, you challenged states and local school systems to put in place meaningful systems of accountability for students, for teachers, and for schools. There are several initiatives already underway to help support these challenges, and, over the next year, the Administration should undertake several additional ones. New and proposed initiatives can be developed in more detail in a subsequent memo. Briefly, these can and could include:

- o **Promoting Excellence and Accountability in Teaching: Expanded support for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.** The FY 98 budget includes a significant increase in support for the NBPTS. The Education Department, in response to a Directive you issued last Fall, will inform states and school districts on ways federal resources can be used to assist in preparing teachers for board certification. In addition, the Education Department will more inform states and school systems on a range of ways in which federal resources can be effectively used to promote excellence and accountability in teaching.
- o **The development of guidebooks that summarize best practices on issues such as rewarding excellence in teaching, removing incompetent teachers, requiring students to meet academic standards before moving to the next level of schooling, etc.**
- o **Working with business leaders to help employers consider student academic performance in employment decisions.** The business community has been working to identify ways in which employers can reinforce the importance of academic performance for high school students, through the review of high school transcripts and other evidence of school performance. Many business leaders working on this issue would welcome a partnership with the White House that could raise the visibility of these efforts, and lead to more widespread efforts by employers.

January 26, 1997

To: Mike Cohen

From: Pat Forglone and Marty Orland

Subject: Providing national and international achievement benchmarks to individual students.

Here are our current thoughts on the feasibility of providing rigorous national and international achievement benchmarks for students in fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics by the Spring of 1999. We think there are two major options:

- 1) calibrating NAEP and TIMSS scores to existing testing instruments;
- 2) creating a new national test linked to NAEP and/or TIMSS.

Each option is technically quite challenging given the proposed timelines, and each offers a unique set of advantages and disadvantages. Below are brief descriptions of the options, along with their primary strengths and weaknesses. Following this is a longer background paper about a national achievement test, where staff have been able to do more technical work over the past week.

Calibration

It is technically feasible to generate statistical links between NAEP/TIMSS and most existing state and local tests. To do so requires that a sample of students take both NAEP and their own test (e.g., norm reference tests, their state or district assessment etc.), after which statistical analyses are conducted to develop linkage scores. This option allows existing assessment systems to remain intact, but provides additional data from them, specifically how students fare relative to NAEP and/or TIMSS standards. Over the next two years and beyond, the federal government would work with those responsible for existing student tests to provide them with the capacity to make these linkages.

Advantages:

- The federal government is not directly associated with developing a national test, only a national and, in the case of eighth grade math, international benchmark;
- The existing NAEP program, and its unique value as a national performance indicator, is not subject to corruption since no new tests are produced;
- Existing tests that are not adequately aligned with the NAEP/TIMSS frameworks for linking purposes would be encouraged to become more aligned with these rigorous frameworks in the future.

Disadvantages:

- There is not enough time between now and the Spring of 1999 to link to all existing reading and mathematics tests by the Spring of 1999 (there are from 6-10 norm referenced tests, 50 state assessment systems, and a few dozen large school districts each with their own independent testing programs);

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- While some linking studies could be conducted in time for tests conducted in the Spring of 1999, fair criteria would need to be established for determining who would be linked, and those not chosen would likely be quite unhappy;
 - Some of the existing tests would not meet the technical standards of alignment to be linked with NAEP (the overlap of the frameworks needs to be 80% or more).

New National Test

The Federal government would develop a new national test that is based directly on the NAEP framework for fourth grade reading and the NAEP/TIMSS frameworks for math. The test would be about one to one and a half hours long, and consist of multiple choice and short constructed response items. The federal role would be to develop the instrument, the linkages to NAEP and TIMSS, and the training materials instructing users on how to administer the test in a valid and reliable manner. Rather than administering the test itself, the government would make this resource available to potential users such as norm reference test publishers, district and state testing coordinators etc. The conditions for doing so could range from highly open (anyone who requests the instrument can get it) to tightly controlled (we only give the instrument to certain parties and determine who gets it based on an applicant's willingness to follow pre-defined rules such as agreeing to test at the appropriate time, securing the instrument, agreeing not to use the test for high stakes purposes etc.).

Advantages:

- Directly challenges students to take an ambitious, challenging exam linked to real national/international benchmarks;
- By creating but not administering the test, the direct Federal role is limited and constructive;
- Over time, existing tests and curriculum would likely become more aligned with the NAEP/TIMSS frameworks.
- Because of its limited nature and absence of direct administration, the test would not be seen as threatening to existing testing programs and systems.

Disadvantages:

- Perceived as a back-door to a national curriculum
- Would compromise the value of NAEP as an indicator of state and national performance (the degree of NAEP corruptibility would be inversely proportional to the degree of federal control over the distribution and use of the test)

Our initial estimates of government costs to develop the test and associated materials is 7-8 million dollars per year for the first two years, and 4-5 million dollars a year after that. To meet the time constraints of a test by the Spring of 1999 would require a financial commitment no later than April 1, 1997. We would also strongly advocate the creation of an independent Board to oversee the development and implementation of this national testing program.

The Development of Individual Achievement Tests in Reading and Mathematics

Based on NAEP and TIMSS Framework

Background

The purpose of this paper is to study the feasibility of developing assessment instruments for grade 4 in the area of reading and for grade 8 in the area of mathematics. These assessment instruments would produce individual student scores and would be designed and verified to measure the overall NAEP Reading Framework at the 4th grade level and the TIMSS Curriculum Framework for Mathematics at the 8th grade level.

Presently both NAEP and TIMSS use a complex version multiple-matrix item-sampling technique. Each student selected for sample testing is administered a small portion of the total test. The overall results produce a reliable estimate of group results but not a reliable score at the individual level. Such matrix item-sampling techniques are appropriate and efficient for large scale surveys of educational achievements such as NAEP and TIMSS.

Other testing programs such as SAT, ACT, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), and the achievement tests operated by private testing agencies such as the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) develop test instruments that produce individual scores.

Most nationally standardized achievement tests, both criterion- and norm-referenced tests, have the following features that affect the development of the test.

- 1) Content and test specifications (Frameworks);
- 2) Item types and formats, including but not limited to multiple-choice, constructed-response, and performance items;
- 3) Desired standard error functions, specifically as they relate to performance standards;
- 4) Testing time per student; and
- 5) Linking or equating requirements between forms for the same test.

Both NAEP and TIMSS have well defined content and test specifications but no prescribed features for testing time or equating requirements. However, the NAEP and TIMSS Frameworks are notable for the breadth of content coverage. This breadth in coverage has contributed to the need for a large, complex, expensive number of test items and test booklets. For NAEP to produce achievement levels, items need to be placed in the assessment to match target achievement levels. For example, to measure accurately Advanced performance, difficult items must be in the assessment. To measure the Basic performance, more items at the low end of the scale must be added to the assessment.

Feasibility of Developing Individual Achievement Tests

It is possible to develop multiple equated forms of assessment instruments that measure the NAEP and TIMSS Frameworks but with certain limitations. These include: 1) limited coverage of the breadth of the content of the Frameworks, 2) limited reporting of results (reporting overall mathematics score, without subscores, such as, algebra, geometry, problem-solving), and 3) the need to develop for each test, parallel forms of the test (parallel forms would be clones with respect to content, format, test length, difficulty, and accuracy of measurement at different cut points along the scoring scale).

For NAEP and TIMSS, the development of individual achievement tests can be achieved by severely constraining the scope of the content coverage and variety of test items formats. Each objective would be assessed by one or two items thus restricting the ability for disaggregate analysis of the test to produce subscores in areas which are of interest to teachers and educational performance.

The need to produce multiple equivalent forms is expensive and requires in-depth analysis to ensure comparable and equated scores for each form developed. The distribution of observed scores could then be compared and tracked, since with parallel equated forms there is no problem of gauging student progress and tracking change.

Both NAEP and TIMSS release some items from their assessment and secure the remaining items for future use. The released items can not be used for the desired individual achievement tests since they have been in the public hands and often used as part of construction. New test items will have to be developed and piloted, then assembled into various forms and field tests, then analyzed and formatted into the proper equated forms pursuant to precise statistical analysis.

It is recommended that a minimum of four equated forms be developed at each grade level and that one form be made available to the schools each year. It is recommended that valid and reliable items developed, but not used in the four equated forms, be made available to the public and media as examples of the individual tests.

Time Line

The development of the items, piloting, field testing, and statistical analysis of the items and the formatting and equating of the test forms will require 18-24 months.

Length of Tests

NAEP results have found that when students at the 4th grade are tested for longer than one testing session (about one hour), there is a substantial loss of student participation and therefore a reliable estimate of students ability. It is recommended that the length for the 4th grade reading

test be about 45-to-50 items, with about 70% multiple-choice and 30% constructed response items.

For the 8th grade mathematics test, it is recommended that the test contain 70-to-80 cognitive items that measure the "Content Aspect" and the "Performance Expectations Aspect" of the TIMSS Curriculum Framework. Testing time would be about 90 minutes which is consistent with most testing programs at the 8th grade level.

It is expected that such tests can be scored and the results returned to schools, parents, and teachers within four months from the end of the testing time.

**KEY FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL
EDUCATION SURVEY**

This report presents the key findings of an in-depth national survey of the public's attitudes on the issue of education. The interviews for this survey were conducted between January 21 and January 24, with a representative sample of 1,002 Americans who voted in last November's presidential election.

The results of this survey clearly suggest that *education is the right issue for President Clinton to take as a defining priority for his second term*. Improving education is at the very top of the voters' agenda for presidential leadership (Q. 3, Q. 5). Moreover, President Clinton comes to this issue with a solid measure of credibility and trust (Q. 8a).

What is especially striking about the response to education is the breadth of the audience for presidential leadership on this issue. Fifty-six percent of Democrats rate it as an extremely important goal for the President to work on, but so do 44% of Independents and 42% of Republicans. While voters under the age of 30 and mothers with school-aged children are the most likely to rank education as an extremely important priority, the emphasis on improving education and the schools cuts across occupational and income lines in a way that few other issues do.

Americans believe that the country's educational needs can best be met by doing what is necessary to improve the public schools, rather than by promoting greater access to private alternatives (Q. 10). But Americans also believe that public schools have to change to make sure children are better prepared to meet the challenges they face in today's world. (Q. 6).

The policy initiatives that resonate most strongly with the public are the ones that respond most directly to the desire to have "strong schools with clear standards of achievement and discipline, to help instill the knowledge, values, and citizenship that are so important to our children and our society." The test for schools today is the degree to which they provide children with a solid foundation in basic skills, in a safe and disciplined environment.

For this survey, we tested voters' reactions to fourteen possible policy goals—asking voters to rate each one on a four-part scale ranging from "extremely important" to "less important" (Q. 13).

Six goals clearly rank above the other eight as top priorities—with 47% or more rating each one of these as being extremely important. These six initiatives are:

- *Making sure that all students have mastered the basics of reading, writing, and math by the time they complete elementary school (69% extremely important)*
- *Having an all-out commitment to literacy programs to ensure that all children are able to read by the third grade (59% extremely important)*

- *Increasing the level of discipline and safety in the schools, with tough measures to keep guns and drugs out, and to remove disruptive students to alternative schools (57% extremely important)*
- *Making sure that all students have up-to-date textbooks and school buildings that are safe and in reasonable repair (52% extremely important)*
- *Establishing meaningful standards for student achievement and performance, and making sure that students reach them before being awarded a high school diploma (49% extremely important)*
- *Getting schools more involved in emphasizing basic values, such as personal responsibility, respect, and good citizenship (47% extremely important).*

Items that deal with the education of children at the elementary and secondary level score far higher in this survey than items dealing with post-secondary education and lifetime learning. Moreover, items involving “getting the basics right” resonate far more strongly than those dealing with high technology and innovation.¹

There is a broad consensus that the federal government is doing too little when it comes to dealing with the issue of education (61%)—a view shared by Independents and Republicans, as well as Democrats (Q. 11a). However, there is an even division of opinion about whether the bigger danger for the long term

¹ The lowest rated items on this scale were: “instilling a spirit of reform and innovation in the public schools, with programs like charter schools to provide new alternatives and greater choice” (17% extremely important); “passing a new GI Bill for the 21st century that gives people lifetime access to training and skill development throughout their working careers” (19% extremely important); and, “making sure that every school has computers and is wired for the Internet by the year 2000, so students can benefit from the new information superhighway” (30% extremely important).

is too much federal interference in education or insufficient federal leadership in doing what is necessary to improve our schools (Q. 11b). This division follows party lines—with Democrats saying by 60% to 28% that the federal government will not be involved enough, Republicans saying by 66% to 28% that the federal government will interfere too much, and Independents evenly divided.

The one topic on which there is a broad consensus about the value of a federal role is the establishment of meaningful national standards for what students should be expected to learn and achieve in basic skill areas such as reading and math.

Indeed, the most important finding of this research is that there is a major opportunity for President Clinton to put his personal stamp on the issue of education by becoming the leading voice for meaningful national standards, and by encouraging states and local governments to participate in a national test to measure reading and math skills.

The public is far more receptive to the idea of national standards than the current political debate would suggest—even when the issue of federal involvement is raised. For example:

- Eighty-four percent express a favorable reaction to the idea of establishing meaningful national standards for what students should be expected to learn and achieve in basic skill areas such as reading and math, including fully 66% who are *very favorable* (Q. 14a).
- Despite the broad public interest in having national standards, Americans say by 59% to 26% that such standards do not now exist (Q. 14b).
- By a lopsided margin of 67% to 22%, voters say it is a good idea for the *federal government* to be involved in promoting national standards for students in basic skill areas such as reading and math (Q. 15a).
- Even when given the counter-argument that “federal involvement would mean too much interference with state and local control of public schools,” voters say by 58% to 35% that the federal government should be involved in promoting national standards (Q. 15b).

We asked respondents what their reaction would be if President Clinton proposed new efforts by the federal government to encourage states and local school districts to participate in a national test to measure reading skills for all 4th grade students and math skills for all 8th grade students. Overall, 77% say they would be favorable (including 48% who say they would be *very favorable*), 8% say they would be neutral, and just 14% say they would be unfavorable (Q. 16a). The response is positive across the range of demographic, partisan, and ideological groups—even among voters who earlier had expressed mixed feelings about federal interference with local prerogatives in education.

The best reason for moving toward a system of national testing is that “in a country where many people often move from state to state, we need a common standard of what students should be achieving in basic skills such as reading and math” (Q. 16c). The public believes most valuable uses for national

reading and math tests would be “identifying low-performing schools that need to be improved” and “making sure that students have mastered the basics before being promoting to the next level” (Q. 17b). Indeed, national standards take on greater prominence as a priority in the public’s mind when they are harnessed to “making sure students master the skills they need.”

Eight of out nine voters say that they would have confidence in the ability of reading and math teachers to develop and approve a national test—including 56% who say they would have a great deal of confidence in reading and math teachers. This is a far higher degree of confidence than voters would be willing to invest in governors, business leaders, testing experts, state and local school boards, or the U.S. Department of Education (Q. 17a).

At the end of this survey, we gave respondents the following argument *against* federal involvement in national testing: “Some people say that the federal government should *not* be involved in establishing a national test in reading and math, because this will give the federal government too much power to create a national curriculum and a one-size-fits all approach to education, when education should be under state and local control.” *Even with this as the last word on the subject, voters support by 55% to 33% the involvement of the federal government in encouraging states and local district to participate in a national reading and math test (Q. 17c).* In this final reading on the issue, voters who we have classified as being in the political center favor national testing by 61% to 27%. Support is also stronger than average among voters under the age of 40

(64% favor), upper-income voters (61%), mothers of school-aged children (62% favor), and public school parents with lower confidence in their schools (64% favor). Senior citizens oppose the national test by 49% to 39%. While white evangelicals are evenly divided on this question, Catholic voters favor national testing by 58% to 31%.

cc: Waldman Kagan
 Baer Prince
 Cohen return ASAP

PETER D. HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.
 1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20009
 (202) 234-5570

Interviews: 1002 interviews
 Dates: January 21-24, 1997

FINAL

Study #4838
 National Education
 January 1997

49 Male
51 Female
[5]

AREA		TYPE	SAMPLE POINT			FORM	DATE	
[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]	January	[13] [14] 1997

1a. Are you currently registered to vote at this address?

Registered	100	CONTINUE	[15]
Not registered	-	TERMINATE AND DO NOT	
Not sure	-	COUNT TOWARD QUOTA	

1b. Did you vote in the election for president this past November, when the candidates were Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, and Ross Perot? (IF "YES" ASK:) For whom did you vote - Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, or Ross Perot?

Yes, voted		[16]
Bill Clinton.....	42	
Bob Dole.....	33	CONTINUE
Ross Perot.....	5	
Refused/Other (VOL)	20	
No, did not vote	-	TERMINATE AND DO NOT
Not sure	-	COUNT TOWARD QUOTA

1c. And in the election for U.S. House of Representatives this past November, did you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate in your district?

Voted for Democratic candidate	43	[17]
Voted for Republican candidate	43	
Other (VOL)	3	
Did not vote (VOL)	2	
Not sure/can't recall	9	

2. Thinking about the way things are going in the country these days, would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the direction of the country these days?

Very satisfied.....	5	[18]
Somewhat satisfied.....	41	
Somewhat dissatisfied	33	
Very dissatisfied	19	
Not sure.....	2	

3. What do you feel are the most important issues, problems, or goals that you personally would like to see the President and Congress do something about? What issues do you think should be the top priorities for the President and Congress to work on?

(PROBE FOR MULTIPLE RESPONSES:) Are there any other issues, problems, or goals that you would like to see the President and Congress do something about? [19-22]

Education	21%
Crime, violence	14
Welfare reform	12
Balancing the budget	12
Health care	11
Social Security issues	10
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>	
Don't know; no response	3%

4. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the job Bill Clinton is doing as president? (IF "APPROVE" OR "DISAPPROVE," ASK:) Do you strongly (approve/disapprove) of the job Bill Clinton is doing as president, or just somewhat (approve/disapprove) of the job he is doing?

Strongly approve	18	[23]	64
Somewhat approve	46		<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: 0;"/>
Somewhat disapprove	17		32
Strongly disapprove	15		
Not sure	4		

5. I'm going to read you some goals that President Clinton might work on in his second term. For each one I mention, please rate how important you personally consider that goal to be--(a) an extremely important goal that's one of the top few priorities you want the President to work on; (b) a very important goal that's near the top of your priorities; (c) a somewhat important goal that you would put in the middle of your priorities, or (d) a less important goal you would put lower down in your priorities for the President to work on.

How would you personally rate the importance of (READ ITEM)--do you consider it to be: (a) an extremely important goal that's one of the top few priorities you want the President to work on; (b) a very important goal that's near the top of your priorities; (c) a somewhat important goal that you would put in the middle of your priorities, or (d) a less important goal you would put lower down in your priorities for the President to work on?

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Less Important	Not Sure		
Improving education and the schools	48	40	6	5	1	[25]	88
Reducing crime and violence**	48	37	11	3	1	[27]	85
Moving people from welfare to work *	44	39	14	1	2	[28]	83
Protecting Social Security and Medicare **	43	33	18	5	1	[31]	
Balancing the federal budget	40	37	17	5	1	[26]	
Improving health care coverage for children *	38	41	15	3	3	[30]	
Reducing the federal tax burden on average families	36	37	21	5	1	[32]	
Helping families afford college and vocational training **	26	40	23	10	1	[29]	66 (22 pt diff w/schools)
Reforming the campaign finance laws * ..	15	29	35	18	3	[24]	44

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).
 ** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

6. Now, I'd like to get your opinion about how well different programs and aspects of our society are working. For each item I mention, please tell me whether you think: (a) it works pretty well as it exists now, (b) some changes are needed, but basically should be kept the same, (c) major changes are needed, or (d) a complete overhaul is needed.

When you think about (READ ITEM), do you think: a) it works pretty well as it exists now, b) some changes are needed, but basically should be kept the same, c) major changes are needed, or d) a complete overhaul is needed.

	Works Pretty Well	Some Changes Needed	Major Changes Needed	Complete Overhaul Needed	Not Sure	
Social Security.....	18	36	20	23	3	[33]
The federal income tax system.....	13	32	22	30	3	[34]
Medicare.....	18	37	23	15	7	[35]
The public education system.....	9	35	33	21	2	[36] 44-54

7. Turning specifically now to the issue of education, what are the most important things you'd like to see the President and Congress do when it comes to the issue of education? What do you feel the most important goals should be for the President and Congress in dealing with the issue of education?

(PROBE FOR MULTIPLE RESPONSES:) Are there any other things you'd particularly like to see the President and Congress do when it comes to the issue of education? * [37-40]

Education funding	16%
Raise the standards	11
Get back to the basics	9
Equal education for all students	8
More qualified teachers	8
-----	-----
Don't know; no response	8%

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

8a. How much do you trust President Clinton to have the right kinds of policies for dealing with the issue of education – do you trust President Clinton a lot, a fair amount, just some, or very little when it comes to dealing with the issue of education?

Trust a lot.....	22	[41]	58-39
Trust a fair amount.....	36		
Trust just some.....	17		
Trust very little.....	22		
Not sure.....	3		

8b. How much do you trust the Republicans in Congress to have the right kinds of policies for dealing with the issue of education – do you trust the Republicans in Congress a lot, a fair amount, just some, or very little when it comes to dealing with the issue of education?

Trust a lot.....	9	[42]	41-56
Trust a fair amount.....	32		
Trust just some.....	29		
Trust very little.....	27		
Not sure.....	3		

9a. Generally speaking, how would you rate the quality of the public schools in the nation today—excellent, good, just fair, not so good, or poor? *

Excellent.....	1	[43]	
Good.....	22		23-73
Just fair.....	45		
Not so good.....	14		
Poor.....	14		
Not sure.....	4		

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

9b. And how would you rate the quality of the public schools in your local community—excellent, good, just fair, not so good, or poor? *

Excellent.....	13	[44]	
Good.....	39		52-46
Just fair.....	27		
Not so good.....	8		
Poor.....	11		
Not sure.....	2		

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

9c. Thinking about the country overall, how would you rate the quality of the education students receive in the public schools today—excellent, good, not so good, or poor? **

Excellent.....	2	[45]	
Good.....	36		38-60
Just fair.....	17		
Not so good.....	27		
Poor.....	16		
Not sure.....	2		

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

9d. And thinking about your own local community now, how would you rate the quality of the education students receive in your local public schools—excellent, good, not so good, or poor? **

Excellent.....	13	[46]	
Good.....	40		53-44
Just fair.....	13		
Not so good.....	18		
Poor.....	12		
Not sure.....	4		

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

10. When it comes to meeting the educational needs of the country, which one of the following approaches would you be more likely to favor: (a) doing what is necessary to improve the quality of education in the public schools, or (b) using tax-funded vouchers or tax deductions to help parents pay the cost of sending their children to private or religious schools, instead of public schools? *

Improve quality of education in public schools.....	69	[47]
Vouchers for private or religious schools.....	25	
Depends (VOL).....	3	
Not sure.....	3	

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

10. When it comes to meeting the educational needs of the country, which one of the following approaches would you be more likely to favor: (a) doing what is necessary to improve the quality of education in the public schools, or (b) using some of the tax money we now spend on public schools to help parents pay the cost of sending their children to private or religious schools? **

Improve quality of education in public schools	69	[48]
Vouchers for private or religious schools	26	
Depends (VOL).....	2	
Not sure	3	

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

- 11a. From what you know, do you feel that the federal government is doing too much, doing too little, or doing the right amount when it comes to dealing with the issue of education?

Doing too much.....	15	[49]
Doing too little	61	
Doing the right amount	15	
Not sure	9	

- 11b. Looking ahead, which concerns you more—a) that the federal government will get too involved in the issue of education and interfere with things that are better left to the states and local communities; or b) that the federal government will not be involved enough in doing what's necessary to improve our schools and meet the country's educational needs?

