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Mr. John M. Doe
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Dear John:

Last week I had the opportunity to visit the Cleveland Elementary School in the District's Shaw neighborhood and learn about the school's remarkable partnership with the law firm of Holland & Knight. As part of this partnership, Holland & Knight lawyers and staff provide parents and community organizations with pro-bono legal assistance; tutor students once a week after school; take children on field trips; help repair school facilities; donate gently used computers, supplies, clothing and grocery store register receipts; and much more. I was told how letters that had fallen on deaf ears when written by a parent, received an immediate response when sent on a law firm's letterhead. One long-time community leader told us the law firm's partnership was "the most valuable thing that has happened in Shaw since urban renewal in 1966."

Holland & Knight is by no means the only District firm that has formed a partnership with a District public school. Several other firms, including Covington & Burling, Steptoe & Johnson, Howrey & Simon, Patton Boggs, and the District Office of the Corporation Counsel have adopted a school. While Holland & Knight has given generously of its time, devoting not only 650 hours over the last 15 months to help the school and its students but also 920 hours of pro-bono legal assistance to nonprofit organizations in the Shaw neighborhood, firm-school partnerships need not require a significant amount of time during weekday office hours.

The existing firm-school partnerships are as varied as the needs and interests of the firm, school, community, and students. For example, Covington & Burling reserves one-third of its summer jobs for Cardozo High School students, sponsors PTA dinners attracting record numbers of parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's performance, and runs a Saturday Academy at the school, providing students with job, conflict resolution and other important skills. Other law firms have helped wire schools to the internet, sent their technical staff to help train teachers on computers, and set up e-mail accounts between the firm and the school so

lawyers and staff can mentor the students and provide them with advice even when they are unable to visit the school.

I am writing to the law firms in the District to encourage you to strengthen any existing partnership you may have with a public school, or to invite you to form one. The Washington Lawyers' Committee, which has helped establish many of the existing firm-school partnerships, has offered to help any firm that wishes to establish a relationship with a school. Rod Boggs of the Washington Lawyers' Committee and Myles Lynk, president of the District of Columbia Bar, have pledged their support for this effort, and both joined me on my visit to the Cleveland School. General Julius Becton Jr., the new Chief Executive Officer of the D.C. Public Schools appointed by the D.C. Control Board, strongly supports these partnerships and has pledged the support of his administration. To demonstrate his commitment, he also joined me at the Cleveland Elementary School.

I know you will agree that if our city and country are to prosper, we cannot afford to leave any child behind. We know the needs of the District public schools are great. All of us who are members of the District community, who live or work in the District, can make a positive difference. The nearly 30,000 people employed by District law firms have so much to offer the city's children. You can give back to the community and also invest in its future employees. I hope you or someone with your firm will call Iris Toyer at the Washington Lawyers' Committee at (202) 835-0031, ext. 117, and develop a partnership with a school. The need could not be greater or the cause more important.

With appreciation for your consideration and best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

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