THE PROBLEM

The "problem of the homeless" comes with a name, with a face. For example, there's "Mary" and her two-year-old daughter. They couldn't make ends meet after Mary became ill and lost her job: Their public assistance check didn't cover the cost of rent and other basic needs.

Fearing eviction, Mary abandoned her apartment and went to stay with one relative after another. While she regretted losing her independence, she liked being with family and friends and liked the support and safety they offered her and her child. She had been afraid evenings in her apartment. There were drug dealers at her door and gun fire at night.

But Mary's solution, clearly, is short term.

Mary knows she can count on her family to take her in for now, but they have financial challenges of their own to face. Mary has tried to find a job, in food services, but has few child-care resources on which she can rely.

And there are other issues—

- She loves her daughter but feels overwhelmed as a parent.
- She needs training in using resources such as an employment agency or day care.
- She needs counseling in budgeting and strategic planning.
- She needs a support system that can offer her guidance when crises arise so she can make decisions that will benefit her family.
- And she needs a community where she feels safe and secure.

We have a solution for Mary.

NORTHWEST CHURCH FAMILY NETWORK, INC.

Board of Directors

c/o 206 New York Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 347-7510

Printed on recycled paper.

NORTHWEST CHURCH FAMILY NETWORK

THE SOLUTION: A PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

The NORTHWEST CHURCH FAMILY NETWORK (NWCFN) is a nonprofit ecumenical organization committed to a faith-based tradition of reaching out to those in need. Our mission is to form a partnership with homeless families in order to support them in their struggle toward self-sufficiency.

To fulfill this mission, we have purchased an apartment complex and formed a governing board. Network members come from Holy Redeemer Parish, St. Aloysius Parish, Holy Trinity Parish, Bibleway Temple, and the Northwest 1 community near Shaw. We have been raising funds and securing the technical assistance needed to renovate and maintain our two-building complex of 30 units, the Augusta-Louisa Apartments in Northwest Washington, DC.

MORE THAN FRESH PAINT

The complex, at the intersection of New York and New Jersey Avenues, needs renovation, but we intend to provide more than fresh paint. The Network will:

- Provide case management services for each family.
- Offer workshops on family management and other life skills.
- Create and support a home-buyers club.
- Link tenants with community resources.

We hope to build a climate of nurturing support and knowledge through the involvement of the members of our congregations. We seek to work with the tenants to enhance their lives and to improve the community where we all worship and live.

WHO WILL BE LIVING HERE?

Our Network will be accepting families who will be moving out of shelters or other unstable living environments. During this transitional phase they will need a great deal of support, including financial assistance.

All families will be expected to pay a fraction of their income for rent. Most will have entered the job market before moving into the building, while some may be completing vocational training programs.

NWCFN is committed to creating a living environment where families can find permanent housing and can raise their children free from the burden of drugs and violence that often plague our city.

HOW CAN I HELP?

There are many ways you can become a partner and join us in our efforts to build a better city and make a difference in people's lives:

- Offer financial assistance that can help us pay for the renovation.
- Sponsor a family by paying part of their rent for a year.
- Donate your time and talent to the renovation.
- Invite one of our board members to speak to your group.
- Become a tutor for resident children or adults.
- Organize recreational activities for residents.

WHITE & CASE Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 24, 1997

To: Melanne Verveer

From: Carolyn Lamm

Re: Preliminary Memorandum on Task Force of Lawyers for the Redevelopment of D.C.

As I mentioned in our conversation, one of the primary projects during my term as President of the D.C. Bar (commencing June 18) will be to create a Task Force on Lawyers for the Redevelopment of D.C. This group would work to promote the economic redevelopment of D.C. and facilitate efforts to bring business into or back into D.C.

The Task Force will consider how to mobilize lawyers to provide pro bono legal services as part of the investment incentives package offered by the District to facilitate investment. For instance, lawyers could devote up to 25 pro bono hours to advise each potential investor (potentially on behalf of the District) about the investment incentives available, the legal requirements for establishing in D.C., various tax and other issues that they should be aware of.

Further, the lawyers could be available to assist in the creation of an investment promotion office in the District of Columbia. Most other countries and states engaged in investment promotion efforts have an office that is tasked with promoting investment, both within the City and to corporations and entities outside. Lawyers have traditionally played a very significant role in facilitating foreign investment, assisting with feasibility studies (i.e., identifying legal issues, etc.) across the world and with law reform projects essential for the economic stimulation and transition of countries and economies. The Task Force would consider methods to perform similar services in the District of Columbia as a bridge for investment and development in D.C.

Further, the Task Force will consider methods for the Bar to expand relations with the Board of Trade and other entities within the City to promote development in D.C. Through the Public Services Activities Corporation of the D.C. Bar this group will work to provide pro bono legal services under the recently received grant for community development entities. This will facilitate the incorporation and expansion of community development entities in the District.

Many details of the program must be addressed, but conceptually at this point the Bar could contribute lawyers who would be willing to devote pro bono legal services as described above. We would envision that the District Investment Office would have the professional staff necessary to direct their efforts, etc. Given that this is in an early stage, once it appears

to be feasible and possible to work together, we can refine this. We would be pleased to work with you on the details of the implementation of this program.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Carolyn B. Lamm

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20415

Secretariat
1900 E St., NW

APR - 8 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTORS OF PERSONNEL, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

FROM: MARY LOU LINDHOLM
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR EMPLOYMENT

SUBJECT: 1997 Summer Initiatives for D.C. Youth

Summer is fast approaching, and I am sure you are beginning to make hiring plans for the summer months. As you make those plans, I would like to remind you of three very important programs geared toward hiring District of Columbia (D.C.) youth:

- D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative;
- D.C. Department of Employment Service's Summer Youth Employment and Training Program; and
- Greater Washington Urban League Summer Youth Program.

Please see the attached fact sheet for more information on, and contacts for, these programs.

I encourage each of you to provide employment opportunities for D.C. youth. As agencies residing in the District, we are expected to meet or exceed the number of D.C. youth employed last year using these vehicles. We all benefit from such an arrangement.

Thank you for your assistance.

Attachment

1997 SUMMER INITIATIVES FOR D.C. YOUTH

District of Columbia SUMMER WORKS '97

- ***D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative***

  √ Agencies actually hire and pay; hires count toward FTE.

  √ Program runs for a 6-week period (no specific dates); program may run longer at agency discretion.

  √ Pay is at GS-1 and above.

  √ Students range from high school to college level (ages 14-21).

  √ Agencies will be contacted by OPM's Washington Service Center/Employment Information Office (working with the Office of Management and Budget) to obtain commitments. Agencies are expected to hire as many as they did last year.

  √ Agencies submit requirements to the D.C. Department of Employment Services, who will in turn conduct preliminary reviews of applicants.

  √ Agencies conduct their own hiring and interview process based on information gathered from the D.C. Department of Employment Services.

  √ Agencies may appoint using the Student Temporary Employment Program (5 CFR 213.3203(a)).

  √ *For more information:* OPM's Washington Service Center/Employment Information Office on (202) 606-2525.

- ***Summer Youth Employment and Training Program***

  - √ Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Money is allocated to each State and the District of Columbia by formula.

  - √ Agencies serve as host-agencies for program; D.C. Department of Employment Services pays the students minimum wage ($4.75/hour).

  - √ Program runs 6 weeks: June 30 through August 8, 1997.

  - √ Each agency designates a host coordinator, who works with the D.C. Department of Employment Services.

  - √ Agencies may appoint as student volunteers (5 CFR part 308).

  - √ *For more information:* agency host coordinators should contact Ms. Wilda Hobson, D.C. Department of Employment Services, (202) 724-7340.

Greater Washington Urban League Summer Youth Program

- Agencies serve as hosts to 200 students ranging in age from 14 to 19.

- Students work 4 hours a day for 1 week.

- There are 2 volunteer assignment timeframes: July 14-18, and August 11-15, 1997.

- Greater Washington Urban League pays the volunteers a stipend of $85.

- Agencies may appoint as student volunteers (5 CFR part 308).

- OPM's Washington Service Center/Employment Information Office will initiate contact with agencies concerning their student requirements on or before May 1, 1997. Agencies will then contact the Greater Washington Urban League directly to hire program participants.

- *For more information:* contact Yvonne Merryweather of the Greater Washington Urban League on voice (202) 265-8200 or fax (202) 265-9878.

Options for Agencies

- Participation in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program and the Urban League Summer Youth Program are at the agency's discretion.
- Participation in the D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative is an agency agreed-upon commitment.
- Agencies are not obligated to participate in all 3 programs.
- In addition to the above programs, for the summer agencies may also hire students under the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP), 5 CFR 213.3202(c), or use the provisions under 5 CFR part 316 for competitive temporary appointments.

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

MAY 1 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTORS FOR PERSONNEL

FROM: MARYLOU LINDHOLM
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR EMPLOYMENT

SUBJECT: D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative - Summer 1997

The Office of Management and Budget requested that the Office of Personnel Management administer the D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative - Summer 1997. Director King's memorandum is attached for your information. Last year Federal agencies were asked to provide a total commitment of 1,000 new summer jobs through this program. We would like to thank you for your participation in last year's program.

Young people currently benefit from several summer jobs programs offered in the District of Columbia. This program is in addition to the D.C. Employment Service's SUMMER WORKS '97 Program, the Greater Washington Urban League Summer Program and other agency and community efforts. Agencies are strongly encouraged to provide as many employment opportunities as possible.

Agencies participating in this year's program are responsible for paying the salary of the youths, who generally will be expected to work for a 6-week period, however, employment may run longer at agency's discretion. Youths in this program are temporary employees appointed under OPM's appointment authority for "Student Temporary Employment," under Schedule B regulation 213.3202(a). This is the same authority agencies use to hire and pay for high school, college, graduate summer employees.

Hiring Process Requirements:

- Agencies should submit the names for points of contact who will be responsible for managing their program to: Ms. Rita A. Cooper, D.C. Department of Employment Services (DCDES), Associate Director, Office of Youth Programs, 500 C Street N.W., Room 106, Washington, DC 20001, (202)-724-7301 or Fax (202) 724-7347. Please include the telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address if available. (A copy of this information should be provided OPM at the address below.)

- A list of last year's contacts is attached for your use.

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL # of pages ▶

To CARL THOMPSON-COLE	From AL SEVERIEN
Dept./Agency ATTN: JANIE	Phone #
Fax # 5-7294	Fax #

NSN 7540-01-317-7368 5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

CON 148-79-4
March 1986

- Agencies should submit hiring requirements to DCDES who will in turn conduct preliminary reviews of applicants.

- Agencies conduct their own hiring and interview process based on information gathered from DCDES. DCDES will work with agencies in resolving problems associated with referral, consideration and selection of students.

Reporting Requirements:

- Agencies should submit hiring reports to OPM weekly (by 12 noon each Friday). On May 16, 1997, this first report should indicate the number of jobs committed to by your agency. Subsequent reports should include the following information: (1) actual hires, and (2) type and grade levels of the jobs.

- Reports should be submitted to: Ms. Linda Lee, OPM Washington Service Center, Employment Information Office, 1900 E Street, N.W., Room 1425, P.O. Box 52, Washington, DC 20415-0001, (202) 606-1304, Fax (202) 606-5049 or email at LLLEE@opm.gov. Ms. Lee is also available to answer agency questions on the reporting requirements.

We look forward to working with you to make this summer's program a positive experience for the young people of Washington DC

Attachments

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MAY 1 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: JAMES B. KING
DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative - Summer 1997

At the request of the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management will administer the D.C. Federal Jobs Initiative - Summer 1997. Last year Federal agencies were asked to make a commitment of 1,000 summer jobs through this program. The actual number hired was 896. We would like to meet or exceed 1000 summer jobs this year.

During the 1996 summer program, youths were employed by agencies in a wide array of jobs which included clerical, administrative, health, business, and finance - to name a few. They also received academic enrichment, exposure to the workplace, job and life skills orientation, and mentoring.

Agencies participating in this year's program are responsible for paying the salary of the youths, who generally will be expected to work for a 6-week period (program may run longer at agency's discretion). Youths in this program are temporary employees appointed under OPM's appointment authority for "Student Temporary Employment," under Schedule B, regulation 213.3202(a). Each agency will be asked to identify a point of contact that will be responsible for coordinating this effort with the D.C. Department of Employment Services (DCDES) and submitting report information to OPM (i.e., the number of jobs committed to by each agency, as well as the number of actual hires). Detailed information on reporting and other procedural requirements for the program will be provided in a separate memorandum to your director of personnel.