Federal government will get too involved.....	47	[50]
Federal government will not be involved enough.....	44	
Both/neither (VOL).....	5	
Not sure.....	4	

12. I'm going to read you some statements about the importance of having national leaders, such as the President, make public education a top priority in the next few years. For each one, please tell me whether you think that statement gives a very convincing reason for making public education a top national priority; a fairly convincing reason, a somewhat convincing reason, or not that convincing a reason for making public education a top priority.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY VERY CONVINCING REASON

	Very Convincing Reason	Fairly Convincing Reason	Somewhat Convincing Reason	Not That Convincing A Reason	Not Sure	
We need strong schools with clear standards of achievement and discipline to help instill the knowledge, values, and citizenship that are so important to our society *	65	19	10	5	1	[55]
Now more than ever, it takes a good education to get a good job, and we need to make sure that Americans can get the kind of education and training they need to get ahead **	62	20	10	7	1	[53]
Quality education is the key to America's success in the new global economy, and we need to make sure that our schools and universities are providing the world-class education and training we'll need to keep America's economy in the forefront *	60	21	13	5	1	[51]
Education is our country's way of providing real hope and opportunity for all Americans to improve themselves and live up to their potential, regardless of their economic circumstances *	58	24	11	5	2	[52]
We live in a time of rapid change, including new technology, and we need a clear national commitment to make sure that our schools are able to keep up with the changes and new demands for excellence as we head into the 21 st century **	57	22	12	8	1	[56]
The public schools have always been the place where new generations of Americans have learned about our nation's democratic values and traditions, and continuing that tradition is especially important now, as our society becomes increasingly diverse **	38	24	18	19	1	[54]

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

13. Now I'm going to mention some major goals that national leaders, such as the President, might have in the area of education and training. For each one I mention, please tell me how important you personally consider that goal to be— (a) an extremely important goal that's one of the top few priorities you want the President to work on; (b) a very important goal that's *near* the top of your priorities; (c) a somewhat important goal that you would put in the middle of your priorities, or (d) a less important goal you would put lower down in your priorities for the President to work on.

How would you personally rate the importance of (READ ITEM)—do you consider it to be: (a) an extremely important goal that's one of the top few priorities you want the President to work on; (b) a very important goal that's *near* the top of your priorities; (c) a somewhat important goal that you would put in the middle of your priorities, or (d) a less important goal you would put lower down in your priorities for the President to work on?

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Less Important	Not Sure		
Making sure that all students have mastered the basics of reading, writing, and math by the time they complete elementary school *	69	26	2	2	1	[57]	95-4
Having an all-out commitment to literacy programs to ensure that all children are able to read by the third grade **	59	33	4	3	1	[58]	92-7
Increasing the level of discipline and safety in the schools, with tough measures to keep guns and drugs out and to remove disruptive students to alternative schools **	57	30	8	3	2	[68]	87-11
Making sure that all schools have up-to-date textbooks and that school buildings are safe and in reasonable repair *	52	37	8	2	1	[69]	
Establishing meaningful standards for student achievement and performance, and making sure that students reach them before being awarded a high school diploma *	49	39	8	4	-	[60]	88-12
Getting schools more involved in emphasizing basic values, such as personal responsibility, respect, and good citizenship **	47	34	10	7	2	[66]	81-17
Providing tax credits and deductions to help ensure that all qualified students are able to afford a college education *	41	38	16	4	1	[67]	79-20
Establishing meaningful standards for student achievement and performance, and holding the education system accountable for achieving those standards **	39	41	14	4	2	[61]	80-18
Increasing opportunities for non-college-bound students, by expanding apprenticeships and school-to-work programs*	36	42	17	4	1	[65]	
Providing "Hope Scholarships" that makes two years of community college available to every student who works hard and achieves good grades **	35	36	18	9	2	[64]	71-27
Making a greater commitment to early childhood education, by expanding the availability of pre-kindergarten and Head Start programs *	32	35	20	12	1	[63]	

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

Q.13 (cont'd)	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Less Important	Not Sure		
Making sure that every school has computers and is wired for the Internet by the year 2000, so that students can benefit from the new information superhighway **.....	30	34	21	12	3	[70]	64-33
Passing a new "G.I. Bill" for the 21 st century that gives people lifetime access to training and skill development throughout their working careers *.....	19	31	30	17	3	[59]	
Instilling a spirit of reform and innovation in the public schools, with programs like charter schools to provide new alternatives and greater choice **.....	17	27	33	17	6	[62]	

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

14a. What is your reaction to the idea of establishing meaningful national standards for what students should be expected to learn and achieve in basic skill areas such as reading and math—very favorable, somewhat favorable, neutral, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

Very favorable	66	[71]
Somewhat favorable	18	
Neutral	8	
Somewhat unfavorable	3	
Very unfavorable	4	
Not sure	1	

14b. Would you say that we already have meaningful national standards for what students should be expected to learn and achieve in basic skill areas such as reading and math, or that we do not currently have these kinds of national standards?

We already have national standards.....	26	[72]
We do not currently have national standards.....	59	
Some of both (VOL).....	6	
Not sure.....	9	

15a. And do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea for the federal government to be involved in promoting national standards for students in basic skill areas such as reading and math?

Good idea	67	[73]
Bad idea.....	22	
Some of both (VOL).....	6	
Not sure.....	5	

- 15b. Let me read you two statements about having the federal government be involved in promoting national standards for students in basic skill areas such as reading and math. After you hear them both, please tell me one of these statements you agree with more.

Statement A: The federal government *should* be involved in promoting national standards, because we have a national interest as a country to encourage excellence in education for students wherever they live, and to hold schools more accountable for giving students the education they need.

Statement B: The federal government should *not* be involved in promoting national standards, because federal involvement would mean too much interference with state and local control of public schools.

Statement A/pro-involvement.....	58	[74]
Statement B/anti-involvement	35	
Some of both (VOL).....	6	
Not sure	1	

- 16a. There is some talk that President Clinton might propose new efforts by the federal government to encourage states and local school districts to participate in a national test to measure reading skills for all 4th grade students and math skills for all 8th grade students.

What would your reaction be if President Clinton proposed new efforts by the federal government to encourage states and local school districts to participate in a national test to measure reading skills for all 4th grade students and math skills for all 8th grade students—very favorable, somewhat favorable, neutral, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

Very favorable	48	[75]
Somewhat favorable	29	
Neutral	8	
Somewhat unfavorable	7	
Very unfavorable	7	
Not sure	1	

77-14

- 16b. Why would you feel that way if President Clinton proposed new efforts by the federal government to encourage states and local school districts to participate in a national test to measure reading skills for all 4th grade students and math skills for all 8th grade students? To your way of thinking, what are the advantages or disadvantages of this kind of a national testing proposal?

(PROBE:) Are there any other reasons why you think it might be a good idea or a bad idea for the federal government to encourage states and local school districts to participate in a national test to measure reading and math skills? ** [76-83]

Net Advantages	65%	Net Disadvantages	29%
Have all states, country on the same level	21	Federal government should not be involved	12
Need to know where we need to improve	17	It may not work for everyone	6
Focus people on where our children should be	7	The cost of the testing	4
It is a good idea	6	It is not needed	3
Will make teaching establishment more accountable	4	It is a waste of federal funding	2
-----		Don't know; no response	7%

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

16c. I'm going to read you some reasons that people might give for supporting a new effort by the federal government to encourage states and local school districts to participate in a national test to measure reading and math skills. For each one, please tell me whether you think it is a very convincing reason, a fairly convincing reason, just somewhat of a convincing reason, or not that convincing of a reason.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY VERY CONVINCING REASON

	<u>Very Convincing Reason</u>	<u>Fairly Convincing Reason</u>	<u>Somewhat Convincing Reason</u>	<u>Not That Convincing A Reason</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>		
In a country where many people often move from state to state, we need a common national standard of what students should be achieving in basic skills such as reading and math *.....	58	20	13	8	1	[85]	78-21
American students consistently score less well than students in Europe and Japan on measures of educational achievement, and we need a national effort to assure world-class standards of excellence in America's schools **.....	50	16	18	14	2	[87]	66-32
Our schools today are promoting too many students who do not have basic skills they need; a national test could help reverse this trend, and target extra help to the students who need it.....	49	20	16	14	1	[86]	69-30
Parents and taxpayers deserve to have a way of knowing how well their schools are performing, and a national test will help make schools more accountable for their performance **	48	16	17	18	1	[88]	64-35
A national test would give local communities a tool for knowing how well their schools are performing compared to schools all over the country *	44	28	16	11	1	[84]	72-27

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).
 ** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

17a. I'm going to mention some different kinds of people and groups that could be involved in developing and approving the kind of national reading and math test we have been talking about. For each one I mention, please tell me how much confidence you would have in that group being involved in developing and approving a national test--a great deal of confidence, a fair amount, just some, or very little confidence?

How much confidence would you have in (READ ITEM) when it comes to developing and approving a national test--a great deal, a fair amount, just some, or very little? *

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY A GREAT DEAL OR FAIR AMOUNT

	<u>A Great Deal</u>	<u>A Fair Amount</u>	<u>Just Some</u>	<u>Very Little</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	
Reading and math teachers.....	56	32	7	3	2	[90]
The U.S. Department of Education.....	26	35	19	16	4	[89]
State and local school boards.....	22	38	20	18	2	[91]
Testing experts.....	25	33	19	18	5	[92]
Business leaders.....	19	29	24	24	4	[93]
Governors.....	12	29	23	33	3	[94]

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

17b. I'm going to mention some ways in which a national reading and math test might be used. For each one, please tell me whether you think this would be a very valuable use for a national test, a fairly valuable use, just somewhat of a valuable use, or not really a valuable use for a national test. **

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY VERY VALUABLE

	<u>Very Valuable</u>	<u>Fairly Valuable</u>	<u>Just Somewhat</u>	<u>Not Really Valuable</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>		
A national test could help identify low-performing schools that need to be improved.....	59	14	16	11	-	[97]	73-27
A national test could be used to make sure that students have mastered the basics before being promoted to the next level	56	17	14	12	1	[98]	73-26
A national test could help identify low-performing students who need extra help and attention.....	48	19	17	14	2	[95]	
A national test could help raise the standards of excellence that students are expected to achieve.....	46	20	21	13	-	[96]	

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

17c. Finally, some people say that the federal government should not be involved in establishing a national test in reading and math, because this will give the federal government too much power to create a national curriculum and a one-size-fits-all approach to education, when education should be under state and local control.

Thinking back on everything we have discussed, who do you tend to agree with more--those who say that the federal government should be involved in encouraging states and local school districts to participate in a national reading and math test, or those who say that the federal government should not get involved in national student testing?

Federal government should be involved.....	55	[99]
Federal government should not get involved.....	33	
Some of both (VOL).....	9	
Not sure	3	

FACTUALS: These last few questions are for statistical purposes only.

F1. How old are you? (IF REFUSED, ASK:) Well, can you tell me which age group you belong to? Are you in the age group 18 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 34, 35 to 39, 40 to 44, 45 to 49, 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60 to 64, or 65 and over?

18-24.....	5	[100]
25-29.....	9	
30-34.....	9	
35-39.....	11	
40-44.....	13	
45-49.....	11	
50-54.....	9	
55-59.....	8	
60-64.....	7	
65 and over.....	18	
Refused.....	-	

F2. What type of work do you do?

Professional/manager.....	21	[101]
White collar worker	21	
Blue collar worker	22	
Farmer.....	1	
Student.....	2	
Homemaker.....	7	
Retired.....	22	
Unemployed.....	3	
Never worked/not sure.....	1	

F3. What is the last grade you completed in school?

Grade school	2	[102]
Some high school	6	
High school graduate.....	25	
Some college, no degree	19	
Vocational training, 2-year college	9	
4-year college/bachelor's degree	20	
Some postgraduate work, no degree	4	
2-3 years' postgraduate work, master's degree	12	
Doctoral degree/law degree	3	
Not sure	-	

F4a. What is your current marital status?

Married	66	[103]
Single/never married.....	16	
Divorced	9	
Widowed	9	
Not sure/refused.....	-	

F4b. Do you have any children under age 18 living in your household at this time?

Yes, have children.....	38	CONTINUE	[104]
No, do not have children	62	SKIP TO Q.F5a	
Not sure	-		

(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY THEY HAVE CHILDREN 18 OR UNDER IN HOUSEHOLD IN Q.F4b.)

F4c. Do the children in this household attend public school or private school, or are they not yet of school age?

Yes, Have Children In School			
Have children in public school.....	73	[105]	
Have children in private/parochial school.....	10		
Have children in both public and private school.....	3		
Not sure what kind of school/refused	1		
No, Do Not Have Children In School			
Not Sure If Have Children In School.....	-		

(ASK EVERYONE.)

F5a. How would you describe your overall point of view in terms of the political parties? Would you say you are mostly Democratic, leaning Democratic, completely independent, leaning Republican, or mostly Republican?

Mostly Democratic	30	[107]
Leaning Democratic	12	
Completely independent	18	
Leaning Republican	15	
Mostly Republican	22	
Not sure	3	

F5b. Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself to be liberal, moderate, or conservative?

Liberal	20	[108]
Moderate	41	
Conservative	35	
Not sure	4	

F6. How would you describe the area in which you live—a large city, a medium to small city, a suburb near a city, a small town that is not near a city, or a rural or country area?

Large city	21	[109]
Medium to small city	26	
Suburb near a city	21	
Small town that is not near a city	18	
Rural or country area	14	
Not sure	-	

F7. If you added together the yearly income of all the members of your family who were living at home last year, would the total be less than \$10,000, between \$10,000 and \$20,000, between \$20,000 and \$30,000, between \$30,000 and \$40,000, between \$40,000 and \$50,000, between \$50,000 and \$75,000, between \$75,000 and \$100,000, or would the total be more than that?

Less than \$10,000	6	[110]
Between \$10,000 and \$20,000	10	
Between \$20,000 and \$30,000	14	
Between \$30,000 and \$40,000	16	
Between \$40,000 and \$50,000	13	
Between \$50,000 and \$75,000	18	
Between \$75,000 and \$100,000	8	
More than \$100,000	6	
Not sure/refused	9	

F8. Finally, are you from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background? (IF "NO," ASK:) What is your race--white, black, Asian, or something else?

Hispanic	4	[111]
White	80	
Black	10	
Asian	1	
Other	4	
Refused	1	

F9a. In what religion were you brought up?

Protestant.....	55	CONTINUE	[131]
Catholic.....	28		
Jewish.....	2	SKIP TO	
Other.....	11		
None.....	2	VALIDATION	
Not sure/refused.....	2		

(ASK ONLY OF PROTESTANTS IN Q.F9a)

F9b. Would you describe yourself as either a fundamentalist or an evangelical Christian, or would you not describe yourself that way?

Yes, fundamentalist/evangelical/both	17	[132]
No, neither fundamentalist or evangelical.....	32	
Not sure	6	
Non-Protestants (Q.F9a).....	45	

November 11, 1996

Edwe -
Standards

To: Secretary Richard Riley

Fr: Kevin Sullivan

Re: TIMSS: Discussions to date

In the last ten days there have been a series of staff discussions and meetings with Neal Lane of the National Science Foundation, Bruce Alberts at the National Academy of Sciences, and the leadership of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) regarding a response to the TIMSS report. This memo summarizes these discussions to date. We have set aside time on your schedule this coming Friday for a possible meeting with Bruce Alberts and Neal Lane who will be responding to the TIMSS findings at the press conference with you.

The National Academy of Sciences (Bruce Alberts)

Alberts clearly believes that we first need to explain "why we care" about improving math. In addition, he seems open to further discussions about a "national convocation" of curriculum developers, state education leaders and textbook publishers to foster a coherent vision of how math and science should be taught. Alberts noted that at this point the "standards are not in place" and we have "no efficient" way to get the standards down to the classroom level.

The idea of a national convocation came at the end of a discussion regarding the disconnect between textbook publishers and a much more focused approach to curriculum development. But as one participant suggested, "textbook publishers" are market driven, they will change the textbooks when the demand changes. Right now the demand hasn't changed."

Alberts raised the issue of changing of the SAT test from the current multiple choice approach to a more rigorous essay format. Since the SAT test is the "gate keeper" for going to college changing the SAT test may be one of the faster ways to encourage a fundamental change in teaching practice, curriculum development and textbooks. Calling for and supporting a change in the SAT test would spark a national debate and may encourage the pace of reform to pick up.

National Science Foundation (Neal Lane)

Lane seemed particularly intrigued with the questions of what the data suggest regarding what high level science and math instruction really means. He concludes that the data (in particular the findings from Japan) supports the value of inquiry-based learning strategies that "exercise the mind" and felt that teachers were too often being scapegoated when the problem was the lack of support being given them. Lane was willing to search for examples of "good practice" from his systemic reform sites.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

We have held three meetings with the leadership of NCTM and their support staff. They are aware that the results of TIMSS will be disappointing, and they are worried about "teacher bashing." They have been working with us to develop possible solutions and have proposed a joint project with the Department to help speed up the process of getting the national math standards down to the classroom. NCTM is supplying us with examples of where their standards are being used in the country which has resulted in improved test scores.

STAFF DISCUSSIONS TO DATE

There is no "magic bullet" to cure what ails mathematics education. A coordinated strategy is needed in terms of heightening public understanding, curriculum reform, improved teacher training (both pre-service and in service), rigorous assessments that measure "high-level mathematical thought", etc.

The press will clearly ask whether the results of these findings call for national standards. Our response is that the appropriate federal role is not to dictate policies and programs but rather to make available the information necessary for local systems to be internationally competitive.

Professionals and citizens need to first understand what is meant by "high quality" math instruction. This means we need to heavily promote examples that illustrate the characteristics and qualities that distinguish high level mathematics pedagogy from what a typical mathematics classroom looks like). Bruce Albert also raised this issue. We have asked Jim Stigler to develop a short "script" that provides such contrasts. This should be coordinated with anything NCTM does in this area.

✓ | The Secretary can challenge the nation to reexamine its approach to math instruction by putting down a challenge that all students should be expected to demonstrate basic competence in algebra by the end of eighth grade – which has been found in TIMSS to be universally in place in the highest performing countries. This is similar to the challenge we established this year that every child should be able to read independently by the end of third grade.

The implications of this suggestion, however, goes much beyond just moving up the curriculum content one grade level forward. For students to study in algebra by the end of eighth grade in a successful way means that their entire previous middle school math experiences (and possibly earlier) would need to be restructured. Terry Peterson suggests that we focus our response on the 6th, 7th and 8th grade experience.

✓ | One of the issues we will have to address is the question of the scale of our response. The United States is second only to Finland in the world when it comes to literacy. However, we are so concerned about reading that the President is calling for a \$2.75 billion tutoring program. Yet, at this point, we have no such response when it comes to "math scores" that are below the international average.

POSSIBLE "ACTION" STEPS IN RESPONSE TO TIMSS

- 1. Announce a multi-year joint project sponsored by the Department, NCTM and the NSF to "shake up" the process of how we train math teachers from top to bottom. The goal is to make sure educators and classroom teachers fully understand the findings of this report and learn in depth how to teach to the newly revised math and science standards.**

The Dept. would sponsor a series of regional, state conferences and workshops on the results of TIMSS and successful international practices that illustrates content and teaching practices. This could be coordinated with our regional labs as well as the new entity -- ACHIEVE.

The Department should find a way to help states and local districts to compare their own systems with the best in the world (a la the Chicago suburban school districts). Examples could include curriculum analyses, videotaping of instructional practice, and replicating the TIMSS exam.

Use the President's initiative on Promoting Excellence and Accountability in Teaching as a way to encourage a new fundamental understanding of how to teach math and how we improve the teaching of science.

- 2. Announce with the Academy of Sciences and NSF that the Department will sponsor a "national convocation" to help develop a coherent vision of how we teach math and science with a strong focus on how to align teacher training, curriculum development, textbooks and testing.**

The Secretary could convene leaders of the teaching profession (egs., NEA, AFT, NCATE, NBPTS, AACTE, accrediting bodies, state education leaders, the Presidents of major research universities,) to design a coordinated strategy for improving teacher training, especially in mathematics.

- 3. Support the call by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) to create a group of "math specialists" at the elementary school level or master math teachers to "sustain professional development" and create "teacher networks".**

The Dept. of Energy, for example, now sponsors a three year National Teacher Enhancement Program through its national labs which may be a possible model for this approach. We could "target" some of our Eisenhower Professional Development money for this purpose.

- 4. Set the goal that every student should learn algebra by the end of 8th grade.**

Setting down this marker allows you to speak to higher expectations and put in concrete terms what we mean by high standards. However, as previously discussed, this can not be done in isolation. Everything has to be start with a new fundamental understanding of how we teach math.

- 5. Announce that the federal government will take a “ second look” in light of these findings at how it now supports improvements in math and science to make sure that federal dollars actually do support the new math and science standards.**

Federal funding to improve math and science cuts across a number of departments and agencies including NSF, NASA, The Defense Dept., the Dept of Energy, the Smithsonian and others.

I have attached a memo from Mike Cohen on this subject as well.

Nov. 4, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR TERRY PETERSON

FROM: MIKE COHEN
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO TIMSS
CC: MIKE SMITH

Below are some thoughts about possible actions in response to the TIMSS reports. As we discussed, I believe the Administration's overall reaction to TIMSS should be to: (1) take the overall findings about our relative performance and curriculum seriously and nondefensively, view them as defining a challenge and a set of targets for improvement, and encourage the Nation to do the same; (2) while recognizing that local communities and states bear the primary responsibility for improving math and science, point to the steps the federal government is already doing to strengthen math and science education, by the Education Department, by NSF, and by other federal agencies such as NASA, Energy, and others; (3) highlight significant local and state efforts, such as the 1st in the World Consortium, which seriously aim to meet internationally competitive standards, and use these as examples of the kinds of steps that must be taken throughout the country.

We should then lay out a series of new steps the Administration will take to galvanize and support local efforts to improve math and science. These efforts presume that local action will be most effective if informed by TIMSS and focused on internationally competitive standards. They also presume (at least implicitly) that significant funding increases -- over and above current or planned federal investments -- are not nearly as important right now as is well informed local action.

Please call me today after you have had a chance to review these suggestions. If we move in this direction, we will need to meet with Luther Williams or others from NSF, and possibly from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. I'll be happy to set this up.

1. Make TIMSS assessments available to any interested local community, so the community can measure its students and schools against internationally competitive standards. ED (and NSF) will help any interested community administer and score the test, and analyze and interpret the results. (depending upon what is needed and what resources are available, "help" could mean anything from making the test instrument and scoring procedures available upon request, to providing some level of technical support, to providing some funds to provide an incentive for local test use.)
2. Convene Secretary's (or White House) Conference on World

Class Math and Science Education, open to teams from local communities that are willing to judge their students and schools against internationally competitive standards. The conference will help local teams share strategies for improving curriculum, training teachers, forming partnerships with businesses, institutions of higher education, federal laboratories and agencies, museums, and other community resources for math and science.

3. Help local communities compare their curriculum, textbooks and other instructional materials against those in high performing countries. ED/NSF could fund an analysis of the content overlap among the most commonly used math and science textbooks (probably 4-5 per subject and grade level) and the curriculum and textbooks in high performing countries. Curriculum specialists from districts with the greatest interest in comparing themselves with other countries could be trained in how to do the analyses, in order to lower the cost and increase the speed of the analyses, and to build local capacity.

4. Make high quality videotapes of classroom instruction in high performing countries (and appropriate supporting materials) widely available, to support preservice training and professional development for teachers.

5. Produce a series of "World Class Math and Science Education" packets for parents, including videotapes of model classroom teaching practices, examples of textbooks and instructional materials, and examples of student work, all drawn from or reflecting practice in, high performing countries. The purpose of these materials is to equip parents to participate in local efforts to strengthen math and science, and to enable them to be demanding consumers.

