

NEWS RELEASE**For Immediate Release**

March 10, 1998

Contact: Board staff

(202) 887-5011

FAX (202) 887-5026

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**UPDATE: TEN APPROVED FOR CHARTERS**

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board is pleased to announce completion of the second and final stage of its 1997-98 application review process. On March 5, 1998, the Board approved seven applications to establish public charter schools in the District of Columbia. The total number of applications approved by the Board during its first competition for charters to establish public charter schools is ten, including the three applications approved in November 1997. The new public charter schools will serve more than 3,000 learners next year.

Josephine C. Baker, Chairperson of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, says, "After a tough competition, the Board has now approved a total of ten schools for charters. As a result, more than 3,000 learners of all ages in the District of Columbia will be offered an exciting range of new educational opportunities when school opens next fall. All of us are pleased about the role these schools can play in the effort to improve public education in the nation's capital".

1. **The SEED Public Charter School of Washington, DC** will provide a residential, coed learning environment for academic underperformers, grades 7-12, whose residential settings are disruptive to their education and who desire to attend a boarding school. The school's program is grounded in the philosophy that all children deserve a high quality education and that all students will learn. To that end, SEED Public Charter School of Washington, DC will offer an academic and residential setting that is conducive to healthy student development, a strong remedial program to bring students up to their current grade level, a high school curriculum and program that is similar to that found in some of the best college preparatory schools in the nation. The school will serve 40 seventh grade students during the first year and will add a new class of seventh graders each year until the school encompasses grades 7 through 12.

Contact: Rajiv Vinnakota**Telephone Number:** (202) 712-9134

2. **Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School** represents the conversion of an existing school-within-a-school to public charter school status. The school's mission is to provide college-bound students in grades 9-12 a classic liberal education with an emphasis on mathematics and science. Students will use technology as a research and learning tool to enhance development of analytical reasoning. The school intends to use the Modern Red Schoolhouse academic standards as the foundation for curriculum in eight core subjects and will offer an extended school day and longer school year, with wrap-around study enrichment programs. Washington Math Science Technology Public Charter High School will serve 175 students in grades 9 through 12 during its first year of operation and over time reach its full capacity of 420 students.

Contact: Mary H. Johnson or Jack McCarthy

Telephone Number: (202) 645-3365 or 775-5826

3. **Hospitality Public Charter High School** plans to begin operation in school year 1999-2000. The school's purpose is to strengthen and expand the work force available to the hospitality industry of the nation's capital. The school will offer students with potential for higher education a rigorous four year academic program with strong preparation for careers in the fastest growing industry in the metropolitan Washington area. The program will include paid internships, industry related technology systems training, student learning projects, and mentors. The Hospitality Public Charter School of Washington, D.C. will begin enrollment in fall of 1999 with a freshman and sophomore class of 40 students each, building to the ultimate goal of serving 150 students by the year 20002.

Contact: Emily Vetter

Telephone Number: (202) 289-0584

4. **Associates for Renewal in Education, Inc. Public Charter School** will provide an educational program for 100 students from age 14 to 22 who are involved in the juvenile justice system. Since students' lives outside of school affect their ability to learn, teachers in this new public charter school will help them to avoid risky behaviors. The goal is to enable these young people to find responsible ways to meet their needs so they can improve their self-confidence, behave appropriately, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, and get a high school diploma. Teachers in the school will strive to create a school in which students feel cared about, are encouraged to voice their opinions and make choices about their education, have fun learning and feel free to move at their own pace. Staff also will emphasize to students that completing their education is necessary to their ability to survive in the world outside of school.

Contact: Brenda Strong Nixon

Telephone Number: (202) 483-9424

5. **The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy** was conceived of by a group of parents and community members in response to the closing of the Richardson Elementary School in northeast Washington, DC. Beginning in September 1998, this new public charter school will enroll 540 students in grades pre-K through 5, and will expand to include grade six in the second year of operation. The design of the school's educational program has two key components: strong academics and a performing/communicative arts concentration. Students will develop strong skills in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, history, foreign language, and technology. A founding partnership has been developed with Advantage Schools, Inc., a Massachusetts based educational management firm that will manage the Academy and administer its education program.

Contact: Pamela Lipscomb Gardner

Telephone Number: (202) 829-5980

6. **The School for Arts in Learning** will be an alternative learning community for children with special needs, particularly children with physical or learning disabilities. The school's program will emphasize education in and through the arts to stimulate intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development. The arts will be an educational tool through which the academic curriculum is taught, promoting thinking, creating, and evaluating. Opening in September 1998, the school will serve 72 students in kindergarten through second grade. One grade per year will be added until the school serves 144 students in grades K through five.

Contact: L. Lawrence Riccio

Telephone Number: (202) 884-9040

7. **Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter High School** will challenge students with a rigorous curriculum that fosters citizenship and prepares them to excel in college and life. Public policy themes will guide instruction and students will have direct experiences with organizations working in the public interest. The school will use the Modern Red Schoolhouse model and offer advanced placement courses in English, history, and U.S. Government. Plans are to have the school open until 7:00 PM each evening and to offer classes on Sundays. In its first year of operation, Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter High School will serve 60 ninth grade students. Each year a grade level will be added serving 60 students until the school reaches its full capacity of 240 students in grades 9 through 12.

Contact: Irasema Salcido

Telephone Number: (301) 213-5753

The following three schools were approved in November 1997 for charters by the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

8. **SEE FOREVER Public Charter School**, an outgrowth of Project Soar/Roma Pizzeria, is a hands-on job training and tutoring program for court involved youth. In its first year, the new public charter school will serve approximately 50 students in grades 9 through 11. The school's special focus is on integrating the world of work into the traditional academic setting by having students take responsibility for a restaurant, and engaging in other workplace experiences. Many students are encouraged to go on to college or other advanced studies, and all students are expected to take full responsibility for their own behavior. Groups of 3-5 students work closely with an advisor and support one another's progress. The school's organization and culture reflect a commitment to each student's learning and growth during their time in the school and afterward.

Contact: David Domenici or James Forman, Jr.

Telephone Number: (202) 216-0206

9. **Edison-Friendship Public Charter School** is a partnership between Friendship House Association, Inc. and The Edison Project, and educational management firm. The new public charter school will open in August 1998 to serve approximately 1,308 children in Pre- School through grade 5. Eventually the school will serve 1,902 students through grade 12. Edison-Friendship Public Charter School will be divided into schools within a school or academies. The school will have longer days and be organized around small academies where teachers stay with the same children for several years. Technology will play an important role; families of students in the third grade and higher will each receive a home computer. The school will have a strong commitment to parents and families and will be governed by a Board of Trustees that will include parents of children attending the school.

Contact: Donald Hense

Telephone Number: (202) 675-9050

10. **The Rosario International Public Charter School** builds on a 26-year history of the former Rosario School. The new public charter school will help the District of Columbia's high school drop-out and at risk youth who are limited English proficient to gain literacy, English language skills, and a high school equivalent diploma. The school also will provide literacy, citizenship, ESL and GED training to the city's adult immigrants and refugees who need to improve their skills to better participate in the workforce and in their

community. Rosario International Public Charter School will serve approximately 890 part-time students, ages 16 to 60 in its first year of operation. The school will reach its full capacity of almost 2000 students in five years.

Contact: Sonia Gutierrez

Telephone Number: (202) 347-3870

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board invites members of the Press to meet the founders and members of the Boards of Trustees of the new public charter schools on Monday, March 23, 1998 from 4-6 PM at Howard University's Founders Library.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chartered Schools, 1998

1. The Community Academy Public Charter School

The Community Academy was founded by the Urban Family Institute, created by Kent Amos, a former VP of Xerox. The Community Academy plans to create a child and family centered community learning environment which offers world-class preschool through 12th grade education to an estimated 300 neighborhood children while serving the diverse educational and social needs of their families. The academy will be based on academic accountability, flexibility, innovation, parental choice, parent-teacher involvement, and public-private partnerships. The Community Academy will target three neighborhoods in Washington, DC: Petworth, Columbia Heights, and Shaw/LeDroit Park.

Contact: Kent Amos

Telephone Number: (202) 234-5437

2. Techworld Public Charter School

The vision of Techworld Public Charter School is to be the most innovative high-tech high school in DC. Its academic focus will be college preparatory mathematics, science, and the analysis, design, development, testing, implementation, and maintenance of Internet and Information Systems solutions through theoretical and hands-on training. Techworld will initially serve 60 9th grade students demographically selected from Wards 1 through 8. The estimated age range of the students will be 14-15. Each student will attend the school from 7:55am to 3:15pm, Monday through Friday and every other Saturday from 9am to 12pm. The school intends to use a bottom-up collegial approach. To encourage student input, self-motivation, and improve the overall learning process, the following methods will be used: *Foundation Skills, Thinking Skills, Life Skills, and Technology Skills.*

Contact: Daanen Strachan

Telephone Number: (202) 832-0846

3. IDEA Academy Charter High School

The Integrated Design and Electronics Academy (IDEA) Charter High School will be a Conversion of the Phelps Career Academy established at Phelps High School in September 1993. The Phelps Academy was one of nine similar programs initiated through a pilot effort in 1993, sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education and Defense. The Academy was designed on a career model--a career-focus, school-within-a-school that integrates academic and occupational curriculums, increases student career options, and provides a meaningful learning context for both potential dropouts and college-bound youth. The Academy will rely on partnerships with employers in the industry to provide summer and part-time jobs and internships for students, as well as mentors and additional instructional and curriculum supports. It will serve 60 9th grade students.

Contact: Norman Johnson

Telephone Number: (202) 388-5101

4. The Hyde Public Charter School

In 1966, the Hyde School of Bath, Maine admitted its first student. Founder Joe Gauld would like to make this successful model work in an urban setting. The mission of the Hyde School is to develop the character and unique potential of each student through the Hyde family and college preparatory based curriculum. The Hyde School charter was approved in 1998; the school will open in September 1999.

Contact: Joe Gauld

Telephone Number: (202) 443-5584

5. Richard Milburn Public Charter High School

The High School program provides non-traditional educational programs for students to earn high school diplomas, either from RMHS or from the local school district, and to gain employment experience. RMHS offers apprenticeships, an academic core curriculum, and career life skills. It will serve 200 9th through 12 graders.

Contact: William Stephens

Telephone Number: (703) 221-4089

6. World Public Charter School of Washington

Dr. Dorothy Goodman originally founded the Washington International School and hopes to repeat its success with the World School. The curriculum will be devoted to "liberal education," demanding in breadth and depth, and encompassing the main academic disciplines. Students will be taught half and half through English/Arabic, English/Chinese (Mandarin), English/Japanese among other languages. The school intends to serve approximately 320 students ages 4-18.

Contact: Dorothy Goodman

Telephone Number: (202) 362-2946

7. Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School

The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School will be dedicated to providing an exemplary academic experience to culturally diverse young students in DC. Stokes will achieve this goal by creating a nurturing small school community of fifty kindergarten through 5th graders that will provide a core liberal arts and science curriculum. The school will actively involve its students in service to the community, while preparing students for responsible citizenship in a multicultural society.

Contact: Linda Moore

Telephone Number: (202) 882-2102

8. The Village Learning Center Public Charter Schools

The Village Learning Center will operate with the philosophy that “it takes a village to educate a child.” It will be a comprehensive school with a rigorous curriculum that will emphasize the fundamentals of reading, writing, math, and the sciences. It will serve an estimated 120 pre-kindergartners through 8th graders.

Contact: Imani Abdullah

Telephone Number: (202) 396-7585

9. Young Technocrats Math & Science Public Charter Lab School

The Young Technocrats is a science, math, technology, and entrepreneurship program currently operating as an after-school program. The program will expand and become a fully operational school, which will include partnerships with the Howard University Observatory and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The school is designed to serve 500 pre-kindergarten thru 12th grade students, who are considered at-risk because of their poverty. The curriculum will include standard academic courses, but the school’s focus will be to develop a strong foundation in science, mathematics, advanced technology, and entrepreneurship/economic development.

Contact: Myesha Washington

Telephone Number: (410) 451-5835

10. The Next Step Public Charter School (approved 1996)

The mission of The Next Step is to help multicultural pregnant teens and teen mothers who have dropped out of high school overcome obstacles to continuing their education or entering the workforce. Approximately 70% of the estimated 36 participants will be Hispanic and the remaining 30% will be African-American, Vietnamese, and non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean. The teachers will use a curriculum that combines GED and ESL skills with content relating to parenting and work. Young mothers and pregnant teens, with their babies in the school’s nursery or at neighborhood babysitters, attend the school four hours a day, bolstering their basic math, reading, and writing skills.

Contact: Lori Kaplan

Telephone Number: (202) 483-1140

ATTACHMENT G
RECENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

HOME INDEX SEARCH ARCHIVES washingtonpost.com	THE KENNEDY CENTER Millennium Stage sponsored by washingtonpost.com and FannieMae FOUNDATION		FREE. NO TICKETS REQUIRED. DAILY AT 6 PM. CLICK FOR THE CALENDAR!
	NEWS STYLE SPORTS CLASSIFIEDS		
PRINT EDITION TOP NEWS WORLD NATION POLITICS METRO BUSINESS WASHTECH OPINION WEATHER			

Ten free log-ins.
 Five free
 archive credits
 The Economist

Upgrading the Public Classroom

Why we need charter schools in D.C. . . .

Sunday, June 7, 1998; Page C08

As parents, we respect and share former D.C. School Superintendent Julius W. Becton Jr.'s concern for accountability and monitoring of charter schools [Close to Home, May 17]. No one wants more mediocre or failing schools at taxpayer expense.

But as parents who also have removed our children from the public system, we disagree with many of Becton's concerns about the proliferation of charters and wonder why he does not require similar measures for accountability and quality control in regular D.C. public schools.

Becton said, "Our education system could be in trouble if charter schools are allowed to undercut the public schools." But the undercutting happened a long time ago, brought about by unenlightened leadership, an unwillingness to provide the quality and quantity of educational programming that parents want and an inability to market public education in ways that capture the public's support and confidence.