If you have any questions concerning the program, you may contact Ms. Rita A. Cooper, DCDES, Associate Director, Office of Youth Programs at (202) 724-7301. Questions on program reporting requirements should be directed to Ms. Linda Lee, OPM Washington Service Center/Employment Information Office at (202) 606-1304.

We look forward to working with you in making this summer an enriching experience not only for the young people in our community, but to all of us who manage the day-to-day business of Government

1996 AGENCY POC'S FOR SUMMER INITIATIVES FOR D.C. YOUTH PROGRAM

AGRICULTURE	Marge Brining	202-720 3286 540-659-1695
COMMERCE	Alan Balutis Austma Karison	202-482-3490 202-482-8076 Fax-482-3361
DEFENSE	Al Papenfuss Nancy Flynn	703-614-9113 703-614-8950
EDUCATION	Kim McNutt	202-401-3572
ENERGY	Shawna Woodhouse	202-586-8562 202-586-9843
EPA	David O'Connor Mike Hamlin	202-260-4467 202-260-3268
EXOP	Deborah Gomes	202-395-1088
FEMA	Dennis Owens Sheryl Withers	202-646-3962 202-646-4081
GSA	Lil Stuart Rose McCall Pat Lewis	202-501-0040 202-501-0370 202-501-1435
HHS	Eugene Kinlaw Barbara Iba	202-690-6191 202-690-7848
HUD	Olivia Jensen	202-708-0940
INTERIOR	Delores Chacon	202-208-6403
JUSTICE	Jolly Spencer	202-514-6778
LABOR	Kim Green Zurcilla Simms Lori Hill	202-219--118
NASA	Bonnie Acoveno	202-358-1551
OPM	Rose Gwin Pat Paige	202-606-2440 202-606-2924

1996 AGENCY POC'S FOR SUMMER INITIATIVES FOR D.C. YOUTH PROGRAM

Smithsonian	Carole Wharton Mary Rodriguez	202-357-2917
STATE	Marsha Frost Mrs. Logan	703-875-7253 703-812-2262
TRANSPORTATION	Durrett Lomax	202-366-9386
TREASURY	Kelvin Crenshaw	202-622-0378
VETERANS AFFAIRS	James Davis	202-565-8246

Albert Seferian 04/30/97 02:54:51 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Robert B. Rideout/OMB/EOP, Bruce D. Long/OMB/EOP, Marcia D. Occomy/OMB/EOP

cc: Carol Thompson-Cole/OMB/EOP, Janie L. Jeffers/OMB/EOP, Stephen A. Weigler/OMB/EOP, Raymond P. Kogut/OMB/EOP

Subject: DC Summer Hires program

In response to a call from Carol Thompson-Cole, who had received a call from a Washington Post reporter inquiring about our program, I provided the following information to Carol:
This was given to me by OPM's Dick Whitford, who runs the shop that is managing "our" piece:

[An initial memo from Mary Lou Lindholm to the IAG describing each of the following three programs was distributed April 8.]

A. The DC Federal Jobs Program (target 1000 jobs)

1. Letter to agency Heads describing the program and reminding them of their commitments to hire summer youths is on Jim King's desk and should be signed today.
2. A companion memo to the IAG from Mary Lou Lindholm providing other technical instructions and the weekly Friday reporting procedure is signed and will be faxed out as soon as Jim signs the above letter.
3. Dick and I worked out an arrangement whereby he will email me a summary of agency weekly reports as soon as they are tallied: I will then send that to Carol, Marcia, Larry and any others who we agree need to keep up to speed on the program. Please suggest others as they come to mind.
4 Carol will provide a status report to the Director as she determines appropriate.

B. The Urban League Program (target 300 jobs)
1. Memo from Mary Lou to the IAG describing this component was sent April 14.
2. Though very early, the League has already received inquiries from 5 agencies. Requests are due NLT June 7.
3. The Justice Department has already committed to one confirmed summer hire.
4. OPM will provide reports on this program as well, though likely not each week.

The DC Department of Employment Services Program (funded by DOL)
1. Memo from Mary Lou describing that component sent to IAG April 14.
2. As needed, we will obtain information on the status of this component directly from the DC government people.

I suggested to Carol, and she agreed, that future media inquiries about our program be directed to OPM's Director of Communications, Doug Walker, since OPM is managing the program for us and would be better prepared to provide details. Matters of policy would be handled by Carol herself.

OPM will also let me know of any such inquiries received by Doug Walker.

She will <u>not</u> provide our target hire number (1024) , but simply state that we hope to meet or exceed the number of hires made last year (896).

Looks good so far. OPM is again showing they can "do more with less."

DC

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

NOTE FOR MELANNE VERVEER

From: Barbara Chow BC

Subject: Announcement of D.C. Schools Initiative in the 1999 Budget

Date: January 9, 1998

The 1999 Budget includes $20 million for a D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) initiative. Administered by the Department of Education, the initiative would provide funds to support elements of D.C.'s school reform plan that are crucial to improving student achievement city-wide. These include expanding summer school for students who are not performing at grade-level, helping to place a reading specialist in every school, restructuring low-achieving schools, and enhancing the skills of teachers and principals.

Secretary Riley has been invited by Senator Jeffords to testify on solutions to the problems facing DCPS on January 15. The Secretary has asked OMB if he can announce the D.C. schools initiative at that hearing. I understand that the First Lady may participate in a D.C. event in the near future. If she is interested in announcing the D.C. schools initiative, we would ask the Department of Education hold off discussing the budget proposal at the hearing.

Please let me know as soon as possible if the First Lady is interested in announcing the D.C. schools initiative so that we determine whether to approve the Department's request.

cc: Jack Lew
Larry Haas

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM

STATEMENT FOR D.C. BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

JANUARY 29, 1998

Good afternoon and welcome. I am honored to be joined this afternoon by OMB Director Frank Raines, Secretary Rubin, Secretary Slater, Secretary Riley, and Congresswoman Norton.

In his State of the Union address, the President challenged us "to make our capital city a great city." Today, he is taking another step to help fulfill that promise. We are announcing that the President's budget request for fiscal year 1999 will include over $100 million in new money targeted directly to the District of Columbia so that this city -- and its citizens -- have the economic strength to succeed in the next century.

Too often, stories about D.C. only focus on what's wrong. But, this city has a great story to tell. For families, this is where our children learn, where we work, the place we call home. For the millions of people who visit our capital each year, this is where we get a firsthand glimpse of our history, culture, and government. And for all citizens, this is where the world's greatest democracy fulfills its responsibilities at home and abroad.

The story of D.C. is the story of the Administration's on-going commitment to help lift it up for those who live, learn, work, and visit here -- for all Americans. Under the Revitalization Act, that was enacted with the President's leadership last year, the criminal justice system has been revamped. Pension liability has been eliminated. And Medicaid payments have been increased.

Now we must continue that progress by focusing in on our schools, our transportation, our management, our cultural institutions -- indeed on the entire nerve center of D.C. -- our downtown. And that's what the President's budget would do.

I want to talk a moment about one part of the budget that has a tremendous impact on this city and our entire nation. Very few people visit or live in D.C. without stopping by our museums and monuments and taking in our history and culture. As we enter the millennium, these are the places that shed light on our creativity and innovation, on who we are and who we want to be. To preserve and strengthen our cultural and historical institutions for the ages, the President's budget includes $1.5 billion -- nine percent more than in 1998.

That means the 4.5 million people who visit the Kennedy Center each year will experience not only the new Concert Hall, but also a renovated Opera House, better aesthetics, better acoustics, and more accessibility for those with disabilities. Our charters of freedom -- the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights -- will be protected and our flag of freedom will be restored.

When we walk down Constitution Avenue, we will see a truly American Garden: sculptures from our 20th century surrounded by trees from all over the nation. The 60 million citizens who see them each year will find our monuments better cared for and our major museums, including the Anacostia Museum, renovated or repaired.

People strolling down the mall to check out the Smithsonian will one day see a National Museum of the American Indian. And people surfing the internet will, with the click of a mouse, be able to take a tour through our history and culture.

In fact, on March 5, I will attend a summit that is bringing together artists, civic leaders, business leaders and others to talk about the critical role that the arts can play in revitalizing downtown Washington.

And, that's the point. Just like Baltimore and Cleveland, the story of D.C. must ultimately be the story of what we can accomplish together. Over the last few years, I've had the opportunity to meet with local businesses, foundations, and civic organizations. I've talked to countless parents, teachers, and child care providers. I've met citizens who are donating their time and money -- including federal employees, who with Secretary Slater's leadership, have given almost $38 million through the Combined Federal Campaign.

I've also visited many of our district's schools, and seen what can happen when citizens take it upon themselves to tutor kids, to repair schools, to simply make a difference. And I'm so pleased that Secretary Riley is here to talk about the additional steps the Administration will take to turn our city's schools into our nation's pride.

Everyone I've met over the last few years has one thing in common: they want D.C. to work. That kind of cooperation is not only the story of D.C. It must be the future of D.C., and the future of our country. And now, it's my great honor to introduce a leader who has worked tirelessly to create that kind of future: OMB Director Frank Raines.

STRUGGLE TO LEARN
INSIDE A D.C. SCHOOL

At P.R. Harris, Exercises in Frustration

Lack of Supplies, Student Skills, Teacher Training Spell Little Progress

Another in a series of occasional articles

By Debbi Wilgoren
Washington Post Staff Writer

A blackboard schedule in first-period English said it was time to read "Home Boy," a novel about a Caribbean immigrant drifting aimlessly through high school. But in this District classroom, only teacher Carolyn Rankin, her voice clear, one hand on her hip, was actually reading.

Before her, 20 seventh-graders sat in ragged rows, following the words in thin, worn copies of a book that seemed to describe some of their own learning hurdles.

"Eddie didn't return to school for the rest of the month, and Marcus tried to stay out of trouble. He still hated Social Studies," Rankin read. "They were studying American government, and the words were as long and confusing as the nonsense his tutor back home had tried to teach him."

A few eyes stared into space and a boy fidgeted with his pen as the teacher struggled to hold the students' attention in what passes for a literature lesson at Patricia Roberts Harris Educational Center in far Southeast Washington.

Rankin says many of her students, who range in age from 12 to nearly 16 but are clustered in the same class, lack the skills to take turns reading aloud. Most would stumble frequently over the story, she said, and probably would stop cold at such words as "tenement," "immigration" and "priority." Their classmates would make fun or grow more distracted.

That's why, this 24-year teaching veteran explained, she has resigned

See HARRIS, A12, Col. 1

HARRIS, From A1

herself this year to reading to her students, rather than helping them learn to read for themselves.

"When they read aloud, it is very time-consuming," Rankin said, though she hopes the youngsters will read a book on their own this spring. "A lot of them have never read a novel from cover to cover. At least this way, they'll have been through a whole novel."

Rankin's situation is a dispiriting illustration of the academic paralysis that afflicts so many public school students in the nation's capital. D.C. schools Chief Executive Julius W. Becton Jr. was hired 14 months ago to cure just this type of systemic dysfunction and to reverse years of widespread

The retired Army general and his recruit from the Seattle school system preach the importance of new teacher training and materials, and they warn that they will judge city educators by how much their students progress when they take the latest round of achievement tests in April.

Ackerman has adopted Becton's mantra: "Failure is not an option."

But with the school year half over, many teachers at P.R. Harris and other public schools in the District say success still seems a distant dream. Students who already lag years behind spend class time listening to their teacher read, instead of the other way around. New training and supplies have barely appeared in the classrooms. A shortage of teachers persists, as well as other problems.

Rankin does not assign "Home Boy" to her students as homework, for example, because she has only 30 copies to share with her five English classes. These are all that remain of the 150 copies purchased for seventh-graders at the school six years ago. Even if she had enough copies, most students couldn't navigate the novel themselves, she said. And many probably would ignore the assignment, as they do other work she gives them.

"That's the problem with homework," Rankin said. "It just is not returned the way it should be."

P.R. Harris, on the edge of Oxon Run Park, has some of the lowest test scores in the city's 77,000-student school system and is one of 21 schools ordered by Ackerman to improve scores by 10 percent this year or risk having its administrators and teachers reassigned. Its principal was replaced in August by Theodore Hinton, an award-winning former assistant principal from the highly regarded Hine Junior High School in Capitol Hill.

The school serves nearly 900 students from pre-kindergarten through ninth grade, 88.5 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The youngsters live in the surrounding apartment complexes. Many carry the scars of urban American problems—teenage pregnancy, neighborhood violence and crime, unemployment, parents struggling with alcohol or drug addiction—with them each day through stern gray metal detectors at the school's front doors.

Hinton has won praise for bringing order and energy to the sprawling building. In January, he launched weekly test-preparation seminars for the teachers and met with them in small groups to ask what additional resources they need.