6. Privately encourage ACHIEVE and the National Education Goals Panel to use their financial and other resources to support state efforts to establish internationally competitive standards and assessments in math and science, and to encourage states to support the local efforts described above. I have already talked with Roy Romer about ways in which ACHIEVE (the newly named "entity") can use TIMSS data and analyses to help states compare their academic standards to those in high performing countries. He seems interested in pursuing this. Romer is also the incoming chair of the Goals Panel, and Pat Forgione and Bill Schmidt will brief the Panel on the TIMSS results at its Nov. 19 meeting. It would be logical for the Goals Panel to follow up on this, since one of the national goals involves being internationally competitive in math and science. We can work with Romer on the type of follow up the Panel might engage in. Since the Secretary and Carol Rasco both serve on the Panel, we can easily stay involved in this.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 28, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Secretary Riley
Bruce Reed
Michael Cohen
Mike Smith

SUBJECT: Moving Forward on National Standards

I. Background

Over the past four years there has been considerable activity throughout the nation to set standards of excellence for education. Work on national content standards has been completed in virtually every discipline. With the support of Goals 2000 and new Title 1 requirements, forty-eight states have developed or are in the process of developing their own academic standards, and most are also developing new assessments aligned to these standards. Public consensus on the importance of national standards of excellence for education is broad and deep, and the standards movement has clearly taken hold nationally.

Yet despite this progress, there are significant challenges as well. The quality of the standards being developed by states is quite varied. A recent AFT report indicates that only 15 states have standards that are clear and specific enough to lead to a common core curriculum, and only 12 states have tried to benchmark their own standards to world-class levels. State progress on developing performance standards and assessments is slower than with respect to content standards. No state is able to determine for itself, or assure the public, that its standards are rigorous and up to world class levels.

The state-by-state approach to standards and assessments limits the information available to parents, teachers and students. In particular, the current arrangements make it impossible for anyone to learn how well individual students perform against national or international benchmarks. In short, there is no way for anyone to know if a student who meets a particular state's performance standards is doing well enough in a larger context. This is especially important because states will vary among themselves with respect to the rigor of their performance standards.

Further, there is considerable evidence that even high quality and widely accepted academic standards, such as the national math standards, have not yet penetrated into the classroom in meaningful ways. The recently released TIMSS study of international performance in math and science shows that neither textbooks and other curriculum materials, nor teaching practices, have yet responded to the standards.

This memorandum describes three strategies for moving your national standards agenda forward. It is designed to respond to the challenges indicated above, and to build on and extend significantly the Administration's efforts over the last four years. While it promotes national level activities -- particularly new national testing -- it is designed to build on and strengthen the work underway at the state level, rather than force states to discard what they have already been doing.

II. National and International Achievement Benchmarks for Reading and Math

Proposal: We recommend that you call for a national test to determine whether students have met national performance standards in 4th grade reading and international performance standards in 8th grade mathematics. Over the next two years the federal government will develop these tests, based on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 4th grade reading test and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 8th grade math test. These tests would be ready for administration for the first time by the Spring of 1999, and available on the Internet by the year 2000.

Purpose: This proposal will serve two purposes. It will make the idea of national and international standards very real and concrete for students and parents for the first time, because students will get test scores comparing their performance to these benchmarks. In addition, these two tests will provide a focus for national campaigns to significantly raise student achievement in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math.

A Focused Effort: This proposal is focused on reading and math because they are the building block of nearly all school learning, and widely accepted as the most basic of basic skills. Fourth and eighth grade are critical transition points in school, and reading well by the 4th grade and mastering math, especially algebra, by the 8th grade, are essential to future academic success. NAEP and TIMSS, while not widely known to the public at large, enjoy bipartisan support in the education and policy communities. We believe this focus approach will minimize political opposition to a federal testing effort.

Information for parents, teachers and students on individual student performance: Once available, these tests will give parents, teachers and students accurate information on student performance against recognized national and international standards. They will be the only assessments that can provide this information -- no state or local testing program can currently provide this information, and no other national efforts are referenced to these recognized standards. This will make the idea of national and international standards meaningful.

Both NAEP and TIMSS were originally designed to monitor national, state or international performance, not to measure individual student achievement. Therefore, at present, neither NAEP nor TIMSS can provide individual-level scores. Our proposal would be to create individual-level versions of these tests, making it possible for the first time to measure individual students against demanding national or international benchmarks. Our consultations with leading testing experts suggests that creating individual level tests that reflect the performance standards in the current assessments is feasible.

A 2-Year Development Period, Led by the Federal Government: The tests would be developed under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. The contractor is most likely to be a commercial test publisher, or consortium of publishers. The development costs are in the range of \$2-4 million per year, and these costs would continue as long as the test was made available. The Education Department, the National Science Foundation and perhaps the Department of Defense Dependent Schools could share the development costs. It will take 18-24 months to develop the new tests. If the Education Department begins work immediately, the test could be administered for the first time in the Spring of 1999. No new legislative authority would be required to undertake this work.

To ensure the technical integrity of the work, we would organize a technical advisory committee, or ask the National Academy of Science to provide ongoing assistance.

We will also need to consider ways of reducing our vulnerability to charges of federal intrusion as a result of the federal responsibility for test development. We have considered alternative approaches, such as asking ACHIEVE, the new entity created by NGA and Lou Gerstner after the education summit in Palisades. However, that organization is still not staffed or operating yet, and is not likely to have the technical capacity to undertake this work. Further, reaching an agreement about how to proceed with this work with the Governors and CEO's on the ACHIEVE Board of Trustees is likely to slow down work which is already on a very tight timetable.

National Tests Administered Locally, Supplementing But Not Replacing State and Local Testing Programs: These tests would be voluntary; states and local school districts would not be required to administer them as a condition of receiving federal funds. They would supplement rather than replace existing state and local tests in these subject and grade levels. The combination of these new national assessments together with state or local testing will provide both performance and diagnostic information for individual students. While the bulk of the diagnostic information would come from state and local testing programs, the new national tests would provide some limited amount as well.

We estimate the cost of administering the tests at between \$5 and \$10 per student, or between \$30 and \$60 million nationally if every state and school district used the test. We have considered providing an incentive for states and districts to participate by sharing the cost of test administration, probably on a 50-50 basis. We believe this will increase participation, while it may also make us vulnerable to the charge that this incentive reduces the voluntary nature of the test.

Like most other state and local tests, these new tests would be available from a commercial test publisher. Because these tests perform a unique function not currently filled by the market, we do not anticipate significant opposition from the test publishers.

By the year 2000, versions of the tests could be placed on the Internet and scored by computer. This means that, in states or school districts not using the test, parents could administer the test to their children at home, and learn how well their children perform against national and international benchmarks.

National Campaigns to Improve 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade Math. These tests will provide important anchors for national efforts to improve reading and math performance, as well as measuring it. The America Reads challenge provides a model of federal programmatic support, coupled with a national campaign to assist parents as first teachers and to mobilize an army of volunteer tutors, that will increase reading achievement considerably. We believe that an equivalent effort should be launched in mathematics, using existing resources in a variety of federal agencies to support teaching and learning in math (e.g., the Education Department, National Science Foundation, Energy Department, NASA, etc.), and the math and science community at the national and local level. Preliminary discussions to launch this effort are already underway among the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Education Department and NSF.

The focused strategy described above should be complemented by additional efforts that address a broader range of issues. These are briefly discussed below, and can be developed more fully in the near future.

III. Promoting National Use of High Quality Standards

The focused effort on math and reading should be complemented by one that builds on existing state standards, addresses a broader range of subject areas and grade levels, provides leadership to promote nationwide consensus on what students should learn in core academic subject areas, and assists states in developing and using higher standards to effectively improve teaching and learning.

Proposal: We propose to hold a White House Conference on Standards of Excellence in Education in the Fall of 1997. The purpose of the conference would be to increase the extent to which states adopt and use standards of recognized high quality and to help improve the quality of state academic standards overall. This would be accomplished by identifying and promoting the best designed and most rigorous standards available from anywhere in the country, and by identifying and reporting to states the extent to which there already exists agreement among states on the content standards in core academic subject areas. In addition, the conference should emphasize that to be effective in improving teaching and learning, academic standards must be placed in a system of aligned assessments, curriculum, teaching practices and professional development programs as a package. Examples of such systems could include Advanced

Placement exams, New Standards, College Board's Equity 2000, and the International Baccalaureate. Promising state efforts could include the New York State Regents exams, and new assessments in Kentucky and Vermont. You could begin highlighting promising examples as part of the build up to this conference, without waiting until the Fall.

This conference should be conducted in partnership with business leaders, governors and other state officials, and educators, perhaps by working with ACHIEVE. The White House role should primarily be in convening the effort, in challenging others working on standards issues to identify quality standards, and then to help build the consensus to use them more broadly throughout the nation.

IV. Linking Standards To Accountability and Quality at the State and Local Level

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 28, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Secretary Riley
Bruce Reed
Michael Cohen
Mike Smith

SUBJECT: Moving Forward on National Standards

I. Background

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Yet despite this progress, there are significant challenges as well. The quality of the standards being developed by states is quite varied. A recent AFT report indicates that only 15 states have standards that are clear and specific enough to lead to a common core curriculum, and only 12 states have tried to benchmark their own standards to world-class levels. State progress on developing performance standards and assessments is slower than with respect to content standards. No state is able to determine for itself, or assure the public, that its standards are rigorous and up to world class levels.

The state-by-state approach to standards and assessments limits the information available to parents, teachers and students. In particular, the current arrangements make it impossible for anyone to learn how well individual students perform against national or international benchmarks. In short, there is no way for anyone to know if a student who meets a particular state's performance standards is doing well enough in a larger context. This is especially important because states will vary among themselves with respect to the rigor of their performance standards.

Further, there is considerable evidence that even high quality and widely accepted academic standards, such as the national math standards, have not yet penetrated into the classroom in meaningful ways. The recently released TIMSS study of international performance in math and science shows that neither textbooks and other curriculum materials, nor teaching practices, have yet responded to the standards.

This memorandum describes three strategies for moving your national standards agenda forward. It is designed to respond to the challenges indicated above, and to build on and extend significantly the Administration's efforts over the last four years. While it promotes national level activities -- particularly new national testing -- it is designed to build on and strengthen the work underway at the state level, rather than force states to discard what they have already been doing.

II. National and International Achievement Benchmarks for Reading and Math

Proposal: We recommend that you call for a national test to determine whether students have met national performance standards in 4th grade reading and international performance standards in 8th grade mathematics. Over the next two years the federal government will develop these tests, based on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 4th grade reading test and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 8th grade math test. These test would be ready for administration for the first time by the Spring of 1999, and available on the Internet by the year 2000.

Purpose: This proposal will serve two purposes. It will make the idea of national and international standards very real and concrete for students and parents for the first time, because students will get test scores comparing their performance to these benchmarks. In addition, these two tests will provide a focus for national campaigns to significantly raise student achievement in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math.

A Focused Effort: This proposal is focused on reading and math because they are the building block of nearly all school learning, and widely accepted as the most basic of basic skills. Fourth and eighth grade are critical transition points in school, and reading well by the 4th grade and mastering math, especially algebra, by the 8th grade, are essential to future academic success. NAEP and TIMSS, while not widely known to the public at large, enjoy bipartisan support in the education and policy communities. We believe this focus approach will minimize political opposition to a federal testing effort.

Information for parents, teachers and students on individual student performance: Once available, these tests will give parents, teachers and students accurate information on student performance against recognized national and international standards. They will be the only assessments that can provide this information -- no state or local testing program can currently provide this information, and no other national efforts are referenced to these recognized standards. This will make the idea of national and international standards meaningful.

Both NAEP and TIMSS were originally designed to monitor national, state or international performance, not to measure individual student achievement. Therefore, at present, neither NAEP nor TIMSS can provide individual-level scores. Our proposal would be to create individual-level versions of these tests, making it possible for the first time to measure individual students against demanding national or international benchmarks. Our consultations with leading testing experts suggests that creating individual level tests that reflect the performance standards in the current assessments is feasible.

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We estimate the cost of administering the tests at between \$5 and \$10 per student, or between \$30 and \$60 million nationally if every state and school district used the test. We have considered providing an incentive for states and districts to participate by sharing the cost of test administration, probably on a 50-50 basis. We believe this will increase participation, while it may also make us vulnerable to the charge that this incentive reduces the voluntary nature of the test.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 28, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Secretary Riley
Bruce Reed
Michael Cohen
Mike Smith

SUBJECT: Moving Forward on National Standards

I. Background

Over the past four years there has been considerable activity throughout the nation to set standards of excellence for education. Work on national content standards has been completed in virtually every discipline. With the support of Goals 2000 and new Title 1 requirements, forty-eight states have developed or are in the process of developing their own academic standards, and most are also developing new assessments aligned to these standards. Public consensus on the importance of national standards of excellence for education is broad and deep, and the standards movement has clearly taken hold nationally.

Yet despite this progress, there are significant challenges as well. The quality of the standards being developed by states is quite varied. A recent AFT report indicates that only 15 states have standards that are clear and specific enough to lead to a common core curriculum, and only 12 states have tried to benchmark their own standards to world-class levels. State progress on developing performance standards and assessments is slower than with respect to content standards. No state is able to determine for itself, or assure the public, that its standards are rigorous and up to world class levels.

The state-by-state approach to standards and assessments limits the information available to parents, teachers and students. In particular, the current arrangements make it impossible for anyone to learn how well individual students perform against national or international benchmarks. In short, there is no way for anyone to know if a student who meets a particular state's performance standards is doing well enough in a larger context. This is especially important because states will vary among themselves with respect to the rigor of their performance standards.

Further, there is considerable evidence that even high quality and widely accepted academic standards, such as the national math standards, have not yet penetrated into the classroom in meaningful ways. The recently released TIMSS study of international performance in math and science shows that neither textbooks and other curriculum materials, nor teaching practices, have yet responded to the standards.

This memorandum describes three strategies for moving your national standards agenda forward. It is designed to respond to the challenges indicated above, and to build on and extend significantly the Administration's efforts over the last four years. While it promotes national level activities -- particularly new national testing -- it is designed to build on and strengthen the work underway at the state level, rather than force states to discard what they have already been doing.

II. National and International Achievement Benchmarks for Reading and Math

Proposal: We recommend that you call for a national test to determine whether students have met national performance standards in 4th grade reading and international performance standards in 8th grade mathematics. Over the next two years the federal government will develop these tests, based on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 4th grade reading test and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 8th grade math test. These test would be ready for administration for the first time by the Spring of 1999, and available on the Internet by the year 2000.

Purpose: This proposal will serve two purposes. It will make the idea of national and international standards very real and concrete for students and parents for the first time, because students will get test scores comparing their performance to these benchmarks. In addition, these two tests will provide a focus for national campaigns to significantly raise student achievement in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math.

A Focused Effort: This proposal is focused on reading and math because they are the building block of nearly all school learning, and widely accepted as the most basic of basic skills. Fourth and eighth grade are critical transition points in school, and reading well by the 4th grade and mastering math, especially algebra, by the 8th grade, are essential to future academic success. NAEP and TIMSS, while not widely known to the public at large, enjoy bipartisan support in the education and policy communities. We believe this focus approach will minimize political opposition to a federal testing effort.

Information for parents, teachers and students on individual student performance: Once available, these tests will give parents, teachers and students accurate information on student performance against recognized national and international standards. They will be the only assessments that can provide this information -- no state or local testing program can currently provide this information, and no other national efforts are referenced to these recognized standards. This will make the idea of national and international standards meaningful.

Both NAEP and TIMSS were originally designed to monitor national, state or international performance, not to measure individual student achievement. Therefore, at present, neither NAEP nor TIMSS can provide individual-level scores. Our proposal would be to create individual-level versions of these tests, making it possible for the first time to measure individual students against demanding national or international benchmarks. Our consultations with leading testing experts suggests that creating individual level tests that reflect the performance standards in the current assessments is feasible.

A 2-Year Development Period, Led by the Federal Government: The tests would be developed under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. The contractor is most likely to be a commercial test publisher, or consortium of publishers. The development costs are in the range of \$2-4 million per year, and these costs would continue as long as the test was made available. The Education Department, the National Science Foundation and perhaps the Department of Defense Dependent Schools could share the development costs. It will take 18-24 months to develop the new tests. If the Education Department begins work immediately, the test could be administered for the first time in the Spring of 1999. No new legislative authority would be required to undertake this work.

To ensure the technical integrity of the work, we would organize a technical advisory committee, or ask the National Academy of Science to provide ongoing assistance.

We will also need to consider ways of reducing our vulnerability to charges of federal intrusion as a result of the federal responsibility for test development. We have considered alternative approaches, such as asking ACHIEVE, the new entity created by NGA and Lou Gerstner after the education summit in Palisades. However, that organization is still not staffed or operating yet, and is not likely to have the technical capacity to undertake this work. Further, reaching an agreement about how to proceed with this work with the Governors and CEO's on the ACHIEVE Board of Trustees is likely to slow down work which is already on a very tight timetable.

National Tests Administered Locally, Supplementing But Not Replacing State and Local Testing Programs: These tests would be voluntary; states and local school districts would not be required to administer them as a condition of receiving federal funds. They would supplement rather than replace existing state and local tests in these subject and grade levels. The combination of these new national assessments together with state or local testing will provide both performance and diagnostic information for individual students. While the bulk of the diagnostic information would come from state and local testing programs, the new national tests would provide some limited amount as well.

We estimate the cost of administering the tests at between \$5 and \$10 per student, or between \$30 and \$60 million nationally if every state and school district used the test. We have considered providing an incentive for states and districts to participate by sharing the cost of test administration, probably on a 50-50 basis. We believe this will increase participation, while it may also make us vulnerable to the charge that this incentive reduces the voluntary nature of the test.

Like most other state and local tests, these new tests would be available from a commercial test publisher. Because these tests perform a unique function not currently filled by the market, we do not anticipate significant opposition from the test publishers.

By the year 2000, versions of the tests could be placed on the Internet and scored by computer. This means that, in states or school districts not using the test, parents could administer the test to their children at home, and learn how well their children perform against national and international benchmarks.

National Campaigns to Improve 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade Math. These tests will provide important anchors for national efforts to improve reading and math performance, as well as measuring it. The America Reads challenge provides a model of federal programmatic support, coupled with a national campaign to assist parents as first teachers and to mobilize an army of volunteer tutors, that will increase reading achievement considerably. We believe that an equivalent effort should be launched in mathematics, using existing resources in a variety of federal agencies to support teaching and learning in math (e.g., the Education Department, National Science Foundation, Energy Department, NASA, etc.), and the math and science community at the national and local level. Preliminary discussions to launch this effort are already underway among the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Education Department and NSF.

The focused strategy described above should be complemented by additional efforts that address a broader range of issues. These are briefly discussed below, and can be developed more fully in the near future.

III. Promoting National Use of High Quality Standards

The focused effort on math and reading should be complemented by one that builds on existing state standards, addresses a broader range of subject areas and grade levels, provides leadership to promote nationwide consensus on what students should learn in core academic subject areas, and assists states in developing and using higher standards to effectively improve teaching and learning.

Proposal: We propose to hold a White House Conference on Standards of Excellence in Education in the Fall of 1997. The purpose of the conference would be to increase the extent to which states adopt and use standards of recognized high quality and to help improve the quality of state academic standards overall. This would be accomplished by identifying and promoting the best designed and most rigorous standards available from anywhere in the country, and by identifying and reporting to states the extent to which there already exists agreement among states on the content standards in core academic subject areas. In addition, the conference should emphasize that to be effective in improving teaching and learning, academic standards must be placed in a system of aligned assessments, curriculum, teaching practices and professional development programs as a package. Examples of such systems could include Advanced

Placement exams, New Standards, College Board's Equity 2000, and the International Baccalaureate. Promising state efforts could include the New York State Regents exams, and new assessments in Kentucky and Vermont. You could begin highlighting promising examples as part of the build up to this conference, without waiting until the Fall.

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IV. Linking Standards To Accountability and Quality at the State and Local Level

In your speech to the National Education Summit in Palisades, you challenged states and local school systems to put in place meaningful systems of accountability for students, for teachers, and for schools. There are several initiatives already underway to help support these challenges, and, over the next year, the Administration should undertake several additional ones. New and proposed initiatives can be developed in more detail in a subsequent memo. Briefly, these can and could include:

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TODAY

- STDS, CHOICE, COLLEGE

* BC RECORD IN ARK

1. REPORT CARD / INTERNET

- Parent info = key to public choice
- Vermont: class size, student performance, dropout rate

2. Shut down FAILING SCHOOLS → CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Close + ~~start~~ start over
- Charters: \$18 → 51m, 3000 (400), 26 states

OVERALL:

- * CLOSING ARGUMENT: 1 of 4 SPECIFICS - 4 BIG CHALLENGES
- * NO ISSUE BETTER SHOWS CHOICE IN ELECTION: WORLD OF DIFFERENCE
- * Dept of Educ., Student loans, Tax Cut

* SUM UP AMBITIOUS AGENDA:

- K-12:
1. Stds - no soc. promotions
 2. Reading - Every child; 30,000; 100,000 words study
 3. Charter schools + Public school choice
 4. Wire every classroom, free Internet
 5. Safety + discipline - school uniforms

- COLLEGE:
1. Record - 10m cheaper. Americans. Bonds
 2. Tax Cut
 3. Tax Deduction \$10,000
 4. IRA

→ No m-c taxed on \$ for college

stop choice + choice
period

PRESIDENT CLINTON CHALLENGES SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN STANDARDS AND DEMAND EXCELLENCE

October 29, 1996

Highlighting his strong commitment to improving education, President Clinton today will challenge schools, states, local communities, colleges and businesses to make academic standards meaningful and to send our students a clear message that their performance in school counts.

The President has called for an end to social promotions, and for requiring students to pass tough tests to keep moving up in school. He has called for rewarding teachers who meet increased professional standards, and for removing those who don't.

President Clinton has further proposed mobilizing an army of 1 million volunteers to help all children to be able to read on their own by the end of 3rd grade. He has challenged every state to give parents the ability to choose the public school their child attends, and to pass legislation allowing teachers and parents to establish innovative, public charter schools, which are free from most regulations, accountable to the public, and survive only if they produce results.

Today, President Clinton will build on this foundation with three specific, new challenges:

- **School Report Cards on the Internet:** The President will challenge every state and community to publish a report card for each public school, so that parents can have the information they need to make well informed choices and to help improve their own school. These report cards should be made widely available, including publishing them in the newspapers and on the Internet. The State of Vermont has pioneered providing parents with school report cards on the Internet.
- **Replacing Failing Schools with new Charter Schools:** The President will challenge states and local communities to step in and fix schools that are persistently failing with respect to academic performance. As one approach to doing this, he will specifically challenge them to close down failing schools, and let teachers and principals reopen them as charter schools -- innovative schools that are free of bureaucracy, accountable to the public for results, and which remain open only if they produce results. Because funding for the President's Charter Schools Initiative has almost tripled, from \$18 million to \$51 million, the federal government will be able to assist states that accept this challenge. And as a result of President Clinton's leadership, 26 states now have charter schools laws.
- **A Message to Students that Performance Counts:** President Clinton will challenge colleges and universities to look at their own admission requirements and make sure they are demanding excellence. He will also challenge employers to examine students' high school transcripts, so they can tell if students are taking and succeeding in challenging courses, have good attendance, and come to school on time. These steps will send a clear message to all students that how hard they work in school, and how much they learn, will matter.

BILL CLINTON: A HISTORY OF FIGHTING FOR TOUGHER STANDARDS AND FOR EDUCATION REFORM

President Clinton has been fighting to raise standards for students and schools and improve education for all children throughout his career.

As Governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton:

- **Insisted on Standards and Accountability for Schools:** In 1983, as Governor, Bill Clinton put in place the Standards for Accreditation for Arkansas Schools, which provided the foundation of Arkansas' education reform movement. The program established minimum standards to be met by all Arkansas schools, including intensive instruction in basic skills, limits on class sizes, and regular testing of student performance.
- **Set Real Standards for Students:** In 1984, Bill Clinton enacted a requirement that eighth graders pass a competency exam in order to go on to high school.
- **Pioneered Public School Choice:** In 1989, under Bill Clinton's leadership, Arkansas enacted the Public School Choice Act, allowing students to attend public school outside the district in which they live, and making Arkansas among the first states in the nation to guarantee choice of public schools for parents and students.
- **Fought for Teacher Accountability:** As part of the 1983 education reform legislation enacted as a result of Bill Clinton's leadership, classroom teachers in Arkansas were required to take and pass a minimum competency test in order to retain their teaching license.

As President, Bill Clinton:

- **Fought to Help States and Communities Raise Academic Standards:** President Clinton fought for the enactment of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which provides funds to states and communities to support their efforts to raise academic standards, strengthen the curriculum, and promote accountability for results. He has continued to speak out in support of more challenging academic standards, including to Governors and business leaders at the 1996 National Education Summit in Palisades, New York in March 1996.
- **Pioneered Federal Support for Public Charter Schools:** In 1993, as part of the Improving America's Schools Act, President Clinton proposed a public charter schools program that is now providing grants to help start over 300 charter schools in 20 states. When President Clinton was elected in 1992, only two states had passed charter school laws and there was only one charter school in the country. Now, 26 states have charter school laws and there are more than 400 operating charter schools in the Nation.
- **Challenged Every State in the Nation to Provide Public School Choice:** In his 1996 State of the Union Address, President Clinton said, "I challenge every state to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend; and to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job."

Vermont School Report
 Produced by the Vermont Department of Education in collaboration with
 the Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont

GENERAL INFORMATION

School: Stowe Middle/High School
 Town: Stowe
 Principal: Mr. Martin Giuffre
 Superintendent: Ms. Alice Angney

STUDENT PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Total School Enrollment	335	355	
Average Class Size	12	12	
% Special Education	9		
% Technical Education (HS only)	10		
Attendance Rate	94		
Dropout Rate (HS only)	2.75		
Length of School Year	175	175	
Length of School Day	6.42	6.57	

STAFF RESOURCES

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Personnel			
# Classroom Teachers	28.80	28.80	
# Other Teachers	5.90	5.10	
# Instructional Assistants	11.10	8.00	
# Administrative Staff	6.00	6.00	
# Other Staff	10.50	7.00	
Teacher Contract Information			
# Contract Days	180		
# Professional Development Days	5		
Average Teacher Salary	\$40,278		

RISK FACTORS (County Data)

	1991	1992	1993
% New Families at Risk	9.2	9.6	10.7
% Low Birthweight Babies	5.3	4.2	3.3
Rate of Child Abuse (per 10,000 under 18)			
Child Abuse and Neglect	56.7	62.6	63.1
Physical Abuse	19.5	22.6	21.9
Sexual Abuse	27.4	32.9	33.5
Neglect	15.0	12.9	11.6

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Property Value/Student			
Dollar Value	\$12,360	\$12,392	
Relative Rank in State	13	12	
Adjusted Gross Income per Exemption			
Index Around State Average	1.2946	1.3176	
Relative Rank in State	9	7	
Median Adjusted Gross Income			
Index Around State Average	0.9799	0.9707	
Relative Rank in State	124	124	
Percent of Students in Poverty			
students who are in poverty	6.00	5.00	

U OF V

Use of math language	1.8
Use of math representation	1.5
Presentation of work	2.9

G8 Math Open Ended Task (5/95)	Distribution of Students (%)			
	1	2	3	4
Understanding the problem	16	58	27	0
How solved the problem	16	58	27	0
Why solved that way	27	64	9	0
So What--applying/extending	84	16	0	0
Use of math language	18	80	2	0
Use of math representation	51	44	4	0
Presentation of work	0	29	56	16

G8 Math Multiple Choice (5/95)	Mean Score
Numbers	84.1
Measurement	64.7
Geometry	72.4
Data Analysis	72.0
Algebra	81.1
Total Score	76.5

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- **Pioneered Federal Support for Public Charter Schools:** In 1993, as part of the Improving America's Schools Act, President Clinton proposed a public charter schools program that is now providing grants to help start over 300 charter schools in 20 states. When President Clinton was elected in 1992, only two states had passed charter school laws and there was only one charter school in the country. Now, 26 states have charter school laws and there are more than 400 operating charter schools in the Nation.
- **Challenged Every State in the Nation to Provide Public School Choice:** In his 1996 State of the Union Address, President Clinton said, "I challenge every state to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend; and to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job."

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October 29, 1996

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President Clinton has further proposed mobilizing an army of 1 million volunteers to help all children to be able to read on their own by the end of 3rd grade. He has challenged every state to give parents the ability to choose the public school their child attends, and to pass legislation allowing teachers and parents to establish innovative, public charter schools, which are free from most regulations, accountable to the public, and survive only if they produce results.

Today, President Clinton will build on this foundation with three specific, new challenges:

- **School Report Cards on the Internet:** The President will challenge every state and community to publish a report card for each public school, so that parents can have the information they need to make well informed choices and to help improve their own school. These report cards should be made widely available, including publishing them in the newspapers and on the Internet. The State of Vermont has pioneered ~~the~~ providing parents with school report cards on the Internet.
- **Replacing Failing Schools with new Charter Schools:** The President will challenge states and local communities to step in and fix schools that are persistently failing with respect to academic performance. As one approach to doing this, he will specifically challenge them to close down failing schools, and let teachers and principals reopen them as charter schools -- innovative schools that are free of bureaucracy, accountable to the public for results, and which remain open only if they produce results. Because funding for the President's Charter Schools Initiative has almost tripled, from \$18 million to \$51 million, the federal government will be able to assist states that accept this challenge. And as a result of President Clinton's leadership, 26 states now have charter schools laws.
- **A Message to Students that Performance Counts:** President Clinton will challenge colleges and universities to look at their own admission requirements and make sure they are demanding excellence. He will also challenge employers to examine students' high school transcripts, so they can tell if students are taking and succeeding in challenging courses, have good attendance, and come to school on time. These steps will send a clear message to all students that how hard they work in school, and how much they learn, will matter.

Bill Clinton: A History of Fighting for Tougher Standards and for Education Reform

President has been fighting to raise standards for students and school and improve education for all children throughout his career.

As Governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton:

- **Insisted on Standards and Accountability for Schools:** In 1983, as Governor, Bill Clinton put in place the Standards for Accreditation for Arkansas Schools, which provided the foundation of Arkansas' education reform movement. The program established minimum standards to be met by all Arkansas schools, including intensive instruction in basic skills, limits on class sizes, and regular testing of student performance.
- **Set Real Standards for Students:** In 1984, Bill Clinton enacted a requirement that eighth graders pass a competency exam in order to go on to high school.
- **Pioneered Public School Choice:** In 1989, under Bill Clinton's leadership, Arkansas enacted the Public School Choice Act, allowing students to attend public school outside the district in which they live, and making Arkansas among the first states in the nation to guarantee choice of public schools for parents and students.
- **Fought for Teacher Accountability:** As part of the 1983 education reform legislation enacted as a result of Bill Clinton's leadership, classroom teachers in Arkansas were required to take and pass a minimum competency test in order to retain their teaching license.

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Kansas to halt its open policy for admissions

Universities no longer will accept any graduate from state high schools.

By KATE BEEM
 Staff Writer

They may not know it, but eighth-graders in Kansas officially could become pioneers this week.

The Kansas Board of Regents will vote Thursday on new standards for admission to the six state universities. The move will end the tradition of accepting any graduate of the state's high schools to the universities in Lawrence, Wichita, Hays, Emporia, Manhattan and Pittsburg.

The standards, mandated by the state Legislature last session, will affect students in the eighth grade this year. They will be college freshmen in 2001.

Kansas was one of the last states to offer open admissions. But now college freshmen will be required to either achieve a composite score of 21 on the American College Test, rank in the top one-third of their high school graduating class or complete a precollege curriculum prescribed by the regents.

Those new rules will take some explaining, said Jack Prall, a guidance counselor in the Shawnee Mission School District.

His department is including the new standards in its planning booklet, which eighth-graders and their parents receive in the spring. Students will have to understand how their high school courses relate to their college careers, he said.

"They don't always put the two together," he said.

The standards, drafted by a regents task force, include a recommendation that Kansas students achieve at least a 2.0 grade point

average on a four-point scale in a 14-unit precollege curriculum in the ninth through 12th grades.

The core curriculum:

- Four units of English or language arts.

- Three units of natural science chosen from among biology, chemistry, earth-space science and physics. At least one unit must be in chemistry or physics.

- Three units of mathematics with two years of algebra and one of geometry. Applied math I and II can be substituted for algebra I.

- Three units of social sciences, including one of U.S. history, half a unit of U.S. government, half a unit from among world history, world geography or international relations, and one unit from among psychology, economics, civics, history, social issues, sociology, anthropology and/or race and ethnic group relations.

- One unit of computer technology.

Persons who are 21 or older are exempt from the new standards. High school graduates who fail to meet the requirements can attend a regents school after successfully completing 24 hours at another school, such as a community college.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.



The Business Roundtable

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WASHINGTON, DC 20036

FAX

Date: 10/14/96

Number of pages including cover sheet: 5

To:

Mike Cohen

Phone:

Fax phone: 202-456-7028

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From:

Suzanne Trainor

Phone: (202) 872-1260

Fax phone: (202) 466-3509

REMARKS: Urgent For your review Reply ASAP Please comment

*Mike - 2 different descriptions of Eastman Chemical Co. attached
Contact at Eastman Chemical -
Betty DeVinney
423-229-5705*

REVIEW DRAFT

Caveats:

- Don't use a transcript as a single or final determinant in making a selection.
- Don't ask students under 18 for a transcript without securing their parents' permission (in writing) to obtain it.
- Don't use transcripts to gain information that could be used for purposes of discrimination, such as a job candidate's sex, race, national origin, or disability.
- Don't require job candidates to submit proof of a high school degree, unless you can demonstrate the connection between the degree and job requirements.

III. Examples of Companies Benefiting from this Practice

- • **Eastman Chemical Company.** Realizing that certain entry-level jobs demanded basic competency in math and science, in 1989 Eastman began requiring every applicant to submit a high school transcript or a more recent school record, such as a GED certificate or a community college transcript.

Eastman says that its use of transcripts is prudent and productive, coupled with a system/process of good employer practices. First, the local school systems report larger enrollments in math and science classes since the practice began. In addition, using its employment process as a whole, the company reports an industry low turnover rate in the first year of employment, as well as lower training costs and a more agile workforce whose members are more capable of being retrained for different jobs as markets change.

REVIEW DRAFT

The company trained its staff in how to utilize a transcript for employment purposes and what kinds of information to look for; in particular, Eastman seeks evidence that students satisfactorily completed difficult academic courses in math, science and English — whether students achieved an A, B or C for their efforts is less important.

- **Delaware Business, Industry and Education Alliance (BIE).** Since 1994, some 200 Delaware employers have pledged to ask young job candidates for their high school transcripts through an initiative led by the Delaware BIE.

Key state business leaders have worked to make this initiative a success by purchasing fax machines for Delaware high schools so that guidance counselors can swiftly provide a transcript to an employer for an immediate hiring decision.

Like Eastman, Delaware businesses have not been challenged regarding this practice. The BIE Alliance is working to let more employers know about the easy availability of student transcripts and to communicate the message that transcripts are filled with valuable information about a student's skills, reliability and work ethic.

IV. Outreach to Students, Parents, and Educators

Given this new initiative, it is incumbent on American businesses to become even more involved in local efforts to raise the standards and performance of American schools.

The statement was signed by James F. Orr III, chairman and CEO of UNUM Corporation and chairman of the Alliance; Norman R. Augustine, vice chairman and CEO of Lockheed Martin and chairman of the Business Roundtable Education Task Force; and Ed Lupberger, chairman and president of Entergy Corporation and chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

'A Snowball Effect'

In Kingsport, Tenn., people already know that school counts. There, Eastman Chemical, a major company with 12,000 employees, has been asking applicants for a high-school transcript or a more recent school record, such as a G.E.D. certificate or college transcript, since 1989. The company is looking for evidence that entry-level candidates satisfactorily completed difficult courses in math, science and English.

The company brings in high school guidance counselors to train employees how to interpret the transcripts — and uses transcripts as just one piece of information about job applicants.

The effort began "quietly, without a splash," says Betty DeVinney, manager of corporate relations. But the effect has rippled through the community. Employees have passed the word to their children and to the five area school districts in northeastern Tennessee. DeVinney reports three major results:

- Enrollment in higher-level math and science courses in five schools districts in northeastern Tennessee has doubled in the past three years.
- The failure rate of entry-level employees has hit an industry low.
- New employees zip through apprenticeship programs without need for remediation.

More recently, Eastman Chemical has banded together with 70 employers in northeastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia to give preference in hiring to

AIM (Appalachian Intermountain) scholars. Eighth-graders and their parents are put on notice that if students earn a C or better in college preparatory math, science and English, and maintain a 95 percent attendance rate, they get a leg up on the competition for jobs.

"This is snowballing all across Tennessee and Virginia," DeVinney says.

New Impetus From the Education Summit

The push to use transcripts has been building momentum since at least the early 1990s, when the Vital Link program in Fort Worth, Tex., motivated students by helping them understand the relationship between school achievement and success in the workplace. With employers reviewing their transcripts, students increased their attendance in school, took higher-level courses, had fewer behavioral problems and showed increased achievement on state-mandated tests.

In 1994, 200 employers in the Delaware Business, Industry and Education Alliance vowed to ask for high school transcripts from job applicants. Delaware employers plowed over one obstacle — the glacial speed at which schools respond to requests for transcripts — by providing every high school in the state with a fax machine.

Then in 1995, when the Business Roundtable updated its nine-point agenda for education reform, business leaders mentioned transcripts as an item for attention.

"It's not a new idea," says Susan Traiman of the Business Roundtable's education initiative, which is taking the lead in putting together guidelines for businesses in using transcripts. "It got new impetus at the Education Summit in March. That was one of the things that governors and business leaders came together on."

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- President Clinton will challenge colleges and universities to look at their own admission requirements and make sure they are demanding excellence. He will also challenge employers to examine students' high school transcripts, so they can tell if students are taking and succeeding in challenging courses, have good attendance, and come to school on time. These steps will send a clear message to all students that how hard they work in school, and how much they learn, will matter.
- The President will challenge every state and community to publish a report card for each public school, so that parents can have the information they need to make well informed choices and to help improve their own school. These report cards should be made widely available, including publishing them in the newspapers and on the Internet.
- The President will challenge states and local communities to step in and fix schools that are persistently failing with respect to academic performance. As one approach to doing this, he will specifically challenge them to close down failing schools, and let teachers and principals reopen them as charter schools -- innovative schools that are free of bureaucracy, accountable to the public for results, and which remain open only if they produce results. Because funding for the President's Charter Schools Initiative has almost tripled, from \$18 million to \$51 million, the federal government will be able to assist states that accept this challenge.

Parents will want to send their children to good schools, and these schools should be rewarded. And when a school is failing, I challenge states and school districts to work to turn them around, or to close them down and reopen them as a charter school instead, bringing educators with vision, dedication and passion to schools that need them the most.

At my urging, Congress has more than tripled funding for charter schools for this year. With these resources, any state that is willing to give teachers and parents this new freedom and opportunity -- in exchange for real public accountability -- can get help in starting up these new schools.

NOTE TO BRUCE REED

Secretary Riley, Mike Smith and I just completed a conference call on the President's challenge to make standards count for kids, based on a lengthy, previous conversation and on the attached options paper.

Bottom line: the Secretary strongly favors having the President reiterate his challenge from the summit, without linking it to federal programs or funds. As he put it, "...there's no getting away from the fact that this is a federal mandate, and on this issue the President's role is to lead, not to mandate."

We talked about having the President challenge states and communities to put in place policies requiring kids to meet academic standard before transitions from one school level to the next, and about his directing Secretary Riley to report each year on which states and districts have responded to this challenge, so that parents and taxpayers could know whether their leaders were getting serious about high standards.

We also talked through what we would expect schools to do with kids who were not meeting standards, so that if the President went ahead with this challenge we could answer questions that may come up. Let me know if you think we need to put anything together on this.

My recommendation is to go with the Secretary's preference. While I continue to like the idea of pushing states harder to make kids meet standards, making that a condition for receiving federal funds may just push to hard, as both a political matter and a matter of policy design.

Let me know if this settles the issue for the speech, or if there will be further discussion. Please also let me know if I can be of any further help. Finally--call me anyway, so I can fill you in on a phone call from AFT regarding the speech.

Mike Cohen

8/22 -
S.E. - R.A., Mike S.,
Mike C

OPTIONS FOR MAKING STANDARDS COUNT FOR STUDENTS

OPTION 1: REPEAT PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE FROM SUMMIT

Repeat
would
challenge
be state
C
act
all
with
lead
state
local

- President challenges states and communities to set challenging academic standards, develop assessments that reflect them, and require students to pass the tests and meet the standards in order to move from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, and graduate from high school.

Pro's:

- The evidence from the minimum competency testing movement is that students can respond to high stakes requirements if there is ample time and opportunity for them to do so.
- There is strong support in the public and among opinion leaders for tough, high stakes testing for kids, in order to motivate students to work hard.
- Use of the bully pulpit to advance this policy avoids the political charge of "federal intrusion", and the complications of designing a workable federal policy in this area.

Cons:

- The President has already done this; it doesn't break new ground or make news.
- A Presidential challenge without teeth to back it up may not move state and local policy very rapidly.

Option 2: REQUIRE STATES TO SHOW HOW THEY WILL HOLD STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE FOR PERFORMANCE AS A CONDITION FOR PARTICIPATING IN FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

- States/districts are required to incorporate into plans for federal education programs supporting instructional services in academic

Pres role to lead
Not Mandate

subjects¹ at least one transition point in the schooling career at which students must demonstrate that they have met state/local academic standards.²

- States/districts would be free to design their own approach to determining if students meet the standards. The state/district sets the standards and determines the assessment instruments. It determines the performance standards and the indicators and evidence to determine if the student meets them. States could use a single test (though shouldn't), a series of tests (such as Maryland's end-of-course tests to be required for high school graduation), a series of tests and major projects (e.g., the equivalent of an honors thesis) or other approaches.
- States would be required to adopt a policy by a fixed point in time (e.g., 1999 or 2000), but could have an even longer implementation timeline so that there is ample time to prepare students before they face consequences.
- The Secretary would have the authority to waive this requirement for states which show high levels of student achievement even without high stakes testing.

Pro's:

- This approach demonstrates that the President and the federal government are serious about raising standards and making them count.
- This approach will have a powerful affect on state and local policy -- if the objective is to get states/districts to make standards count for kids, this approach should do it on a large scale.
- There is enough flexibility built into the design to mute charges of federal intrusion or micromanagement of state and local education

¹ Title 1, Perkins Voc.- Ed, Bilingual Ed; but not Eisenhower Professional Development or Drug Free Schools. Goals 2000 could be argued either way.

² We could also require states to show how they will help kids meet the standards and provide extra support for those who are at risk of not meeting them, or who fail to. This would strengthen the policy, but if not framed well would rekindle the OTL debate.

policy, and to accomodate a wide range of variations in state and local approaches.

- This approach is patterned after Title 1 requirements for school-accountability already in place.

Cons:

- This approach will be unpopular among many, but not all, in the civil rights community -- since they have historically oposed high stakes testing under most circumstances.
- A federal requirement for high stakes testing may reignite the controversy over opportunity-to-learn standards, since many advocates of otl standards see them as a precondition of high stakes testing. This may be a good and important debate to have, but it will be even more difficult to have intelligent debate during the campaign than it has been in the legislative process.
- This will be opposed as "federal intrusion" by at least some of the opposition on the right; they will argue that it confirms their long held suspicion that there are always federal strings that come with federal funds. This will be especially true if this requirement is added on to Goals 2000. And the lesson from Goals 2000 is that a truly flexible program design is not necessarily a good defense against charges of federal intrustion.
- Some will mistakenly argue that this is a Clinton "flip flop", reversing positions previously taken in Goals 2000. they will also argue that the Administration is being hypocritical, because the Education Department's OCR investigated Ohio's use of high stakes testing due to evidence of disparate impact.
- This requirement will engender strong opposition in very strong local control states (e.g, New Hampshire, Iowa, Wyoming, and perhaps Colorado and other Rocky Mountain states.) where the state would have a difficult time imposing a similar requirement on local districts.

- Without some requirement on states for meaningful -- and funded -- extra help for kids who don't meet the standards, some states are likely to fail to provide adequate opportunities, or to set the standards to low.

OPTION 3: REQUIRE STATES, AS A CONDITION OF RECEIVING FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDING, TO PROVIDE ASSURANCES TO PARENTS, STUDENTS, TAXPAYERS AND EMPLOYERS THAT ANY STUDENT WHO RECEIVES A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA HAS MET RIGOROUS STATE ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

- States would provide an assurance to the Secretary, as part of their application for Title 1 or other funds, that it has guaranteed parents, students, employers and taxpayers that every student who receives a high school diploma will have demonstrated that he or she has met state academic standards. This public guarantee must include a statement/description of the evidence/indicators the state will use to determine that the student has reached the standards.
- As with option 1, the state would have the flexibility to design its own system of standards and assessment. There would be a fixed point by which states would have to adopt a policy, but would then have additional years in order to implement it. The Secretary would continue to have the authority to waive the requirement for high performing states.

Pro's:

- In addition to those for Option 1, this option has the advantage of providing a very clear message: The high school diploma will finally mean something.
- This option places greater emphasis on accountability to the public, and less on accountability to federal officials. It therefore reduces our exposure on charges of federal micromanagement. All the state needs to do to continue to qualify for federal funding is provide a written assurance that they are carrying out the policy. However, they have to explain the particulars of how this would work to parents, educators and voters in the state.

Con's:

- Even with public accountability within the state, it may be too easy for a state to essentially evade the intent of this policy, by repackaging existing practices, relying on low level tests, teacher judgment or class grades (without much additional training for teachers). Consequently, in at least a handful of states, this policy may have no effect or a negative impact.

Educ. - Standards

NOTE TO BRUCE REED

I've been working on the idea of requiring states/school districts to require students to pass tests before moving on to the next level. While I continue to think this is the right approach, I've run into two potential -- and potentially serious -- problems:

- Recent polling data (supplied by Terry Peterson, and attached) indicating that public support for "high stakes" testing policies declines considerably when they are proposed as coming from the federal government, either in the form of requirements, or even encouragement from the federal government.
- The fact that no more than a handful of states come close to meeting the President's challenge now (about half a dozen or so if you don't count states with old, minimum competency requirements for high school graduation): Such a large gap between current state policy and a new federal requirement may be seen as (1) bold Presidential leadership; (2) unwarranted federal intrusion; (3) an unrealistic and unachievable goal, if we will require all states and districts to get there within the next 3 1/2 years;; or (4) all of the above.

I don't think these are disqualifying problems, but they are real ones. I'm continuing to think about this, and to think of other options in the "get serious about standards" mode of the Summit speech. I will try to discuss this with Riley this evening or tomorrow morning. In the meantime, attached are some additional details and food for thought.

I'll get you some more stuff on Tuesday.

Mike Cohen

1/20 1/29 2/4 2/11 2/21 2/28 3/5 3/14 3/18

98. Reforming teacher tenure, to make it easier to fire teachers.

Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this idea?

- 1) strongly support 35
- 2) somewhat support 30
- 3) somewhat oppose 18
- 4) strongly oppose 12
- 5) don't know 5

99. Shortening the amount of time allowed for hearings before teachers can be fired.

- 1) strongly support 33
- 2) somewhat support 30
- 3) somewhat oppose 18
- 4) strongly oppose 12
- 5) don't know 6

100. Limiting the legal rights of teachers to appeal firings.

- 1) strongly support 21
- 2) somewhat support 24
- 3) somewhat oppose 20
- 4) strongly oppose 29
- 5) don't know 6

101. Giving school principals more power to fire teachers.

- 1) strongly support 28
- 2) somewhat support 27
- 3) somewhat oppose 22
- 4) strongly oppose 20
- 5) don't know 3

102. Encouraging teachers and principals to spot teachers who are burned out and working with them to try to revive their enthusiasm.