Becton said no one is taking responsibility for monitoring charter schools, but his concern is valid only in the unlikely case that both of the two boards involved in chartering abrogate their roles, which is unlikely. But if that should happen, the rules of the marketplace would prevail: Parents won't patronize bad schools, and lacking enrollment, bad charter schools will fail.

Further, by law, charters must be renewed periodically and can be revoked, as was the case with the Marcus Garvey School. This review provides more accountability than is now found in traditional public schools, where poor performance has been allowed to go on indefinitely.

Becton said, "Unless the attitude of the citizens in the nation's capital changes significantly, public schools as we know them won't exist by the year 2003." We agree. Attitudes must change, and public schools as they are now should not exist. Parents and educators are trying to create better schools, which is the driving force behind the charter movement.

Becton said charter schools will siphon off "some of our best and brightest students," with the result that test scores at D.C. Public Schools will sink even lower than their current abysmal level. But scores aren't the issue here. A quality education is, and the "best

students" shouldn't be used as statistical props for an inadequate system.

If the D.C. government really wants to maintain and develop quality educational programs and increase test scores, it will support charter schools. It will provide program options now unavailable in the District, including a math-science high school, an international baccalaureate, an array of intensive second-language programs, a residential school for students from troubled families and, in time, a feeder school to Ellington Performing Arts School.

Finally, Becton said, "D.C. Public Schools are required to fund all charter schools at a cost per student greater than that spent on public school students." That is inaccurate. Charters are not funded at the same level as regular public schools, particularly in terms of facilities and teacher retirement.

Becton also complained that charter schools receive three-quarters of their per-pupil allotment by October 15 and that these funds can't be recovered if a student leaves before the end of the school term. But the same is true when students drop out or are forced out of regular public schools after the fall enrollment count.

Instead of being dismissive of new and innovative approaches offered by charter schools, the D.C. school system should direct its energies and resources toward enriching public school fare in the District by treating charters as expansions of the traditional schools.

-- Harold Bardonille

-- Glenda Partee

© Copyright 1998 The Washington Post Company



*When it comes to
your retirement,*



**CALLING ALL
FRONT LAWNS
BACKYARDS
LANDSCAPES**



IT'S RIGHT BEHIND THIS BANNER

tech news • the answer geek • the gamer • and more!



washingtonpost.com **NEWS** **STYLE** **SPORTS** **CLASSIFIEDS**
PRINT EDITION **TOP NEWS** **WORLD** **NATION** **POLITICS** **METRO** **BUSINESS** **WASHTECH** **OPINION** **WEATHER**



Chartering a New Course for D.C. Schools

Sunday, May 31, 1998; Page C08

Recent Post coverage about charter schools ["Charters: Unsettled Issues," editorial, May 21; "The Charter School Parade," Close to Home, May 17] raised important questions about their emergence and impact on the District.

Charter schools are public schools that operate autonomously, relatively free of the constraints imposed by a centralized administrative bureaucracy. Enrollment is open to all children at no charge.

The Public Charter School Board was created by Congress, and its members were nominated by the U.S. secretary of education and appointed by the mayor to oversee the approval and operation of charter schools in the District. Board members bring skills to the table that are relevant to the educational, operational, facilities management and business aspects of approving and monitoring charter schools.

Schools must compete to obtain a charter. Only one-third of the applicants who went before the Public Charter School Board had their requests approved. In large part, these programs will fill critical gaps in the current school system.

The 10 schools approved include:

Maya Angelou Public Charter High School, which will offer job training and tutoring to youth involved in the court system.

Associates for Renewal in Education, which will meet the educational needs of children involved in the juvenile justice system.

Cesar Chavez Public Policy High School, which will be a multicultural leadership institute with strong community backing.

Edison-Friendship Public Charter School, which will be a collaborative effort of Friendship House, one of the city's oldest and most respected service organizations, and the nationally known Edison Project.

Hospitality Public Charter High School, which will produce skilled graduates for employment in the region's hotel, restaurant and tourism industry.

Robert Louis Johnson Academy, which will be a partnership between



parents and community leaders in Marshall Heights and Advantage Schools Inc., an experienced school-management firm.

Rosario International Public Charter School, which will address the needs of dropouts pursuing a high school equivalency degree, as well as provide training in literacy, English and citizenship primarily for immigrants and refugees.

School for Arts in Learning, which will be an arts-infused program for young children with learning disabilities.

The SEED Foundation, which will be a residential college preparatory program for children who come from residential settings that have been disruptive to their education.

Washington Mathematics Science Technology High School, which will be converted to charter status, as was requested by the teachers of the successful Ballou High School program.

Under existing law, the Public Charter School Board operates independently of the elected Board of Education and the emergency board of trustees. The charter board reports to the mayor, the D.C. Council, the secretary of education and Congress.

Regarding some common misconceptions about charter schools:

The budget threat allegedly posed by charter schools is overstated. Initial indications are that funding for charter schools in 1998-99 will be about \$25 million -- a fraction of the public schools budget.

The per-pupil funding formula approved by the D.C. Council is the same as -- not more favorable than -- that used by the school system. Conversely, charter schools must use these funds to pay for significant costs that the traditional schools are not required to fund with their per-pupil allocations, including the cost of facilities rental and payments into retirement systems.

The Public Charter School Board does not solicit applications from existing public schools, individuals or institutions. The conversion of Ballou was self-initiated.

Suggestions that "certain entrepreneurs" will feed at the charter school trough do a disservice to the professionals who are trying to improve educational opportunities for students in the District.

All charter schools are required by law to achieve accreditation -- a status few of the D.C. public schools have accomplished. Further, all charter schools will be subject to at least the minimum standards established for the public schools, including the Stanford 9 testing regimen. Our board is developing an accountability and monitoring program that we believe has the potential to serve as a national best-practice standard for charter schools.

Alarms are being sounded about a perceived lack of accountability by charter schools. But it is precisely such a lack of accountability within the public school system that has served as the impetus for the charter school movement in the District.

-- Josephine C. Baker

-- Thomas P. Loughlin

are, respectively, chair and vice chair of the D.C. Public Charter School Board.

© Copyright 1998 The Washington Post Company



Free Weekends Until
The Year 2000.

CELLULARONE



Certain
restrictions apply.





infoseek WE'VE GOT ALL THE ANSWERS.

CLICK HERE

washingtonpost.com **NEWS** STYLE SPORTS CLASSIFIEDS
 PRINT EDITION TOP NEWS WORLD NATION POLITICS METRO BUSINESS WASHTECH OPINION WEATHER



Two Approaches for D.C. Schools

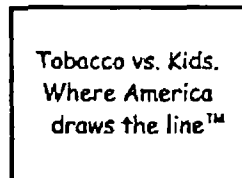
Friday, May 29, 1998; Page A26

Letter to the Editor

Related Items

Print Edition
[Sunday Outlook](#)
[Editorials](#)
[Front Page Articles](#)

On Our Site
[Talk Central](#)
[Editorials & Opinion](#)



Julius Becton's May 17 Close to Home article warned that charter schools pose a threat to our public school system because of the haphazard way they are being approved and the lack of a plan to rationalize both public and charter schools being funded from the same source.

Plans have been made to open as many as 12 to 15 new charter schools in September. Yet the District has no plans for the public school system to reduce its size and scope to offset the funding it might lose if all authorized charter schools do, in fact, open this fall. The short time between chartering decisions and prospective opening dates coupled with the uncertainty of their opening plans leaves the public schools in the untenable position of not knowing whether a student will be returning the following year until after the year has started.

Everyone underestimated the speed with which charter programs would surface and be approved. Most schools planned for the fall have solid backing and will likely draw many students who are doing well in the public schools. For those charter schools that are successful and live up to the goals set forth in their plans, the school system, as a whole, will benefit. However for those schools that fail, the public schools must still provide a place for those returning students.

The funding allocation formulas being developed have proposed equal per-pupil funding for charter and public schools. However, the existing public schools are providing all educational programs, and they have a continuing obligation to provide a safety net for any charter schools that fail.

The public schools also have to carry the large inventory of school facilities until it can be downsized to fit the existing school population for both systems. Therefore equal per-pupil funding is inequitable until movement of students between the two systems stabilizes and the facilities inventory problem has been rationalized. Until that time, the allocation formulas should compensate for these obligations the public schools must carry until some level of equilibrium is reached.

Finally, a comprehensive plan must be developed to accommodate these two approaches if education reform in the District is to be successful. If either approach fails, that means both fail. That must be

our thinking if we are serious about putting all of our children first.

EDWARD A. SINGLETARY

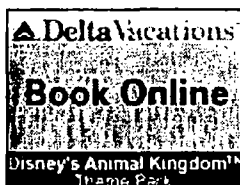
Washington

The writer is a member of the D.C. control board.

© Copyright 1998 The Washington Post Company



HOME INDEX SEARCH ARCHIVES			"Get the Skills...Get the Job"™ 1-800-CLC-3393	
washingtonpost				
NEWS				
STYLE				
SPORTS				
CLASSIFIEDS				
PRINT EDITION	TOP NEWS	WORLD	NATION	POLITICS
	METRO	BUSINESS	WASHTECH	OPINION
			WEATHER	



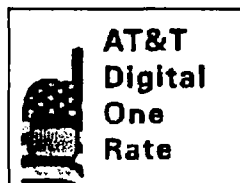
After Garvey Decision, Doubts About Charter Schools

By Valerie Strauss and Peter Slevin
Washington Post Staff Writers
Thursday, May 28, 1998; Page D01

Related Items

[Print Edition](#)
[Metro Articles](#)
[Front Page Articles](#)

[On Our Site](#)
[Neighborhoods](#)
[Traffic](#)
[Community](#)
[Resources](#)
[Metro Section](#)



The D.C. Board of Education's decision to close the Marcus Garvey Public Charter School has raised new concerns about how to make charter schools more accountable for their performance -- particularly since scores of such schools could open in the nation's capital over the next several years.

After months of turmoil at the Afrocentric school in Northwest Washington, the school board last week revoked Garvey's charter, citing a "pattern of financial mismanagement" that board members say began when the school first opened in 1996 and continued after its controversial founder and principal, Mary A.T. Anigbo, was fired in January.

The board also is grappling with a separate development that has renewed questions about how well charter school applicants are screened. Board members recently learned, from a reporter, that a company that was given the board's go-ahead to open a charter school this fall has lost another educational contract with the city -- because D.C. administrators were dissatisfied with its performance.

Boston-based Richard Milburn High School Inc., which plans to open a charter school for 200 low-performing high school students this fall, recently lost a \$1.7 million annual contract to educate youths incarcerated at Oak Hill Youth Center in Laurel.

Garvey's charter revocation, effective at the end of the school year, brought recriminations from parents and a lawsuit by the school's trustees, who said they had just stabilized operations there when the rug was pulled from under them.

But others, including charter school proponents, wonder why the board waited so long, especially after Anigbo was convicted last year of assaulting a reporter and two police officers who came to the school. These critics also complain that the board was too tolerant of Garvey's failure to provide audits and to adhere to basic procurement procedures. The school received \$417,000 in public funds this year for operating costs.

"If [Garvey officials say] they were just now beginning to develop a measure of accountability, it does beg the question as to why" its charter wasn't revoked a long time ago, said Jim Ford, former staff director of the D.C. Council's education committee. Ford now works

for a firm that is helping to open charter schools nationwide, including an elementary school in the city.

"I don't think the [school] board has developed a process that requires sufficient accountability," Ford said.

Charter schools, hundreds of which have been set up around the country, are funded with public money but operate outside the bureaucracy of a traditional school system. Since Congress gave the District the authority two years ago to approve charter schools, three, including Garvey, have opened. More than a dozen others could be accepting students by this fall.

In authorizing charter schools in the District, the only city in the region that has them, Congress gave both the elected school board and a new, appointed D.C. Public Charter Board chartering powers. As many as 20 schools, 10 charters per board, are allowed to open each year -- one of the most liberal allotments of any school district in the nation.

But the Garvey debacle has fueled a debate about whether the chartering bodies, especially the school board, can adequately monitor the charter schools it now supervises -- let alone screen additional applicants and watch over new schools.

School board officials say they properly monitored Garvey and two other charter schools. They said they didn't move sooner to revoke its charter because they wanted to give the school every opportunity to succeed.

But ultimately, board President Wilma R. Harvey (Ward 1) said, "the law is very clear. If a school is not economically viable, it cannot exist."

By the time Garvey's charter was revoked, its officials were mired in a number of controversies. Harvey said the school never produced a thorough audit, despite repeated requests, and it awarded contracts, including one for \$25,000 to Anigbo's ex-husband, without getting the board's approval.

There is also the matter of Garvey's projected \$161,000 deficit for this year -- even though it lost at least half its enrollment when Anigbo was fired. At one point, the school was reporting that it had 73 students. But Harvey, who has asked the city's inspector general to investigate Garvey's handling of public money, said she didn't see more than 30 when she visited the school last week.

Charter proponents agree that the Garvey episode raises a number of questions, including how much time a chartering agency should give a school to correct any issues of noncompliance and how money improperly spent can be recovered.

"The question is who can recoup those public funds from a charter school that has come on hard times?" said Bruce K. MacLaury, head of the emergency board of trustees, which oversees the school system as an agent of the D.C. financial control board. "There is a real issue of fiscal responsibility and oversight."

The appointed charter board, funded by Congress, has been widely credited with setting up a smooth, thoughtful process for granting charters. Its leader, Josephine Baker, says it is on schedule for developing operating standards and a careful monitoring system.

School board officials say they, too, are negotiating tough accountability contracts with schools they charter. There is, however, concern among some charter school proponents that the board's criteria for judging performance are not strict enough.

Critics note, for example, that while the charter board turned down a number of proposals, the school board gave charters to all nine of its applicants -- including the Milburn company, which is running Oak Hill's education program.

"I didn't know about [Milburn's] problems," said Tonya Vidal Kinlow, who heads the school board's charter committee. She said the board will continue to "hold schools accountable based on the charter they have with us."

D.C. administrators say they decided several weeks ago not to renew Milburn's contract at Oak Hill after city officials and inmate advocates complained about several problems, including poor coordination, too few special education teachers and not receiving a list of substitute teachers.

"I felt we could do a better job for what we were paying," said Wayne Casey, who oversees Oak Hill. He described the parting after two years as "amicable" and said the company agreed to stay until October, when the school system will take over the program.