"We can improve. We're gonna improve," he said at a recent faculty meeting. "In June, we're going to

signs of promise are few and far between. Asked for an example of student work she was proud of, Rankin brought out a collage of magazine cutouts depicting characters and scenes from "Home Boy." Its creator—the only one in his class to turn in the assignment—can barely read or write, she said, so he dictated the simple picture captions to a friend.

"This made me feel good, because I saw that he was really interested in the story," Rankin said. "I'm trying, but, you know, I'm not a miracle worker."

Assistant Superintendent Helena N. Jones, who oversees P.R. Harris, is sympathetic to the challenges faced by Rankin and other D.C. schoolteachers but believes these challenges require new approaches, such as finding easier books that students can read on their own.

"Children get better at doing things with practice," Jones said. "If there is a case where what is being expected of students . . . is not being [done] in the classroom, then the teacher must adjust her instruction."

The students from Rankin's first-period English class start their day next door in Homeroom 326, under the strict eye of social studies teacher Charles Coaston. Thirty students—21 boys and nine girls—are listed on his attendance ledger, including several special education students who are enrolled in separate academic classes. The usual age for seventh-graders at the start of the school year is 12, but slightly more than half the students in this group are 13, 14 and even 15 years old—meaning they began school late, have been held back or both.

Nearly two-thirds of the students were far below grade level on the math and reading tests in October. If the strict new promotion standards are applied to seventh-graders this spring, they will need to do much better on the April tests to go on to eighth grade. Ten of the students are assigned to a remedial reading program while their classmates are in wood shop; a half-dozen have signed up for tutoring one day a week by volunteers from the Social Security Administration.

Coaston, like Rankin, has lowered his teaching expectations to meet his students' limited skills. Instead of lecturing or leading class discussions, he guides them page by page through their 10-year-old world geography text, stopping at each boldface vocabulary word, asking a student to read the definition of that word, then coaxing the class to write the word and copy the definition.

"A sphere or a ball with a map covering it is a globe," one boy laboriously read aloud recently. He pro-

several words. If they looked at their notes at home that evening—like Rankin, Coaston has only one set of this text for all his classes—they would have been hard-pressed to figure out what the vocabulary words meant.

One youth, seated up front near the blackboard, wasn't writing at all. Coaston had given him special permission to take a textbook home, the student explained, because he was failing the class and needed to study. Sitting sideways at his desk, playing with a glove he wore on one hand, the youth said he had written the vocabulary definitions at home a few days earlier and saw no need to do so again.

Halfway through the lesson, teacher's aide Karen Rush came in and scanned the desks for a student who needed help. Rush splits her time among all the sixth- and seventh-grade classrooms, working 30 hours a week and making $19,000 a year. She is 41 years old and is taking classes at the University of the District of Columbia to become a teacher.

Without a word to Coaston, she settled in next to Parrish Burrow, who was struggling to find the definition of one word the rest of the class had already located.

Parrish's mother, Ethel Burrow, was one of only five parents and grandparents from the class who showed up for a recent meeting with teachers. She said she was deeply worried about her son's future.

"I get on him all the time," said Burrow, who has registered her son for the free tutoring program. "I've been telling him for the longest time to go and get some help."

At the meeting, Rankin, Coaston and the other seventh-grade teachers painted a bleak picture of student performance. They told of reading for the students who couldn't, assigning homework that never got done and reviewing vocabulary words again and again—only to have students fail simple tests. Coaston, who, like nearly all staff members and students at the school, is African American, told the small group he was especially bothered by the failure of children from his own community.

"It breaks my heart when I see these black kids come to class [and] do nothing," he said. "This is our future. We need to do better. . . . I go home and tear my hair out, because these are our kids."

Although other teachers voiced similar urgency, the school's assistant principal and a guidance counselor were strikingly neutral. They spoke generally of the need for cooperation and hard work. [illegible]

were fueled by frustration at the decline he has seen in students' skills during his 26-year career. They have fallen behind gradually, he said, and as their attention spans have shrunk, their behavior problems have multiplied. The school system, he added, doesn't seem to know what to do.

"We're supposed to hold them back if they can't read. We're supposed to," he said. "But then we got a memo last year saying we're failing too many kids. It's kind of a Catch-22. If you fail a whole bunch of kids, they say you're not doing your job. And if you pass a whole bunch of kids who aren't up to par, what are they saying? You're not doing your job."

Coaston consoles himself with brighter moments. He keeps business cards of two former students, now in their twenties, in his wallet. And he smiles when Keisha and some classmates break into an animated discussion about the solar system, showing they do understand what he taught them in Chapter 2.

Teaching would be easier, Coaston acknowledges, if he had textbooks for all his students. But he says the books he wanted were not available in April, when Becton asked schools to turn in complete book orders to avoid past problems with shortages. Smith, the assistant principal, said that she had been unaware of Coaston's problem and that he should have consulted her if he was concerned about what to buy.

"Each child should have a book," Smith said.

Rankin, she said, will be able to replenish her paperback supply after this school year. In the meantime, Smith and other school officials said, Rankin and other teachers should seek creative ways to get all students reading—trips to the library, photocopied poems and short stories, anything that captures and holds their interest.

Rankin said she would love for her students to read on their own. But most treat homework with a carelessness that was obvious the day they returned from Christmas vacation—and Rankin asked for the diaries they were supposed to keep during the break.

Augustine Hughes, a diligent student, proudly handed in a detailed pocket diary. The girl next to her offered up three pieces of notebook paper with two sentences written for each day. Keisha Jones hastily finished a one-sentence-a-day account. Jamar Drew gave Rankin one entry.

"And I want to see you actually writing," she said, interrupting two boys in animated conversation.

"There ain't no Santa Claus," one youth replied.

"Then you write, 'Dear Mom,'" Rankin cajoled, standing over the student until he put pen to paper.

But when she turned away, the pen came up. The youngster resumed dreamy bragging with his classmate about the cars and other luxuries they would buy for their mothers if they had $5 million. When Rankin told the students to close their journals, neither boy had written a word.

The students filed up to their teacher's desk and selected from the stack of tattered paperbacks. It was time to listen to "Home Boy."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read the first article in this series, click on the above symbol on the front page of the Post's Web site at www.washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1998

not performing up to par on nationally recognized math and reading tests.

large number of kids who are not going to be promoted."

Upstairs, in Rankin's classroom,

this before," she said. "I did it."

"Write it down in your notebooks," Coaston said, encouragingly, pacing the room. Most of the students dutifully did. Some copied the definition incompletely, however, or misspelled

The Washington Post
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1998

1/2

Clinton Plan Adds Funds For District

$120 Million Aimed At Economy, Schools

By David A. Vise
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Clinton administration yesterday proposed spending an additional $120 million on the District next year to buoy the local economy and give the city's ailing schools extra funds to improve student achievement and teacher training.

In a White House ceremony, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said the fresh funding reflects the administration's continuing commitment to the District and builds on a broad-based rescue package approved by Congress last year. Although Mayor Marion Barry (D) attacked the proposal as woefully inadequate and "awful," Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) and other local officials described it as a logical and important step forward in the city's efforts to boost tourism, improve education and emerge from a prolonged financial crisis.

The proposal includes a $50 million federal investment in a new local economic development corporation, $25 million for Metro station improvements at the city's new convention center site and $25 million for the D.C. financial control board to spend on management reforms. The city's schools, engaged in a campaign to improve student performance, would receive $20 million to expand summer school, put reading specialists in every school and beef up principal and teacher training.

"The president's historic rescue package last year has made it possible for the District government to survive," Norton said. "With today's initiative, the president has moved

See DISTRICT, B8, Col. 1

DISTRICT, From B1

beyond keeping the District alive to helping the city to thrive."

Barry accused Norton of mistakenly embracing the federal rescue package that stripped him of power over the summer and said she was prematurely praising the Clinton administration's latest proposal. The mayor said the District's needs are far greater than the financial package that the first lady, flanked by four Cabinet secretaries in the Roosevelt Room, announced yesterday.

"I am extremely disappointed," Barry said. "We need more resources and less rhetoric. I am hopeful Congress will see the light and do more."

That doesn't seem likely. Rep. Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.), chairman of the House Government Oversight subcommittee on the District, said he will support the Clinton plan once the president transmits the budget to Capitol Hill. Although he may propose certain modifications, Davis said he favors the scope and emphasis of the White House plan and scoffed at the notion that the city government needs much more money.

"I like the president's proposal," Davis said. "The thrust of this is very positive, and we are going to do everything we can up here to support him."

Although other legislators declined to comment, congressional sources said Rep. Charles H. Taylor (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on the District, would oppose the president's request for an additional $120 million for the city. Last year, Republican leaders overruled Taylor when he objected to providing the District with a substantial boost in federal aid.

This is the Clinton administration's second attempt to fund an economic development corporation for the city that would have vast powers to spur job creation and neighborhood revitalization. Last year, Congress rejected the notion of a federally chartered economic development entity and instead approved tax breaks to benefit first-time home buyers and investors willing to put money into District-based businesses in some parts of the city.

Federal budget chief Franklin D. Raines said the difference this time is that the economic development corporation would be created by city officials, rather than by Congress, and that the federal government would be an investor in the new enterprise.

D.C. Council member Charlene Drew Jarvis (D-Ward 4), who is working on legislation to set up the new corporation, said it would include three presidential appointees but have a majority of locally appointed officials on its board. Jarvis said she plans to hold a hearing on the economic development corporation next week.

"The timing of the president's announcement couldn't have been better," Jarvis said. "I am delighted with the support for economic development, and I think that this stimulus for investment will expand our revenue base."

Control board Chairman Andrew F. Brimmer said he was pleased with the White House focus on economic development. And D.C. Council member Harold Brazil (D-At Large) said he was glad to see the expanded White House commitment to the city.

"We are in desperate need of more revenue," Brazil said. "I'm pleased."

The budget proposed by the Clinton administration would be the first in many years not to include a direct federal payment to the city government, which is not allowed to tax commuters who work in the city. The city received a $190 million "federal contribution" this year and had received $660 million in prior years. Clinton administration officials said the District was better off with the transfer of expensive programs to the federal government than with the stagnant federal payment.

Hillary Clinton said she will attend a March 5 summit on the importance of the arts in the District and hailed the city's continuing progress, especially in revitalizing downtown, which she described as its "nerve center."

"Too often, stories about the District of Columbia only focus on what is wrong," she said. "This city has a great story to tell."

The Washington Post
Friday, January 30, 1998

Congress's Path Unclear Amid Distractions

Lawmakers Attempt to Pursue Pressing Issues in a Surreal Atmosphere

By Helen Dewar and Guy Gugliotta
Washington Post Staff Writers

During President Clinton's State of the Union address, Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.) was on his feet, clapping and cheering. "Then I went home and I felt awful" because of the president's personal problems. "This is the political equivalent of a black hole and it is sucking all the energy" from Congress.

While other lawmakers may not have experienced the intensity of Kerrey's mood swings, many agree that the questions hanging over Clinton's head, unless resolved swiftly, are likely to become a drag on his agenda and spill over onto a broad array of bipartisan initiatives on subjects from tobacco to trade.

"It could get to be a distraction, to say the least, and an impediment at the worst," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.).

According to some key lawmakers, the scandal could do the most damage in the areas of trade and foreign policy, where the stakes are especially high and where consensus is difficult even in normal times.

"These issues are tough ... and the president has to convince the American people that it's in the best interest of the country," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston (R-La.). On these issues, "the president needs to get involved," said Rep. Charles B. Rangel (N.Y.), ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee.

But some believe that the scandal is making Clinton "as engaged as he has ever been on public policy," as Rep. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va.) put it. "He revels in it anyway, and this is the way that he blocks out all this other stuff. That's how he keeps his wits about him."

Some lawmakers also believe that Clinton's problems might—ironically—spur both parties to demonstrate they can govern in the face of adversity.

Democrats, buoyed at least for the moment by the response to Clinton's speech Tuesday night and to his first foray into the country Wednesday, will want to dispel any notion of paralysis or meltdown. Republicans, who have grown used to dealing with Clinton from positions of both strength and weakness, will use any opportunity to push their own smaller-government alternatives to Clinton's proposals for greater governmental activism.

And, to the extent that Clinton articulated compelling issues of bipartisan concern in his State of the Union address, such as education, child care and consumer rights for managed health care plans, they will probably have momentum of their own, although fights are assured over the proposed solutions.

"In a curious way, I almost get the sense that we could get more done, not less, because they [members of Congress] will want to show they're tending to business," said Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.).

"The fact is that people from both parties want to get things done," said Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.). "The metaphysics count for less than people think."

Although Republicans have gone out of their way to avoid an appearance of trying to profit at Clinton's expense, they clearly sensed an opening.