- 1) strongly support 63
- 2) somewhat support 10
- 3) somewhat oppose 1
- 4) strongly oppose 4
- 5) don't know 2

103. If these teachers are still burned out, encourage them to retire.

- 1) strongly support 59
- 2) somewhat support 27
- 3) somewhat oppose 7

1/20 1/29 2/4 2/11 2/21 2/28 3/5 3/14 3/18

4) strongly oppose 5
9) don't know 3

*104. Requiring that children pass an achievement test at the end of every year before they can be promoted to the next grade.

1) strongly support 70
2) somewhat support 18
3) somewhat oppose 7
4) strongly oppose 4
9) don't know 1

*105. Requiring that children pass an achievement test at the end of high school before they can graduate.

1) strongly support 78
2) somewhat support 24
3) somewhat oppose 3
4) strongly oppose 4
9) don't know 1

*106. Having the federal government compose a uniform nationwide achievement test that each child in the country must pass before promotion or graduation.

1) strongly support 41
2) somewhat support 28
3) somewhat oppose 13
4) strongly oppose 15
9) don't know 3

*107. Federal encouragement for state and local governments to develop their own achievement tests.

1) strongly support 44
2) somewhat support 29
3) somewhat oppose 11
4) strongly oppose 12
9) don't know 3

*108. Federal encouragement for state and local governments to develop their own achievement tests which children must pass before they are promoted or graduated.

1) strongly support 44
2) somewhat support 31
3) somewhat oppose 10
4) strongly oppose 13
9) don't know 1

109. Testing teachers to make sure they are competent before they are hired.

1) strongly support 88

1/20 1/29 2/4 2/11 2/21 2/28 3/5 3/14 3/18

2) somewhat support	1
3) somewhat oppose	8
4) strongly oppose	2
9) don't know	1

110. Requiring teachers to pass a nationwide test before they are hired.

1) strongly support	62
2) somewhat support	17
3) somewhat oppose	11
4) strongly oppose	9
9) don't know	1

111. Federal support to state and local governments to identify good teachers and reward them with bonuses, promotions and extra pay to encourage them.

1) strongly support	60
2) somewhat support	27
3) somewhat oppose	7
4) strongly oppose	7
9) don't know	0

112. Federal encouragement for state and local governments to use their own teacher tests.

1) strongly support	43
2) somewhat support	34
3) somewhat oppose	12
4) strongly oppose	9
9) don't know	2

113. Teaching values and ethics in the schools.

1) strongly support	73
2) somewhat support	20
3) somewhat oppose	2
4) strongly oppose	2
9) don't know	3

114. Federal encouragement for teaching values and ethics in the schools, on the basis of locally designed curricula.

1) strongly support	47
2) somewhat support	31
3) somewhat oppose	9
4) strongly oppose	8
9) don't know	2

115. A federal requirement to teach values and ethics in the schools, on the basis of locally designed curricula.

1/20 1/29 2/4 2/11 2/21 2/28 3/5 3/14 3/18

1) strongly support	40
2) somewhat support	33
3) somewhat oppose	12
4) strongly oppose	12
9) don't know	4
116. Put computers in every classroom by the year 2000	
1) strongly support	67
2) somewhat support	18
3) somewhat oppose	8
4) strongly oppose	5
9) don't know	1
117. Let parents pick their public school	
1) strongly support	52
2) somewhat support	23
3) somewhat oppose	12
4) strongly oppose	11
9) don't know	3
118. Build more school buildings	
1) strongly support	42
2) somewhat support	29
3) somewhat oppose	16
4) strongly oppose	11
9) don't know	2
119. Impose strict disciplinary standards	
1) strongly support	69
2) somewhat support	21
3) somewhat oppose	3
4) strongly oppose	5
9) don't know	2
120. Hire more police and assign them to schools to make schools safer	
1) strongly support	42
2) somewhat support	32
3) somewhat oppose	12
4) strongly oppose	10
9) don't know	2
121. Lengthen the school year by 20 days	
1) strongly support	27
2) somewhat support	27
3) somewhat oppose	16

1/20 1/29 2/4 2/11 2/21 2/28 3/5 3/14 3/18

4) strongly oppose 29
 9) don't know 2

122. What would you say is the most important reason for raising standards in American schools today. Is it that our kids are falling behind kids in other countries, that our kids are not prepared for today's competitive job market, that kids will have to work harder and become more responsible citizens or that higher standards will motivate kids to learn more?

1) our kids are falling behind 15
 2) kids not prepared to compete 23
 3) kids will work harder/be more responsible 18
 4) motivate kids to learn more 34
 5) Other (SPECIFY) 5
 9) don't know 5

123. What is the second most important reason for raising standards in American schools today?

1) our kids are falling behind 21
 2) kids not prepared to compete 21
 3) kids will work harder/be more responsible 23
 4) motivate kids to learn more 23
 5) Other (SPECIFY) 4
 9) don't know 7

124. In general, do you think the amount of money local school boards spend on administrative and centralized costs is too low, too high or just about right?

1) too low 25
 2) too high 34
 3) just about right 30
 9) don't know 11

125. Some people have proposed that some federal education aid for local schools should be linked to a local school board's success in cutting administrative costs to free up more money for the classroom. Schools that failed to cut administrative and central costs would lose some federal aid under this plan. Do you strongly support this proposal, somewhat support it, somewhat oppose it or strongly oppose it?

1) strongly support 26
 2) somewhat support 39
 3) somewhat oppose 18
 4) strongly oppose 11
 9) don't know 5

126. Some communities are keeping their schools open from very early in the morning to late at night, essentially making the school a neighborhood center where parents and children can get a range of programs and services they need, including tutoring and supervised recreation for children after school, child care for working parents and social services, such as counseling for families that need them. Would you

1/20 1/29 2/4 2/11 2/21 2/28 3/5 3/14 3/18

strongly support creating more of these schools, somewhat support it, somewhat oppose it or strongly oppose it?

1) strongly support	63
2) somewhat support	24
3) somewhat oppose	7
4) strongly oppose	5
9) don't know	1

Draft

Draft

Draft

Summit challenge 1: Standards for students:

Option 1: Require "high stakes" testing

Require states or districts to require kids to pass school promotion/graduation test as a condition of federal education funding. If states or districts don't have some kind of serious system of standards and assessments in place that provide some real consequences to students for their academic performance, they should not count on the federal government to continue to underwrite their school systems.

The *intent* would be for kids to have to pass a test tied to high standards in order to enter middle and high school, and to graduate from high school. The *requirement* would be that states/districts would need to have at least one point at which kids were required to demonstrate that they met the standards in order to move on to the next level or graduate from high school.

States/districts would be free to design their own approach to determining if kids meet standards. It could be a single test (such as a minimum competency test); a series of tests (such as Maryland's end-of-course tests just required for high school graduation), a series of tests and major projects (e.g., the equivalent of an honors thesis), or some approaches that rely heavily on teacher judgment.

Pro's:

There is strong public support for tough, high stakes testing for kids, and support among opinion leaders as well.

There is plausible evidence that if the standards are high, if they count, and if kids are given enough time and the right opportunities, they can meet the standards.

Demonstrates that the President and the federal government are serious about raising standards and making them count.

This approach provides considerable design flexibility at state and local level, so that it can accommodate variations in state and local approaches to improving education.

Con's:

This approach will be unpopular among many, but not all, in the civil rights community -- since they have historically opposed high stakes testing under most circumstances.

A federal requirement for high stakes testing will immediately reignite the controversy over "opportunity to learn" standards--the educational practice and resource

standards that are seen by some as defining the preconditions for high stakes testing to be fair.

- . This will be painted as "federal intrusion" by at least some of the opposition (not because they oppose high stakes testing) on the right, and they will argue that it confirms their long held suspicion that there are always federal strings that come with federal funds.
- . Some will argue mistakenly that this is a Clinton "flip flop", reversing positions previously taken in Goals 2000. They will also argue that we are being hypocritical, because ED Office of Civil Rights investigated Ohio's use of high stakes testing because there was evidence of "disparate impact".
- . There are some states and district's (e.g., New Hampshire, Iowa, Wyoming) with very strong and deep traditions of local control, in which there would be great difficulty in, and unwillingness to, meet these requirements.
- . The more flexible the requirement and the more numerous the ways in which states/districts can demonstrate compliance, the less meaningfully it will be imposed in different jurisdictions.

Option 2: Provide Incentives to states and localities to require high stakes testing

- . Provide additional federal funding to states or districts that do require promotion/graduation testing for kids. This might be something like a 5% increase in Title 1 funding.

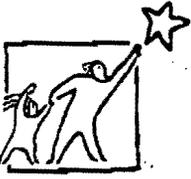
Pro's and Con's in brief:

- . Many of the same arguments above still hold, except that this option pretty much takes away arguments about federal intrusion, and gives states/districts in which this approach just won't work a way out.
- . Along with this escape hatch, this approach will probably have less impact, and will have a less sharp message.
- . Require kids to meet some state standard in order to receive student financial aid.

Summit Challenge 2: Standards for schools:

- . Provide help for after-school and summer-school tutoring for kids in low performing schools, if the state/district (1) gives kids choice of which other public school to attend; (2) dismantles failing school and replaces it with a charter school
- . Create Presidential incentive program for high performing

schools, which provides funds for schools in each state that make most progress toward helping kids reach academic standards.



NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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Ms Cowan

Educ - Standards

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 1996

TO: Panel Members
Working Group Members

FROM: Ken Nelson *K.N.*
Executive Director

RE: Al Shanker's Article

Governor Engler wants this Al Shanker article to be distributed as soon as possible, especially to Summit attendees. It was just delivered to the Panel office in response to Governor Engler's request at our February 3 Panel meeting, and builds upon Shanker's presentation at that time. You will note that Shanker expands on the academic standards and assessment proposals which the Panel has been considering. And he suggests a role for the Panel.



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ALBERT SHANKER
PRESIDENT

EDWARD J. McELROY
SECRETARY-TREASURER

March 15, 1996

Ken Nelson, Executive Director
National Education Goals Panel
1255 Twenty-second Street, NW
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Ken:

On behalf of Albert Shanker, I want to thank you once again for inviting him to speak about education standards at the Goals Panel meeting last month. As you recall, Governor Engler requested that Mr. Shanker put together a more thorough proposal for creating a mechanism that states and districts can use to benchmark their standards to world class levels. Our understanding is that he wanted this in time for the March 26-27 Education Summit.

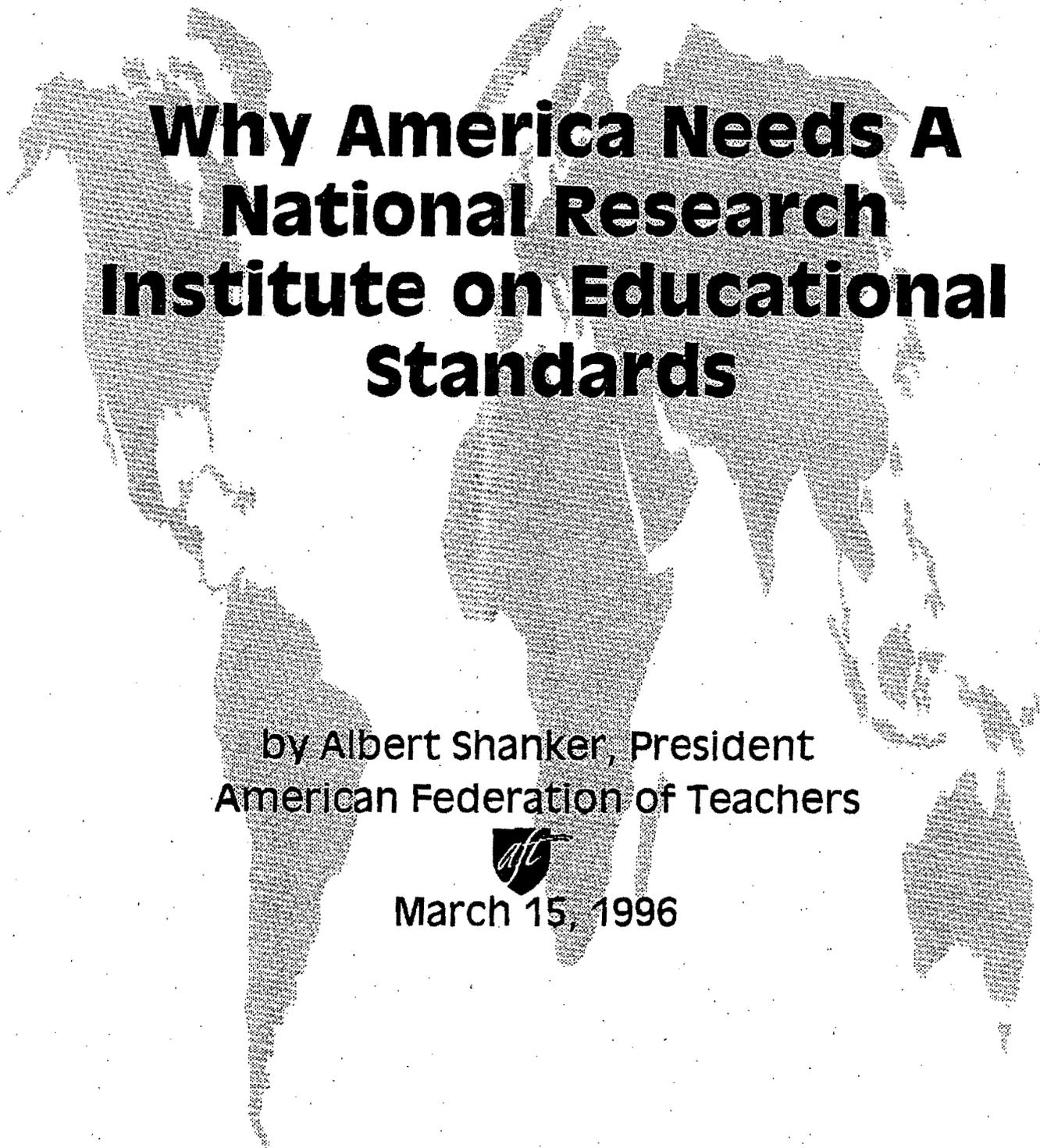
Enclosed is a paper by Mr. Shanker that we hope will serve the Goals Panel's needs and help shape conversations that will be taking place at the Summit and in the months to come. Please let me know if there is anything more we can do to help, including providing you with any additional AFT materials related to standards.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gandal
Senior Associate
Educational Issues Department

Enclosure

MG/lge/aftsu/opeiu#2



Why America Needs A National Research Institute on Educational Standards

by Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers



March 15, 1996

Later this month, the nation's governors, business, and education leaders will come together for an Education Summit sure to make national headlines. As an invitee, I look forward to an agenda centered on what is certainly one of the most important challenges facing the public schools in America: raising academic standards.

Six years ago in Charlottesville, Virginia, a similar gathering produced the national education goals, two of which speak directly to the need for higher academic standards in the schools. Those goals may have been unrealistic—"American students will be first in the world in math and science achievement by the year 2000"—but they have helped to shape our national conversation about education. Before 1989, very few states could hand you a document and say "these are the academic standards we expect our students to meet." Today, all but one or two states are developing such standards, and support for higher standards among parents and the public is as strong as ever.

Despite this overwhelming desire for standards, many articles we read these days about education reform seem to focus more on who should run schools than what students should learn. Vouchers for parents to send their children to private schools, "charters" that encourage anyone to open a school, and private contracts for companies to run public schools all have a certain free-market appeal, but none of these things has been proven to work anywhere in the world, let alone in this country. What does work in high-achieving foreign countries is an insistence on high academic standards, a rigorous core curriculum, assessments linked to the standards, and incentives for students to work hard.

This year's summit is an opportunity to recommit ourselves as a nation to these universally accepted ideas. It is a chance for the business community to speak in a clear voice about how it is affected by low standards in the schools and to make a long-term commitment to helping put higher standards in place. It is a chance for the governors—most of whom were not at the '89 summit—to show that helping American youngsters achieve world class academic standards is as much of a national priority as it was six years ago, and a *more* sensible, responsible solution than these other proposals for reform. And it is a time for educators to own up to our share of the responsibility for low standards and to commit our own resources and expertise to doing something about it.

What Are World Class Standards?

When I appeared before the National Education Goals Panel last month, I spoke not only about the need for standards in our schools, but the need for *high-quality, internationally competitive* standards. I also talked about some of the features of successful school systems overseas that contribute to their higher levels of achievement: a common core curriculum, tests linked to the standards, and rewards and consequences for student achievement.

To illustrate what I meant by "world class standards," I referred to a recent trip I took with other AFT leaders to visit the Saturn auto plant in Tennessee. Not only is Saturn a model of how union-management relationships can transform a company, it is also a model of what it means to pursue a world class product.

In a special wing of the plant dedicated to research, development, and training, Saturn employees spend their days tearing apart the more popular and reliable cars made by other companies to learn what makes them work. Every piece of the car, from the engine to the tiniest screw or hinge, is inspected for clues. They also tear down Saturn and other GM cars, but the emphasis is on learning from the best cars in the class. If Toyota is producing the best-selling sedan, then that model is torn down and thoroughly examined. If Volvo's producing the safest, then they take a look at that car. The intention isn't necessarily to copy everything they see, but to determine what makes each car so successful and figure out how to get the new Saturn to measure up.

This is good business. You find out what the competition is doing better than you, and you try to learn from them. In the world of education, we don't always operate that way. Even though it is clear from the data that other countries are having more success educating larger proportions of students to higher levels of achievement than we are, our tendency is to look inward for the answers.

The AFT published a report last summer that analyzed states' efforts to develop standards (*Making Standards Matter*, June 1995). Among other things, we asked which states had looked at what students in other countries are expected to learn and used that information to guide their standards-setting work. While a number of states initially claimed to have done so, it turned out, upon further questioning, that only a few had actually laid eyes on any foreign documents. Most had merely taken their present expectations and raised them up a notch or two. Some hadn't even done that.

Why does this matter so much? One important reason to benchmark internationally, and the reason most often discussed, has to do with American competitiveness. In a global economy where productivity depends heavily on the knowledge and abilities of the workforce, we can't afford to provide our children with an education inferior to what other nations provide.

But there's another reason why we should be seriously studying foreign education standards, and it's a reason that has far greater resonance with teachers and others who have devoted their careers to education. If we don't look at internationally competitive standards, there is a danger that those of us who have been involved so long in the struggle to raise student achievement will become prisoners of the status quo, unable to imagine youngsters achieving at higher levels than we are accustomed. In other words, by looking at what students in other nations are capable of accomplishing, we may aim higher when judging the potential of our own youngsters.

I raised this benchmarking issue with the Goals Panel, and I spoke about some of the work we've been engaged in at the AFT to contribute to the discussion of what high-quality standards and high-achieving school systems look like:

- First, we developed criteria for strong standards based on what other successful education systems do and on what we think is needed to guide the development of good curricula and good teaching.
- Second, we compared the standards being developed in the states using our criteria.
- Third, we looked at the exams students take in other countries and published them for others to see.
- Fourth, we developed standards-setting kits in each of the core academic subjects, which include some of the best materials we can find from the U.S. and around the world.

CREATING A NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

The materials we've developed at the AFT have been very well received. But the need for this kind of information is far too great to be satisfied by one or two organizations. Those of us who care so deeply about helping children reach world class academic standards need to work together to create an infrastructure that will support states and districts and lend credence and clarity to the standards movement. We need to launch a mechanism and policy process focused on quality; something that can withstand the political winds of change that so often threaten good ideas in education.

I recommend that the governors, business, and education leaders establish a **national research institute** dedicated to promoting world class education standards and to providing the type of information I just mentioned. I am not proposing a new branch of the federal Department of Education, nor am I trying to resurrect the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC). The type of institute I envision would be independent and fully research-based. Its focus would be on the quality of academic standards and the systems that support the standards—it would not allow itself to be sidetracked by any other issues. It would be designed to provide information, feedback, and technical assistance to states, school districts, and possibly other entities who request help—it would not be in the business of "certifying" or "approving" what states or districts are doing.

I am thinking of the kind of place where states could go to look at the standards of other states, or the curricula and exams of other countries. I am thinking of a place where states could send their standards and receive an in-depth report as to how those standards compare to the expectations for students in other high-achieving countries. I am thinking of a place that could issue reports that go beyond simply showing that U.S. students are behind their foreign counterparts in terms of achievement but also help us understand what makes some foreign education systems so successful. Let me elaborate on each of these functions.



Collecting, translating, and disseminating materials from around the world

If I am developing standards in New Jersey, I should have access to the standards being developed in Colorado, Illinois, and Maryland, and I should be able to get a copy of the French national curriculum, the *brevet* exams, and the *baccalaureat* exams. Right now, this is impossible for me to do. I would have to contact each state individually to get copies of their materials and to learn how they are progressing. I may be able to find a few organizations that have translated materials from overseas, but the information will be sparse—it won't be enough to help with every subject and every grade level. This is the first function a standards institute could serve: the collection, translation, and dissemination of materials and information relevant to setting standards.

State and District Materials

Collecting the materials from every state is the easier piece of this puzzle. Standards and curriculum frameworks exist in all but a few states and could be pulled together rather easily. There is also a need to pull together academic standards and related materials from school districts. The new Title I law holds districts and schools accountable for helping eligible students reach high academic standards, and we are seeing increased local interest and activity in standards as a result. States are farther along than most districts, but some districts, particularly some of the larger ones, are developing their own standards. As both states and districts work to develop standards, it will be important to get a good picture of how well the two are linked. In other words, are a particular district's standards well aligned with the state standards?

Some states, districts, and industries are developing "career" or "skills" standards separate from the academic subjects. These should be collected by the Institute. Only then can we begin to determine whether the skills standards sufficiently reinforce academic knowledge.

It is also important for the Institute to have a broader knowledge of state and local reform strategies that will allow it to answer such questions as: Will there be curriculum frameworks to flesh out what's in the standards? Will there be state assessments tied to these standards, or will this be a district responsibility? Will there be consequences

attached to student achievement of the standards (e.g., exit exams)? How will the standards, assessments, and consequences be phased in?

This last point is important. If states and districts do set internationally competitive standards, we shouldn't expect students to magically achieve them as soon as they are put in place. Other substantial changes will need to occur around those standards, including changes in the curriculum and in the training and professional development of teachers and other school staff, and these things take time.

International Materials

The international perspective will be harder to provide, but it is absolutely essential that we do so. We need to see many more documents and get much more information from other countries if we are ever going to understand what it means to have world class standards. The first step is to collect the raw materials:

- We need to collect and translate **standards, curriculum frameworks, and other curriculum documents** from France, England, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Taiwan, Australia, and other countries across the globe where student achievement is high.
- We need to collect the **exams** students take at various stages of their schooling. This means the "gateway" exams that students in many countries take at the end of lower secondary school before moving on to more challenging courses of study; the entrance exams that most countries require of college-bound students; the more technical exams that are required to enter training programs, apprenticeships, and jobs; and any tests that students take in the elementary grades. It also means collecting scoring guides and answers to test questions that help illustrate how good is good enough and determining how many students in each country take and pass each of these exams.
- We need to collect and translate **textbooks** and other instructional materials used in foreign classrooms. The University of Chicago Math and Science project has done some of this already, and most teachers who look at the texts are struck by how advanced both the Russian elementary math curriculum and the Japanese middle school math curriculum are in comparison to ours.
- We need to develop a collection of **student work** that more directly illustrates how well students abroad are actually doing compared to ours. To understand how well students write, for example, we need to look at a collection of essays, poems, and other writings, and we need to see a scale of what's considered unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and advanced work at various grade levels. As mentioned earlier, exam questions alone aren't sufficient. We need to see how good the answers need to be for a student to pass a particular test.