Robert Crosby, the primary owner of Milburn, disputed the criticism. Oak Hill "was a hellhole," he said. "We made many reforms in that school, and many more need to be made."

Crosby said it "was mutually decided" that the best way to continue improvements at Oak Hill, which has been under court order since 1985 to provide better services to incarcerated youths, was for the city to run the education program itself.

Donna Wulkan, attorney for Oak Hill's juveniles, said Milburn's problems at the prison could be repeated in its charter school operations.

Commenting on the parallels, she said the company presented "a very glossy, very detailed proposal" for running the education program. It "won the day," she said, "because it was very pretty, very detailed and very substantive. You look at that proposal and think, 'Ah, this is great.'"

But problems, Wulkan said, cropped up early and were never resolved.

"I don't feel they ever committed the experienced personnel, the resources or a coherent philosophy to the project," she said. "I worry about them coming into a charter school. . . . It is a similar population

of kids."

Peter Leone, the court-appointed monitor for education at Oak Hill, recounted walking into a math class. "They were watching a Spielberg film, the sequel to Jurassic Park," he said. "It had nothing to do with math. I couldn't discern any connection . . . and there were kids from another class watching it with them."

Milburn's Crosby applauded the school board's decision to revoke Garvey's charter.

"They probably should have done it a year ago," he said. "The risk you take with the whole charter school movement is approving mom-and-pop operations. The down side is that you are going to have some failures. The up side is you will create innovative, successful schools."

Charter school opponents, citing Garvey, fear that the schools will not be adequately supervised or held accountable for their performance.

But supporters say charter schools will force failing school systems to improve.

"The question is whether we will ever get real accountability in the traditional schools," Ford said. "The lack of it is underlying the growing support for charter schools."

Though oversight of charter schools is one of the few powers left to the elected school board since it was supplanted by the appointed trustees, board officials say they have not yet figured out how to set up a good monitoring system.

"I don't think I have the appropriate resources for the monitoring that will be required for the number of schools we have coming on," Kinlow said. She said the board plans to meet soon with control board, council and congressional representatives to seek more money to hire monitors. As of now, it has one consultant overseeing charter schools.

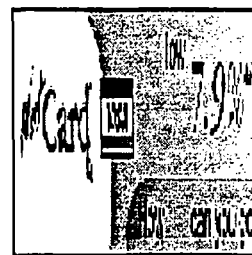
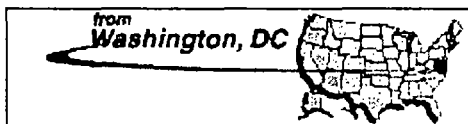
When board and school system officials took joint control of Garvey last week, they seized financial records and fired personnel they considered unnecessary, including some teachers.

The move infuriated parents, who complained that officials acted hastily without weighing the emotional impact on students.

"A lot of these children have been with these teachers for two years," said Jeanne Fields, whose son is an eighth-grader at Garvey. "It was traumatic for them. . . . We keep hearing, 'Children First,' and it seems like it's children last."

© Copyright 1998 The Washington Post Company

washingtonpost.com **NEWS** **STYLE** **SPORTS** **CLASSIFIEDS**
PRINT EDITION **TOP NEWS** **WORLD** **NATION** **POLITICS** **METRO** **BUSINESS** **WASHTECH** **OPINION** **WEATHER**





Click here, you have nothing to lose.

The Economist

World politics, business, science, technology, and the arts.

washingtonpost.com

NEWS

STYLE

SPORTS

CLASSIFIEDS

PRINT EDITION

TOP NEWS

WORLD

NATION

POLITICS

METRO

BUSINESS

WASHTECH

OPINION

WEATHER

Complete Courses Online
Anytime, Anywhere



Related Items

[Print Edition](#)
[Today's National](#)
[Articles](#)
[Inside "A" Section](#)
[Front Page Articles](#)

[On Our Site](#)
[Top News/Breaking](#)
[News](#)
[Politics Section](#)
[National Section](#)



Edison Project to Double Number of Schools

Two D.C. Public Elementary Schools to Be Included in Company's Expansion

By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, May 27, 1998; Page A06

The Edison Project, the largest venture ever into public education by a private, for-profit company, announced yesterday it will double in size this fall by adding 23 more schools to its national network, including its first two in Washington.

The expansion is the most substantial so far in the short, tumultuous history of Edison, which was founded by media entrepreneur Christopher Whittle. It plans to run 48 public schools nationwide, after debuting with four in 1995.

Even though it has yet to earn a profit and some educators remain skeptical of its long-term success, Edison continues to show steady growth and attract financial backers. Its early academic results also have been promising.

"We are demonstrating that our schools work and that we have the ability to grow," said Christopher Cerf, executive vice president of the company, which is based in New York. "We've also gone a long way to proving the economics of this can work, too."

The latest expansion will give Edison 23,000 students and extend its reach to 25 cities, including the District, where it intends to open two elementary schools. Both will be independent "charter" schools, which get the same money per student as other public schools but have the freedom to set nearly all of their policies.

Edison officials said one school will be at the site of the former Woodridge School in Northeast and the other will be at what was once the Chamberlain Adult Education Center in Southeast.

A growing number of private companies are forming academic or business partnerships with public schools, but Edison's scope is unrivaled: It spent more than \$40 million creating its own curriculum, and it uses the per-pupil money it receives from school systems to hire its own teachers and administrators. Its class days are 90 minutes longer than those at most public schools and its academic year is almost a month longer. The company is led by a former president of Yale University, Benno C. Schmidt.

A few years ago, before it ran any schools, many educators figured

Edison was doomed because of its extravagant goals and the deep financial troubles of Whittle, who also founded Channel One, which beams educational programming and commercials into schools.

But Edison abruptly abandoned its plan to open a national network of 1,000 new private schools and adopted the more modest strategy of taking over existing public schools. Most schools in Edison's fold are part of public school systems.

Edison expects to collect \$126 million this fall from cities where it will operate schools. This spring, it received \$35 million in philanthropic support and another \$20 million in financing to renovate facilities for its new charter schools. Edison ran 12 schools in its second year and is running 25 schools this year.

"They seem to be on track now," said John McLaughlin, director of the Education Industry Group, which monitors the burgeoning relationships between private companies and schools. "Their expansion is a sign of good health. If Edison can put together one more positive year, it should be able to prove that it can be profitable."

But the target number of schools that Edison officials say they have to run to sustain a profit still seems to be in flux. Last year, company officials said they would need about 60 schools. Now they say it will likely take more than that.

Edison is still battling with some teacher unions. In a report this month, the American Federation of Teachers called student performance in Edison schools "mixed and inconclusive" and accused the company of overstating its success. The report also said Edison relies on inexperienced teachers and has large class sizes.

Edison officials concede they have had staffing or cost problems at a few sites but say student test scores -- which are independently evaluated -- are rising at nearly all of its schools. None of the school districts that have entered into a partnership with Edison have retreated from it; some are turning over more schools to the company.

Edison also plans to open schools for the first time in Denver, Minneapolis, Trenton, and the San Francisco Bay area. It already has schools in cities such as Boston, Detroit, Miami, San Antonio and Wichita.

© Copyright 1998 The Washington Post Company

washingtonpost.com **NEWS** **STYLE** **SPORTS** **CLASSIFIEDS**
PRINT EDITION **TOP NEWS** **WORLD** **NATION** **POLITICS** **METRO** **BUSINESS** **WASHTECH** **OPINION** **WEATHER**

yellowpages

**COMPUTER
DISCOUNTERS**

**Your Total
Hardware Source!**
Best Prices in Town!

Search the Washington Post articles since 1986.
ARCHIVES Type in any word/phrase **click
here
to
search**

ATTACHMENT D

**OCTOBER 1997, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S PROPOSAL
FOR
A DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE**

District of Columbia's Charter School Initiative

I. Description of Initiative and Problems Being Addressed

A. The Initiative

The Department proposes to initiate an aggressive effort to make public school choice a tangible opportunity in the District of Columbia (DC) by ensuring that public charter schools are an easily accessible and high performance alternative for all students. To maximize the impact of these new schools and to make sure that this effort is effective in offering a real choice to parents and students throughout DC will require a focused Initiative in the early years of the DC charter schools' operation. This Initiative would build on the initial efforts in DC to establish charter schools, and would involve three steps that the Department would work on together with the White House, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and DC officials. The steps have little or no necessary immediate budget implications. The steps are as follows:

1. Develop a legislative proposal to amend the DC public charter schools law (the DC School Reform Act) to establish a clear, single authority to ensure that the review of charter school petitions are fair and effective; that public charter schools are fully accountable to the public; that admissions are open and fair; that charter schools prepare their students to meet at least as challenging academic standards as those established for other DC public schools; and that the review, revocation, and renewal of charter is reasonable. In order for such an authority to operate effectively it must either work closely with the Chief Executive Officer and the Control Board or be vested initially in the Chief Executive Officer and the Control Board. The legislation would clarify who has oversight authority over charter schools, and create a clear authority that oversees and coordinates the chartering authorities, and further clarify the existing oversight authority of the chartering authorities, and other DC entities.

2. Work with the DC Public Schools (DCPS) and other authorities to establish mechanisms to ensure that complete information is available to all parents and students about choices of public charter schools and to help determine how to provide transportation to students so that they can take full advantage of their charter school opportunities. This effort to arrange for transportation might take some seed money.

3. Initiate an aggressive effort to involve more local DC institutions including Federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation, the Department of Defense, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Library of Congress and local colleges and universities in sponsoring or supporting public charter schools in the District. While some local institutions have become involved in establishing charter schools, substantially more involvement would enhance the charter schools.

B. The Problems That Would Be Addressed

The three step Initiative on the DC charter schools is designed to improve the

effectiveness, accountability and accessibility of the charter schools. At present, the DC School Board (DC School Board) and a Public Charter School Board (PCS Board) responsible to the Mayor each have authority to charter 10 new schools each year. Two charter schools currently are operating, each chartered by the DC School Board. There is likely to be 15 to 20 new charter schools starting up by the Fall of 1998. Currently, no single official or body appears to have clear oversight authority over the charter schools to ensure that they are being implemented in accordance with their charter and are effective in having their students meet challenging standards. While the DCPS' application approved for the Department's Public Charter School program funds provides for oversight by an Office of Educational Accountability, authority for some monitoring and oversight is also split between the two chartering authorities. There appears to be some lack of clarity on who has oversight authority, and what authority they have, which may be causing the existing authorities to be exercising oversight authority less vigorously.

There should be clear oversight authority to insure public accountability and fairness in admissions. Students attending public charter schools should be held to at least as challenging standards as students in other DC public schools. Because the interim Chief Executive Officer and the Control Board appear to have limited responsibility for charter schools, they have not taken steps to insure these minimum procedures. There also appears to be limited information provided about charter schools to parents and students, and no transportation for students who are considering charter schools in areas not near their homes. These shortcomings make it difficult for parents and students to make effective school choices. To maximize the impact of these new schools and to be effective in offering real choice to parents and students throughout the district will require a focused effort in the early years of the schools' operation to ensure effective operation. Finally, few of the local colleges and universities or federal agencies are involved in any of the plans for a new charter school. These issues all require addressing before charter schools can make a substantial positive impact.

C. Background Information. Below is general background on the issues discussed concerning improving the operation of the District of Columbia's charter schools:

1. Accountability and Oversight

- Under District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995 (the D.C. Reform Act), two existing entities are authorized to issue charters for the establishment of public charter schools: (1) the DC School Board; and (2) the PCS Board. The D.C. Reform Act also authorizes the D.C. Council to designate a third "eligible chartering entity." The seven-member PCS Board was appointed by Mayor Barry in accordance with section 2214(b) of the D.C. Reform Act. The DC School Board is an elected body.

- The DC School Board and the PCS Board, as eligible chartering authorities under the D.C. Reform Act, are responsible for "monitoring the operations" of each public charter school to which each entity grants a charter, and for ensuring that such charter school complies with

applicable laws as well as the provisions of its charter. The D.C. Reform Act also requires the eligible chartering authority to monitor the progress of each school to which it issues a charter in meeting the student academic achievement expectations specified in the charter granted to the school. The chartering authorities can revoke charters and have wide latitude in determining the academic standards that students at public charter schools are required to meet. These chartering bodies, however, have few resources for such efforts. Additionally, for a "State" charter school program, such as D.C.'s program to receive funds under the Department's Public Charter School Program under Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it must describe in its application "how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student performance standards...."

- Although the DC School Board and the PCS Board are required to submit annual reports to various city and Federal entities; including the Mayor, the Secretary, and Congress; the D.C. Reform Act does not identify any one entity as having oversight responsibility over the eligible chartering authorities. To the contrary, the D.C. Reform Act specifically prohibits any governmental entity, elected official, or D.C. employee from intervening in a chartering authority's decision to approve or deny a petition to establish a public charter school. It is unclear whether under current law, a single DC official or board has oversight authority over public charter schools in D.C. The District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (unofficially referred to as the Control Board) has been granted broad authority under the D.C. Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Act of 1995 (the D.C. Financial Assistance Act), to take whatever action it deems appropriate to carry out the purposes of the D.C. Financial Assistance Act. Legislation would be helpful to clarify not only the Chief Executive Officer's authority, or lack thereof, over public charter schools, but also, whether the proper administration of D.C.'s public charter schools program falls within the scope of the Control Board's authority.

2. Federal Agency Involvement in DC Charter Schools

- The D.C. Reform Act "encourages" several Federal agencies, including the Library of Congress, the Department of Defense, the National Science Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, and the United States Department of Education, to explore the feasibility of establishing one or more public charter schools. The Department of Education's authority to sponsor a public charter school is limited by the Department of Education Organization Act. There are currently only very limited efforts underway to involve Federal agencies and local colleges and universities in assisting or sponsoring D.C. charter schools.

3. Public Information on D.C. Charter Schools

- We are unaware of any coordinated effort to disseminate information about public charter schools in D.C. or to ensure that public charter schools are a realistic and practical choice for all students. Although the D.C. Reform Act requires a petition to establish a public charter school to include a description of how parents have been involved in the design and will continue

to be involved in the implementation and operations of the proposed school, it does not require any affirmative action to inform the community of the proposal to establish a public charter school or the existence of the public charter school after it has been established.