"The good news is we can achieve many of the same goals and do it better with Republican initiatives," said Sen. Phil Gramm (Tex.). "I think quite frankly we have an opportunity to come forward with our agenda ... to see that this Congress is not wasted."

It also gives Republicans "more time to shape legislation and do things the way we want.... We have a bit more leverage, and we don't have to panic anymore," said Rep. Mark Edward Souder (Ind.).

In any case, lawmakers say, the direction of the second session of the 105th Congress, including its balance of political power and the outlook for major accomplishments, is not likely to become clear until more is known about allegations that Clinton had sexual relations with a White House intern and lied about it.

"It's directly related to how soon the situation is resolved," said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.). "If it drags out, it will be a huge distraction."

"If it gets to the point where people decide he's a congenital liar, then it's going to hurt," said Sen. Robert F. Bennett (R-Utah). "If he can show Monica Lewinsky made it all up and he did not have any kind of sexual relations, then he'll be all right."

For the time being, however, Congress is going about its business in an almost surreal atmosphere of normalcy. The Senate voted to confirm three federal judges and plunged into a typical partisan squabble over naming National Airport for President Ronald Reagan, while the House held the latest in a series of inconclusive votes on a contested California election. Hearings proceeded in both houses on everything from the economy to campaign finance abuses.

With what Lott described as greater-than-normal urgency, leaders of both parties proposed a resolution aimed at showing a united front for tough action against Iraq, including extraordinarily broad language urging Clinton to take "all necessary and appropriate action" to force unimpeded inspections of weapons facilities. Both houses are scheduled to act on the resolution next week.

Many of the domestic issues that will present Clinton with the most difficulty would have been troublesome anyway, such as expanding access to Medicare, increasing the minimum wage and passing new campaign finance legislation.

But, while polls showed wide public support for Clinton's proposal to devote any budget surpluses to shoring up Social Security resources, he may need all the political capital he can muster to keep Democrats from dipping into it for spending programs and Republicans from trying to tap it for tax cuts.

Strong presidential leadership may also be required to forge a consensus on the proposed tobacco deal and steer it toward enactment, many lawmakers have said. "Someone has to crack the whip," said a Republican senator, asking not to be quoted by name.

Most foreign policy and trade initiatives fall in the category of already difficult issues that will require increasing presidential involvement—including funding for continued U.S. military engagement in Bosnia, for the International Monetary Fund and for payment of back dues to the United Nations. Even more controversial is Clinton's announced effort to win approval of "fast track" trade negotiating authority, which died for lack of Democratic support in the House last year.

Despite these problems, however, Clinton could be "slightly stronger" on national security matters to the extent that hostile foreign countries seek to take advantage of his troubles, Souder said.

The Washington Post
FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR FRANKLIN D. RAINES

FROM: Marshall S. Smith MSS
Acting Deputy Secretary

DATE: October 30, 1997

SUBJECT: Memoradum to Assist the District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS)

Enclosed is a memoradum with recommendations on how to best assist DCPS. Although this document is in draft form, it contains information we plan to include in a memoradum from the Secretary to the President of the United States. Thank you for your review and comments.

Ackerman
Becker
McClory
Brookings
'25 24

DRAFT

October 30, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR FRANKLIN D. RAINES

FROM: Marshall S. Smith
Acting Deputy Secretary

SUBJECT: Supporting Improvements in the District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS)

Purpose and Executive Summary:

This memorandum lays out options for the Administration to assist the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) in academic reform and with the maintenance and modernization needs of the school facilities. It is important to assist General Julius W. Becton and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Arlene Ackerman, with their academic plan in addition to establishing a responsible strategy for addressing the problems with school facilities. Indeed the credibility and success of Becton and Ackerman's attempt to reform the DC public schools may rest upon our capacity and willingness to support their proposed reforms.

Below are our recommendations:

1. Invest in Reading, Summer School, Failing Schools, and Standards and Assessments
   Invest $10 million/year for 3 years to help jump-start four DCPS critical reforms: professional development and after-school program to improve reading, summer school for students not promoted, comprehensive whole-school reform to address failing schools, and implement challenging standards, assessments, and an accountability system.

2. Charter Schools
   Work with the District to establish an aggressive plan to ensure that charter schools are a real and rich alternative public school choice and involve Federal agencies and local colleges and universities in charter schools across the city. Charter schools would be held accountable to at least the same challenging academic standards as all public schools. DCPS and/or other responsible authorities would ensure true access for all students to charter schools, disseminating information widely and setting up a plan to assist in transportation needs.

3. Long-Term Facilities Plan and Immediate DCPS Assistance for Short-Term Problems
   Initiate a short-term strategy to help address the boiler, roof, and other immediate problems. Work with the private sector and the District to establish a Commission that would evaluate long-term needs and suggest sustainable solutions in the long term.

4. Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission to Consider Creating a Community College
   Create a commission to consider establishing a focused, structured, and comprehensive two year community college in the District of Columbia. One model would be to have Federal agencies assist the academic program in their areas of specialty.

I. Context

During the 1996-97 school year, DCPS enrolled 78,648 students and operated 157 school buildings, including 97 Title I schools. Education outcomes in DCPS are far below the national norms on standardized tests of student achievement. The District is at the bottom of almost every NAEP state assessment and is the lowest in the nation in average SAT scores. In 1995, dropout rates were nearly twice that of high school students nationwide. During 1995-96 both students and teachers in DCPS were subjected to levels of violence that were twice the national average. Nearly two-thirds of the teachers reported that violent student behavior was a serious impediment to teaching. In 1995, almost 4,000 of the criminal arrests in the District (9% of all arrests) were of school-aged youth.

On November 12, 1996, the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (Control Board) temporarily shifted most of the powers of the 11-member elected Board of Education (School Board) to a nine-member Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees (Trustees). The Trustees assumed immediate responsibility for the operation and management of the school system until June 30, 2000; General Julius W. Becton, Jr., who serves as one of the Trustees, was appointed CEO-Superintendent for a three-year term. The School Board continues to serve but with few responsibilities.

Although there were and are bright spots in the District's schools, General Becton inherited a dysfunctional organization. The management systems were broken, there were few mechanisms for quality control both in the business and academic components of the organization and, at the bottom line, the students were very badly served.

Yet, even as the District has been racked with seemingly insoluble troubles over issues of school maintenance and construction the General has made inroads in a variety of areas. Among other accomplishments, he has made hard decisions to eliminate 11 schools, taken many steps to improve efficiency and accountability within the administration of the system, injected new talent, and addressed safety in the schools. On the academic side he adopted academic content standards, brought in the Stanford 9 as the test of choice, developed a close working relationship with the New Standards project, established a training program for principals, and put firmly into place research-based comprehensive whole-school improvement efforts at 14 low-performing schools. In addition, with the help of Department of Education staff, he initiated action in several areas to improve the quality of federal program operations and to clear up actual or potential audit problems, and commissioned his own wide-scale financial audit across the system.

Six weeks ago General Becton brought Dr. Arlene Ackerman on board as his Chief Academic Officer and second-in-command. Dr. Ackerman came highly recommended and has moved quickly to develop and publicly announce an academic plan based on challenging standards with a strong one-year performance strategy (see Appendix A). The one-year strategy includes a focus on reading, the improvement of failing schools, and the imposition of high-stakes accountability standards for students, teachers, and principals.

While the details are not yet fully worked out, we believe that the plan is a giant step in the right direction

and should be supported. Indeed the credibility of Becton and Ackerman's attempt to reform the DCPS may rest upon our capacity and ability support their proposed reforms.

II. Possible Investments in the DCPS Academic Reforms

The recently announced academic plan for DCPS provides a structure for new, focused investments beyond those in the existing DC budget. Although in the long run the plan should be able to operate within the core budget of the District, in the first years we expect marginal, targeted resources will be necessary to ensure that the effort has substantial quality. Four particular areas within Dr. Ackerman's academic plan hold promise to directly improve academic quality in the District. Each activity meets three criteria: offer a strong promise of positive effects on academic achievement; address an immediate, substantial problem; and would enable the Administration to support the basic goals of the District's academic plan.

We can significantly support four DCPS activities directly. Appendix B considers these activities in some detail. These activities are:

A. Improve reading for K-3 students. The District plans to announce an aggressive broad-based campaign called "It Takes a Village", to dramatically improve reading instruction and reading achievement for all 24,000 students in K-3. The campaign will include a massive community-wide effort, including after-school tutoring, outreach to parents, intensive professional development for almost all primary school teachers in the District, and an early identification, intervention, and prevention program for low performing students.

B. Summer academic programs for students who do not meet the basic standards in the grades where, according to the academic plan, such students will be retained in grade. Three grades are identified in the plan with as many as 40% or roughly 7,500 students potentially likely to be held back. The program should demonstrate that it is different from the regular academic year program. These programs should be challenging, enriching, and engaging. In addition, DCPS should develop an innovative instructional year for students who are retained in grade for not reaching academic standards. At the second grade, students below a "basic" level on the Stanford 9 will be retained, at the third grade students below a "basic" level in reading and mathematics will be retained, and at the eighth grade a comprehensive assessment will determine who will be retained.

C. An effort to turn around up to 50 failing schools by using research-based, whole school programs. The District will be working with organizations such as New American Schools, and has reached out to the Department's Education Laboratories and other organizations. Twenty-three schools have already been named and efforts at improvement have started in these schools. More schools will be identified in November. After-school tutorials and Saturday Academies will be part of the effort.

D. Sustained implementation of the District's new standards, assessments, and accountability system. The District strategy will emphasize system-wide professional development and school-based efforts to ensure that common challenging standards are being implemented in every school. The District

has been working with the New Standards Project to plan and implement these reforms.

Recommendation 1:
We recommend that the Administration support a targeted $10 million/year effort for three years to support four DCPS activities focused on improving reading, providing support for students required to attend summer school, turning around failing schools, and implementing challenging standards, assessments and an accountability system. A support strategy would have two components.

1. Allocate $10 million/year for three years in extra funds through DC appropriations or other means to help accelerate the DC reform efforts. These funds could be used in the immediate future. The specific details of the use of the funds should be worked out with Dr. Ackerman. Ten million dollars per year for the next three years would support, for example, an intensive and sustained professional development effort in teaching reading for all 1,500 K-3 teachers ($6 million), summer enrichment programs for 5,000 students ($12 million), and three years of funds to support reform of 50 failing schools ($12 million). The Administration has already suggested that the $7 million in the Republican proposal for vouchers in FY98 be used to support comprehensive whole school reform for failing schools and for after-school programs for students.

2. Simultaneously the Department of Education would work closely with DCPS to ensure that they efficiently use their existing Federal program funds to help them accomplish their goals. These programs include Title I basic grants and whole school reform provisions, the new Title I comprehensive school reform funds, Title II professional development funds, Title VI block grant funds, Goals 2000, and technology funds. These funds may be partially diverted to directly support the reform efforts. Work with NSF to see if a five-year $13.5 million grant for the reform of teaching of math and science could be restored. We would also work to ensure that DCPS knows how to make effective use of the their opportunity to use waivers.

E. Improving the effectiveness of Charter Schools.
Charter schools are not included in the current DCPS plan, at least partially, because the initiation and oversight of DC charter schools are not within General Becton's authority. Appendix C addresses this issue. At present, the DC School Board and a Commission reporting to the Mayor each have the authority to charter 10 new schools each year. Two charter schools currently are operating and four charter schools have been approved, all chartered by the School Board. We expect that there will be 15- 20 new charter schools starting up in Fall 1998 and hope that many of them will be first rate.

DCPS does not have a systematic way to get information to parents about the charter schools that do and will exist throughout the city. Without such information many parents have no means of making informed choices. Moreover, the issue of transporting students from one part of the city to another has not yet been addressed system wide.

In addition, there is no common oversight authority to ensure public accountability and fairness in admissions. Public charter schools should be held to, at least, as challenging standards as students in other public schools. Because the interim CEO and the Trustees have no direct responsibility for charter

schools, they have not taken steps to ensure these minimum procedures. Finally, as far as we know neither the local colleges and universities nor any Federal agencies are sponsoring the new charter schools. This is a great opportunity being missed. These issues all require addressing before charter schools can make the kind of positive impact that we hope they do.

Recommendation 2: We propose that we initiate an aggressive effort to make public choice real in the district by generating an assertive strategy to create charter schools as a rich alternative. This would involve three steps that the Department could work on together with the White House. There is no necessary immediate budget implication of these steps.

1. Propose altering the DC public charter law to establish a single oversight authority to insure that public charter schools are accountable to the public, that admissions are fair, and that charter schools prepare their students to meet at least as challenging standards as other public schools in the District. The School Board and the Mayor's Board would continue chartering schools. In order for a new oversight authority to operate effectively, it must either work closely with the Superintendent and the Trustees or be the Superintendent and Trustees.