All of these materials exist in other countries, and they are not that difficult to obtain. The AFT has already established a small library of international standards, exams, and curriculum documents, and we would be happy to contribute to the Institute. The Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) has done this on a grander scale, translating curricula, textbooks, and exams from close to one hundred countries. All of these materials should be made accessible through this Standards Institute.

The exception here is student work. We have found it very difficult to obtain actual examples of student work, whether it be answers to test questions or assignments from classroom teachers. There are privacy and access issues to deal with, and making these kinds of things available will probably require collaboration between national governments, perhaps through international agencies such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). I can't emphasize enough how important it is to have access to student work in other countries. Until we do, we can't really understand how high their standards are.

Other Information Relevant to Standards

Along with these "raw materials," the Standards Institute should compile statistics and other data that can help us understand what proportion of students in each country meets the standards reflected in the curriculum documents and exams. For example, in looking at the *brevet* exams in France, it is important to know that 60 percent of 15-year-olds pass these tests. The next logical question is: "What standards do the other 40 percent reach?" By answering questions like this, the Institute should get a real handle on how large a gap exists between the highest- and lowest-performing students in each country, and it should explore the factors that contribute to that performance gap.

There is another type of information that the Standards Institute should make available that I think would be very instructive to states, districts, and everyone involved in raising educational standards. I am thinking here about some of the behind-the-scenes educational variables that contribute to such high standards in other countries but aren't necessarily reflected in the curriculum frameworks or textbooks. For example, I think people deserve to know:

- the extent to which the curricula and exams in other countries are centralized and how local autonomy is or is not reconciled with this central authority;
- what kinds of rewards and consequences there are for student achievement;
- the kinds of intervention and remedial programs other countries use to prevent students from falling behind and to help them catch up if they do fall behind;
- the extent to which social promotion is a problem;
- the degree to which diplomas and transcripts are respected and used by employers and universities;
- how great the need is for remedial courses in universities;

- what the success rate is for students who enter higher education (i.e., do most of them get their degree?);
- how teachers and students spend their time each day and week—for example, how much of students' time in school is spent on core academic subjects? (This was revealed in the *Prisoners of Time* report, and it deserves greater attention from states and districts as they create higher standards);
- the ways in which school agendas and time are organized around standards and a core curriculum;
- the ways parents are engaged to keep students performing at the appropriate level; and
- how teacher training and professional development are connected to the standards and curriculum.

Using Technology

One of the keys to making all of these materials accessible to a broad range of people is to use technology. If the Standards Institute had all of these materials online, just imagine the possibilities!

- ◇ *I'm on the committee in Maine charged with developing science standards. I log onto the Internet, connect with the Standards Institute web page, and begin to browse through the other state science standards. If I have a particular question—let's say, "which states require students to learn chemistry in high school?"—I could use "chemistry" as a key word and have access to all the chemistry standards. To begin benchmarking my standards internationally, I could look to see when in the curriculum other countries expect their students to learn chemistry and at what level of depth and breadth. I could also look at the exam questions to determine how rigorous the expectations are.*
- ◇ *I'm an English teacher in a Los Angeles middle school interested in finding out what kind of literature students in other countries are reading at this age and how well they are expected to write. I go to the school library and tap into the Standards Institute web page. There I have a choice of countries to look at with their scores on the most recent International Assessment of Educational Progress reading test displayed. I choose the top three countries, I click on eighth-grade literature, and up comes a list of books, short stories, and poems along with some sample passages. Also there for my perusal are a variety of essays showing different levels of student writing and information on the proportion of students reaching those levels.*
- ◇ *I'm a state legislator in Indiana doing research for an upcoming vote on whether the state should institute a series of high school exit exams for students. I go to the Standards Institute web page, enter "high stakes exams," and a list of countries and grade levels appears. I click on the French baccalaureat and read a few*

paragraphs on what these exams are for, who takes them, how many students pass them, and much more. I can even look at the exams in various subjects if I want to.

The possibilities here are endless. I have no doubt that states, districts, and everyone with a stake in our education system would greatly benefit from having access to so much information from around the world.



Benchmarking state and local standards to the best in the world

In addition to the raw materials, many states and districts will also want to know how their standards measure up to the standards in other states, districts, and countries, and they won't have the time, expertise, or objectivity to make that determination on their own. Many states are at this point right now—they want feedback on the quality of their standards but they're not sure where to turn. We have had a number of states ask us to review their standards, and I know other organizations have had these requests as well. But each of our analyses carries with it a certain ideology, depending on who we are and what we believe in. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; in fact, it's very important that a variety of groups with diverse opinions and interests weigh in. But I believe that an independent Standards Institute could issue reviews that avoid any political label by making use of the state and international materials that get collected.

I can imagine a number of criteria being developed and used by the Institute when analyzing standards. We have our own standards criteria at the AFT, and so do some other groups, but Institute criteria would have to be straightforward, widely accepted, and firmly rooted in international research. When someone asks why a particular criterion is important, the answer should be: "Because we know it works in other high-achieving countries."

What are some examples of criteria the Institute should develop and use? The most obvious criterion has to do with rigor: How challenging is a particular set of academic standards compared with the expectations in other high-achieving countries? I could imagine a report that would read something like this:

In France and the Netherlands, students are expected to have mastered addition and subtraction of two- and three-digit numbers by the end of first grade; in Germany, students learn this in second grade—your standards don't require it until third grade. Your standards expect fourth graders to master long division whereas that doesn't enter the curriculum in France or Germany until fifth grade and the Netherlands in sixth grade. In France and the Netherlands, students begin learning basic algebra in the third grade and they are doing the equivalent of your tenth grade algebra in the seventh grade. French students are expected to solve advanced geometric problems by the ninth grade that aren't reflected anywhere in your standards. Two-thirds of German students are expected to

learn advanced trigonometry by the end of eleventh grade and one-third pass a series of exams in which they must apply advanced trigonometric principles to actual job-related tasks or problems (examples could be provided). Trigonometry is touched upon in your high school standards, but the language isn't clear or specific enough to allow us to compare it in terms of rigor with the content of the German exams.

There should also be criteria other than rigor. One that comes to mind has to do with the extent to which standards are clear and specific enough to help ease the student mobility problem. One out of every five students switches schools or moves to another school district every year. In urban areas, one in three students switches schools or districts. The more clear and specific standards are about what students should learn each year, the better the chances that a student who moves from school to school or district to district will enter his new classroom having studied the same material as the rest of the students. The more general or vague the standards are, the less continuity we'll see, and the harder it will be on mobile students.

I could envision the Standards Institute developing a 10-point "mobility index" that could communicate to states and districts how effective their standards will be in this area. A state or district with standards that are very clear and specific about what students should learn in each grade might earn a "9" on the scale, whereas a set of standards that are arranged by grade clusters (e.g., k-4, 5-8, 9-12) might earn a "5," and standards without any grade level indications at all might earn a "1." Some states or districts might decide not to act on the mobility index on the grounds that it conflicts with local autonomy. That would be their right, but at least the information would be available to enable them to sufficiently weigh the tradeoffs.

I could also imagine something like a "performance index," which would measure the extent to which a set of standards answers the question "how good is good enough?" Most of what we've seen states develop so far are content standards that describe *what* students should learn. For standards to ultimately be useful to teachers, parents, and others, they need to also illustrate how well students need to perform a particular task or skill in order to show that they've mastered the content. Simply stating that "third graders should be able to write a well-constructed paragraph, using challenging vocabulary and proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar" doesn't tell me how good is good enough. But showing examples of paragraphs that meet and don't meet the standard does. A performance index could determine how far standards go in answering this important question.



Benchmarking state and local assessments and textbooks to the best in the world

To keep pace with states' needs, the Standards Institute could phase in the benchmarking of state assessments, and possibly textbooks as well. If I were a governor or superintendent, I would want to know if my state exit exams are as rigorous as the exams students in other countries take at the same age, and I'd want to compare the statistics of how many take and pass these exams. I would also want to know how the textbooks used in my state compare with those in other countries. This is something the Institute should be able to tell me, but benchmarking standards needs to be the priority in the beginning.

I'll say it again: To be useful and credible, the indexes and benchmarking reports need not have any particular political spin to them, nor do they have to render any value judgments. The point is to provide useful information to states and districts and to let them decide for themselves how they want to act on it.

This would not, however, preclude other organizations from using the information supplied by the Institute to issue their own reports and render their own judgments. In fact, I think this should be encouraged. At the AFT, we would like to be able to draw on the resources of the Institute to keep pushing for the issues we think are important: standards that are rigorous, specific, and grounded in the core academic disciplines. Other organizations should have the same opportunity. But we should all be working from the same rich and thorough base of information. We should all be enlightened by it. I'm convinced that creating a free flow of information like this would substantially improve the quality of the discussions and debates that are going on in every state and every district developing standards.



Monitoring Progress

In addition to determining the quality of their educational standards, assessments, and other materials, states and districts also need to be able to monitor the progress of their overall reforms. They need external indicators and benchmarks that they can use to inform and guide their work. Some of this information is included in the annual National Education Goals reports that have been issued by the Goals Panel every year since the last summit. But the good student achievement information that's in these reports gets buried among too much other information. It needs much more prominent attention.

NAEP and IAEP Data

Right now, one of the most useful series of indicators we have available to us is the data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and its international counterpart (IAEP). It is important to make the public aware of both national achievement trends and state-by-state data. There are even ways to compare state achievement on these tests with that of other countries, although these kinds of

comparisons typically tell us only what the average student in Utah can do when compared to the average German student. To get a more complete picture, we need to understand the distribution of achievement in states and other countries. What standards are being met by the top third of students, the middle third, and the bottom third?

Proportion of Students Taking Advanced Courses

Another indicator that deserves much more attention—and it begins to get at the distribution of achievement issue I just raised—is the proportion of students taking advanced courses and exams in high school. In a study the AFT conducted with the National Center for Improving Science Education, the Advanced Placement (AP) exams in science were found to be comparable in rigor to exams taken by college-bound students in England, France, Germany, and Japan. Yet, whereas 25 to 36 percent of students in these foreign countries pass exams of this caliber in multiple subjects, only 5 percent of American 18-year-olds pass even a single AP exam. If one-quarter to one-third of 18-year-olds in other countries are passing the equivalent of four or five AP exams, at least that many American students should be able to pass four or five AP exams before graduating from high school.

This is a benchmarked standard that states can begin working toward immediately. Unlike the standards and assessments under development in most states, AP courses and exams exist now, and they can be made more widely available. Only half the high schools in the U.S. offer AP courses to students, and within most of those schools, only a handful of students take the courses. The International Baccalaureate is another example of a high school program that reflects world class academic standards. Less than 1 percent of American high schools offer the IB program.

There are a variety of factors that contribute to such low numbers of American students reaching the AP and IB standards, including the cost of the programs, availability of qualified teachers to teach the material, and the lack of external incentives for students—while some colleges give credit for students with IB diplomas and high scores on the AP exams, few if any *require* that applicants have gone through these programs. But these should not be excuses. There is no reason why these courses can't be made available in every high school in the country. If states and districts truly set world class standards for their students, they will need AP and IB courses to help students reach them.

Some states have passed laws requiring AP courses be offered in every high school, and that has had a significant effect on the number of students taking these courses and exams. In South Carolina, for example, a law passed in 1983 required districts and schools to make AP courses available to all students who wanted to take them. Since that law went into effect, there has been an 87 percent increase in the number of schools offering AP courses, and the number of students taking AP exams has nearly quadrupled. Other states have made funds available to students who could not otherwise afford these programs or to teachers so they could be trained to teach the

courses. These kinds of efforts will have significant payoffs, but they are only under way in a handful of states.

Other Indicators

The Advanced Placement is one idea for an indicator, but I would hope that through its research, the Institute could come up with more. There is a particular need for indicators at the elementary level, since that's when so much of a child's development takes place. But even in the high school years, the picture is incomplete. AP courses are typically taken by college-bound students. We also need indicators that will give us rich information about those students who aren't going on to college.

Ultimately, I think there should also be an indicator or a set of indicators built around the kind of elements that we know work in foreign education systems: a core curriculum, exams linked to the curriculum, and rewards and consequences for student achievement. In my view, these three factors, more than most other school-related issues, account for the performance gap between their students and ours. The public deserves to know this, and people should be able to find out how their state or district compares.

For example, the Institute could report which states and districts have standards clear and specific enough to form the basis of a common core curriculum for all students. This is important for a few reasons. As mentioned earlier, student mobility is a problem that clear standards can help alleviate. But specificity is also important if states and districts want to ensure that no school can arrive at an interpretation of the standards that's too low; that the curriculum, assessments, and textbooks will be well aligned; and that teachers and parents can understand what the standards mean for *their* students and *their* children, whatever grade they may be in.

The Institute could also determine whether the assessments being used in states and districts are actually linked to the standards that have been circulated to educators and the public. And it could report the extent to which student performance on the assessments will count for something (i.e., will promotion, graduation, college scholarships or something else be dependent on achievement?).

These systemic indicators wouldn't necessarily be harder to apply than the others, but they may cast the Institute in more of an advocacy role than some may be comfortable with. Perhaps reports on these issues would be best left to outside organizations to do on their own, using information from the Institute. This is something that the governors and others who would be using the Institute would have to work out.

Funding and Oversight

Who should be in charge of this Educational Standards Institute, and how should it be funded? To some, the Goals Panel would be the logical choice to oversee such an operation because of its political credibility and its bipartisan configuration. Others see

the Panel as too closely associated with Congress and the federal government, or they question the lack of education and business representation.

One thing is clear. As it is presently funded and staffed, the Goals Panel could not perform any of the functions I've described here. But that doesn't mean that it couldn't set up this Educational Standards Institute and a credible governance board to oversee it. The Institute and/or its board could then report to the Goals Panel on a regular basis, but its work would be independent of the Goals Panel.

If the work of this Institute was kept to pure research, it is possible that it could be housed within the U.S. Department of Education. After all, ministries of education in most other countries routinely perform these functions, and staff at the Department of Education would have better access than anyone else to many of the international materials I've described here.

Another possibility would be to set this up as a fully independent Institute, funded by private sources and accountable to its funders. This might be preferable if the goal is to avoid any possible link to the U.S. government or elected officials. On the other hand, private sources are less reliable and could be discontinued or diminished based on the mood of the funders.

However the Institute is put together, it is important that prominent education and business leaders are involved, people who have expertise in the area of educational standards but who also have real credibility with educators and the public. The goal of creating this Institute is to not only provide people with good information but also to energize the standards movement, give it some visibility, and make sure it is here to stay. We can't afford to let raising academic standards become the latest in a series of failed educational fads.

As to where the money would come from, I think there are multiple sources. The business community is an obvious one. It is clear from their interest in this year's summit and from the work of the National Business Roundtable and the National Alliance of Business, that business is serious about educational standards. After the '89 summit, the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) was formed with substantial business support, and it has continued to fund innovative school reform efforts since then. NASDC is due to go out of business later this year. Why couldn't all of its supporters put their contributions into an Educational Standards Institute?

I think that states should also contribute since they will be the prime beneficiaries. They could pay a per-pupil expenditure or an equal lump sum. The federal government also has a vested interest—a national interest—in supporting these efforts. If it doesn't make sense for the federal government to invest money, it could certainly provide the Institute access to a lot of information. Many of the private foundations that have shown real interest in educational standards may want to contribute to a Standards Institute, as will education organizations, like the AFT, which support the standards movement.

Some time down the road I could envision the Institute also working on a fee-for-service basis. States and districts could pay for the information and technical assistance they need. Businesses, education groups, schools, and others should also be able to take advantage of the Institute's services. In the beginning, though, it will take a more substantial and consistent amount of support to make this work.



As I look to the future of public education I want to see headlines like "Colorado Raises Academic Standards, Students Respond" or "Thirty Percent of Florida's Students Take AP Courses and Exams—Up from 5 percent a Decade Ago" or "Since Maryland's New Standards Went into Effect, State Colleges Report Big Decrease in Remedial Courses Needed." I want to see headlines like this in every state and every city. But I am deeply concerned that states and districts need help to get there.

Establishing an Educational Standards Institute of the nature I describe in this paper will take time, money, expertise, and a commitment from a lot of organizations and people. But it is one concrete way we can help public education move forward. I can't think of a more important endeavor for the governors, business, and education leaders to support.

Educ. - Standards

THE CASE FOR TOUGH

As head of a Texas school commission in the 1980s, Ross Perot railed against public schools' lax standards and misplaced priorities. His favorite story was about a vocational student who was permitted to miss 35 days of school to enter a pet chicken in livestock shows. Finally, a newspaper sent a reporter to the Houston Fat Stock Show to check Perot's claim — and found what

Perot declared "a new world champion," a student who had missed 42 days of school showing a sheep.

His folksy barbs were part of a national drive to redefine the mission of public education. Traditionally, public schools have primarily taught the majority of students vocational and "life" skills rather than rigorous academics, on the grounds that they could earn a middle-class wage

in factories with diplomas that represented an eighth-grade academic education. Some high-standard schools have always existed, but the "excellence movement" of the 1980s argued that the increasing complexity of work demanded that schools ratchet up standards dramatically and give all students a shot at the sort of education traditionally reserved for the gifted and the privileged.

WHO'S MAKING THE GRADE?

▣ In a U.S. News poll, 87% say kids shouldn't graduate from high school without passing standard academic exams.

▣ 58% say firms should screen job seekers by standard exam scores and grades.

▣ 76% of U.S. high school seniors spend less than five hours per week on homework. In Japan, only 35% spend so little time on homework.

▣ Japanese teachers earn 10% more than top civil servants. U.S. salaries are set locally.



H STANDARDS

Governors and corporate leaders launch a new drive to demand more from students. History's lesson: Enemies are everywhere

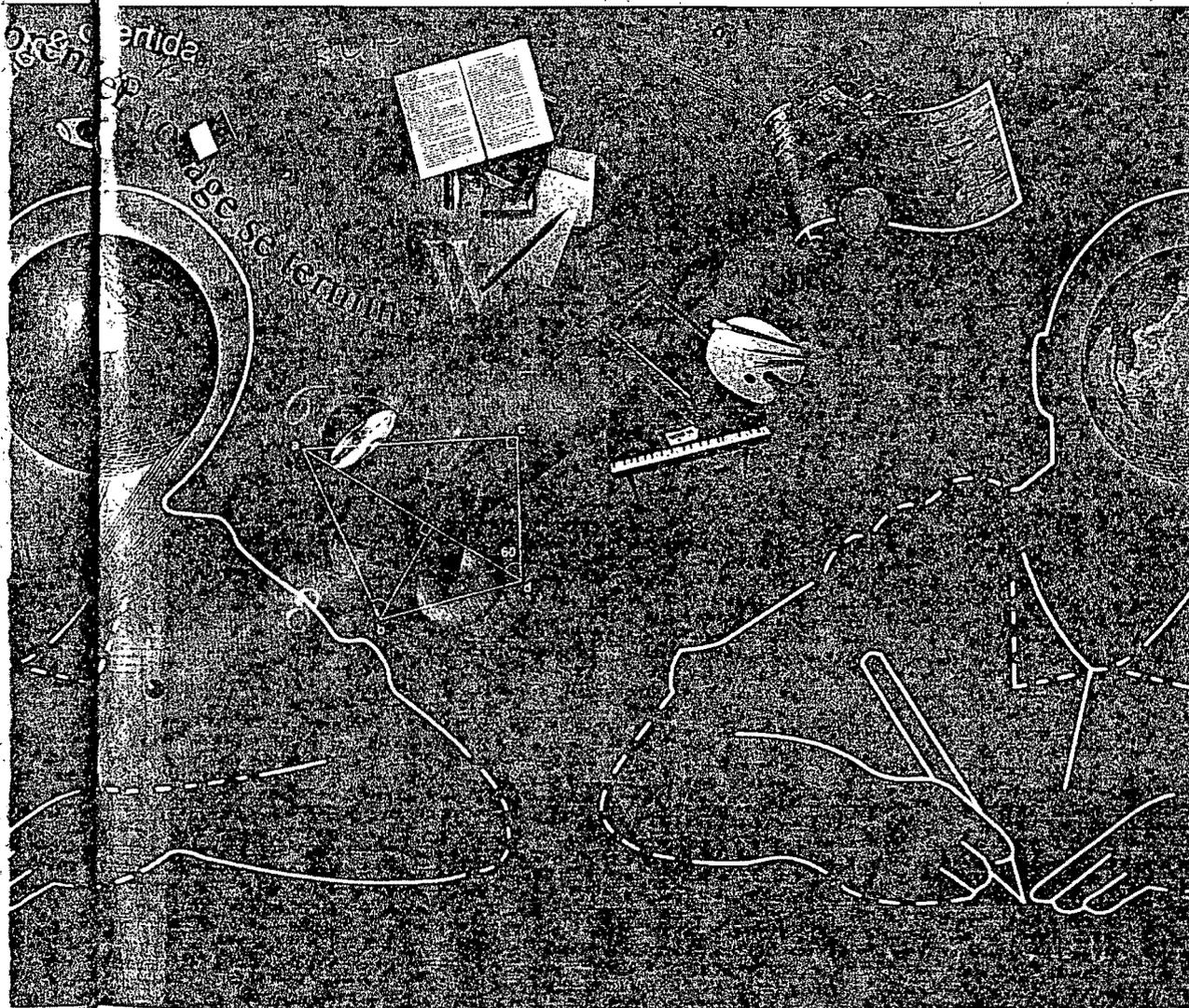
As a result, public schools are doing a better job of educating kids than ever before. Graduation rates are up. The share of high school students taking a core of academic subjects increased from 13 percent to 47 percent in the past decade. The gap between whites' and minorities' test scores has narrowed.

But the vast majority of American students are still educated at too low a level.

Only a third of twelfth graders mastered rigorous reading passages in a 1994 test by the respected National Assessment of Educational Progress. Only 11 percent showed a strong grasp of history. NAEP reports that the average reading level of black 17-year-olds is about the same as that of white 13-year-olds. And the general standards of U.S. schools pale in comparison with those of other industri-

alized nations. Says Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers: "Very few American pupils are performing anywhere near where they could be performing."

This week, 45 governors and the chief executives of dozens of the nation's largest corporations are gathering in Palisades, N.Y., to explore ways to bring "world class" standards to American



High school students in Japan, France and Germany spend more than twice as many hours in class studying math, history and science as U.S. kids do.

In France, Germany, Israel and Japan, about half of all students take advanced examinations; a third pass. Only 6.6% of U.S. kids take Advanced Placement exams; 4.4% pass.

Days in school year, on average:

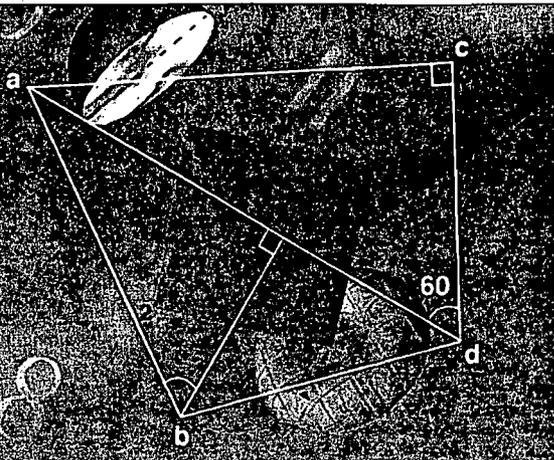
Japan	240
Korea	222
Taiwan	222
Israel	215
Scotland	191
Canada	188
U.S.	178

CULTURE & IDEAS

education. "Standards are the starting point, the sine qua non of school reform," says Louis Gerstner, chairman of IBM and cohost of the summit with Gov. Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada. And Americans seem anxious to respond. Three quarters of the respondents to a poll for *U.S. News* say academic standards should be raised. "Parents want to make sure in these anxious times that no matter where they live, the standards will be high," explains Celinda Lake of Lake Research, who conducted the survey with Ed Goetas of the Tarrance Group.

