

PRESS CLASS SIZE Q&A

Q: The Council for the Great City Schools is releasing a report on how federal funding is being used to reduce class size. What does the report say?

A: The Council for the Great City Schools reports that:

- In year one of the class size Initiative, 3, 558 teachers have been hired in 40 of the nation's largest urban school districts to reduce class size in the early grades.
- Teachers hired under the class size reduction program are serving in areas of the highest need, including literacy, mathematics, bilingual and special education.
- Under the class size initiative, over 22,000 teachers have also received high-quality training and to support class-size reduction. Urban schools have provided new and current teachers with training on instructional practices and technology and mentors for support.

Q: Who is the Council for the Great City Schools?

A: The Council for the Great City Schools The Great City Schools is an organization of the nation's largest urban public school systems, advocating K-12 education in inner-city schools, and governed by superintendents and board of education members from 58 cities across the country. This Administration is working together with organizations like Great City Schools to fight for our children's future.

Q: How will the Administration's first investment in the Class-Size Reduction initiative help reach the goal of hiring 100,000 new teachers?

A: The Administration is committed to providing funding to hire 100,000 teachers over the next seven years - approximately \$7.3 billion over five years (\$12 billion over seven years) within the context of a balanced budget. Last year, the federal government began acting on this commitment by appropriating \$1.2 billion dollars to help states hire approximately 30,000 teachers this fall. This year the Administration's budget request for fiscal year 2000 includes another \$1.4 billion for the class-size reduction initiative.

Q: Do class-size reduction efforts really affect student achievement?

Research demonstrates that class size reduction helps schools improve student learning by enabling them to hire additional, high qualified teachers in the early grades where students learn to read and master the basics. By having more high qualified teachers in smaller classes, students receive more personal attention, acquire a solid foundation for further learning and are more likely to read independently by the end of third grade, class size reduction has proven to be one of the most effective means to boost children's academic achievement.

Hiring and Preparing More Teachers to Improve Student Performance by Reducing Class Size

In his meeting with Michael Casserly, the President will discuss a report from the Council of Great City Schools on how federal funding for class size reduction has been used to spur academic achievement in the nation's urban schools. *Reducing Class Size in America's Urban Schools* cites the growing body of research finding that reducing class size yields concrete and lasting benefits—especially for poor kids—and details the important efforts being made by urban school districts to reduce class size and improve achievement through the recruitment, hiring and preparation of high-quality teachers.

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A bullet on why class size reduction:

- Reducing class size provides more time for students with their teachers and allows children with learning challenges and individual needs more personalized attention.

Education Q & A
President's Speech to the National Board
October 22, 1999

Q: This morning, the President spoke to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. What did he talk about?

A: The President went to this conference to congratulate the National Board on its work of raising standards for the teaching profession as a way to improve teaching and raise student achievement. As the President noted, you can't build a system of world-class schools without world-class teachers. The President also talked about what he sees as the cornerstones of this budget debate with the Republicans:

- getting 100,000 highly qualified teachers into the classroom to reduce class size and raise student achievement in the early grades,
- holding schools accountable for results, including a \$200 million set-aside to help states and school districts turn around failing schools, and
- helping students meet high standards by investing in after-school and summer school, the GEAR-UP program to help disadvantaged students prepare for and enter college, and his Hispanic Education Action Plan.

The President urges Congress to make strategic investments in what states and districts across the country have shown works to improve student achievement.

Q: Who is the National Board?

A: The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was founded in 1987. It conducts a system of national, voluntary certification for master teachers. The Board has set rigorous standards for the teaching profession with the goal of improving teaching, "professionalizing" the job of teaching and to push standards-based reform of teaching in the states. At present there are nearly 2000 certified teachers working in 27 states across the country.

Q: Yesterday, the House passed HR 2, the Students Results Act. Is the President prepared to sign the bill?

A: As I commented yesterday, the President is very pleased that the House worked in a bipartisan spirit to craft a bill that reflects many of the themes in his ESEA proposal, The Educational Excellence for All Children Act. He does not believe that reauthorizing ESEA in piecemeal fashion is the right way to do this, but he looks forward to working with Congress as the bill moves forward. He is pleased that this bill would continue standards-based reform, recognizes the importance of

accountability, emphasizes public school choice and it rejects the false promise of vouchers. But for this bill to work, we must ensure that it targets funds to our most disadvantaged students, strengthens accountability for the achievement of all students, invests in turning around our lowest-performing schools, and improves teacher quality.

Q: Was the President surprised that the proposed amendments on vouchers were defeated by fairly comfortable margins?

The President was pleased that the House took action to reject what he believes is the false promise of vouchers and to concentrate on providing quality educational services to public schools—where nine out of every ten students goes to school.

Q: Last night, the House passed HR 2300, the Straight A's bill. Does the Administration have a position on the bill as it was signed last night?

A: Let me first say that while the President is pleased by the bipartisan effort in the House to reauthorize ESEA, he is discouraged by the partisan gimmickry of "Straight A's" that would undo all of this work and harm our most disadvantaged students. This block grant bill would undercut both targeting and accountability in federal education programs. Limiting the number of states to 10 doesn't address any of the key flaws in this bill, it simply limits to 10 the number of states in which poor children can be harmed by this political gimmick. This bill fails to target funds to our neediest students and schools, contains almost no accountability for taxpayer dollars, and could in fact convert federal aid to our most needy schools into voucher schemes. It is unfortunate that rather than continuing to work in a bipartisan manner to reauthorize ESEA Congressional Republicans are wasting valuable time on this political gimmick.

Q&A
American Council on Education Teacher Quality Report
October 25, 1999

Q: According to the *NY Times*, the American Council on Education is releasing a report today that is extremely critical of the quality of the nation's teaching force. The President has been talking a lot about teacher quality lately -- does this mean he is wrong?

A: This report is further evidence why the President's agenda to raise teacher quality is so important. There is an undeniable teacher quality problem right now and that is why the President has proposed a number of initiatives to help recruit, train, and support high quality new teachers. In addition, Secretary Riley has been working with university presidents to implement some of the same improvements in teacher training that are recommended in today's report. Unfortunately, the Republican education appropriations bill would underfund the President's initiatives to raise teacher quality, as well as the successful "Troops to Teachers" program, and eliminate the President's plan to hire 100,000 highly qualified teachers to reduce class sizes in the early grades.

[Background]: The President's Initiatives include the Teacher Quality Enhancement grants designed to improve teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities; grants to help teachers use educational technology and help them teach limited English proficient students; professional development for early childhood educators; and the Eisenhower Professional Development program, which focuses on improving the teaching of science and math. The President has also proposed that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act be used to phase out the use of uncertified teachers and teachers teaching out of field, limit the use of aides who are not trained or qualified to teach, and recruit qualified mid-career professionals into teaching through the Transition to Teaching program.

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cc:

Subject:

Provides no funding for class size reduction and no guarantee that 30,000 teachers hired last year can continue teaching in smaller classes throughout the country. It also provides no funding for the additional 8,000 teachers the President's plan would support this year.