2. Work with DCPS and/or other authorities to help establish mechanisms to insure that good information is available and disseminated to all parents and students about choices among public charter schools, such as making flyers available in all public libraries and in community centers. Figure out how to provide transportation to needy students so that they can take advantage of their opportunities. This effort might take some seed money.

3. Initiate an aggressive effort to involve more local DC institutions including Federal agencies such as DOT, the Dept. of the Army, the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress etc. and local colleges and universities in sponsoring public charter schools in the District.

III. Additional Strategies for Improving the DC Public Schools

There are a large number of other issues that the Federal government might address to help the DC public schools and students. I have not included proposals that should naturally flow from other agencies such as non-school based child care (HHS) or strategies for reducing youth violence such as those followed by Boston (DOJ). The following two areas are not as directly aligned with the District's academic plan as the previous proposals. Each of the areas could require long-term investments. They are:

A. School maintenance and modernization needs.

The immediate roofing and boiler problems interfere with the education of many District students, and there may be other short-term problems on the horizon that the District will need assistance to address successfully.

For the long-term planning, two independent reports estimate the construction needs for DCPS. They differ in their estimates by a very large amount (800 million vs. 2 billion over 10 years). Many believe that even the lower estimate is high because of the assumptions used in the analysis. In short, DCPS

needs an objective and legitimate analysis of the future needs and a strategy for dealing with them. See Appendix D for more details.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that we take two immediate steps to address the DCPS facilities crisis.

1. Consider an immediate strategy to use federal resources to help meet the roofing and boiler crisis in the schools so that students can return to their schools. A combination of GSA, Armed Services, and FEMA may be needed to address these problems effectively.

2. Create a blue ribbon committee to develop within the next six months a long-term proposal to address facilities construction, maintenance and modernization needs, and consider ways of meeting the financial burden of bringing the district's building needs to a point where the backlog is eliminated. This proposal could be modeled after the successful planning effort made a few years ago in New York City that brought together a high powered commission that represented the financial and construction communities and residential interests to consider the long term needs and propose a financing strategy. The New York City Commission completed its work without any public funding. The resource implications are modest.

B. DC Community College: Although UDC provides some 2-year degrees, DC residents do not have access to the comprehensive, publicly supported one and two-year academic and vocational post-secondary credentials that most large cities provide for their residents. This penalizes both their opportunities for obtaining good jobs and the District's opportunity to attract industry and businesses to locate in it.

Recommendation 4: We recommend establishing a blue ribbon commission to consider whether and how to establish a new community college in the District. Have the commission consider whether to have the college federally sponsored and supported by the various departments and agencies and how to coordinate its programs with the local and regional industry needs. The commission would also consider the alternative of opening admissions to DC residents of nearby Maryland and Virginia community colleges perhaps by having them establish branch campuses.

The community college could be unique in the training it could provide because of the resources of the Federal government. It could be an extraordinary opportunity for President Clinton to propose a 2-year college of exemplary quality. For example, there could be a Aviation degree, taught and sponsored by the Federal Aviation Agency or a School of Nursing run by Walter Reed Hospital, or a professional degree in child-care run by HHS. The opportunities for a school of this kind is tremendous. The initial resource implications are modest.

List of Appendixes

NOTE TO MELANNE VERVEER

FROM: Marshall S. Smith
Acting Deputy Secretary

DATE: January 28, 1998

SUBJECT: Assistance to the District of Columbia Public School System

---

Attached is a memorandum with recommendations on how best to assist the DC Public Schools. Although this document is labeled draft, we transmitted it to Franklin Raines on October 30, 1997. Also attached is a copy of testimony Secretary Riley was planning to give at a recent hearing before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, Chaired by Senator James M. Jeffords. Each of the documents gives a pretty good summary of our current proposals for the District schools. Because of our work with the school system, we have a significant amount of other material available. I would like to discuss with you what you think we need for a 2-pager for the First Lady.

DRAFT TESTIMONY ON DC SCHOOLS

DRAFT

JAN 8 1998

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here this morning on behalf of Secretary Riley to testify in support of measures to help improve the performance of the DC public school system. I know the Secretary has great appreciation and respect, Mr. Chairman, for your longstanding commitment to help transform the DC schools. Thanks in part to your efforts, I believe we are now beginning to see the kind of momentum and determination in Congress, the Executive Branch, and the District government itself that will finally give the children of DC the high quality education they deserve.

I begin by observing that the problems faced by the DC schools are not unique. Many large urban school systems across the Nation struggle with a significant majority of students performing below grade-level in basic skills like reading and mathematics, social promotion, high dropout rates, the constant threat and the occasional reality of classroom violence, and school buildings that are falling down instead of raising children up.

The Clinton Administration has long recognized the special challenges faced by urban schools, and nearly all of the President's education initiatives have been aimed in part at helping urban districts meet these challenges. The emphasis on challenging standards in Goals 2000 and Title I, making school relevant through School-to-Work Opportunities, increasing the Pell Grant to make college affordable for poor students, the Eisenhower program's emphasis on intensive and sustained professional development, America Reads, School Construction, the voluntary national tests in reading and mathematics, and expanded after-school programs—all of these can help improve educational outcomes in urban schools.

However, the continuing crisis in urban education—perhaps more accurately described as the continuing waste of the talents and potential of millions of young Americans—demands that we do more. This is why the President recently announced that an Urban Initiative, which would include the creation of Education Opportunity Zones, would be part of his 1999 budget request.

Because DC schools share many of the characteristics and problems of other cities, they will benefit from Federal education initiatives targeting urban areas, as well as from the wide array of more broad-based Federal programs, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

While the problems faced by the DC schools are not unique, the responsibility for addressing those problems is shared in ways not found in any other U.S. city, owing to the District's special status as the Nation's Capital. Lacking access to the resources and infrastructure of a State, the District looks to the Federal Government for assistance, primarily to the Congress but also to the Executive Branch.

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ROLE

At the U.S. Department of Education, we believe that Federal agencies can and should help improve the quality of the DC public school system (DCPS). From the beginning of the Clinton Administration, the Department has worked to help the DC schools, initially through adopt-a-school programs and volunteer mentoring and reading activities. With the advent of the Control Board and the appointment of General Becton in late 1996, the Department has worked closely with the District on more comprehensive approaches to rebuilding and reforming the DC school system.

Department efforts have included encouraging the development and use of new standards and assessments, helping to ensure that Federal education funds are properly spent, and assistance in getting a handle on DCPS's personnel and financial management systems.

In December, for example, DCPS secured the Control Board's approval to contract with the *National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE)* to develop and implement a comprehensive set of student performance standards and assessment systems. NCEE's *New Standards* program offers a widely praised, comprehensive, and internationally benchmarked set of performance standards in mathematics, English language arts, science and applied learning. *New Standards* assessments also are aligned with the Stanford-9 assessments that DCPS began administering last year.

The Department also helped develop the *DC Reads Initiative*—the District's response to the President's America Reads Challenge—which last fall brought work-study students from six local colleges to tutor first-graders at 16 elementary schools. In November DCPS announced *Everybody Reads*, a public/private partnership aimed at ensuring that every child can read by the end of the third grade.

The Department continues to provide advice and feedback to DCPS on how to improve professional development for teachers and principals, while helping to make sure DCPS officials have the latest information and data on research-based methods for improving failing schools. ED's Office of Educational Research and Improvement now operates a special help-desk for the District that allows DC teachers, principals, and staff to call in for up-to-date information on instructional practices and other reforms.

The District receives substantial Federal education funds that will be critical to successful reform, and the Department has been working to make sure DCPS makes the best possible use of these funds in accordance with Federal law and regulation. For example, the Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services is helping DCPS develop an agreement for the education of students with disabilities that must be completed before certain Federal funds are released. The Department also is providing technical assistance on plans for spending School-to-Work and Technology funds.

DCPS reforms have been hindered in the past by obsolete and inadequate personnel and financial management systems. The *Grants Study Project*, a systemwide financial audit of the DCPS's personnel, procurement, and accounting systems, is expected to be completed by the PeatMarwick accounting firm next month. The Department stands ready to help implement any improvements recommended in the PeatMarwick report.

MAXIMUM IMPACT AT MINIMAL COST

The selection of a Chief Academic Officer has accelerated both the pace of DCPS reform efforts and the hopes for success. The new DCPS strategy—emphasizing challenging standards, accountability, improving reading skills, and turning around failing schools—reflects many of the same principles long promoted by President Clinton, Secretary Riley, and this Committee.

In the long run, the DCPS budget should provide sufficient support for the new reform plan. Initially, however, the plan calls for a modest amount of additional start-up

funding. Department of Education officials have met with General Becton and his staff to identify their most critical needs and discuss ways in which the Department might help meet those needs. DCPS has asked for extra funds to launch four key initiatives:

- Putting a well-trained reading specialist in every school to improve K-3 reading skills.

- Providing academically intensive summer programs for students at risk of being retained in grade for failure to meet basic standards.

- Implementing comprehensive, whole-school reforms, with an emphasis on turning around failing schools.

- Providing professional development for teachers and principals in the areas of standards, assessments, and instructional best practices, with an emphasis on reading and mathematics.

We believe these initiatives are well-calculated to make an immediate difference at a minimal cost. The Department is working with DCPS to identify existing Federal program funds that might be tapped to support these initiatives, both within ED and at other Federal agencies. In addition, the Department will make available up to $5 million in fiscal year 1998 discretionary funds to launch a partnership with DCPS specifically focused on these activities. Finally, we intend to address these initiatives in the President's 1999 budget request.

MAKING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE A REALITY

The Department also believes that the DCPS reform plan would be complemented by an expansion of the charter school movement, which would help make public school choice a reality in the District. Three charter schools are currently operating in the District, and about 15 additional charter schools are expected to open in fall 1998. However, charter schools are not part of the DCPS reform plan because they fall under the authority of the School Board and not General Becton. A Public Charter School Board reporting to the Mayor also has authority to create new charter schools.

The charter school movement in DC would be enhanced by the creation of a single oversight authority to ensure that all charters provide for fair admissions, challenging standards, and public accountability. The School Board and the Mayor's Charter School Board would retain responsibility for chartering schools, but the oversight authority would ensure that charter schools provide expanded opportunities for all students by complementing systemwide reform efforts.

The Department of Education would work with DCPS to disseminate good information on charter school opportunities to all students and parents. The Department also could spearhead efforts to involve Federal agencies and other institutions in sponsoring charter schools in the District.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPPORTUNITY

There are two additional but longer-term steps that the Committee should consider in its efforts to improve education in the District of Columbia. First, assuming the resolution of the immediate roofing and boiler problems afflicting DC schools, the long-term problem of school maintenance and modernization remains. The Department believes that DC might start to address this problem by following the example of New York City, which several years ago brought together a high-powered commission—including members of the financial and construction communities as well as residents—to develop a plan and propose a financing strategy.

Second, the District's education system and its residents currently suffer from the absence of a quality community college. Community colleges are increasingly the gateway to high-wage, high-benefit jobs in technology-based industries. In addition, the presence of community colleges and the training opportunities they offer are a key resource in efforts to attract job-creating industries. In the District, the benefits of a community college might be met through the creation of a new school or through open enrollment arrangements with nearby Maryland and Virginia community colleges. As with the infrastructure issue, the Committee should consider appointing a blue ribbon commission to assess alternatives for offering a community college education to DC residents and recommend options.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by saying once again how much we appreciate the efforts of this Committee to seriously address the problem of educational failure in the District of Columbia. The District has developed a promising plan for moving forward, the U.S. Department of Education stands ready to help in any way it can, and with some modest support from the Congress I believe we can make real progress in turning around failing DC schools.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by saying once again how much we appreciate the efforts of this Committee to seriously address the problem of educational failure in the District of Columbia. The District has developed a promising plan for moving forward, the U.S. Department of Education stands ready to help in any way it can, and with some modest support from the Congress I believe we can make real progress in turning around failing DC schools.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

January 8, 1998 12:19PM

DRAFT

October 30, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR FRANKLIN D. RAINES

FROM: Marshall S. Smith
Acting Deputy Secretary

SUBJECT: Supporting Improvements in the District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS)

Purpose and Executive Summary:

This memorandum lays out options for the Administration to assist the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) in academic reform and with the maintenance and modernization needs of the school facilities. It is important to assist General Julius W. Becton and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Arlene Ackerman, with their academic plan in addition to establishing a responsible strategy for addressing the problems with school facilities. Indeed the credibility and success of Becton and Ackerman's attempt to reform the DC public schools may rest upon our capacity and willingness to support their proposed reforms.