But at present—and in sharp contrast to other industrialized nations—America has a patchwork system of widely varying standards set largely by some 15,000 local school systems. "We have had, in effect, no standards," says Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy. The Palisades summit will attempt to address the problem by getting governors to pledge to create high standards in their states within two years. A group of governors and business leaders is then expected to spend the next year creating a clearinghouse to help states set standards and recognize model standards with "seals of approval."

Yet, this new drive comes six years after a summit between President Bush and the nation's governors (including Bill Clinton) spurred a movement to build a national system of standards and tests. The effort has been plagued by opposition from both liberals and conservatives, and its many troubles suggest that if the Palisades participants are to meet their lofty aims, they



THE NUMBERS GAME

At every level, the U.S. math curriculum is less demanding than in other countries. In Japan, 70% of math classes focus on advanced concepts like algebra; in the United States, fewer than 10% do.

will have to overcome these barriers:

A LEGACY OF LOCAL CONTROL

There's a huge conflict at the center of the standards movement: School reformers are skeptical that thousands of independent local school boards can produce the higher academic standards that the nation as a whole needs, but Americans have a long tradition of allowing communities to set their own policies. "We're not going to give up local control just because some CEO says we need statewide standards," insists Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, a conservative Republican.

experts and special-interest groups in the nation's capital know more about what should happen in schools than families, communities or states."

The controversy over Goals 2000 guarantees that the idea of national standards and tests, in the short term, is dead. Federal standards are widely disliked, so the notion of national standards independent of the federal government was discredited, too. "We might get national standards eventually," says Governor Thompson. "But the only way it's going to happen is bottom up, through coalitions of states." The question now is

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON EDUCATION ISSUES

- **National.** Sixty-two percent of respondents in the U.S. *News* poll think the education kids receive around the nation is fair, poor or very poor.
- **Local.** Forty-four percent think their local schools do a good job.

Blacks and rural residents are among the most pleased.

- **Most serious problems.** Thirty-four percent say parental involvement; 22%, lack of discipline; 13%, inadequate funding; 24%, combination of factors. Pollster Celinda Lake notes that most people think the things that need fixing in

schools don't cost more money. That's good for conservatives, bad for liberals.

- **Setting standards.** Thirty-nine percent say the job should be left to local education authorities (especially those in South Central and Mountain states); 27% say state authorities should set them; 24% say national authori-

ties (especially younger women; suburban parents; Hispanics).

- **Gifted students.** Forty-six percent say talented kids should be taught in separate classrooms, while 44% think they should be taught in classrooms with other children. Whites favor separation of the gifted; blacks favor integration.

whether tough statewide standards will fly. IBM's Gerstner is hopeful: "If the states set standards, we go from 15,000 standards to 50, let's do it."

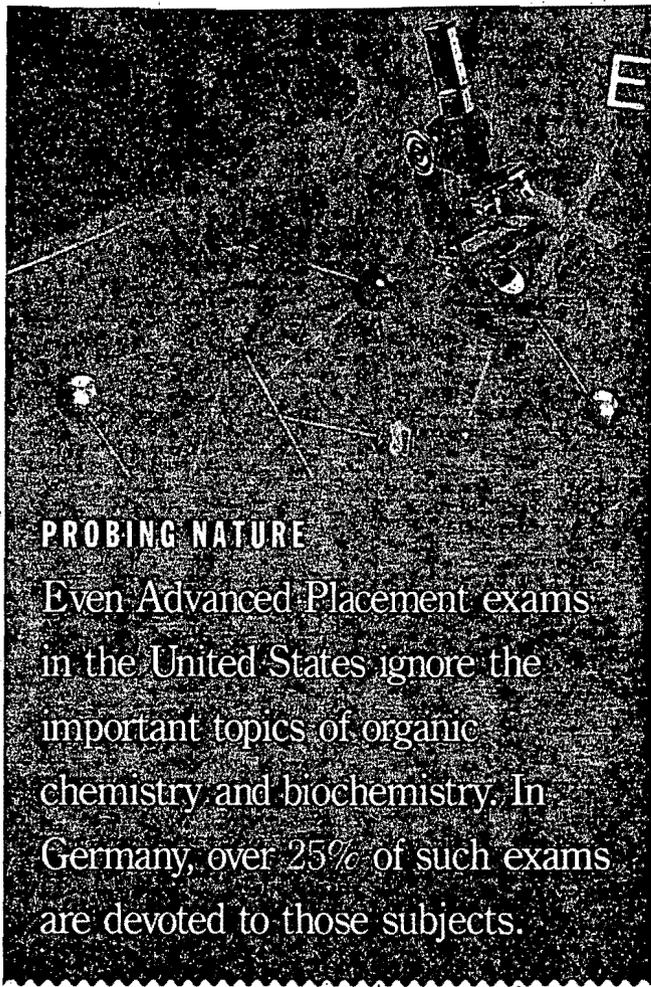
SKEPTICAL TEACHERS

Surprisingly, many teachers and principals are "tepid" about "the value of advanced learning and study," according to a report prepared for the Palisades summit by the Public Agenda organization, which has done studies on teacher attitudes. "Far from being strong advocates for high-level learning in their own fields, [they] seem to downplay the importance of the very subjects they teach."

This prevailing anti-intellectualism is reinforced, says Tucker, by "a very strong belief that academic achievement is mostly a matter of natural ability." Indeed, in a poll by U.S. researchers, 93 percent of Japanese teachers but only 26 percent of U.S. teachers said studying hard was the most important factor in math performance. Many U.S. educators and a number of civil rights advocates also argue that higher standards will hurt disadvantaged students by increasing dropout rates—a notion school reformers reject.

Many educators are wary of the standards movement as yet another indictment of public schools, and they get defensive. They have new ammunition from authors of recent books defending public schools. Hundreds of attendees at a school administrators' convention in San Diego earlier this month cheered as David Berliner, co-author of *The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud and the Attack on America's Public Schools*, proclaimed the criticism of public education a right-wing conspiracy aided by the media. In part, educators feel they are being held responsible for factors influencing student learning, such as poverty and crime, that they can't control.

Their ambivalence about academic subjects is partly a reflection of the strong belief in the public education circles of the importance of students' emotional well being. In some states, that has led standards setters to focus on fuzzy, feel-good goals. A movement in public education known as "outcome-based education," or OBE, urges schools to shift from a "focus on curriculum traditions and



PROBING NATURE

Even Advanced Placement exams in the United States ignore the important topics of organic chemistry and biochemistry. In Germany, over 25% of such exams are devoted to those subjects.

content" to a focus on "significant life challenges and opportunities." This has sparked a huge conservative backlash; William Bennett calls it "a Trojan horse for social engineering."

The conservative attack on OBE helped the standards movement by prompting a number of states to drop their often vague pronouncements on nonacademic matters and focus on raising academic performance. But in many instances, the attack undercut reformers' attempts to introduce tougher academic standards. "It took the good idea of setting standards and put a bull's eye on it," says Andy Plattner of the New Standards Project, a foundation-funded effort to draft national standards and tests, by tarring all standards drives as synonymous with OBE.

COMMUNITIES AREN'T CONVINCED

Many districts are ambivalent about tougher academic standards. They like their extracurriculars—a lot. "The same people who say with straight faces that they cannot afford X or Y have no trouble outfitting a 150-member marching band or building a new football stadi-

um," argues Thomas Corcoran, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied the standards movement. "It comes down to priorities."

The *U.S. News* poll suggests where priorities lie. Nearly 60 percent say that sports and music and other extracurricular programs deserve the emphasis and resources they now receive; only 35 percent say some of the money devoted to extracurricular programs should be diverted into academic programs. In sharp contrast, schools in other industrialized nations clearly focus on academics.

WHOSE STANDARDS?

Convincing people that there should be tough standards is only half the battle. The second half is forging a consensus on what the standards should be in a vast and diverse nation. The release of model national history standards a year ago provoked a huge public outcry, particularly from conservatives, for downplaying the nation's greatness and failing to mention by name historical figures such as Paul Revere, Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein. Even though the

standards were revolutionary in their high expectations for students and their attention to the diversity of the American experience, the attack on them has made it very unlikely any future history standards will be widely adopted.

The difficulty in getting a consensus on standards has produced a number of massive, everything-but-the-kitchen-sink documents that are simply unwieldy. The history standards ran to 314 pages—and still couldn't make anyone happy. Other groups have sought to dodge controversy by keeping standards short and vague. The organizations representing the nation's English and reading teachers, polarized by debates over how to teach reading and what students should read, recently released national "language arts" standards that fit on a single page. To be meaningful, reformers say, standards have to set an expectation and then be clear about what students and teachers need to do to meet it.

TESTS AND MONEY

Tough standards require tough tests. "Standards without consequences are just more paper," says Christopher

CULTURE & IDEAS

Cross, president of the Maryland State Board of Education: Many industrialized nations have rigorous subject-matter exams that both colleges and employers expect students to pass; the tests drive the nations' entire educational systems. But tests geared to high standards don't exist in the United States except at the Advanced Placement level. Widely used basic-skills tests drive down the level of instruction in many classrooms. The college-admissions process doesn't promote high standards either: Many colleges require only a high school diploma. "American high school students are among the only students in the world who have no incentives to take tough courses in school," says Tucker.

A few states are introducing tough new tests to spur higher standards. Maryland, for example, is designing 12 new end-of-course exams in academic subjects; the class of 2004 will have to pass 10 to graduate. In Kentucky, schools are eligible for state-funded bonuses of up to \$2,600 per teacher if their students meet expectations on new statewide exams, and the incentives are spurring improvements. But the expense of putting the tests together and opposition from key voices in the education establishment don't bode well. A resolution passed last year by the National Education Association, the powerful teachers' union, proclaims the NEA's opposition to testing "mandated by local, state or national authority."

Moreover, translating higher standards into higher student achievement is going to cost a lot of money to improve textbooks and the skills of a teaching force that has traditionally only had to educate a relatively small number of students to high levels. One measure of the task: Only 63 percent of high school teachers now have a college degree in the academic subject they teach most frequently. Gerstner of IBM contends that "we should be able to do it out of money we spend today," by making tough choices. But others argue there are huge discrepancies in spending that will make national standards unfair unless the funding playing field is leveled.

So, for the governors at the Palisades conference, bringing world-class standards to American schools is an endeavor fraught with fiscal and political perils. The question is whether they are serious about the task or merely want to be seen talking about a popular issue in an election year. ■

BY THOMAS TOCH WITH ROBIN M. BENNEFIELD AND AMY BERNSTEIN

ENGLISH LESSONS

The struggle never ceases

DAVID BURGESS—LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH



Pulling things up. Willie Atkinson with Phoenix High School students

Willie Atkinson was summoned to a London inner-city school when all else had failed. His predecessor hid herself in her office for fear of being assaulted. Kids roamed the corridors; vandalism and truancy were endemic. "It was worse than anything I saw in the Bronx," says Atkinson, who has taught in New York.

To turn things around, he spent \$75,000 cleaning up the school within two weeks of becoming headmaster last April. He gave it a new name, Phoenix High School, and strict guidelines for staff, pupils and parents. Teachers were closely monitored, and a third of them departed. A year later, behavior is improving, truancy and expulsions are down, staff morale is up and Atkinson hopes the number who pass national exams this year will grow from 5 percent of the student body to 20 percent.

Halting progress. Still, that would leave four fifths of the students unable to pass the exams, and therein lies England's frustration with its schools. Since 1988, the Conservative government has tried to toughen standards with a core curriculum, national testing, teacher training, rigorous inspections and more autonomy for schools. But the drive has shown only halting progress and is quite "fragile," argues Chris Woodhead, director of the government-run Of-

fice for Standards in Education. More than 40 percent of pupils are still underperforming.

The results of this cultural revolution are very mixed. A much higher proportion of the most talented students are passing university entrance exams, but the government doesn't believe that is attributable to higher standards and is investigating the cause. One theory: More students are taking and passing easier courses. The tougher grading has meant lower scores overall, but the proportion of those getting higher grades—presumably inspired by higher standards—has risen significantly. Among the lowest achievers, the number leaving school without being able to pass graduation tests is rising. Experts suggest these results mean that schools have stopped getting worse. But they know that's not saying much after eight years of concerted effort.

At Phoenix High School, the rot has been checked. But Atkinson acknowledges, "We're improving from an almost subterranean level." Today, the housing development opposite his office has 80 percent male unemployment and his job is to convince those families that education is the children's ticket out of poverty. "If we ever stop trying," he says, "a school like this will quickly revert to a desert."

BY ROBIN KNIGHT IN LONDON

What kids will have to know

See if you're good enough to compete with students at a world-class level

What should students know and be able to do? Drafting a fitting response has turned into a mammoth endeavor, with hundreds of experts producing thousands of pages of suggestions. Some are so vague it is hard to know how they translate to the classroom. Others are so detailed that only a superhero could wade through the material, let alone teach it. Some criteria are so tough even Ph.D.'s complain they can't meet them.

In the midst of this muddle, the National Education Goals Panel created a working set of standards in a few subject areas and tested students against them. Their findings guide much of the material below. While governors and corporate executives debate in Palisades, N.Y., about what to do, *U.S. News* has waded through dozens of proposals to highlight a few of the best ideas about the standards experts think children should meet by the end of 4th, 8th and 12th grades—when national performance tests are usually given. Take a close look at the questions. You may be stumped by more than one:

4TH GRADE

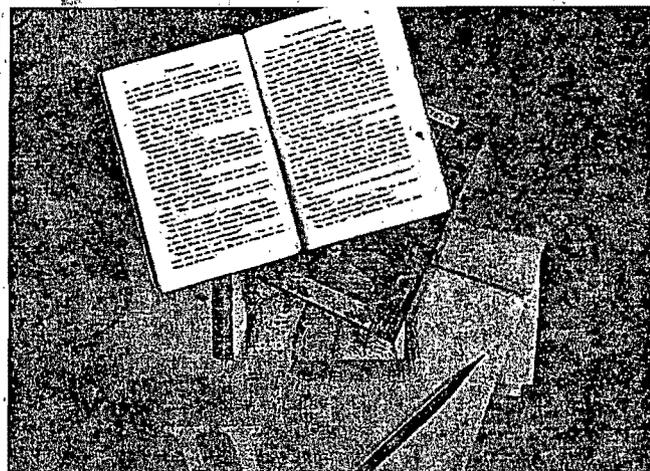
THE REALITY

READING & WRITING. Three in 4 students can't meet suggested standards. Only 7 percent can write a persuasive essay about a topic like this: Why should children be allowed to watch TV?

GEOGRAPHY. Seventy-eight percent can't meet suggested standards. Thirty percent are unable to answer a question like this:

Which landforms were most likely created by the eruption of volcanoes?

a. plains



HITTING THE BOOKS

British students are required to master a range of drama, fiction and poetry, from William Shakespeare to George Orwell.

Only 34% of U.S. high school seniors achieve this.

- b. mountains
- c. canyons
- d. deltas

Answer: b

MATHEMATICS. Four in 5 can't meet suggested standards, and 39 percent are unable to answer questions such as: What is 108 divided by 9?

Answer: 12

HISTORY. Five in 6 can't meet suggested standards, and 36 percent cannot consistently answer basic-level questions such as: Which state last became part of the United States?

Answer: Hawaii

THE IDEAL

READING & WRITING. Advance beyond basic comprehension to know the difference between fact and opinion, between well-developed characters and stereotypes. Employ more than basic grammar and punctuation skills in writing. Have the ability to analyze and edit one's own work to make it more precise and convincing.

EXAMPLES

1. Read at least 25 books during the year, including such works as:
The Little Prince

Princess Furball
The Wind in the Willows
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Keep a reading log with reactions to the texts—comparing and contrasting characters with people the student knows in real life, analyzing the author's choice of words and symbols, critiquing the story.

2. Produce a verse-by-verse paraphrase of a poem and an original poem that follows conventions of rhyme and meter.

3. Craft two different types of writing about the same subject, such as a personal narrative about trying out for a sports team, then an informative report on how to try out for that sports team.

MATHEMATICS. Master basic arithmetic and more-advanced concepts involved in geometry, algebra and probability concepts. Be able to apply them to all sorts of real-life situations.

EXAMPLES

1. Design the floor plan for a dream house in which regular rooms cost \$75 per square foot and special rooms (indoor pools, science labs, etc.) cost \$150, spending no more than \$100,000. The house must include a kitchen, bathroom, living room and bedroom.

2. Set up a system for discovering and recording all the possible combinations from rolling two dice and show what fraction of total possible outcomes each combination sum amounts to. (Hint: You can roll "7" six different ways; and six is one sixth of the 36 possible combinations of the two dice.)

SCIENCE. Master the basics of how to formulate hypotheses and test them in valid experiments. Understand physical properties like light, heat, sound and magnetism. Start ap-

preciating how living things interact with the environment.

EXAMPLES

1. Design and build a musical instrument and show how different forms affect the sound.
2. Explain the reasons why each of the following helps keep aquarium fish alive: a light, thermometer, rock, snail and plant.

GEOGRAPHY. Know how to use maps and graphs. Develop a sense of the world as a whole and the relationships between different regions and peoples.

EXAMPLES

1. Point out on a map features such as Lake Okeechobee and the Ozark Plateau, the Corn Belt and New England.
2. Explain how the local physical environment shapes how people live, such as the building materials they use, and the types of plants they grow.

HISTORY. Learn more than just the names and dates of historical events. Discover how decisions shape history, weigh the merits of different accounts of a historical event. Be able to place oneself in the shoes of someone living during that period.

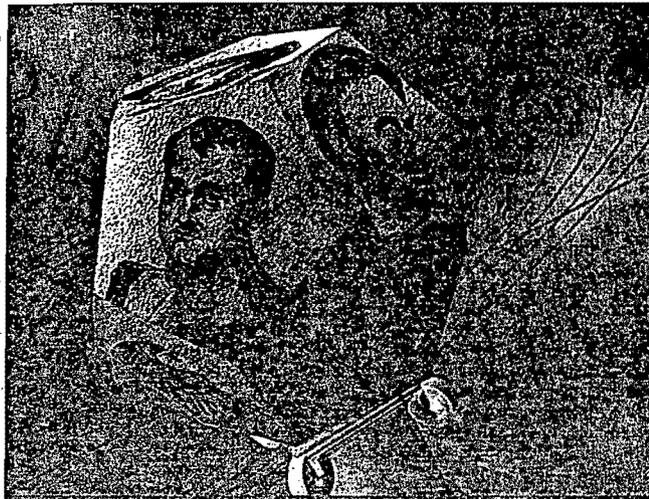
EXAMPLES

1. Compare characters and events described in historical fiction with primary sources of information about that period and make a judgment about the accuracy of the story.
2. Analyze how the world would be different today if those involved in key historical events (the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, etc.) had chosen a different course of action.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE. Don't just begin reading, writing and speaking at a basic level in a foreign language, but learn about a country's culture and how it compares with one's own.

EXAMPLES

1. Become pen pals (via letter or E-mail) with a student in a foreign country, asking and answering questions about family, school events and celebrations.
2. After listening to folk tales and songs in the foreign lan-



HISTORY'S POWER

French students must be able to explain many different factors leading to World War I. More than half of U.S. high school seniors have trouble naming even one important factor.

guage, describe how they are similar to or different from those in this country.

THE ARTS. Master the essentials of dance, theater, music and visual arts — then learn to improvise and create simple works in all four arts. Recognize how art is affected by culture and vice versa, and see connections between different art forms.

EXAMPLES

1. Paint a representation of a favorite song.
2. Script a play for class that includes original music and a choreographed dance.

8TH GRADE

THE REALITY

READING & WRITING. Seventy-two percent of students can't

MATHEMATICS. Three in 4 can't meet suggested standards, and 37 percent cannot answer a basic question like: How long does it take to earn \$45 if one earns \$2 a day on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and \$3 a day on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays (nothing is earned on Sundays)?

Answer: 3 weeks

HISTORY. Eighty-six percent of students can't meet history standards. Four out of 10 cannot answer a basic question like: Who wrote "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"?

Answer: Thomas Jefferson.

THE IDEAL

READING & WRITING. Become well-versed in many literary forms — essays, poetry, plays, short stories, novels — and be able to compare the style and merits of two pieces of literature. Know how to create complex fictional characters and how to build essay arguments.

EXAMPLES

1. Read 25 works, such as:
Inherit the Wind
Ryan White: My Own Story
The Princess Bride
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Treasure Island
The Outsiders
2. Read in depth four books from a single genre (historical novels), by a single writer (like Jack London), or on a single subject (adolescent life); make connections between the works.
3. Write a persuasive essay, such as an editorial on a school issue, that anticipates and addresses counterarguments.

MATHEMATICS. Move from simply memorizing math rules to having a good sense for which of different strategies would be the wisest to solve a given problem. Make sense of complicated patterns and understand how math plays a

meet suggested standards. Just 1 in 3 can write a well-developed review of a school performance, and only 8 percent are able to write a persuasive essay on a subject like: Why random drug searches should (or should not) be allowed in school.

GEOGRAPHY. Seven in 10 can't meet suggested standards, and 30 percent cannot answer a basic question like:

In ancient Greece, most towns were built on tops of hills primarily because:

- a. it was easier to find water on hilltops than lowlands
- b. temperatures were warmer at higher elevations
- c. defending a hill town was easier than defending a lowland town
- d. people in early Greece did not rely on farming for food.

Answer: c

part in endeavors ranging from music to space travel.

EXAMPLES

1. If, in a school of 1,000 lockers, one student opens every locker, a second student closes every other locker (second, fourth, sixth, etc.), a third student changes every third locker (opens closed lockers and closes open lockers) and so on until the 1,000th student changes the 1,000th locker, which lockers are open?

2. Show two different methods of answering the question: How many handshakes will occur at a party if every one of the 15 guests shakes hands with each of the others?

SCIENCE. Develop an awareness of the many things that interact in large, complex, evolving systems by studying such things as heredity and genes, the solar system and ocean life.

EXAMPLES

1. Explain the lines of evidence showing that dogs and cats are related by common ancestors.

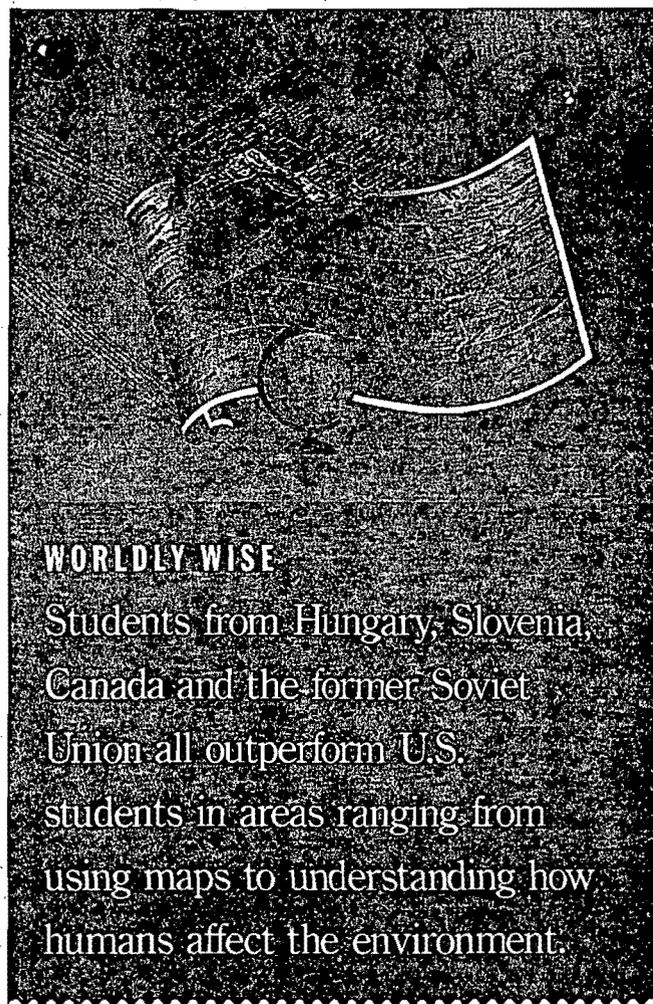
2. Explain what happens to the reading on a bathroom scale if one stands on it while riding an elevator.