4. Transportation for Students

- The D.C. Reform Act does not require public charter school operators to make any provisions for transporting certain classes of students (e.g., very young, low-income, or elementary school students) to and from a charter school. While we are aware that there are discount programs available for D.C. public school students using public transportation, this will not help younger students whose parents may wish them to attend charter schools that are not close to their homes.

II. How the Initiative Will Be Managed

The Initiative will be largely accomplished through legislation and technical assistance. The Department will work in cooperation with OMB, the White House, and DC officials in designing legislative amendments that are needed and in arranging for technical assistance.

III. Expected Costs

The only part of the Initiative that could involve a substantial amount of costs is the transportation. This may involve some start up costs and depending on the solution, may involve a continuing cost to DCPS. The establishment of a single oversight authority may also involve some salaries and expenses, or could be assigned to volunteers or an existing group or individual. Additionally, the dissemination of information on charter schools to the public may also involve some expenses.

IV. Measuring Results

Through this Initiative we are hoping to maximize the positive impact and effectiveness of these new schools. As a result, charter schools in DC must offer a real choice to parents and students throughout the district, must provide an opportunity for all students to attend the charter schools, must be fair in admissions and accountable to the public, and students must achieve to high standards. The Department will develop an evaluation plan to measure the success of the Initiative.

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

March 10, 1998

Contact: Board staff

(202) 887-5011

FAX (202) 887-5026

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

UPDATE: TEN APPROVED FOR CHARTERS

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board is pleased to announce completion of the second and final stage of its 1997-98 application review process. On March 5, 1998, the Board approved seven applications to establish public charter schools in the District of Columbia. The total number of applications approved by the Board during its first competition for charters to establish public charter schools is ten, including the three applications approved in November 1997. The new public charter schools will serve more than 3,000 learners next year.

Josephine C. Baker, Chairperson of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, says, "After a tough competition, the Board has now approved a total of ten schools for charters. As a result, more than 3,000 learners of all ages in the District of Columbia will be offered an exciting range of new educational opportunities when school opens next fall. All of us are pleased about the role these schools can play in the effort to improve public education in the nation's capital".

1. The SEED Public Charter School of Washington, DC will provide a residential, coed learning environment for academic underperformers, grades 7-12, whose residential settings are disruptive to their education and who desire to attend a boarding school. The school's program is grounded in the philosophy that all children deserve a high quality education and that all students will learn. To that end, SEED Public Charter School of Washington, DC will offer an academic and residential setting that is conducive to healthy student development, a strong remedial program to bring students up to their current grade level, a high school curriculum and program that is similar to that found in some of the best college preparatory schools in the nation. The school will serve 40 seventh grade students during the first year and will add a new class of seventh graders each year until the school encompasses grades 7 through 12.

Contact: Rajiv Vinnakota

Telephone Number: (202) 712-9134

2. **Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School** represents the conversion of an existing school-within-a-school to public charter school status. The school's mission is to provide college-bound students in grades 9-12 a classic liberal education with an emphasis on mathematics and science. Students will use technology as a research and learning tool to enhance development of analytical reasoning. The school intends to use the Modern Red Schoolhouse academic standards as the foundation for curriculum in eight core subjects and will offer an extended school day and longer school year, with wrap-around study enrichment programs. Washington Math Science Technology Public Charter High School will serve 175 students in grades 9 through 12 during its first year of operation and over time reach its full capacity of 420 students.

Contact: Mary H. Johnson or Jack McCarthy

Telephone Number: (202) 645-3365 or 775-5826

3. **Hospitality Public Charter High School** plans to begin operation in school year 1999-2000. The school's purpose is to strengthen and expand the work force available to the hospitality industry of the nation's capital. The school will offer students with potential for higher education a rigorous four year academic program with strong preparation for careers in the fastest growing industry in the metropolitan Washington area. The program will include paid internships, industry related technology systems training, student learning projects, and mentors. The Hospitality Public Charter School of Washington, D.C. will begin enrollment in fall of 1999 with a freshman and sophomore class of 40 students each, building to the ultimate goal of serving 150 students by the year 20002.

Contact: Emily Vetter

Telephone Number: (202) 289-0584

4. **Associates for Renewal in Education, Inc. Public Charter School** will provide an educational program for 100 students from age 14 to 22 who are involved in the juvenile justice system. Since students' lives outside of school affect their ability to learn, teachers in this new public charter school will help them to avoid risky behaviors. The goal is to enable these young people to find responsible ways to meet their needs so they can improve their self-confidence, behave appropriately, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, and get a high school diploma. Teachers in the school will strive to create a school in which students feel cared about, are encouraged to voice their opinions and make choices about their education, have fun learning and feel free to move at their own pace. Staff also will emphasize to students that completing their education is necessary to their ability to survive in the world outside of school.

Contact: Brenda Strong Nixon

Telephone Number: (202) 483-9424

5. **The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy** was conceived of by a group of parents and community members in response to the closing of the Richardson Elementary School in northeast Washington, DC. Beginning in September 1998, this new public charter school will enroll 540 students in grades pre-K through 5, and will expand to include grade six in the second year of operation. The design of the school's educational program has two key components: strong academics and a performing/communicative arts concentration. Students will develop strong skills in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, history, foreign language, and technology. A founding partnership has been developed with Advantage Schools, Inc., a Massachusetts based educational management firm that will manage the Academy and administer its education program.

Contact: Pamela Lipscomb Gardner

Telephone Number: (202) 829-5980

6. **The School for Arts in Learning** will be an alternative learning community for children with special needs, particularly children with physical or learning disabilities. The school's program will emphasize education in and through the arts to stimulate intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development. The arts will be an educational tool through which the academic curriculum is taught, promoting thinking, creating, and evaluating. Opening in September 1998, the school will serve 72 students in kindergarten through second grade. One grade per year will be added until the school serves 144 students in grades K through five.

Contact: L. Lawrence Riccio

Telephone Number: (202) 884-9040

7. **Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter High School** will challenge students with a rigorous curriculum that fosters citizenship and prepares them to excel in college and life. Public policy themes will guide instruction and students will have direct experiences with organizations working in the public interest. The school will use the Modern Red Schoolhouse model and offer advanced placement courses in English, history, and U.S. Government. Plans are to have the school open until 7:00 PM each evening and to offer classes on Sundays. In its first year of operation, Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter High School will serve 60 ninth grade students. Each year a grade level will be added serving 60 students until the school reaches its full capacity of 240 students in grades 9 through 12.

Contact: Irasema Salcido

Telephone Number: (301) 213-5753

The following three schools were approved in November 1997 for charters by the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

8. **SEE FOREVER Public Charter School**, an outgrowth of Project Soar/Roma Pizzeria, is a hands-on job training and tutoring program for court involved youth. In its first year, the new public charter school will serve approximately 50 students in grades 9 through 11. The school's special focus is on integrating the world of work into the traditional academic setting by having students take responsibility for a restaurant, and engaging in other workplace experiences. Many students are encouraged to go on to college or other advanced studies, and all students are expected to take full responsibility for their own behavior. Groups of 3-5 students work closely with an advisor and support one another's progress. The school's organization and culture reflect a commitment to each student's learning and growth during their time in the school and afterward.

Contact: David Domenici or James Forman, Jr.

Telephone Number: (202) 216-0206

9. **Edison-Friendship Public Charter School** is a partnership between Friendship House Association, Inc. and The Edison Project, and educational management firm. The new public charter school will open in August 1998 to serve approximately 1,308 children in Pre-School through grade 5. Eventually the school will serve 1,902 students through grade 12. Edison-Friendship Public Charter School will be divided into schools within a school or academies. The school will have longer days and be organized around small academies where teachers stay with the same children for several years. Technology will play an important role; families of students in the third grade and higher will each receive a home computer. The school will have a strong commitment to parents and families and will be governed by a Board of Trustees that will include parents of children attending the school.

Contact: Donald Hense

Telephone Number: (202) 675-9050

10. **The Rosario International Public Charter School** builds on a 26-year history of the former Rosario School. The new public charter school will help the District of Columbia's high school drop-out and at risk youth who are limited English proficient to gain literacy, English language skills, and a high school equivalent diploma. The school also will provide literacy, citizenship, ESL and GED training to the city's adult immigrants and refugees who need to improve their skills to better participate in the workforce and in their

Edison

community. Rosario International Public Charter School will serve approximately 890 part-time students, ages 16 to 60 in its first year of operation. The school will reach its full capacity of almost 2000 students in five years.

Contact: Sonia Gutierrez

Telephone Number: (202) 347-3870

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board invites members of the Press to meet the founders and members of the Boards of Trustees of the new public charter schools on Monday, March 23, 1998 from 4-6 PM at Howard University's Founders Library.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chartered Schools, 1998

1. The Community Academy Public Charter School

The Community Academy was founded by the Urban Family Institute, created by Kent Amos, a former VP of Xerox. The Community Academy plans to create a child and family centered community learning environment which offers world-class preschool through 12th grade education to an estimated 300 neighborhood children while serving the diverse educational and social needs of their families. The academy will be based on academic accountability, flexibility, innovation, parental choice, parent-teacher involvement, and public-private partnerships. The Community Academy will target three neighborhoods in Washington, DC: Petworth, Columbia Heights, and Shaw/LeDroit Park.

Contact: Kent Amos

Telephone Number: (202) 234-5437

2. Techworld Public Charter School

The vision of Techworld Public Charter School is to be the most innovative high-tech high school in DC. Its academic focus will be college preparatory mathematics, science, and the analysis, design, development, testing, implementation, and maintenance of Internet and Information Systems solutions through theoretical and hands-on training. Techworld will initially serve 60 9th grade students demographically selected from Wards 1 through 8. The estimated age range of the students will be 14-15. Each student will attend the school from 7:55am to 3:15pm, Monday through Friday and every other Saturday from 9am to 12pm. The school intends to use a bottom-up collegial approach. To encourage student input, self-motivation, and improve the overall learning process, the following methods will be used: *Foundation Skills, Thinking Skills, Life Skills, and Technology Skills.*

Contact: Daanen Strachan

Telephone Number: (202) 832-0846

3. IDEA Academy Charter High School

The Integrated Design and Electronics Academy (IDEA) Charter High School will be a Conversion of the Phelps Career Academy established at Phelps High School in September 1993. The Phelps Academy was one of nine similar programs initiated through a pilot effort in 1993, sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education and Defense. The Academy was designed on a career model--a career-focus, school-within-a-school that integrates academic and occupational curriculums, increases student career options, and provides a meaningful learning context for both potential dropouts and college-bound youth. The Academy will rely on partnerships with employers in the industry to provide summer and part-time jobs and internships for students, as well as mentors and additional instructional and curriculum supports. It will serve 60 9th grade students.

Contact: Norman Johnson

Telephone Number: (202) 388-5101

4. The Hyde Public Charter School

In 1966, the Hyde School of Bath, Maine admitted its first student. Founder Joe Gauld would like to make this successful model work in an urban setting. The mission of the Hyde School is to develop the character and unique potential of each student through the Hyde family and college preparatory based curriculum. The Hyde School charter was approved in 1998; the school will open in September 1999.

Contact: Joe Gauld

Telephone Number: (202) 443-5584

5. Richard Milburn Public Charter High School

The High School program provides non-traditional educational programs for students to earn high school diplomas, either from RMHS or from the local school district, and to gain employment experience. RMHS offers apprenticeships, an academic core curriculum, and career life skills. It will serve 200 9th through 12 graders.

Contact: William Stephens

Telephone Number: (703) 221-4089

6. World Public Charter School of Washington

Dr. Dorothy Goodman originally founded the Washington International School and hopes to repeat its success with the World School. The curriculum will be devoted to "liberal education," demanding in breadth and depth, and encompassing the main academic disciplines. Students will be taught half and half through English/Arabic, English/Chinese (Mandarin), English/Japanese among other languages. The school intends to serve approximately 320 students ages 4-18.

Contact: Dorothy Goodman

Telephone Number: (202) 362-2946

7. Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School

The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School will be dedicated to providing an exemplary academic experience to culturally diverse young students in DC. Stokes will achieve this goal by creating a nurturing small school community of fifty kindergarten through 5th graders that will provide a core liberal arts and science curriculum. The school will actively involve its students in service to the community, while preparing students for responsible citizenship in a multicultural society.

Contact: Linda Moore

Telephone Number: (202) 882-2102

8. The Village Learning Center Public Charter Schools

The Village Learning Center will operate with the philosophy that "it takes a village to educate a child." It will be a comprehensive school with a rigorous curriculum that will emphasize the fundamentals of reading, writing, math, and the sciences. It will serve an estimated 120 pre-kindergartners through 8th graders.

Contact: Imani Abdullah

Telephone Number: (202) 396-7585

9. Young Technocrats Math & Science Public Charter Lab School

The Young Technocrats is a science, math, technology, and entrepreneurship program currently operating as an after-school program. The program will expand and become a fully operational school, which will include partnerships with the Howard University Observatory and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The school is designed to serve 500 pre-kindergarten thru 12th grade students, who are considered at-risk because of their poverty. The curriculum will include standard academic courses, but the school's focus will be to develop a strong foundation in science, mathematics, advanced technology, and entrepreneurship/economic development.

Contact: Myesha Washington

Telephone Number: (410) 451-5835

10. The Next Step Public Charter School (approved 1996)

The mission of The Next Step is to help multicultural pregnant teens and teen mothers who have dropped out of high school overcome obstacles to continuing their education or entering the workforce. Approximately 70% of the estimated 36 participants will be Hispanic and the remaining 30% will be African-American, Vietnamese, and non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean. The teachers will use a curriculum that combines GED and ESL skills with content relating to parenting and work. Young mothers and pregnant teens, with their babies in the school's nursery or at neighborhood babysitters, attend the school four hours a day, bolstering their basic math, reading, and writing skills.