Below are our recommendations:

1. Invest in Reading, Summer School, Failing Schools, and Standards and Assessments
Invest $10 million/year for 3 years to help jump-start four DCPS critical reforms: professional development and after-school program to improve reading, summer school for students not promoted, comprehensive whole-school reform to address failing schools, and implement challenging standards, assessments, and an accountability system.

2. Charter Schools
Work with the District to establish an aggressive plan to ensure that charter schools are a real and rich alternative public school choice and involve Federal agencies and local colleges and universities in charter schools across the city. Charter schools would be held accountable to at least the same challenging academic standards as all public schools. DCPS and/or other responsible authorities would ensure true access for all students to charter schools, disseminating information widely and setting up a plan to assist in transportation needs.

3. Long-Term Facilities Plan and Immediate DCPS Assistance for Short-Term Problems
Initiate a short-term strategy to help address the boiler, roof, and other immediate problems. Work with the private sector and the District to establish a Commission that would evaluate long-term needs and suggest sustainable solutions in the long term.

4. Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission to Consider Creating a Community College
Create a commission to consider establishing a focused, structured, and comprehensive two year community college in the District of Columbia. One model would be to have Federal agencies assist the academic program in their areas of specialty.

I. Context

During the 1996-97 school year, DCPS enrolled 78,648 students and operated 157 school buildings, including 97 Title I schools. Education outcomes in DCPS are far below the national norms on standardized tests of student achievement. The District is at the bottom of almost every NAEP state assessment and is the lowest in the nation in average SAT scores. In 1995, dropout rates were nearly twice that of high school students nationwide. During 1995-96 both students and teachers in DCPS were subjected to levels of violence that were twice the national average. Nearly two-thirds of the teachers reported that violent student behavior was a serious impediment to teaching. In 1995, almost 4,000 of the criminal arrests in the District (9% of all arrests) were of school-aged youth.

On November 12, 1996, the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (Control Board) temporarily shifted most of the powers of the 11-member elected Board of Education (School Board) to a nine-member Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees (Trustees). The Trustees assumed immediate responsibility for the operation and management of the school system until June 30, 2000; General Julius W. Becton, Jr., who serves as one of the Trustees, was appointed CEO-Superintendent for a three-year term. The School Board continues to serve but with few responsibilities.

Although there were and are bright spots in the District's schools, General Becton inherited a dysfunctional organization. The management systems were broken, there were few mechanisms for quality control both in the business and academic components of the organization and, at the bottom line, the students were very badly served.

Yet, even as the District has been racked with seemingly insoluble troubles over issues of school maintenance and construction the General has made inroads in a variety of areas. Among other accomplishments, he has made hard decisions to eliminate 11 schools, taken many steps to improve efficiency and accountability within the administration of the system, injected new talent, and addressed safety in the schools. On the academic side he adopted academic content standards, brought in the Stanford 9 as the test of choice, developed a close working relationship with the New Standards project, established a training program for principals, and put firmly into place research-based comprehensive whole-school improvement efforts at 14 low-performing schools. In addition, with the help of Department of Education staff, he initiated action in several areas to improve the quality of federal program operations and to clear up actual or potential audit problems, and commissioned his own wide-scale financial audit across the system.

Six weeks ago General Becton brought Dr. Arlene Ackerman on board as his Chief Academic Officer and second-in-command. Dr. Ackerman came highly recommended and has moved quickly to develop and publicly announce an academic plan based on challenging standards with a strong one-year performance strategy (see Appendix A). The one-year strategy includes a focus on reading, the improvement of failing schools, and the imposition of high-stakes accountability standards for students, teachers, and principals.

While the details are not yet fully worked out, we believe that the plan is a giant step in the right direction

and should be supported. Indeed the credibility of Becton and Ackerman's attempt to reform the DCPS may rest upon our capacity and ability support their proposed reforms.

II. Possible Investments in the DCPS Academic Reforms

The recently announced academic plan for DCPS provides a structure for new, focused investments beyond those in the existing DC budget. Although in the long run the plan should be able to operate within the core budget of the District, in the first years we expect marginal, targeted resources will be necessary to ensure that the effort has substantial quality. Four particular areas within Dr. Ackerman's academic plan hold promise to directly improve academic quality in the District. Each activity meets three criteria: offer a strong promise of positive effects on academic achievement; address an immediate, substantial problem; and would enable the Administration to support the basic goals of the District's academic plan.

We can significantly support four DCPS activities directly. Appendix B considers these activities in some detail. These activities are:

A. Improve reading for K-3 students. The District plans to announce an aggressive broad-based campaign called "It Takes a Village", to dramatically improve reading instruction and reading achievement for all 24,000 students in K-3. The campaign will include a massive community-wide effort, including after-school tutoring, outreach to parents, intensive professional development for almost all primary school teachers in the District, and an early identification, intervention, and prevention program for low performing students.

B. Summer academic programs for students who do not meet the basic standards in the grades where, according to the academic plan, such students will be retained in grade. Three grades are identified in the plan with as many as 40% or roughly 7,500 students potentially likely to be held back. The program should demonstrate that it is different from the regular academic year program. These programs should be challenging, enriching, and engaging. In addition, DCPS should develop an innovative instructional year for students who are retained in grade for not reaching academic standards. At the second grade, students below a "basic" level on the Stanford 9 will be retained, at the third grade students below a "basic" level in reading and mathematics will be retained, and at the eighth grade a comprehensive assessment will determine who will be retained.

C. An effort to turn around up to 50 failing schools by using research-based, whole school programs. The District will be working with organizations such as New American Schools, and has reached out to the Department's Education Laboratories and other organizations. Twenty-three schools have already been named and efforts at improvement have started in these schools. More schools will be identified in November. After-school tutorials and Saturday Academies will be part of the effort.

D. Sustained implementation of the District's new standards, assessments, and accountability system. The District strategy will emphasize system-wide professional development and school-based efforts to ensure that common challenging standards are being implemented in every school. The District

has been working with the New Standards Project to plan and implement these reforms.

Recommendation 1:
We recommend that the Administration support a targeted $10 million/year effort for three years to support four DCPS activities focused on improving reading, providing support for students required to attend summer school, turning around failing schools, and implementing challenging standards, assessments and an accountability system. A support strategy would have two components.

1. Allocate $10 million/year for three years in extra funds through DC appropriations or other means to help accelerate the DC reform efforts. These funds could be used in the immediate future. The specific details of the use of the funds should be worked out with Dr. Ackerman. Ten million dollars per year for the next three years would support, for example, an intensive and sustained professional development effort in teaching reading for all 1,500 K-3 teachers ($6 million), summer enrichment programs for 5,000 students ($12 million), and three years of funds to support reform of 50 failing schools ($12 million). The Administration has already suggested that the $7 million in the Republican proposal for vouchers in FY98 be used to support comprehensive whole school reform for failing schools and for after-school programs for students.

2. Simultaneously the Department of Education would work closely with DCPS to ensure that they efficiently use their existing Federal program funds to help them accomplish their goals. These programs include Title I basic grants and whole school reform provisions, the new Title I comprehensive school reform funds, Title II professional development funds, Title VI block grant funds, Goals 2000, and technology funds. These funds may be partially diverted to directly support the reform efforts. Work with NSF to see if a five-year $13.5 million grant for the reform of teaching of math and science could be restored. We would also work to ensure that DCPS knows how to make effective use of the their opportunity to use waivers.

E. Improving the effectiveness of Charter Schools.
Charter schools are not included in the current DCPS plan, at least partially, because the initiation and oversight of DC charter schools are not within General Becton's authority. Appendix C addresses this issue. At present, the DC School Board and a Commission reporting to the Mayor each have the authority to charter 10 new schools each year. Two charter schools currently are operating and four charter schools have been approved, all chartered by the School Board. We expect that there will be 15- 20 new charter schools starting up in Fall 1998 and hope that many of them will be first rate.

DCPS does not have a systematic way to get information to parents about the charter schools that do and will exist throughout the city. Without such information many parents have no means of making informed choices. Moreover, the issue of transporting students from one part of the city to another has not yet been addressed system wide.

In addition, there is no common oversight authority to ensure public accountability and fairness in admissions. Public charter schools should be held to, at least, as challenging standards as students in other public schools. Because the interim CEO and the Trustees have no direct responsibility for charter

schools, they have not taken steps to ensure these minimum procedures. Finally, as far as we know neither the local colleges and universities nor any Federal agencies are sponsoring the new charter schools. This is a great opportunity being missed. These issues all require addressing before charter schools can make the kind of positive impact that we hope they do.

Recommendation 2: We propose that we initiate an aggressive effort to make public choice real in the district by generating an assertive strategy to create charter schools as a rich alternative. This would involve three steps that the Department could work on together with the White House. There is no necessary immediate budget implication of these steps.

1. Propose altering the DC public charter law to establish a single oversight authority to insure that public charter schools are accountable to the public, that admissions are fair, and that charter schools prepare their students to meet at least as challenging standards as other public schools in the District. The School Board and the Mayor's Board would continue chartering schools. In order for a new oversight authority to operate effectively, it must either work closely with the Superintendent and the Trustees or be the Superintendent and Trustees.

2. Work with DCPS and/or other authorities to help establish mechanisms to insure that good information is available and disseminated to all parents and students about choices among public charter schools, such as making flyers available in all public libraries and in community centers. Figure out how to provide transportation to needy students so that they can take advantage of their opportunities. This effort might take some seed money.

3. Initiate an aggressive effort to involve more local DC institutions including Federal agencies such as DOT, the Dept. of the Army, the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress etc. and local colleges and universities in sponsoring public charter schools in the District.

III. Additional Strategies for Improving the DC Public Schools

There are a large number of other issues that the Federal government might address to help the DC public schools and students. I have not included proposals that should naturally flow from other agencies such as non-school based child care (HHS) or strategies for reducing youth violence such as those followed by Boston (DOJ). The following two areas are not as directly aligned with the District's academic plan as the previous proposals. Each of the areas could require long-term investments. They are:

A. School maintenance and modernization needs.

The immediate roofing and boiler problems interfere with the education of many District students, and there may be other short-term problems on the horizon that the District will need assistance to address successfully.

For the long-term planning, two independent reports estimate the construction needs for DCPS. They differ in their estimates by a very large amount (800 million vs. 2 billion over 10 years). Many believe that even the lower estimate is high because of the assumptions used in the analysis. In short, DCPS

needs an objective and legitimate analysis of the future needs and a strategy for dealing with them. See Appendix D for more details.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that we take two immediate steps to address the DCPS facilities crisis.

1. Consider an immediate strategy to use federal resources to help meet the roofing and boiler crisis in the schools so that students can return to their schools. A combination of GSA, Armed Services, and FEMA may be needed to address these problems effectively.

2. Create a blue ribbon committee to develop within the next six months a long-term proposal to address facilities construction, maintenance and modernization needs, and consider ways of meeting the financial burden of bringing the district's building needs to a point where the backlog is eliminated. This proposal could be modeled after the successful planning effort made a few years ago in New York City that brought together a high powered commission that represented the financial and construction communities and residential interests to consider the long term needs and propose a financing strategy. The New York City Commission completed its work without any public funding. The resource implications are modest.

B. DC Community College: Although UDC provides some 2-year degrees, DC residents do not have access to the comprehensive, publicly supported one and two-year academic and vocational post-secondary credentials that most large cities provide for their residents. This penalizes both their opportunities for obtaining good jobs and the District's opportunity to attract industry and businesses to locate in it.

Recommendation 4: We recommend establishing a blue ribbon commission to consider whether and how to establish a new community college in the District. Have the commission consider whether to have the college federally sponsored and supported by the various departments and agencies and how to coordinate its programs with the local and regional industry needs. The commission would also consider the alternative of opening admissions to DC residents of nearby Maryland and Virginia community colleges perhaps by having them establish branch campuses.

The community college could be unique in the training it could provide because of the resources of the Federal government. It could be an extraordinary opportunity for President Clinton to propose a 2-year college of exemplary quality. For example, there could be a Aviation degree, taught and sponsored by the Federal Aviation Agency or a School of Nursing run by Walter Reed Hospital, or a professional degree in child-care run by HHS. The opportunities for a school of this kind is tremendous. The initial resource implications are modest.