HISTORY. See the cause-and-effect relationship between the attitudes and actions in all sorts of historical endeavors—social, technological, economic, political, philosophical and religious—and the mark they have left on the present.

EXAMPLES

1. Imagine yourself as the director who built Stonehenge. Prepare a plan to make it happen: How will the stones be obtained? How are the laborers to be recruited, provisioned for and supervised? How will the enterprise be financed? How will the structure be used?

2. Draw evidence from literature, biographies and other historical sources to evaluate the influence of the Horatio Alger stories on the notion of the "American Dream." What do "rags to riches" stories tell about American values? To what extent is that dream alive today in TV or modern novels?



WORLDLY WISE

Students from Hungary, Slovenia, Canada and the former Soviet Union all outperform U.S.

students in areas ranging from using maps to understanding how humans affect the environment.

GEOGRAPHY. Gain a more sophisticated appreciation for how human and physical elements interact, for better or worse, and begin to formulate solutions to current problems (like pollution and acid rain).

EXAMPLES

1. Write a set of instructions on what your family should do in case of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, earthquake, fire, tornado, blizzard or flood.

2. From memory, draw a map of the world on a single sheet of paper. Outline and label major physical features (including continents, oceans, mountain ranges, large rivers and deserts) and important human-devised features (including major cities, the equator and the prime meridian).

FOREIGN LANGUAGE. Advance to a deeper level of thinking in the language. Move from de-

scribing tangible things to expressing opinions and experiences and understanding more subtle ways of communicating.

EXAMPLES

1. Keep a journal (in the foreign language) with four entries per week. Include reactions to literature and newspaper articles.

2. Write an essay (in the foreign language) on the differences between nonverbal gestures in another culture and American gestures and how the differences might have come to exist.

THE ARTS. Hone a unique, personal style in artistic creations. Grow better at discriminating between good and great works of art and be able to learn from art works about other times and cultures.

EXAMPLES

1. Recognize the historical period and genre of famous works

of art, then compare and contrast them and explain what makes these art works excellent.
2. Accurately evaluate one's own and classmates' creations or performances, offering suggestions for improvement.

12TH GRADE

THE REALITY

READING & WRITING. Two in 3 students can't meet suggested standards. Forty-five percent cannot craft a well-developed essay on an object and what it would reveal about current times if placed in a time capsule. Just 12 percent can write well on a subject like: Why students should be required to do community service.

GEOGRAPHY. Seventy-three percent can't meet suggested standards. Three of 10 cannot answer a question like: What do Rome, Jerusalem, Mecca and Benares have in common?

- capitals of highly industrialized nations
- the world's four most densely populated cities
- areas of highest elevation
- religious centers.

Answer: d

MATHEMATICS. Eighty-four percent can't meet suggested standards. Over a third can't answer a basic question like: If x can be replaced by any number, how many different values can the expression $x + 6$ have?

Answer: infinitely many

HISTORY. Eighty-nine percent can't meet suggested standards, and 57 percent can't answer basic questions like: Many American colonies believed the Stamp Act (1765) was a form of:

- taxation without representation
- colonial self-government
- compromise with the British Parliament
- limitation on international trade.

Answer: a

THE IDEAL

READING & WRITING. Read with enough insight to surmise the

political and social influences on a piece of literature, and to detect the biases present in non-fiction. Know how to marshal persuasive evidence to support controversial conclusions.

EXAMPLES

1. Read 25 books, including works such as:

For Whom the Bell Tolls
Julius Caesar
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
A Brief History of Time

Compare two works on the same theme from different periods.

2. Produce an investigative piece that could run in a newspaper, using a variety of sources.

3. Write a reflective essay—such as an analysis of a proverb's significance.

MATHEMATICS. Have a full command of advanced theories and formulas like quadratic equations and the Pythagorean theorem. Use knowledge from geometry, trigonometry, algebra, statistics and calculus to solve real-world problems.

EXAMPLES

1. Explain which is a better fit, a round peg in a square hole or a square peg in a round hole. (Hint: Think in terms of ratios.)

2. Ann tells you that under her old method of shooting free throws in basketball, her average was 60 percent. Using a new method of shooting, she hit on 9 out of her first 10 throws. Should she conclude that the new method really is better than the old method? (Hint: Advanced statistical formula must be used.)

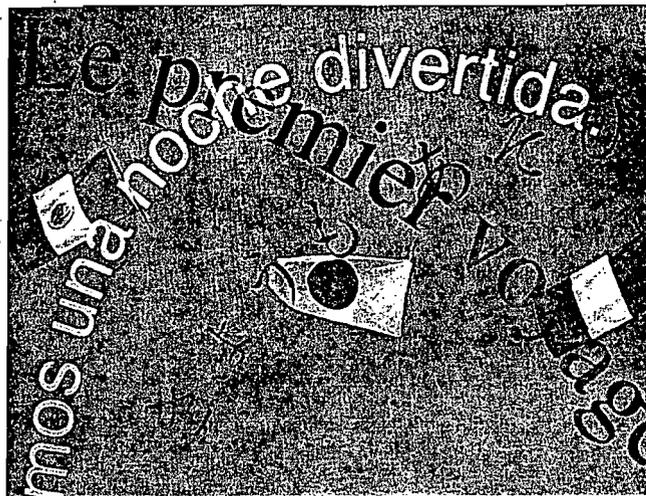
SCIENCE. Delve into current, scientific mysteries using the same approach as a career scientist: Design useful experiments and analyze the results.

EXAMPLES

1. Design modifications to in-line skates, skateboards or bicycles which make them safer, faster or less expensive.

2. Explain how DNA testing works. Take a position about including it as evidence in a trial.

3. Write about both the positive and negative consequences of a technological innovation that has occurred during your lifetime.



LANGUAGE BARRIERS

In Spain, more than 90% of students study a foreign language throughout high school. In the United States, about 43% study a foreign language and tend to do so for a shorter period.

HISTORY. Be able to identify the influences of multiple, competing voices throughout history and take account of the many unforeseen consequences, for better and worse, generated by historic events.

EXAMPLES

1. Create a chart of important technological advances through history such as the bow and arrow, the wheel, weaving, the sail, bronze casting, the plow, etc. Ex-

plore their possible origins; discuss the impact each technology had on the social organization and political power of the time.

2. Draw upon ideas of religious groups such as Virginia Baptists, mid-Atlantic Presbyterians and millennialists to assess how religion became a factor in the American Revolution.

GEOGRAPHY. Grasp the reality and consequences of global interdependence, and explain

the many reasons people form themselves into regions and why those regions inevitably change over time.

EXAMPLES

1. Name three places in the local area that have been affected by pollution. Identify the sources and types of pollution and explain how each type affects the people living there. Suggest solutions.

2. Write an essay about the geographic differences between developing and developed regions of the world and how those differences alter the way of life.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE. Reach a high fluency level. Comprehend subtle nuances and literature and understand how the language itself shapes ideas. Become well-versed in the history, traditions and current events of the country.

EXAMPLES

1. Write an essay in the language about idioms and phrases that have no direct translation to English. Form a hypothesis about their origin and what they say about the culture.

2. View a film in the language and write an essay (in that language) summarizing personal reactions to the film's themes.

THE ARTS. Specialize in at least one of these four arts—dance, music, theater, or visual arts—creating complex works. Begin to convey more abstract themes in artistic works.

EXAMPLES

1. Create a work of art that deals with a current social theme. Revise it several times, explaining the reasons for each artistic decision and saying what was lost and gained by each decision.

2. Identify genres (in music, dance, etc.) that show the influence of two or more cultural traditions and trace the historical conditions that led to their coming together.

BY JOANNIE M. SCHROF

For more information, see U.S. News Online at <http://www.usnews.com> on the Internet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION from key groups about the standards they think are appropriate:

- Natl. Center on Education and the Economy (202) 783-3668
- Council for Basic Education (202) 347-4171
- Natl. Council of Teachers of Mathematics (703) 620-9840
- Natl. Center for History in the Schools at UCLA (310) 825-4702

- Natl. Geographic Society (202) 857-7000
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (914) 963-8830
- National Standards for Arts Education (703) 860-4000
- Natl. Academy of Sciences (202) 334-2000
- Natl. Council of Teachers of English (217) 328-3870

Shakespeare vs. Spiderman

I visited the Barclay School in Baltimore the same day that the new national "Standards for the English Language Arts" arrived on my desk in New York. This produced what the authors of the new standards might call "dissonant cognitive process diversity," or what an English-speaking person would call a jumbled mind.

Barclay is a rigorous, back-to-basics public school that combines confidence building with high expectations. It gets results that elite private schools would be proud of, and it gets them from inner-city students, 85 percent of them black, 60 to 65 percent from single-parent homes.

While Barclay insists on plain English, the new standards are written in mind-bending jargon. They talk about "word identification strategies" (reading) and the use of "different writing process elements" (writing), but nothing directs teachers to teach rules of phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation (though the text says students "may wish" to explore ways of using punctuation more effectively).

At Barclay, these things are pushed hard and early. All consonant sounds are mastered before first grade. In the kindergarten I visited, a girl was sounding out words from a written list. In the first grade, I flipped through the assignment booklets hanging on the wall. All had well-written, grammatical one-page essays in clear, attractive handwriting.

Even in a special-education class of older children, the written work was of good quality. I wouldn't have guessed the writers had to be in a separate class.

The standards, on the other hand, feature a picture of a third grader's rather crude one-paragraph essay. It has 20 mistakes of grammar, spelling and punctuation. In current educational theory, these aren't errors, just alternate expressions and personal spellings. But Barclay aims at perfection, so they are errors. Any found in homework are corrected immediately the next day.

What they learn. The standards are dismissive of "prescribed sequences," but Barclay is built around them: Parents are told exactly what their children will learn each week and how they must help their children progress. At the end of the school year, parents and children visit the next grade, where they learn what will happen next term.

Barclay's approach is a rebuke to the reigning theories at our education schools. Barclay ignores whole-language theory. It believes in "direct instruction" (a dismissive educational term for actual teaching). It doesn't build self-esteem by excusing or praising failure. It ignores "learning strategies" and multicultural claptrap. All it does is churn out bright, achieving kids.

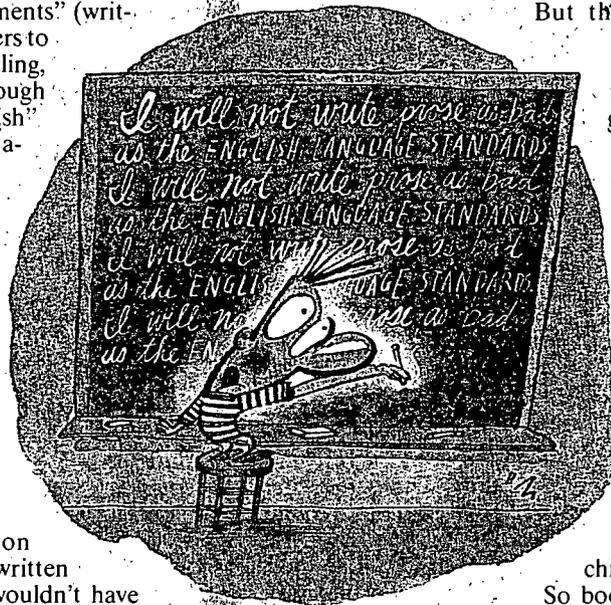
Unlike the notorious national history standards, which were overly long and grandly contemptuous of the West, the English standards are short (one page with 69 pages of tortured explanation) and have been attacked on all sides as unreadable, even by the *New York Times*. They are the dubious work of the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. These people are teaching our children how to write English?

It's a sign of the times at the NCTE that every key word in its title except "Council" is under attack from its membership: National (too nationalistic), "Teachers" (should be facilitators or guides) and "English" (noninclusive of other languages). After reading the report, I'd take the word "English" out, too, as deceptive advertising.

But the problem goes well beyond prose style. As is so often the case, bad prose hides bad thinking. Buried in all the gobbledygook is a theory of education, derived from literary theory and the deconstruction movement on college campuses. It goes like this: Schools treat literature and history as texts, but every form of expression is an equally important text worthy of study—CDs, TV shows, movies, comic books, ad slogans, graffiti, conversation. Children must explore all these texts in personal searches for meaning. This meaning is not inherent in any text—it is personally created in the mind of each child.

So books have no inherent meaning, and nobody can say that Shakespeare is more worthy of study than a baseball card or a cola jingle. There are no hierarchies of value and nobody is right or wrong about anything. In this meltdown of traditional learning, the teacher of course can't teach. He or she acts as a marginal, but friendly, guide to "critical thinking," which turns out to mean not the development of sharp and logical critical skills but the easy accumulation of "divergent" views on all matters. In effect, learning becomes just another matter of "choice," a marketplace view of thought without thinkers.

With our SAT scores so low and our public schools in deep trouble, this is not a very good time to convince students that reading comic books is just as good as traditional schoolwork. The good news is that the publication of the English standards is exposing this awful stuff to a broad public for the first time. It has hummed along in the background without much opposition, mostly because few of us noticed it and fewer still were inclined to demand an English-language version. Now it's out in the open, and we all can throw mudpies. ■



By David Henry
and Tom Lowry
USA TODAY

AI

83% back education testing

By Dennis Kelly
and Mimi Hall
USA TODAY

AI

President Clinton's plan to test every fourth- and eighth-grader in reading and math has huge support, a USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll shows.

In the poll of 400 people Wednesday, 83% said they favored the idea and just 13% were opposed.

Clinton, in his State of the Union speech Tuesday, asked school districts to adopt national testing in 1999. The first year's cost would be paid by the federal government.

Clinton, meanwhile, traveled to Georgia Wednesday to ask for help in persuading Congress to approve \$51 billion in new education spending.

"I'm committed to doing my part. You must do yours," he said in a speech at Augusta State University.

He also said that he is not trying to undermine state control of education with national tests. "Algebra is the same in Georgia as it is in Utah."

Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, said Wednesday a mandatory national standard "undermines local control of education."

Some educators favored the plan. Frank Newman of the Education Commission of the States, said tests now "are too infrequent and the results are not available quickly enough ... to truly assess educational effectiveness."

But key Republicans looked at Clinton's \$51 billion price tag and said throwing money at problems is not the answer.

"Don't we have to look at what has already worked and what hasn't" before trying new programs? asked Chairman William Goodling, R-Pa., of the House education committee.

The poll's margin of error was 5 percentage points.

Morgan Stanley and Dean Witter/Discover are merging to create Wall Street's biggest firm, a bold move to tap individuals' huge appetite for stocks and mutual funds.

The \$10.6 billion deal announced Wednesday is expected to fuel a consolidation wave among financial services firms facing increasing competition from banks, insurance companies and mutual fund firms.

The marriage teams Dean Witter, which has catered to middle America, with Morgan Stanley, a venerable Wall Street investment bank serving corporations and governments around the world.

"The combined companies create a financial powerhouse," says Steve Eisman analyst at Oppenheimer & Co.

So much of a powerhouse that the new company will unseat Merrill Lynch as the USA's largest brokerage.

Individual investors have proved a powerful source behind the bull market of the 1990s and a lucrative source of profits for Wall Street firms. The Federal Reserve says about 40% of U.S. household assets now are in stocks or stock mutual funds.

Dean Witter's sales force of 9,000 brokers now can help market securities Morgan Stanley underwrites. That should help Morgan Stanley's bankers compete with giant Merrill Lynch for business, including handling sales of state-owned industries around the world.

The new company also will have more clout in the mutual fund business and manage more than \$270 billion in assets, more than any securities firm, but about half that of fund giant Fidelity.

For Dean Witter's 3.2 million brokerage customers, the deal means more choices on the mutual-fund menu. In addition to Dean Witter's existing stock funds, customers will be able to buy funds from the Van Kampen/American Capital group. Morgan Stanley also may offer some of its top-performing institutional funds to individual investors.

Watch your head in jet's aisle seat

By Tim Friend
USA TODAY

Laptop computers, luggage carriers and briefcases falling from the overhead bins onto passengers may be the most common accident aboard an airline, experts say.

And the aisle seat is the most hazardous place to sit. Houston neurologist Randolph Evans describes three patients treated for "overhead headache" in the February

Journal *Headache*. They were hit by a case of wine, a briefcase and a laptop computer. All suffered head injuries. All were sitting in aisle seats.

Evans says the FAA should survey airlines to determine how common the accidents are, how often they cause injuries and what can be done.

Airlines are not required to report such accidents, but aviation lawyer Michael Pangia says they happen daily.

"The amount of incidents is

staggering," says Pangia, former trial lawyer for the FAA.

Records obtained by USA TODAY show USAir settled more than 1,000 claims involving falling objects in a three-year period. USAir's David Castelvetter says flight attendants routinely caution their 150,000 to 200,000 daily passengers to watch for objects in the overhead bins. "We're aware of it. It's a concern and we do our best to thwart any possible problems," he says.

Many frequent fliers blame fellow passengers.

David Frisbie, a motivational speaker from Minneapolis who flies eight to 10 times a month, was hit by a laptop computer that lacerated his scalp. "I was just glad a little child wasn't sitting there."

Says Pangia: "I would not be surprised if this is the most common accident aboard the airlines. We need some regulation in this area, or some change in design."

Va. Class Standards Mean No Standing Pat

Teachers Scramble to Change Basic Routines to Meet Tough New Goals

Second of two articles

A1 By Victoria Benning
Washington Post Staff Writer

Each January, as a break from the winter doldrums, the first-graders in Donna Pozda's class at Leesburg's Catocin Elementary School have embarked on a lighthearted study of penguins. They always seem to enjoy learning about Macaroni and Chinstrap penguins and other varieties of the creatures.

But this year, Pozda's lesson plan was much more substantive. Her students studied the different places that penguins live: Antarctica, Australia, New Zealand and South America. They examined maps of those lands, then used miniature penguins to mark the spots on a globe they made.

Pozda made the changes because of new state education standards that took effect in the fall. First-graders now are supposed to be able to locate not only their own communities but also Richmond, the state of Virginia, the United States, seven continents and four oceans on a map and a globe.

Teachers, students and parents throughout Northern Virginia are scrambling to adjust to the state's Standards of Learning, a 101-page document that sets subject-by-subject expectations for students in each grade. It is the centerpiece of Republican Gov. George Allen's education program, and state officials this week will propose how teachers and school districts are to be held accountable for their students' performance.

The standards are ambitious. Kindergartners are supposed to be introduced to the concepts of algebra, probability and statistics. Second- and third-graders are to learn principles of economics. In science, students at various grade levels will spend more time in laboratories.

Maryland, meanwhile, has had standards in place for third-, fifth- and eighth-graders for several years to help measure how well schools are doing. State officials are developing high school requirements that will form the basis of tests students will have to pass to graduate. They are scheduled to decide this week what form the testing will take. District school officials are developing an academic plan that would include standards.

Virginia's initiative has drawn praise from many educators and business leaders outside the state who describe it as a national model that meets President Clinton's call for tougher academic standards and testing in public schools. The American Federation of Teachers rated the guidelines "exemplary," and sev-

See STANDARDS, A11, Col. 1

STANDARDS, From A1

eral states are borrowing from Virginia for their own standards.

But although local school officials, teachers and parent groups are applauding the goal of raising academic standards, they say they have problems with the way the Allen administration is pursuing it.

Many complain that the pace of the changes is too rapid. Students in the third, fifth, eighth and 11th grades will undergo a practice round of testing in the spring, and when the tests are given again next year, the results will count as the measure of whether students are meeting the standards. But be-

cause many teachers lack the training or textbooks to teach the new lessons, some students will be tested on material they haven't covered, school administrators say.

Teachers and school officials also maintain that some of the standards for younger students aren't appropriate. Second-graders, for example, are required to learn about ancient Egypt and China at an age when they still are trying to grasp the concept of their own communities and how they fit into the United States, critics say.

In addition, local educators say, the sheer volume of new requirements—coupled with the state's testing schedule—may force teachers to be less innovative in the classroom.

"There is a lot of information to cover," said Kathleen Grove, assistant superintendent for instruction in Arlington. "That means less discretionary time for teachers to introduce pet projects. Instruction will have to be quite focused and paced."

"I think we're all worried about the number of tests and that they will take away time from connecting with kids," said Cathy McMurtrey, a fourth-grade teacher in Prince William County who is trying to teach her students to do historical analysis from diaries, letters and artifacts, another skill specified in the state's regulations. "It could get to the point where all we have time for is tests."

Allen administration officials, who have warned repeatedly that the local "education establishment" is determined to resist the governor's program, reject the criticism that the state is moving too quickly and say school districts have had plenty of time to prepare. Curriculum guides list hundreds of appropriate textbooks and materials, said Michelle Easton, president of the state Board of Education, which issued the new standards.

"Every time you change something, you're going to get the criticism that you're doing things too fast," said Richard T. LaPointe, state superintendent of public instruction.

The old state standards, adopted in 1983 and revised slightly in 1992, were "difficult to implement, unclear, mushy and, most importantly, not rigorous," LaPointe said.

For example, they required high school students to take three years of math to graduate but didn't specify which courses, so students could graduate after taking only basic math, he said. The new standards say that students must master algebra, and algebra will be on the 11th-grade test they'll eventually be required to pass to graduate.

Northern Virginia officials note that many of their districts' standards, in math and other subjects, exceeded the state's. But implementing the state's new rules, they say, still will be a long and arduous process, one that requires rewriting much of the curriculum and training many teachers, especially in the early grades, in subjects they have never taught.

Fairfax County, the Washington area's largest school system, is revising its math, science and social studies courses because of skills that will need to be taught to students at a younger age. "Between the changes in science, the different social studies requirements and the expanded math, there is going to be tremendous stress on our primary-grade teachers who have to prepare kids for the third grade, where they will be tested," said Nancy Sprague, assistant superintendent for instructional services in Fairfax. "It's going to require major staff development."

In Prince William, substitute teachers will work 2,800 more days this school year than the previous year so that regular teachers can be trained in the new standards. The district also must add labs and equipment at many schools because of changes to its math and science curriculums.

In some cases, the main problem is finding the teaching materials to meet the state's objectives, instructors say. Second-grade teachers, for example, say it's hard to find information on economics or ancient Egypt that is aimed at 7-year-olds. In Loudoun County, teachers have had to cull resources from libraries, parents and the World Wide Web.

Third-graders now are supposed to know about ancient Greece and Rome. But Arlington officials have warned parents that their children won't have a clue when they are tested on those subjects in the spring, because there hasn't been time to design the lessons.

Tom Vischi, parent of a third-grader at Arlington's Jamestown Elementary School, worries that it will be a blow to his daughter's confidence to sit down to a test full of unfamiliar things, even though this year's scores won't count. "You know that nightmare we've all had when you go in to take your final exam . . . and you wake up screaming?" Vischi said. "I want to avoid that."

For older students, the program may mean fewer electives as middle and high schools add courses to meet the new requirements.

Arlington officials, for example, have proposed adding geography and a second year of world history in the 10th grade to prepare students for the state's 11th-grade test. That would reduce the number of electives that 10th-graders could take—courses such as music or a second foreign language—from three to two. School officials say their hands are tied and have told parents who don't like the proposal to contact the state Board of Education.

For all the doubts about the new rules and the timetable for implementing them, several local school board members say the rules are a step in the right direction.

"The old standards and our old curriculum were not stringent enough for the students, and they've paid a price for that," said Prince William School Board Chairman Lucy S. Beauchamp (At Large). "We owe it to the kids in this county to have these standards and to make sure that they're followed."

Staff writer Dan Beyers contributed to this report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read the full text of Virginia's Standards of Learning for English, history, math and science, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

The Washington Post

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1997

File: Educ-Stands
cc: Mike C.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
2-25-97

B. Reed
Metsy Livingston
BC