Contact: Lori Kaplan

Telephone Number: (202) 483-1140

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S
DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS INITIATIVE
May 1998 - Status Report**

The Department's DC Public Schools Initiative is intended to help the District's public school system implements **system-wide and school-based academic and management reforms** to improve the quality of education through, providing resources and sharing expertise in such areas as curriculum and instruction, assessment, accountability, education research, school governance, education technology, adult education, and parent and community involvement.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- The Department makes available, on a continuing basis, information on promising approaches, research-based ideas, and guidance to DCPS to assist it in addressing the system-wide challenges it faces.
- The Department is working closely with the new Superintendent as she focuses on improving student achievement and failing schools. To accelerate academic reform, the Department recently granted DCPS \$5 million in FY 1998 funds from the Fund for the Improvement of Education and has requested another \$20 million for FY 1999. These funds will be used to provide academically intensive summer programs primarily for students performing below the basic level in reading and mathematics on the Stanford Achievement Test, help fund reading specialists in every school to improve student literacy skills, provide professional development for teachers and principals, and implement comprehensive whole-school reform, with an emphasis on turning around failing schools.
- The Department is providing assistance to the new Superintendent by helping to develop an Entry Plan for her as she assumes the Superintendency. A small number of successful urban superintendents will be selected from around the nation to advise her. The Department will help put a Transition Team in place, which will assist in critical positions within the system, identify areas for reform, and shape a reform strategy.
- The Department continues to work to ensure that all education programs are effective and that Federal (and local) funds are spent in ways that are faithful to Federal laws while strengthening the system's reform efforts and its ability to effectively participate in Federal grant programs.

The Department recommended that DCPS hire independent auditors to conduct an internal controlled self-assessment and provide recommendations on fixing the central administrative systems, including procurement, personnel, payroll and accounting. A final report on an implementation plan and Federal grants procedures for DCPS was recently completed and the Department is now considering subsequent actions. At the same time, the District is moving toward centralizing Personnel, Financial Management Systems, Information Technology, and Procurement, and the Department is helping both DCPS and District officials by working with consultants hired by the District to inform them of Federal requirements.

The Department is providing assistance to DCPS in developing specific plans for achieving education reform, using various Federal initiatives. The following are four examples in which the Department has withheld grants until DCPS developed quality, strategic plans for use of such Federal funds:

2 - DC Public Schools Initiative

The Department withheld **FY 1997 formula Goals 2000 - State Education Systemic Improvement Grant** until DCPS satisfied conditions of their FY 1997 award by demonstrating progress on implementing content and performance standards, and an aligned student assessment system. Goals 2000 grants are provided to support the development and implementation of comprehensive education reform plans to improve the teaching and learning of all students, in part through the establishment of high standards with aligned assessments, curriculum, and professional development.

The Department withheld **FY 1997 and FY 1998 Technology Literacy Challenge Fund** formula grants but continued to provide significant policy and technical assistance as DCPS developed its systemic technology strategy to improve the teaching and learning of all children. The Department has not yet released FY 1998 funds. **Technology Literacy Challenge Fund** supports efforts to meet four national technology goals for schools: modern computers, high quality educational software, trained teachers, and affordable connections to the Internet. The Department continues to work towards approval of DCPS's plan for education technology; that plan must be approved by the Department for DCPS to be eligible for subsidies available to schools through the Schools and Libraries Corporation from the Universal Service Fund.

The Department recently signed a 3-year agreement to bring DCPS into compliance with Federal statute and regulations on the education of children with disabilities and is now working with DCPS on the implementation of the agreement. During negotiations, the Department withheld **FY 1997 formula grant funds** available under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. IDEA funds are used to help provide children with disabilities free appropriate public education, including special education and related services.

The Department has been working with DCPS to rebuild its Adult Education programs and required DCPS to file an Amendment to its State Plan for Adult Education. The Department attached special conditions to DCPS's **FY 1996 and 1997 Adult Education State-Administered Basic Grant**. The special conditions are intended to track the District's progress in improving educational opportunities for adults who lack literacy skills, ensure accountability, and meet Federal grant matching requirements.

- The Department is working closely with DCPS and community and business organizations to develop a plan and a comprehensive system for students to make a smooth transition from school to work. The **School-to-Work Opportunities State Implementation Grant** is provided to states and communities for the implementation of **School-to-Work** initiatives integrating academic and vocational learning with work-based learning. The initiative is jointly administered with the US Department of Labor. To assist DCPS in developing an

3 - DC Public Schools Initiative

effective plan, Federal funds were used to secure an independent private-sector district-wide assessment of the readiness of DCPS's School-to-Work system for implementation. In May 1998, DCPS is expected to submit its application for more than \$9 million. These funds serve as 'venture capital' to allow states to build comprehensive school-to-work systems that will remain when Federal funds are phased out.

OTHER SELECTED U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Department funds the Laboratory for Student Success, Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory established at Temple University to assist with comprehensive whole-school reform in six of the lowest performing elementary schools.
- The Department identified promising programs and resources to help put in place new system-wide, standards-based curricula for students.
- The Department provided guidance and advice as the system selected its academic improvement reform initiatives and strategies.
- The Department provided advice as DCPS developed an accountability system and selected assessments to measure student performance and help shape instruction to raise the academic achievement of students.
- Working in partnership with 6 local universities, the Corporation for National Service, AmeriCorps*Vista members, and community organizations, the Department guided the implementation of the DC Reads Program, a literacy program modeled after the Administration's America Reads challenge. College work-study students, Department employees, and other volunteers tutor students in 16 of the lowest performing elementary schools.
- The Department created the DC Desk, which provides employees, parents, students, and others with one-stop access to Department resources, including research, practice-based information, and technical assistance.
- The Department temporarily detailed two employees to DCPS to help with the FY 1997 Charter School Federal subgrant process.
- The Department recommended 15 persons to the Mayor as qualified to serve on the 7-member DC Public Charter School Board; subsequently, the Department transmitted the names of 3 individuals to fill an expired 1-year appointment to the Board. In its first year of operation, this Board received 26 applications to establish public charter schools and approved 10; nine will begin operations in Fall of 1998 and one will open in Fall of 1999.
- The Department provided technical assistance and resources to address the Year 2000 computer problem.
- The Department is continuing its 'Adopt A School' relationship with Amidon Elementary school.

Helene Hekherian
10/20/97

Ackerman's Strategy for Reform.

- 1 ☐ **1997-98 - A Focus on Student Achievement**
- 2 ☐ **The Vision: To make Washington D.C. school system exemplary by the year 2000.**
- 3 ☐ **The Mission: To make dramatic improvement in the achievement of all students today in preparation for their world tomorrow.**
- 4 ☐ **Core Beliefs**
 - Children First
 - Parents Are Our Partners
 - Victory is in the Classroom
 - Leadership and Accountability are the Keys to Our Success
 - It Takes a Village to Raise a Child
- 5 ☐ **The Focus**
 - Implement the Education Plan = Year 1
 - Set Clear Performance Standards and Outcomes
 - Performance standards for students, teachers and principals
 - Content standards for students
 - Promotion requirements
 - Build an Infrastructure for Support of Schools
 - Organizational and fiscal realignment of resources
 - Systemwide accountability
 - Frequent monitoring of student progress
 - Implement Professional Development
 - Teachers, principals and instructional support
 - Public Engagement
 - Community forums, standards, promotion requirement, parent and student surveys, annual school report cards
- 6 ☐ **First 90 Days - Priorities**
 - Implement Fall Testing for Grades 1-11

- Identify District Performance Targets
- Implement a Communitywide Focus on Reading
- Implement New Principal Evaluation Process
- Develop Process for Annual School Review
- Recommend New Promotion Requirements
- Offer First of Four Professional Development Institutes for Instructional Staff
- Identify New Target Assistance Schools and Develop Support System/Redesign Process

7 ☐ **Fall Testing**

- Students Tested on Grade Level
- Diagnostic Results Foundation for Instructional Planning
- Re-test in Spring to Determine Gains

8 ☐ **Performance Targets**

- SAT-9
 - 10% Gains in Combined Scores of Reading and Math
 - Movement of Students From Levels
 - » 10% from Below Basic to Basic
 - » 5-10% from Basic to Proficient
 - » 2-5% from Proficient to Advanced
- Attendance
 - Elementary
 - Middle School
 - High School

9 ☐ **Benchmarks - Grades 3,5,8,11**

- Reading, Writing and Math Skills in Reading and Math

10 ☐ **Principal Evaluation**

- Part I: Six Performance Criteria
 - Academic Achievement - 50%
 - School Climate 10%
 - Parental and Community Involvement 10%
 - Human Resource Management 10%
 - Fiscal Resource Management 10%
 - Leadership 10%
- Part II: Site Visits

- Achievement Plans from all Principals

11 ☐ Annual Performance Review for Schools

- Performance Criteria - Year I
 - Academic Achievement
 - Test Scores
 - Writing Sample - Pilot in Year
 - Attendance
 - Dropout Rates (Secondary only)
 - School Climate (As measured by student, staff and parent surveys)
 - School Leadership (As measured by staff and parent surveys)
 - Market Share

12 ☐ Annual Performance Review: Process and Timeline

- School Self-Study Teams (June and July)
- District Review Teams (July and August)
- Hearing Review Panel (August and September) — *schools where there are concerns*
- Schools of Focus Identified (September)
- Exemplary Programs and Practices (September)

13 ☐ Recommended Promotion Requirements & Safety Net Activities

- Promotion Requirements
 - Non-promotion of all second graders reading below basic
 - Non-promotion of third graders performing below basic in both reading and math
 - Comprehensive assessment to determine eighth grade promotion to include reading and math scores, grade point average, attendance and other input from a School Intervention Team
 - Tenth graders reading below basic must pass a Reading Proficiency Test before graduation
 - 2.0 culminative grade point average to graduate (Class of 2002)

14 ☐ Student Safety Net Activities

- Year I
 - Mandatory summer school for all students performing below basic in reading
 - Quarterly reports on student progress to include school activities to remediate
 - Parent notification each quarter for students in danger of non-

promotion (Initial notification in November)

- After-school tutorials and Saturday Academies in all Target Assistance Schools
- Whole school redesign programs in all Target Assistance Schools

- Year II

- Year-round schools (strategically located geographically)

15 ☐ **Professional Development for Staff**

- Principal Leadership Institute

- Providing Clear, Positive Direction
 - Instructional Leadership
 - Accountability and School Management
 - Selection and Development of Staff
 - Building Positive Relationships (Internal and External)

- Institutes for Instructional Staff (Four)

- Themes — *standards, assessment, and classroom management*
 - » Standards, Assessment and Content
 - » Instructional Best Practices and Classroom Management
 - » Instructional Leadership

- Standards Specialists in Each School

- Provide standards information to building staff and feedback to CAO staff about standards implementation in schools

16 ☐ **Target Assistance Schools**

- Process and new schools to be announced in early November, 1997

17 ☐ **It Takes A Village.....**

- Reading Campaign - A communitywide effort to ensure that all students are reading by the end of third grade
- Announcement October 28th

18 ☐ **Vision: To make Washington D.C. school system exemplary by the year 2000.**

19 ☐ **Mission: To make dramatic improvement in the achievement of all students today in preparation for**

their world tomorrow.

20 ☐ **There is no stopping a district whose
time has come.....it is our time!**

21 ☐ **Question and Answer Period**

**STATEMENT OF ARLENE ACKERMAN
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT AND CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APRIL 3, 1998**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am Arlene Ackerman, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools. I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about our plans for improving student achievement at DCPS.

Background

When I arrived at DCPS six months ago, I came with the understanding that the system was in crisis. However, after careful review of the results of the Spring 1997 Stanford 9 Achievement Test and other achievement data, I learned that the academic situation was even more serious than I expected.

(X) For instance, in reading, we found that 41 percent of our third graders were performing "below basic" (meaning they have little or no mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills for this grade level), compared to just 25 percent of students nationally. Worse yet, by 10th grade, 53 percent of our students were reading "below basic," compared to just 26 percent nationally. In math, the statistics were even worse. Fully 89 percent of our tenth graders scored "below basic" in math, compared to a national average of 61 percent. ✓

Clearly, this performance is not acceptable. Neither is it representative of the work our students are capable of doing. It is certainly not what we expect of the nation's capital city. It is a system-wide failure -- both internally, in the district, and externally, in the community -- to provide students with the necessary tools and opportunities to succeed. ✓

As gloomy as this sounds, I believe that out of this crisis comes an opportunity to give the District's students, once again, the quality education they deserve. I know that, working together, we can turn this system around. Our children's future depends on the success of adults in providing them with a world class education that will ensure that they have choices when they leave high school.

A Vision for Student Success

I came to DCPS with a clear vision that I hope this community will embrace: to create an exemplary school system that prepares our students for college, for good jobs and for life in the 21st century. To make that vision a reality, we must focus all of our energy, and resources, on making dramatic improvement in the achievement of all students today in preparation for their world tomorrow.

Clearly, success won't happen overnight. We know that. The community knows that. But we need to make steady progress, year by year, classroom by classroom, school by school. And we have already started. But I'd like to talk a moment about the challenges we faced -- and some that we are still facing today -- before I tell you what we've done and where we're going.

I said I found a system in crisis. What does that mean, specifically? It means there was no system-wide accountability, there were no performance standards, and there was no uniform curriculum. Staff development was not focused. In the central office, personnel and payroll systems were badly broken. The procurement system was extremely complicated, slow, and difficult for school principals to use. Basic data -- on the system's budget, students and staff -- could not be accessed for use in monitoring ongoing activities or planning strategically for the future. Finally, the community was not unified in its focus on education as this city's number one priority in a way that mobilized resources to increase student achievement.

We are moving forward. We developed an academic plan in October that sets four goals for the system: improving student achievement, ensuring quality school staff, increasing accountability throughout the system and promoting school restructuring and parental choice. We are moving ahead on all of these fronts.