List of Appendixes

A. DCPS One Year Academic Plan and Standards
B. Details on the DCPS Academic Reforms
C. Details on a Charter School Plan
D. Details on a Maintenance and Contruction Initiative

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by saying once again how much we appreciate the efforts of this Committee to seriously address the problem of educational failure in the District of Columbia. The District has developed a promising plan for moving forward, the U.S. Department of Education stands ready to help in any way it can, and with some modest support from the Congress I believe we can make real progress in turning around failing DC schools.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Bruce MacLaury

D.C. Schools Need Leadership— Not a Volunteer 'Advisory Board'

On the final page of its recent decision overturning the Emergency Board of Trustees for the D.C. schools, the U.S. Court of Appeals took the unusual step of suggesting a way around its own ruling. Since appointment of the trustees had been held *ultra vires*—that is, beyond legal boundaries—the court said the control board "may wish to use a body with the prestige and expertise of the Board of Trustees . . . reconstituted perhaps, as an advisory board. . . . ."

The Post seconded the theme in a recent editorial ["Who Is Running the Schools?" Jan. 22]. While acknowledging that the emergency board had "laid a foundation for progress on the academic front," and that neither the control board nor the elected board was ready to run the schools, The Post urged the incumbent trustees to accept advisory status as "public-spirited citizen volunteers."

And in recent House hearings on school facilities, D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton read a statement urging "gradual power sharing" between the appointed and elected boards. She said that "no one seeks to displace [the trustees] quickly" but vowed to oppose any "legislative solution"—that is, any bill that would provide the trustees with the legal status the court said they lacked. But in fact, such a solution is the only sure way out of our current impasse.

Norton also warned of the "hubris" she saw in trustees' reluctance to follow her recommendations. Members of the volunteer Emergency Board have spent countless hours away from their families and businesses over the past year, enduring public wrath over unpopular but necessary decisions, raising hundreds of thousands of private dollars, even sweeping school corridors on Spruce-Up Day. Their public spirit is beyond question.

So why do we decline the invitation to become an "advisory board?"

A year ago, the control board christened us with a cumbersome but specific title: "Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees." The name acknowledged a crisis requiring leadership unencumbered by the usual protocols; it described a temporary role, lasting only until the elected school board could return to power; it emphasized "education," with a singular focus on reform of the District's public schools; and, finally, it created a Board of Trustees: not a commission, study group or advisory body but a board entrusted with responsibility for action, accountability for results, and authority to make decisions stick.

Although our work in a few areas such as budget and facilities has been subject to ratification by the control board, the trustees have generally operated with a high degree of autonomy. The public has perceived us as the final authority in school matters. With a clear mandate, and powers enunciated in the control board's order of Nov. 15, 1996, we've dealt with some tough cases: closing 11 unsafe and underutilized school buildings; obtaining the first sales of 60 vacant school buildings, some of which had been neighborhood eyesores for two decades; reducing the size of the school system's central staff; getting control of personnel and student counts; adopting a far-reaching new academic plan.

Many more such decisions were awaiting action when the appeals court's ax fell—and still are:

- New promotion policies requiring mastery of subject matter before students go on to the next grade.
- Tougher residency verification rules, designed to reduce the several million dollars in free education we are apparently providing non-District children.
- Comprehensive review of security and discipline policies.
- Review of the public-school choice program, which parents have complained allows principals too much leeway in deciding who attends their school.
- Action on the sale and lease of excess D.C. school properties, including efforts to help charter-school operators obtain classroom space;
- Approval of a new long-term facilities master plan, and criteria for future school closings.
- Consideration of new policies on the rights and responsibilities of parents.
- Approval of plans for reconstituting chronically failing schools.

Taking Exception

The trustees have made hard decisions and taken the heat. Their powers should be restored.

We've taken a lot of heat for decisions such as these—but that's why we were put here. School reform is a tough, controversial business under the best of circumstances. In a city such as Washington, D.C., crisscrossed by racial and economic fault lines, even the most high-minded school reformers can get burned by traditional ward politics. The control board was right to seek as trustees a group of District residents with long track records of public service, and then to provide them some insulation from the hurly-burly of local politics.

Would a new advisory body clarify accountability or muddy it more? As it is now, a parent with a school-related problem confronts a messy governance map, starting with the school's own Local School Restructuring Team (LSRT) and including the elected school board, board of trustees, school administration, D.C. Council's education committee, control board, mayor, D.C. delegate to Congress and members and staff of the House and Senate committees dealing with the District's schools. With all these contestants jockeying for oversight rights, what purpose would be served by an additional body whose every decision would be in the subjunctive tense until approved by the control board?

Assume the best: a diligent advisory body that proposes serious action. Would the control board simply rubber-stamp the advice it received? Wouldn't it need to add substantially more staff to investigate and validate the advice? Wouldn't a second tier of review add time to each decision—time we can't afford in an emergency?

My colleagues and I have always known that time was short; less than 30 months remain in our assignment. But having completed a tumultuous first year, having put in place a top-notch management team, we had finally climbed a steep learning curve. We were looking at ways to get more community participation in our work and were optimistic about the chances for a fresh start with the Board of Education's new leadership.

But when the trustees met to consider the appeals court ruling, strong consensus was apparent on two points.

First, they would make a decision on one basis—what was good for the kids. Skeptics are welcome to scoff, but it's true; over the past 14 months, the trustees have understood their role as putting children first—not their ethnic or professional groups, nor their neighborhoods, nor their own career advancement. This has made them unique, and in my view, indispensable.

Second, reconstitution as an advisory body was out of the question. Each trustee in turn said that he or she would volunteer as an individual to help Gen. Becton and the control board. But hard experience told them that being handed the responsibility for fixing the schools while being denied the authority to make their decisions stick would be a prescription for failure.

There's no shortage of groups ready to furnish advice about the school system, from the elected school board to the Federal City Council, from the Board of Trade to the Goals 2000 Task Force. But the body actually charged with reforming the District's public schools must have the authority to get the job done.

If that body is the control board, it is welcome to solicit help and advice from all quarters. But let's not kid the public that setting up a toothless and unaccountable "advisory board" will somehow hasten school reform.

The writer is chairman of the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees.

The Washington Post

Wednesday, February 4, 1998

Robert J. Samuelson

Salesman in Chief

President Clinton's recent performance suggests a striking parallel with the movie "Titanic." Before its release, the buzz was that the film would be a commercial disaster that would never cover its $200 million cost. But audiences loved it, and U.S. theater receipts have passed $300 million (though the studios get only half). Similarly, Clinton's sex scandal initially seemed fatal, but his approval rating has risen. Something more than a strong economy is at work. Clinton retains his power to mesmerize the public with caring rhetoric. His State of the Union and $1.7 trillion budget are—judged by the polls—big box-office hits.

We should not be surprised. Clinton is a master at crafting programmatic gestures that speak to people's hopes and fears. He thinks government should minister to every imaginable social problem, popular anxiety and legitimate ambition. He now wants (among other things) to raise the minimum wage, encourage near-universal college education, expand tax credits for day care and allow 62- to 64-year-olds to buy into Medicare. By these acts, he seeks to assemble psychic constituencies (two-earner couples, the near-elderly, the poor) that connect with him through feeling—a sense of shared sympathies—as much as anything else.

Budget surpluses (on paper at least) now give Clinton new freedom to employ this strategy. The surpluses, of course, rest on fragile assumptions. The projected surplus in 1999 occurs only because federal taxes and receipts are at their highest level since World War II: 20.1 percent of national income (Gross Domestic Product). In the 1970s, that was 18 percent of GDP; in the 1980s, it was 18.4 percent of GDP. The difference between these average taxes and the tax burden under Clinton is worth between $120 billion and $160 billion. Wealthier taxpayers account for much of the tax gain; but it also reflects higher proposed cigarette taxes levied mainly on those with less than $30,000 of income.

No one predicted the tax surge, and if taxes were to drop unexpectedly, the budget surpluses might vanish. The same is true of two other favorable circumstances: declining defense spending and tame health costs. By 2001, defense spending would constitute less than 15 percent of projected federal outlays, down from 18 percent in 1995 and 27 percent in 1985. If the world suddenly turned more dangerous, military spending might rise. And health care costs (20 percent of the budget) are a constant wild card. But such concerns are now banished from public consciousness, and Clinton brims with ideas to make people feel better.

These usually seem humane and even farsighted. In a technological age, why shouldn't everyone go to college? Why not help families with day care? And what's wrong with cutting poverty by raising the minimum wage? On inspection, however, all these schemes are undesirable or have big drawbacks. The gap between promise and possibility is huge, but this doesn't bother Clinton. He wants to seem good more than do good.

Consider the day-care tax credit. Its political virtue is clear. In 27 million families, both parents have paying jobs or a single parent has a job. So these families (up to $59,000 of income) get an extra tax break. This is, of course, unfair to families in which one parent stays home to take care of the children. Not only do these families sacrifice a second income but they're penalized with higher taxes. The social benefit for children is illusory, because the tax break favors one family choice (day care) over another when there's no evidence that the favored choice is better for children. It may be worse.

Universal college also sounds good. What it ignores is that almost anyone who deserves a college education—regardless of income—can now get one. About 60 percent of high school graduates go on to some post-secondary education. Not everyone, however, deserves a college education. About half of those who go now don't finish. Similarly, the economy doesn't need more college students. A study by economists Frederic Pryor of Swarthmore College and David Schaffer of Haverford College emphasizes the point: Many college graduates have such poor literacy skills that they take jobs once reserved for high school graduates. The real need is to improve standards at both high schools and colleges, while raising the college graduation rate.

Allowing people under 65 to buy into Medicare likewise seems sensible. Some people who lose their jobs and private insurance need coverage. This is a genuine problem, but Clinton's solution might create bigger problems. He promises that his plan would create no drain on the budget, because people would pay their own premiums. Hardly anyone who understands health care thinks the scheme would work as he envisions. The availability of Medicare for people as young as 62 might perversely encourage employers to drop private coverage. And there would be huge pressures on Congress to subsidize Medicare premiums for those who said they couldn't pay. The budget costs could be large.

The president is the first Rhodes scholar in the White House. He prides himself on high intelligence. So do most of his aides. They know the flaws of their proposals. They also know that the potential for good is overstated and the potential for harm is ignored. It doesn't matter. They aim mainly to advertise their good intentions. A new study by economists David Neumark of Michigan State University and William Wascher of the Federal Reserve confirms that a higher minimum wage doesn't much cut poverty. Some poor workers get higher wages; others lose their jobs because their wages are too high. On balance, there's little effect. So? A higher minimum wage still symbolizes sympathy for the poor; and symbolism is mainly what Clinton's agenda is about.

Clinton saw it originally as a grand strategy to "rally Democrats, energize his presidency and fashion a progressive legacy," as the National Journal says. In reality, it has become his central defense against personal scandal. People are wary of seeing a president driven from office. They like the fact that Clinton checks the Republican Congress. They dislike the press. These are Clinton assets. But to activate them, he had to convince people that, whatever his personal failings, he is a man of substance with their interests at heart. His success shows, if nothing else,

The Washington Post
Wednesday, February 4, 1998

Wilma Harvey

Leadership D.C.'s Elected School Board Can Provide

Bruce MacLaury, chairman of the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees for the District, emphasized that "D.C. Schools Need Leadership--Not a Volunteer 'Advisory Board' " [op-ed, Feb. 4]. I agree.

The schools need decisive leadership, which is supported by competent staff and committed to doing what is necessary to resolve school problems and set a clear direction for the future. The community and the children deserve no less, and the D.C. Council and other D.C. authorities, the courts, Congress and the control board will accept no less.

I cannot agree, however, that leadership is merely a matter of acting decisively. The school system, especially in

Taking Exception

a city expected to be a model for democracy and respect for diversity of opinion, cannot be led effectively by an appointed board with no mandate to be accountable to the community. This is not a question of whether the appointed trustees are operating with good intent or in a spirit of public service. My concern is that their decisions be well-informed and that those charged with implementing those decisions know that they are accountable for their mistakes as well as encouraged for their successes. This has not happened in the past 15 months.

School buildings were closed, not because they were unsafe and underused, but because once the decisions were made, the trustees were unable to acknowledge that much of the data were unreliable, some of the schools were in relatively good repair and several closings would be disrupting programs that were functioning well and had strong community support. The communities did not disagree that schools had to be closed; they disagreed about which schools should be closed, and they were not asked to participate in the decision except defensively and after the fact.

Support is broad for raising standards and holding administrators, principals and teachers accountable for results. Support is slight, however, for standards imposed without an academic plan in place, without adequate preparation of teachers, parents or students for high-stakes exams and without any apparent process for relating the standards to the expectations of parents and the specific context of young learners in this city.

No one disagrees that schools must be safe and drug-free, but people do disagree as to whether this can be done by relying mainly on armed guards and Draconian discipline rather than through greater involvement of parents and communities and the young people themselves.