Performance Standards

First, we are implementing standards. We are saying clearly to students, teachers, and parents: this is what we expect children to know and be able to do. We have established content standards in reading and mathematics and we are teaching parents what those standards mean for their children. We are using the Stanford 9 achievement test, which is aligned with these standards, to determine where students are in the fall and the progress they have made by the spring. Because we know test scores don't give us a complete picture of student performance, we are also using other tools to measure student progress in meeting the standards. ✓

Students who do not meet the standards will not be promoted to the next grade at the end of this school year. Ending social promotion is not an easy task -- and, frankly, it is a step that not every school district has been willing to take -- but we know that this is what we must do to ensure that our students leave this school system with the skills they need to succeed. To support students at risk of non-promotion, we are providing extended opportunities to learn -- in the form of additional time spent working on literacy skills during the school day, tutoring support after school and in Saturday academies, and our new Summer STARS (Students and Teachers Achieving Results and Success) program. ✓

I want to talk a moment about the Summer STARS program, because I think it is a good example of how serious we are about student success. Summer STARS will give students an intensive, highly-structured opportunity to gain critical skills, with two hours of reading and two hours of math each morning and enrichment opportunities in the afternoon. Summer STARS will be led by our best principals and staffed by highly qualified teachers working with students in smaller groups than we have during the school year. We expect up to 20,000 students to participate in Summer STARS this year.

Accountability

Our second priority is accountability. We are holding people accountable, across the system, for student performance. We have instituted a new principal evaluation system in which fifty percent of a principal's evaluation is based on student achievement. Every principal in the system will be expected to improve student performance this year. In addition to student performance, we will use surveys of parents and teachers to help us measure school performance and customer satisfaction. Next year, we will institute a new evaluation system for teachers linked directly to student achievement.

We are instituting an annual school review process, to look at how each school in the system is doing, compared to other schools and compared to its own performance in past years. Schools that show a pattern of low performance will be reconstituted -- meaning a new staff will be put in place and a research-based reform model will be implemented there. We are going to publish school-by-school report cards, so that parents can easily evaluate the performance of their children's schools and make decisions about them accordingly. Finally, I am holding my central office staff accountable for improving student achievement, by evaluating them on the basis of how they support schools. Again, we will use surveys to determine whether customer service in the central office is improving.

Professional Development

My third priority is professional development. I know that people must not only be committed to success; they must also have the skills they need to succeed. We are providing focused professional development for principals and teachers on standards, curriculum, instructional strategies, and class management. We are training 100% of staff in our lowest performing schools and we hope to reach 25% of teachers system-wide this year. I intend to institute mandatory professional development requirements next year.

Public Engagement

Finally, we have made public engagement a priority. We know that this effort has to be supported both internally and externally. Most of all, we need parents to be involved in the education of their children both at home and at school. We are making dramatic changes in this school district and I have made a concerted effort to reach out to parents and engage them in real, meaningful discussions about these changes. We already have held eight meetings with parents to talk about the test scores, the new standards, the promotion guidelines and summer school. These meetings, for the most part, have been well attended and parents have expressed a real interest in being active participants in this effort.

Looking to the Future

We are making progress, but I must tell you that we will need more resources to get the job done. In the next school year, we will need:

- almost 150 new reading resource teachers -- one for each school -- to provide the extra help that many of our students need with reading,
- one additional math teacher in all of our senior high schools, where, as you know, our students' math scores are really unacceptably low in almost every school,
- additional staff in our middle schools, so that we can transform them into the small learning communities that work for children at this critical transition stage in their education, and resources to support after-school programs for those same students,
- support for continued large-scale professional development for teachers and administrators, and
- funding for additional staff to implement proven, research-based reform programs in our lowest performing schools.

We also need the technological infrastructure to access data on our students and staff in a timely fashion and to manage our fiscal resources effectively and we need the resources to offer our teachers competitive salaries, so that we can attract and retain the best and brightest for our students. Finally, we need a level playing field -- we must improve our performance, but we must also be held to the same standards as other jurisdictions. In special education, that means help from you, in Congress, to give us a reasonable timeline for evaluating children and placing them in programs that address their special needs. //x

Finally, we need parents, policymakers and the community as a whole to stand with us and give us their time, energy and commitment. It truly does take a village to raise a child and we all must be invested in the success of this effort.

With these resources, we promise to graduate:

--- 5⁺ pockets of excellence
in the system

- students who have strong basic skills,
- students who are technologically competent,
- students who are knowledgeable about careers,
- students whose special needs have been served by our schools,
- students who are culturally aware, and
- students who are physically fit.

In short, we will graduate students who are prepared today for their world tomorrow.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to respond to your questions now.

Draft #4

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

□TALKING IT OVER□/CREATORS SYNDICATE

COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION MAY 19, 1998

America is facing a critical choice □ whether to honor and strengthen our commitment to our public schools or to retreat.

A truly free, public education is a cornerstone of our democracy. Nearly 90 percent of the 52.2 million students in this country are enrolled in public schools.

Expanding the commitment to public schools is one of my husband's highest priorities. He has proposed legislation that would reduce class size in the early grades, modernize and build new schools, implement high standards of achievement, and help every child read independently by the end of third grade.

It would also end the practice of automatically promoting every student whether they have successfully completed the work or not, link every school to the Internet, and give communities the flexibility to decide what their schools need.

Some members of Congress, however, have chosen to reject these meaningful improvements in favor of political expediency. They want to take dollars away from the public schools and use them to pay for private school vouchers.

One proposal, which has passed both houses of Congress, would provide vouchers of up to \$3,200 for private or parochial school tuition to approximately 2,000 families in the District of Columbia.

Many of you have read news reports about the dismal state of the D.C. public schools, sadly referred to as among the worst in the nation. We must fix them, but vouchers are not the solution.

Vouchers divert attention and taxpayer dollars away from the schools that serve the vast majority of our students just when they need these resources to make fundamental changes. That's why my husband promised to veto the bill.

Recently, a new superintendent took over the reins of D.C.'s troubled schools and has already begun to bring much-needed reform to the system. Now is not the time to siphon off desperately needed money for a program that will affect at most three percent of the system's 70,000 students at a cost of more than \$6 million.

Vouchers will not bring one more math teacher into the classroom or repair one broken window. Vouchers will not restore art, music or after-school activities. Vouchers will not rekindle a sense of pride in our public schools.

Vouchers raise fundamental questions about whether the federal government can use taxpayer dollars to send children to religious schools. And, vouchers provide funds to schools that are not accountable for what their students learn or how the school manages its money.

The evidence is mixed on whether children who participate in voucher programs actually do better in school. The most recent study of Cleveland's voucher program concludes that students who use vouchers do no better than their counterparts in public school.

At a time in our nation's history when it is critical for every student to have better teachers, higher standards and more modern facilities, vouchers drain our public schools. Giving a few students a ticket out of the public schools is the wrong approach. The right approach is to fix the schools that are failing and to offer choices within the public school system.

We know how to fix our schools.

More than ten years ago, Chicago's schools were singled out as the nation's worst. That's when the Mayor, the business community and parents got serious about fixing their schools. This week, Mayor Daley announced that test scores in the city have risen for the third straight year — proof, he says, of the success of tough reform initiatives. The Mayor singled out DuSable High School which has created a "culture of reading," including a special summer reading program and security guards who quiz kids on vocabulary words in the halls.

We also know how to provide meaningful choices for parents within the public schools — such as charter schools. Charter schools are public schools that give parents and teachers the opportunity to design their own program, but are open to all students and strictly accountable for the education of their students. When my husband was elected, there was one charter school in the country. Today, under his leadership, there are almost 800.

Bill and I have visited charter schools all over the country that are leading the way in offering important choices to public school students and their parents. Many of these schools are meeting the needs of students who had trouble succeeding in more traditional public schools.

As we prepare to enter the new millennium, we can choose to walk away from our public schools or we can choose to roll up our sleeves and make them work again. Let's not opt to give just a few students a way out at the expense of giving every student a way up.

(777 words)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 20, 1998

TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 1502, the "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1998."

If we are to prepare our children for the 21st Century by providing them with the best education in the world, we must strengthen our public schools, not abandon them. My agenda for accomplishing this includes raising academic standards; strengthening accountability; providing more public school choice, including public charter schools; and providing additional help to students who need it through tutors, mentors, and after-school programs. My education agenda also calls for reducing class size, modernizing our schools and linking them to the Internet, making our schools safe by removing guns and drugs, and instilling greater discipline.

This bill would create a program of federally funded vouchers that would divert critical Federal resources to private schools instead of investing in fundamental improvements in public schools. The voucher program established by S. 1502 would pay for a few selected students to attend private schools, with little or no public accountability for how those funds are used, and would draw resources and attention away from the essential work of reforming the public schools that serve the overwhelming majority of the District's students. In short, S. 1502 would do nothing to improve public education in the District of Columbia. The bill won't hire one new teacher, purchase one more computer, or open one after-school program.

Although I appreciate the interest of the Congress in the educational needs of the children in our Nation's Capital, this bill is fundamentally misguided and a disservice to those children.

The way to improve education for all our children is to increase standards, accountability, and choice within the public schools. I urge the Congress to send me legislation I have proposed to reduce class size, modernize our schools, end social promotions, raise academic standards for all students, and hold school systems, schools, and staff accountable for results.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 20, 1998.



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

April 30, 1998
(House)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES.)

S. 1502 - District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act (Coats (R) Indiana and 4 cosponsors)

The Administration strongly opposes S. 1502 because it would appropriate Federal taxpayer funds to pay for private school vouchers. If this bill were presented to the President, the President's senior advisers would recommend that the bill be vetoed.

S. 1502 would create a program of Federally funded vouchers that would divert critical resources that should be devoted to our public education priorities to private schools, with little or no public accountability for how funds are used. Moreover, the bill is apparently designed to ensure that receipt of these vouchers, unlike other Federal funds, would not require schools to comply with Federal civil rights laws that protect students from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

Instead of investing additional resources in public schools, vouchers would allow a few selected students to attend private schools, and would draw attention away from the hard work of reforming public schools that serve the overwhelming majority of D.C. students. Efforts should focus on approaches that will improve education for all children. The D.C. public school system has intensified such efforts with its Improved Student Achievement Initiative.

Under S. 1502, Federal taxpayers would be asked to provide up to \$3,200 to each student with a voucher, nearly eight times the amount the Federal Government now makes available for public school children throughout the Nation. Establishing a private school voucher system in the Nation's Capital would set a dangerous precedent for using Federal taxpayer funds for schools that are not accountable to the public. This would be an extremely costly venture that could be a first step toward a nationalized voucher program at public expense. Choice among private schools should be paid for with private funds, with public funds used to provide choice among public schools.

Pay-As-You-Go Scoring

S. 1502 would increase direct spending; therefore it is subject to the pay-as-you-go requirement of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1990. The bill does not contain provisions to offset the increased direct spending. If the bill were enacted, it could contribute to a sequester of mandatory programs.

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

NEWS

FOR RELEASE
April 7, 1998

Contacts: Melinda Malico (202) 401-1008
David Thomas (202) 401-1579

**FIRST LADY ANNOUNCES \$5 MILLION IN SUPPORT
FOR NEW D.C. SUMMER SCHOOL INITIATIVE**

Eighty D.C. public schools will keep their doors open this summer to provide nearly 20,000 area youth with extra academic instruction in reading and mathematics, with assistance from a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton announced today.

The new grant will support *Summer STARS (Students and Teachers Achieving Results and Success)*, an intensive and accelerated summer school program designed to increase the academic achievement of D.C. public school students in grades 1-12.

"With this important initiative, thousands of children in our nation's capital will have the chance to continue their school-year education throughout the summer and to fulfill their promise in school and beyond," said First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"This critical and unprecedented undertaking aims to increase significantly the number of D.C. students who are able to read and do math at grade level," U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said. "We know that these young people in particular are performing below the basic level in math and science. By strengthening students' skills and offering a variety of learning activities, these students will be given a chance to move ahead, not fall further behind."

The District recently adopted new promotion requirements and is putting activities in place to assist students needing extra help. The summer school program will help improve the skills of children at risk of school failure. Specifically, the program aims to boost the skills of students previously identified for retention in grades 2, 3, 5, 8 and 11 sufficiently to allow for



promotion to the next grade level. Students who score below basic on the Stanford-9 reading and mathematics achievement tests and those who fail to show progress in meeting the standards through other measures will be selected for the summer school enrichment program.

President Clinton has urged school districts to abandon policies of social promotion -- policies that allow students to be promoted from grade to grade even if they have not mastered the basics for each grade.

The six-week program is designed to provide students with a challenging, standards-based curriculum that focuses on the critical basic skills of mathematics and reading in a classroom setting with a low (15:1) teacher to child ratio. Sixty elementary, 10 middle and 10 high schools are scheduled to be part of the summer school program which will operate between June and August. In addition, D.C. plans to involve parents as classroom volunteers and after-school assistants; train teachers in the new curricula; and partner with the D.C. Department of Recreation and other organizations to provide organized afternoon activities.

The \$4,997,019 grant came from the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE), under the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. FIE funds activities that stimulate reform and improve teaching and learning.

The effort fits in with the Department's *Improve Student Performance Initiative*, intended to help the District's public school system implement system wide and school-based academic and management reforms to improve the quality of education. In his FY 1999 budget, President Clinton requested an additional \$20 million for the District of Columbia public schools to support comprehensive school reform activities, intensify rigorous professional development opportunities, and put reading specialists in every school.

###



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

April 30, 1998

Honorable Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to S. 1502, the "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997," because it would authorize the use of Federal taxpayer funds to pay for private school vouchers. If this bill were presented to the President in its current form, I would recommend that he veto it.

S. 1502 would create a program of federally funded vouchers that would divert critical resources that should be devoted to our public education priorities to private schools with little or no public accountability for how funds are used. While the President and I have long supported choice among public schools, including publicly accountable charter schools, we have repeatedly expressed our opposition to using taxpayer funds for private school vouchers, whether or not they are referred to in some other way, such as "scholarships." Moreover, the bill is apparently designed to ensure that receipt of these vouchers, unlike other Federal funds, would not require schools to comply with Federal civil rights laws that protect students from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

We need to focus on approaches that will improve education for all children instead of draining much-needed resources from the public schools, which will continue to serve the overwhelming majority of students. The D.C. public school system has intensified such efforts with its Improved Student Achievement Initiative.

Accordingly, I strongly support the substitute amendment, crafted by the District's elected Member of Congress, which would provide funds to the District for reading tutors and for demonstrations of comprehensive school reform, along the lines of the ESEA, Title I program that the Congress initiated this year at the urging of Representatives Obey and Porter. As with the bipartisan Obey-Porter initiative, Federal funds would be used to raise student achievement by assisting public schools in implementing effective, comprehensive, locally-driven reforms that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and that include an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement. I am disappointed that the House leadership has denied Congresswoman Norton an opportunity to present her substitute to the full House.

600 INDEPENDENCE AVE. S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-0100

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

Page 2

Unfortunately, instead of adopting an approach that will really make a difference for the children in the District's public schools, the bill passed by the Senate and now before the House would ask Federal taxpayers to provide up to \$3,200 to each student with a voucher, nearly eight times the average amount the Federal Government now makes available for public school children throughout the Nation. This is an extremely costly venture that could be a first step toward a nationalized voucher program at public expense that diverts funds from the critical task of improving America's public schools for all students. Choice among private schools should be paid for with private funds, with public funds used to provide choice among public schools.

I appreciate the genuine interest of the Congress in responding to the educational needs of the District's children, but I strongly oppose S. 1502 because it would permit Federal funds to be used for private school tuition. Accordingly, I would recommend that the President veto it.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program and that enactment of S. 1502 would not be in accord with the President's program.

Yours sincerely,


Richard W. Riley

RESPONSE TO VOUCHER PROPOSALS

1. The problem with voucher proposals is that they ignore 90% of the children in America. Three weeks ago the U.S. Department of Education released a national report that shows we have more children in our nation's schools than ever before – 52.2 million – and 90% of them go to public schools.
2. The report went on to say that school enrollment figures are going to go up every year for the next ten years. Every school district in northern Virginia is being overwhelmed by the number of young people they have to educate. We have schools that are bursting at their seams, yet this Congress would not support the President's proposal for school construction.
3. If you gave the American people a choice between using federal dollars to renovate and build new schools or give out vouchers to a few thousand kids there would be no question how the American people would vote. The last thing we should be doing at a time of record enrollment increases is to be taking public tax dollars from public education to subsidize the private education of some children.
4. The solution to a bad school is not to give a few vouchers to a few kids while the majority of kids stay on. You also have to be tough minded about fixing failing schools. If a school is failing the solution isn't to give scholarships to 50 children and leave 500 behind, but to fix the school. If a school is bad – fix it – close it down - or reconstitute it. If a principal isn't strong enough to lead, find new leadership. If teachers are burnt out, counsel them to improve or offer them a fair but speedy process to leave the profession.
5. What disturbs me about voucher proponents is that they think of nothing else when it comes to education. They never talk about how to improve reading, how to improve teaching, how to raise academic achievement, or the importance of early childhood development. Their solution for every issue in education is vouchers. It's a silver bullet solution that doesn't have the support of the American people.
6. American taxpayers do not support the idea of using public tax dollars to pay for private education. Public tax dollars ought to be spent to improve reading, to get better teachers into the classroom, and to make sure that high school diplomas really stand for something.

What Really Matters in American Education

White Paper prepared for
U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley
for speech at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

September 23, 1997

U.S. Department of Education

PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DEMOCRACY, AND FREE ENTERPRISE

Quality public schools are the foundation of a democracy and a free enterprise economic system. The public school concept is fundamentally American: most of the fifty U.S. states have a provision in their state constitution for free, public education. These statutes reflect a commitment to the idea that all children, regardless of their academic readiness, race, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or special education needs, have equal access to a quality K-12 education, and a chance to develop to their maximum potential. State constitutions describe this most essential purpose as:

"A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools." (Texas)

"The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained." (Virginia)

"It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person...The legislature shall provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools." (Montana)

Therein lies the power of the American system of education — it is truly *public*. The "common school" — the concept upon which our public school system was built — teaches children important lessons about both the commonality and diversity of American culture. These lessons are conveyed not only through what is taught in the classroom, but by the very experience of attending school with a diverse mix of students. The common school has made quality public education and hard work the open door to American success and good citizenship and the American way to achievement and freedom.

VOUCHERS THREATEN THE FUNDAMENTAL MISSION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Using public tax dollars for private school vouchers fundamentally undermines 200 years of public education in America. As Neil Postman has suggested in his book The End of Education, "...public education does not serve the public. It creates the public. And in creating the right kind of public, the schools contribute toward strengthening the spiritual basis of the American Creed. That is how Jefferson understood it, how Horace Mann understood it, how John Dewey understood it." Private school vouchers strike at this ideal because they would:

Expanding the options available to students and families is a worthy goal, as long as this is not done in a way that undermines a quality education for all children. But private school vouchers are too small, too costly, and too divisive to have any potential for improving the public school system.

IMPACT OF VOUCHERS ON SCHOOLING

A voucher program which served a substantial number of public school students would suffer from serious implementation problems related to private schools' capacity and mission, and would violate basic principles of equity and a quality education for all students. Specifically:

- **Private schools have little capacity to absorb a substantial number of additional students.** According to a California study, less than 1 percent of public school students in that state could expect to find spaces in existing private schools. [Corwin and Dianda, "What Can We Really Expect from Large-Scale Voucher Programs," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1993] The study found that most private schools that were interested in participating in a voucher program were already operating at 85 percent or more of their capacity. Although some private schools might be created or expanded, a voucher system would do little or nothing to address the needs for educating the 89 percent of students in public schools (46.5 million students).
- **Most private schools are religious in nature, and few are likely to give up their religious mission in order to overcome constitutional barriers to receiving public funds.** Religious schools account for 79 percent of all private schools and 85 percent of private school students. A recent survey found that most associations of religious schools believe their schools would not participate in a voucher program if they were required to permit exemptions from religious instruction for students transferring from public schools [Murnighan et al., Barriers, Benefits, and Costs of Using Private Schools to Alleviate Overcrowding in Public Schools: Preliminary Report, 1997]. In addition, government officials should not be expected to choose which private and religious schools merit taxpayer support. For a religiously diverse country like the U.S., this is a road to onerous problems.
- **Private schools could select the best and the brightest students.** As Representative Bill Goodling (Pennsylvania), then ranking minority member of the Education and Labor Committee, said in 1991, "If you have 500 students in a school and 250 of them are the 'thousand points of light' and decide to go to a school of choice, that leaves 250 fallen angels behind." [Congressional Quarterly, 1991, p. 379] Research shows that private school vouchers do skim more advantaged students — those whose parents have more education, higher expectations for their children, and higher incomes. This finding holds even for programs where vouchers are restricted to low-income families. For example:

— In San Antonio, mothers of low-income voucher students were three times more likely to have had some college education than mothers of comparable public school students (55 percent vs. 19 percent). [Martinez, V., et al. (1995). "The Consequences of School Choice: Who Leaves and Who Stays in the Inner City," *Social Science Quarterly*, September.]

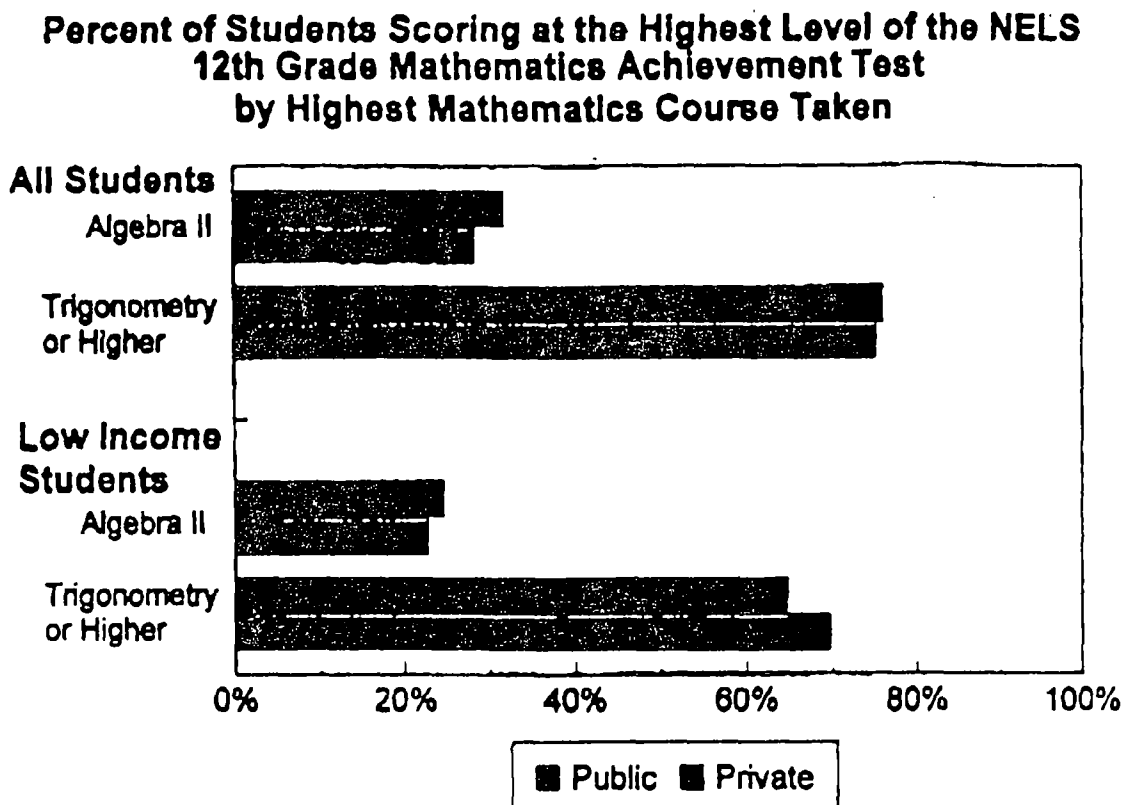
achievement *did not* improve significantly from their previous achievement in public schools [Witte et al., *Fourth-Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program*, 1994], but a second evaluation of the same data *did* find evidence that the Milwaukee voucher program had a substantial positive impact on the achievement of students who remained in the program for 3-4 years [Greene, Peterson, and Du, "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation," 1996]. This second analysis, however, has serious methodological flaws, including the attrition of 85-95 percent of voucher students in the two years in which significant results were found, and a failure to account for student family background and prior achievement. Yet a third analysis [Rouse, "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," 1997] repeated Greene, et al.'s analysis, and found that voucher recipients *did* significantly outperform non-enrolled voucher program applicants and a random sample of Milwaukee public school students in math, but *did not* in reading. These conflicting results provide more of a lesson in the art of statistics than in the effectiveness of voucher programs. The one clear implication of these studies is that the impact of voucher programs on student achievement remains unproven.

In Cleveland, the voucher program has only been in existence since the Fall of 1996, and no systematic research on the impact of the program on student achievement is yet available. The Ohio Department of Education is currently sponsoring an Indiana University evaluation of third-graders in the Cleveland voucher program, and a first-year report is expected in late September of this year. However, a recent, well-publicized Harvard press release on the achievement gains of Cleveland voucher students has been touted as evidence of the benefits of voucher programs. [Harvard University, "Gains in Test Scores in the Cleveland Voucher Program Found," 1997] This analysis, conducted by Paul Peterson and funded by the Olin Foundation, claims that students enrolled in two schools in the Cleveland program have realized "moderately large" gains in reading and "even more substantial" gains in math. However, even this analysis concedes that these academic results are mixed, with language scores declining by 5 percentage points overall, and declining by 19 percent among first graders. More importantly, this analysis is in no way a representation of the effectiveness of the Cleveland voucher program, as it is based on only 15 percent of participating students who are enrolled in uniquely operated, resource-intensive schools, and it suffers from severe methodological problems.³

Lastly, a Hudson Institute study [Wechsler and Kilgore, "Educational Choices Charitable Trust: An Experiment in School Choice," 1996] of the privately-funded voucher program in Indianapolis found that the voucher students performed "as well as [public school] students in the earlier grades and seem to be doing better in the middle-school grades." However, this appears to be an overly generous characterization of their data, which showed that the voucher students' average test scores were below those of public school students in grade 2, about the same in grades 3 and 6, and higher only in grade 8.

³ Among the problems with the Peterson analysis are: (1) it does not compare the gains of these voucher students to their counterparts in the Cleveland public schools; (2) it does not control for the family background or prior achievement of the voucher students; (3) it is based on the results of an old, invalid form of the California Achievement Test; (4) it lumps together results for students in grades K through 3, suggesting that differences among grades are being masked; and (5) the researchers tested the voucher students within the same school year (fall and spring), an approach that has been widely rejected by test experts as producing artificially positive achievement gains.

Figure 1.



Source: Analysis of National Educational Longitudinal Survey data

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that public school reform efforts like challenging standards and rigorous coursetaking can improve achievement for the majority of students who are in the public schools. States and local communities that have set more challenging standards are seeing substantial gains in student achievement. For example:

- Kentucky's comprehensive school reforms continue to result in substantial improvement in school performance. More than 92 percent of Kentucky's schools posted achievement gains in 1995-96. Fifty percent of schools in the state met or exceeded their performance goals. These schools are distributed across all grade levels, throughout every geographic region in the state, and in poor as well as wealthy communities. Elementary schools performed well above expectations, as they exceeded their statewide performance goal by 27 percent. [Kentucky Department of Education Press Release, October 1996]

- **High academic standards and rigorous coursetaking.** Probably the most effective educational choice that parents and students can make is to choose to take more challenging academic courses. Taking tougher courses is one factor that produces substantial gains in student achievement. Making challenging curriculum and engaging instruction available to all students must be schools' central mission.
- **Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers.** In order for students' performance to improve, teachers must be able to teach to higher standards. They must know the content of the curriculum and the best strategies for engaging students in learning more challenging content. Professional development can be supported formally through intensive training and also more informally through teachers working together on common classroom concerns and learning from each other.
- **Buildings and technology suited for learning.** Children cannot learn to high standards in schools that are literally falling down. Environments where children learn best are schools that are safe and modern, more spacious and technologically equipped, and that can be used not only during the school day but after school and during the summer, as well.
- **Reinforcement through after-school and summer programs.** Research shows that students in quality after-school programs (lower student to staff ratios, age-appropriate activities, academic and enrichment activities) demonstrate higher academic achievement and have better attitudes towards school than children left alone or under the care of siblings. (Posner and Vendell, 1994) Moreover, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, youth are most at risk of getting in trouble or being victims between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., after the regular school day.
- **Greater school autonomy and accountability.** Greater school autonomy when coupled with performance accountability also can contribute to conditions that make optimal learning possible. Unreasonable regulations can produce a compliance mentality in which no one takes ownership or is personally responsible. If teachers are to act as professionals and not as automatons, they need to be given responsibility for making professional decisions regarding classroom practice and school policy. Holding our students to high standards requires that adults take responsibility for improving student performance.
- **Expansion of public school choice options.** Public charter schools, magnet schools and open enrollment policies offer real alternatives to students and parents while maintaining the kind of accountability that is crucial to ensuring a quality education.