The community strongly supports an effective response to the learning needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse city. It is concerned with special-needs students and wants all learners to achieve at least basic proficiency. The trustees and the school system administration have acted decisively in these and many other areas, but they have not acted successfully either to resolve problems or to set a clear sense of direction, let alone to build support among the parents and community members who must live with the results.

In other areas, the trustees and school administrators have built on decisions made by the previous administration and by the previous school board. The trustees found it inconvenient to acknowledge these decisions, given their self-justifying mandate to overcome what they characterized as the inertia and failure of previous years. This they knew to be an exaggeration at the time, and they know even better now that they have had some experience with the difficult processes of managing and making policy for such a complex system.

For example, "Targeted Assisted Schools" already were identified and undergoing restructuring when the trustees came aboard. The school-by-school comprehensive planning and assessments and local school restructuring teams also were in place. New policies on teacher assessments were being implemented, and a broad-based community group was working on facilities. Other groups were working on special needs, still others on technology improvement.

It would have helped greatly to have built on these successes and involved these people and organizations in reforms. Instead, the new team started fresh, treating the existing groups as disgruntled defenders of the status quo. Many problems now emerging in public could have been addressed earlier and with less cost and disruption had there been more open participation and respectful dialogue on the part of school authorities.

I am committed to changing this atmosphere and setting a different framework for leadership on education. Last year, before the court decision on the validity of the delegation of authority to the trustees, I began a conversation with colleagues about the changing role, structure and processes for the elected board. I found broad agreement that we could not wait until the trustees complete their mandate, that we must be ready with ideas about how to provide effective school leadership. And, we must work together with a positive, "can-do" attitude.

As the newly elected president of the elected D.C. Board of Education, I am committed to doing three things to break the inertia and move us forward, together, to improve our schools, meet the needs of our children and begin healing our communities.

First, the board of education is being restructured, with each committee chair expected to establish a timely work plan for providing advice and explicit provisions for obtaining community input through forums, advisory bodies and other means.

Second, the board will focus on ensuring that the voices of the community are represented effectively and that the information people require to be effectively engaged in the improvement of education is readily accessible.

Third, the board must work in support of the many community-based organizations and issue-specific organizations that are trying to be heard.

I look forward to working with everybody concerned to move forward as a community on our shared responsibilities to educate our children.

The writer is president of the D.C. Board of Educatio.

The Washington Post
Tuesday, February 17, 1998

The Washington Post
Tuesday, February 17, 1998

James Glassman

The President-Proof Economy

Because the economy is booming, Americans give Bill Clinton high ratings—despite the Monica Lewinsky scandal. "It's not Paula Jones, it's Dow Jones," goes the new saying.

But how responsible is Clinton, really, for our prosperity? As the new Economic Report of the President acknowledges, "The lion's share of the credit for the economy's performance goes to American workers and firms, who have risen to the challenge of a competitive global economy and rapidly changing technology."

So don't worry about your paycheck or your account at Merrill Lynch. The economy and the stock market can get along very well without Bill Clinton—if it comes to that.

Consider: If Clinton is so essential to the boom, why have stocks responded to the scandal, not by falling, but by rising? Typical was Feb. 6, when newspapers reported that White House secretary Betty Currie had given damaging testimony about her boss before the grand jury. That day, the Dow Jones Industrial Average shot up 72 points.

Since the original page-one story in The Post on Jan. 21 ["Starr Investigates Whether Clinton Told Intern to Deny Affair"], the Dow has risen 497 points to its highest level of all time. Before the scandal became public, it was languishing 386 points below its August 1997 high.

By contrast, during Watergate, the Dow fell 26 percent in the 19 months between the first revelations and President Nixon's resignation. Of course, with both scandals, other factors, primarily inflation, were influencing the market.

But it is striking that investors are shrugging off the Lewinsky affair—or even finding it bullish. If they believed that Clinton was vital to our economic success, wouldn't they dump stocks?

It's true that, for now, most Americans think Clinton is more likely to serve out his term than to leave in disgrace. But it's undeniable that his hold on the presidency is shakier than it was four weeks ago, when the scandal broke.

Let's say investors see a 15 percent chance of Clinton leaving the presidency prematurely. But before Jan. 21, the chances were zero. The market operates at the margin; it's concerned with *changes*. And Clinton's condition has changed for the worse in the past month, even if his approval ratings have risen.

Not only is he more likely to leave (my scenario has Bob Strauss, the Democratic kingmaker, walking up to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. and handing him the fateful note), he's also been damaged. A recent Gallup poll, for example, found that 42 percent believe the scandal will harm him temporarily, 29 percent believe it will harm him permanently and 15 percent say he'll resign or be removed.

Imagine a similar scandal placing the tenure of Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve chairman, in even the slightest doubt and that it's believed to harm his performance. Certainly, the market would fall.

This thought experiment shows how important Greenspan is to the economy and the stock market. Now, try the same with the Republican Congress: What if a scandal boosted the chances that Democrats would regain the House and Senate, making Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) the speaker and Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) the chairman of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee? I doubt markets would take a benign view.

> ***"Investors are shrugging off the Lewinsky affair."***

In fact, if there is another political explanation behind the behavior of the markets since the Lewinsky story broke, it is that Clinton's troubles help the GOP in the 1998 elections.

In the 1974 congressional races, three months after Nixon resigned, Democrats gained 49 seats in the House and five in the Senate. That swing would give today's Republicans enough votes to break filibusters and, with help from Democratic moderates, override vetoes.

Recently, a powerful correlation has existed between markets and the fortunes of Republicans in Congress. For the two years after Clinton was elected in November 1992, the Dow rose just 18 percent, or less than one percent per month. But since November 1994, when Republicans took over the House and Senate, the Dow is up 118 percent, or 3 percent per month.

It's the same with long-term interest rates: In the two years after Clinton's 1992 victory, the rate on the 30-year bond rose from 7.6 percent to 8 percent. Since the GOP took Congress in 1994, it has fallen to 5.9 percent.

This is not to say that Republicans deserve "the lion's share of the credit" either. America's unprecedented 15-year boom is best explained by the massive restructuring of businesses that began in the early 1980s, the spread of high technology, the monetary stewardship of Greenspan and Paul Volcker, and the worldwide enthusiasm for free markets and lower tax rates that started with Ronald Reagan and has flourished since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Clinton's legacy is that he's liberalized trade and otherwise hasn't mucked things up. Left to his own devices, he would have spent more, taxed more and nationalized health care, but constrained by Congress, he's behaved well. The economy has thrived, tax revenues have rolled in, the budget has been balanced and jobs continue to rise by 200,000 a month, a trend that began in 1983.

So while Clinton's exit might be tragic in other ways, it's unlikely to dim prosperity or crack the market. This is no secret, and the Dow—despite an unsettling volatility whose source lies in Asia—continues to rise.

THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS INITIATIVE STATUS REPORT

September 14, 1998

This report focuses primarily on public charter schools in the District of Columbia. The US Department of Education (Department) continues to work closely with Superintendent Arlene Ackerman, the Chairs of the two chartering boards and their staff helping them as they transition to having charter schools as part of the DC public school (DCPS) system. We held meetings to ensure that they are aware of legal requirements and their obligations, and we raised issues requiring immediate attention and concerns to help them anticipate and address problems that potentially could negatively affect the operation of the schools.

Sixteen New Public Charter Schools Will Open This Fall: In 1996, an act of Congress allowed public charter schools to be created in DC. The law currently allows the two chartering boards -- the elected School Board of Education and the appointed DC Public Charter School Board -- to grant up to 20 charters each year. Earlier this year the boards granted a total of 19 new charters. Of those, 17 had been approved with plans for new charter schools to open in Fall 1998. Another charter, granted by the elected school board in 1996, was also scheduled to open in Fall 1998. Of the 18 charters that were expected to begin operation in Fall 1998, two will not open their schools this fall because they could not complete all necessary charter school start-up activities.

The addition of 16 new charter schools will bring the total number of public charter schools operating in DC to 18. During the 1997-98 school year DC had three charter schools. However, the charter for one school --the Marcus Garvey Public Charter School-- was revoked.

New Public Charter Schools Readiness for Opening: During the week of August 31, 1998, we contacted all DC charter school operators that had approved schedules for opening in Fall 1998, and we asked each the same series of questions. We solicited information on when each school would open, the number of students registered, whether schools had all teaching staff, text books, supplies, materials, adequate facilities and essential Fire Marshall's approval, health and safety clearances and insurance coverage. We spoke to charter schools operators who wanted to lease excess DCPS' school buildings but were waiting for approval from DCPS or the Control Board. We intervened and, as necessary, prodded either DCPS or the Control Board to take actions as soon as practical. The following summarizes other key information gleaned from these discussions.

- *Dates public charter schools will open*

DC public charter schools have selected different dates for the first day of the 1998-99 school year. For 12 of the new charter schools, the first day of the 1998-99 school year was September 8. Two charter school operators opened as early as September 2, another opened on September 4 and the final school opened today, September 14.

- *Number of students registered to attend public charter schools*

More than 4,000 students were registered to attend the 16 new DC public charter schools; four schools reported having long waiting-lists, while most of the others schools were still registering students. The DC School Reform Act establishes September 15 as the day each public charter school must submit a report to the Mayor and Board of Education on the number of students enrolled. A couple of charter schools expressed their intention to continue with major registration drives to recruit students until that date.

- *Hiring necessary staff, and securing furniture, equipment, text books, supplies, materials, etc.*

The past few weeks charter school operators were busy hiring staff, ordering equipment, furniture, supplies, etc. With one exception, charter school operators reported that they had completed hiring all teachers and principals. One principal reported that she may have to hire one additional teacher if after opening, the school's actual enrollment is higher than the numbers of students registered. Also, the vast majority reported that text books, materials, supplies, etc. had already been delivered to the school sites. Others were expecting deliveries the week of August 31. However, with the opening of school we have heard that a couple of charter schools are attempting to secure additional furniture for students and staff.

- *Most pressing start-up challenges faced by charter schools*

Access to Facilities: Last week, nine charter school operators were still working on securing occupancy permits or adequate space to house their programs. Four operators were awaiting completion of the long process required to gain access to excess DCPS' space. Many charter school operators reported frustration in having to work their way through the local bureaucracy to get approval to rent unused public school buildings or secure work permits for renovations at other sites.

Despite significant challenges, most of the charter schools (nine schools) opened on time in permanent locations. Four charter schools opened in semi-permanent locations in that schools had leases permitting them to stay at the current locations for periods ranging from one to four years. Three schools opened in temporary locations because their spaces were not ready for the first day of classes; they plan to move to permanent facilities within a few weeks.

Access to Federal Funding: The Department provides Federal funding for charter schools start-up activities. Like most of the Department funding, we provide these funds to DCPS as the State Education Agency (SEA). DCPS must then redistribute the funds to charter schools. All 16 new charter schools received $110,000.00 from FY97 funds to support charter school design and initial implementation activities. The Department expects to mail FY98 charter schools start-up funding grant award notifications to recipients by mid-September. DC is scheduled to receive an award. We secured an agreement from DCPS to expedite its action to ensure that the charter

schools get access to FY98 start-up funds as soon as possible; we anticipate that charter schools will get these funds by mid-October.

Besides the above Federal start-up funds, charter schools are eligible for other Federal dollars (e.g., Titles II, IV, VI, VII and Goals 2000). Federal regulations require the submission of an application that delineates how the funds will be used. In order to reduce the burden of developing multiple plans, DCPS as the SEA developed a consolidated application that charter schools were to complete by July 15, 1998. The DCPS system plans to distribute 25% of Federal program funds to charter schools within the next week, using the charter schools projected student enrollment figures. Upon receipt of actual enrollment figures DCPS will distribute the remaining 75%.

Access to Local Funding: DC has a per-pupil formula that is to be used to set funding levels for public schools, including charter schools. Based on this per-pupil formula, the DC FY99 budget request is insufficient for the dramatic increase in the number of students expected to attend charter schools. Recognizing that we are taking steps to ensure that charter schools are fully funded, the City has decided that charter schools would be eligible to apply for a loan from its revolving loan fund in the amount of $639 per student. Charter schools which use this option must repay the revolving loan fund when DC's FY99 funding is available.

ON THE HORIZON

Special Education: Like other public schools, charter schools have a legal obligation to serve students with disabilities. The DC School Reform Act requires charter schools to decide whether to be treated as a Local Education Agency (LEA) or as a DC public school for special education purposes. The DCPS system is working with charter schools to develop a Memorandum of Agreement that will clarify the relationships and obligations for serving special education students. One key issue is who ultimately will be responsible for covering the costs for providing an appropriate education for special education students. Depending on the student's disability and needs, the local per-pupil formula -- although it provides for an additional stipend for students with special needs -- may not be enough to cover the actual cost of providing students with an appropriate education.