In some cases, drastic actions are needed to improve chronically troubled schools. For example, in San Francisco, failing schools have been "reconstituted." The district has shut down these schools and reopened them with new administrators, teachers, and programs.

- **Dropout rates show similar improvements, particularly for minority students.** From 1982 to 1995, the dropout rate for persons 16-24 years old fell from 13.9 percent to 12.0 percent and has been relatively flat throughout the 1990's.⁵ For blacks, the dropout rate fell from 18.4 percent in 1982 to 12.1 percent in 1995 — a 34 percent decrease. For whites, the rate fell from 11.4 to 8.6 percent over the same period — a 25 percent decrease. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1996]

Exemplary Efforts at Comprehensive School Reforms in Urban Districts

Across the nation, states and communities are implementing comprehensive reforms focused on enabling students to meet challenging standards, and student achievement is improving as a result. These districts reach out to teachers, principals, parents, and community members in developing a shared commitment to excellence and equity for all students and cultivating these partnerships. Their mission statements reflect in plain language the real-world concerns of parents, employers, and other citizens. Beyond that, they dedicate themselves to making that mission a reality through careful planning, efficient and equitable management of resources, and the development and recognition of instructional leaders throughout the school system. Examples of this process can be found in San Antonio, Memphis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, New York City's Community District 2, and Chicago:

- **San Antonio Independent School District** underwent a major organizational restructuring aimed at placing maximum emphasis on instructional needs, giving more direct support to schools in matters of instruction and curriculum, streamlining decisionmaking, and strengthening intradistrict communication and collaboration. The district implemented site-based decision-making (as mandated by the state) during the 1994-95 school year by incorporating it with its broader strategic plan. Each school has an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) composed of school staff, parents, and community residents, who receive annual training provided by the district. A ten-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation supports professional development and technology for teachers, as well as promoting community involvement through monthly public town hall meetings and a community newsletter. In 1996, the district entered into a partnership with the New American Schools Design Corporation (NASDC), and half of the district's schools have committed to a whole school design through NASDC. Student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) has shown significant gains; from 1995 to 1996, the percentage of students passing the TAAS rising from 33 percent to 41 percent for 4th-graders and from 31 percent to 36 percent for 10th graders. Math skills showed even greater improvement, with the percentage of students passing the math portion of the TAAS rising from 42 percent to 55 percent for 4th-graders and from 35 percent to 42 percent for 10th graders.
- **Memphis** adopted in 1993 a comprehensive school reform plan designed to raise student achievement that includes setting higher standards for all students, implementing site-

⁵ The dropout rate is defined as the percent of 16-24 year-olds who have not completed high school and were not enrolled in school that year.

effort and a long-term commitment based on high expectations, clear objectives, and shared expertise. The concrete strategies revolve around the idea that professional development is not a series of programs per se but rather an ongoing opportunity to build and bridge skills. Strategies include: a Professional Development Laboratory in which visiting teachers observe and practice with a resident teacher for three weeks while their classrooms are taught by a teacher who has also gone through the Laboratory; extensive use of visits across classrooms and schools by teachers and principals; and a core of consultants hired by the districts and available to the schools for one-on-one and small group assistance. With these strategies in hand, the district has a direct impact on improving its schools: on the 1996 assessment, District 2 ranked second in the city in math scores.

- Chicago is ensuring that promotion to the next grade reflects students' learning the content to enable them to succeed. In August 1996, the Chicago School Reform Board adopted a rigorous student promotion policy that requires underachieving students in grades three, six, eight, and nine to complete a summer school program before being promoted to the next grade. The policy sets performance standards based on test scores for third-, sixth-, eighth-, and ninth-graders. Students who score more than one year below their grade level (one-and-a-half years for sixth-graders) on the standardized tests, or who fail reading or math, must successfully complete a six- or seven-week Summer Bridge program. All ninth-graders who miss more than 20 days of school or fail to earn the required 4.5 core credits are also required to attend the summer-school programs. Students who fail the summer programs are held back. Results show that over 80 percent of Chicago students were able to meet the promotion criteria; many would not have done so without the intensive summer instruction provided through the Bridge program.

These large, urban districts face some of the most complex educational issues in the nation, yet their students are beginning to benefit from sustained school improvement efforts. We are committed to continue working for high standards of discipline and achievement and a means to assess student performance in meeting them, safe schools, technology in the classroom, quality teachers, and increased access to college. When we focus sustained effort and careful investments on critical education issues at school, neighborhood, community, and national levels, students progress and so does our nation.

Muraskin, L., Freid, S. and Lahring, K. (1997). Barriers, Benefits and Costs of Using Private Schools to Alleviate Overcrowding in Public Schools: Preliminary Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Nathan, J. and Ysseldyke, R. (1994). "What Minnesota has learned about school choice." Phi Delta Kappan. May.

National Center for Education Statistics (1997). The Condition of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics (various years). The Digest of Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics (various years). High School Transcript Study. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics (1997). NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Newmann, F. and Wehlage, G. (1995). Successful School Restructuring: A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

Posner, J. and Vandell, D. (1994). "Low Income Children's after School Care: Are There Beneficial Effects of After-school Programs?" Child Development, 65, 440-456.

Postman, N. (1995). The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Rouse, C. (1997). "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Stearns, K. (1996). School Reform: Lessons from England. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

U.S. Department of Education (1994). Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning. Washington, DC: Author.

Witte, J., et. al. (1994). Fourth-Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON:
MAKING THE INFORMATION AGE AN EDUCATION AGE**

April 24, 1998

"As the Information Age becomes more and more of an Education Age, now is no time to walk away from our commitment to public education, no time to reject our common obligation to preparing our children for the challenges of the future. I am determined to do my part -- to stand by our teachers and our students, to strengthen education in America."

President Bill Clinton
April 24, 1998

Today, President Clinton hosts a Rose Garden event to honor the National Teacher of the Year, Philip Bigler from Virginia, and this year's state teachers of the year. At the event, the President underscores his commitment to education as a national priority, outlines his plans to improve public education, and renews his call to Congress to pass real legislation that strengthens and improves public education.

A PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING K-12 EDUCATION. President Clinton is working to make historic investments and improvements in K-12 education, including initiatives to:

- **Reduce Class Size.** President Clinton proposes a \$12.4 billion initiative over 7 years to help schools provide small classes with qualified teachers in the early grades. The initiative will reduce class size in grades 1-3 to a nationwide average of 18, and will help school districts hire an additional 100,000 well-prepared teachers.
- **Modernize And Build Schools To Improve Student Learning.** In order for students to learn and compete in the global economy, schools must be well-equipped and able to accommodate smaller class sizes. The President proposes federal tax credits to modernize and build more than 5,000 new schools.
- **Achieve High Standards.** The President's education plan includes proposals to ensure that all students attend schools where high standards are taken seriously and kids are given the help they need to succeed. It supports the continued development and implementation of high national standards and national tests, and establishes educational opportunity zones in poor urban and rural communities.
- **End The Practice Of Social Promotion.** No child should be allowed to pass to the next grade unless he or she is adequately prepared. President Clinton is calling for guidelines to help schools end social promotion, ensure that more students learn what they need the first time round, and help those who don't with extra tutoring and summer school.
- **Use Education Reform To Give Communities The Flexibility To Decide What Their Schools Need.** The President's plan expands Ed-Flex, the program that frees states from federal regulations so long as they set high academic standards, waive their own regulations for local schools, and hold schools accountable for results.

WORKING TO PASS "REAL" EDUCATION LEGISLATION. This week, Congress acted in a way that undercuts public education. The Senate voted against modernizing schools, against national standards, and against reducing class size in the first, second and third grades. And earlier this month, a House committee eliminated funding for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- a organization important to improving teaching and keeping our best teachers in the classroom. Now is no time to walk away from our commitment to public education and our obligation to prepare our children for the future. President Clinton is determined to do all he can to fight for the legislation needed to strengthen and improve America's schools.

TO: The First Lady
CC: Melanne Verveer, Christy Macy

FROM: Neera Tanden

RE: Background on Connecticut's Charter Schools and a Related Desegregation Case

Date: April 29, 1998

In response to Sheff v. O'Neill, a major desegregation case, Connecticut adopted a series of education measures, including new charter school legislation. Plaintiffs in the case have been dissatisfied with this response, and to some degree, the controversy surrounding the case has shaded the charter school issue in the state. As the issue stands today, to the extent that charter schools are viewed as a remedy to school segregation, they are considered inadequate. However, as a choice issue they are still considered a positive reform when coupled with other measures such as interdistrict school choice.

Background of case:

In a 4-to-3 decision announced in the summer of 1996, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the state's school-districting laws have resulted in de facto racial segregation of Hartford's schools, which are 95% black and Hispanic. Although the case only involved Hartford, the ruling was recognized to apply statewide, affecting the other two large urban districts, Bridgeport and New Haven, as well as smaller cities with significant minority populations.

Rather than order a specific remedy, such as busing, the Connecticut Supreme Court called on the General Assembly to resolve the issue. Governor Rowland responded by appointing the Educational Improvement Panel, a committee of legislators, parents and educators, to recommend actions the legislature might consider. In January of 1997, after five months of debate, the panel issued a series of recommendations for education legislation, including expansion of charter and magnet schools, and interdistrict public school choice for urban children. However, the final bill that passed the General Assembly was far less ambitious than the panel's recommendations. While the education legislation did increase the number of students in regional charter schools from 1,000 to 1,500, provide more money to magnet schools, and require school districts to offer opportunities for students to interact with students from different backgrounds, measures to finance a significant number of additional charter schools and magnet schools were put off for two years.

In response, the Sheff plaintiffs have announced their intent to return to court to claim that the General Assembly has failed to respond satisfactorily to the Supreme Court's mandate to end racial isolation in Connecticut's public schools. They claim that the legislature's response did not go far enough toward equalizing urban and suburban schools, sets no enforceable standards to reduce racial and ethnic isolation, and will do little to desegregate schools.

Governor Rowland recently proposed \$93 million in new education spending for 1998-99 as part

of a multiyear plan that could provide \$500 million in new school spending during the next five years; however, this new initiative did not contain any additional funding for charter schools.

Charter Schools in Connecticut Today

The Sheff desegregation case has had a direct impact on Connecticut's charter schools. As a result of the case, the charter school legislation was amended and charter schools are now a vehicle which may be specifically used to increase racial and ethnic diversity in the public schools. The State Board of Education, in making its decision to grant a charter must give preference to schools which will serve students who reside in a priority school district or in a district in which seventy-five per cent or more of the enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities. It must also consider the effect of a proposed charter school on the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the region in which it is to be located. The applicant for a charter must now include in its description of admission criteria procedures to promote a diverse student body and efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of its staff.

The legislation passed by the General Assembly in response to Sheff created additional charter schools, bringing the number of students in the state's charter schools to 1,500, from 1,000. The twelve charter schools open today range from a few dozen students to nearly 200 and include curriculums that focus on careers such as sports medicine, merchandising, law, and communications.

Wade Rabner

Wade L

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING CLEVELAND VOUCHER PROGRAM

1. What is the Cleveland voucher program?

The Cleveland voucher program is formally called the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Grant Program. In fall 1996, it became the first publicly funded private school voucher program in which religious schools may participate.

It gives preference to low-income students.

2. How many students participated?

Although approximately 30,000 Cleveland school children were eligible, only 6,246 applied for vouchers in the 1996-97 school year. For a variety of reasons, (e.g. ineligibility, decision not to use the vouchers because individual private schools were oversubscribed), a voucher was not offered to every eligible student that had applied. As of February 1997, 1801 students had accepted and were using vouchers to attend approved private schools. Of these, 640 were former Cleveland public school students, 526 were former private school students, and 635 were kindergarten students with no prior enrollment history. Of those voucher students in grades 1-3, 55% were former Cleveland public school students and 45% were already attending private schools when they received vouchers. All voucher students were enrolled in 41 private schools (29 Catholic, 3 Islamic, 6 Protestant, and 3 non-religious).

3. Who conducted the research study? What was the purpose of the study?

In spring 1997, a team of researchers from Indiana University began a longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the Cleveland voucher program. The researchers focused on two issues:

- How do the characteristics of voucher students and their families compare to those of non-voucher students and families?
- What were the effects of the vouchers on student achievement?

In the first year of evaluation, researchers analyzed the test scores and background characteristics of third-grade voucher and non-voucher students.

4. How was the research study designed?

The researchers compared students' current achievement, controlling for prior achievement and pre-program differences. They administered the Terra Nova Test, which includes reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies components.

5. Who were voucher students?

The researchers found that the voucher program has attracted the better-achieving students away from the Cleveland public schools. The beginning academic achievement of the voucher students was significantly higher than non-voucher students.

6. How do the test scores of third-grade voucher students compare to those of non-voucher students after controlling for background and demographic characteristics?

The researchers concluded that voucher students did not outperform non-voucher students after adjusting for background and demographic characteristics.

7. How much did this experiment cost?

According to an Ohio state audit of the program, \$1.9 million of public money has been spent over the past two years. And most of this money has been spent on taxis. More than \$1.4 million has been used to transport children to and from private schools.

Delivered 9/15/97

Just Say No to Divisive Voucher Proposals

By Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

As responsible policy makers we are forced to make tough choices and to set priorities for the public well-being and the future of our nation. It is against this backdrop that we must consider Senator Coverdell's efforts to attach to the balanced budget bill a K-12 Individual Retirement Account/Voucher plan. Unfortunately, the Senator's attempts to see this legislation into law offer a prime example of what happens when one is unwilling to make the necessary tough choices to develop actions and policies that benefit all students and works instead to develop plans that help only a small portion of the student population. Such policies are unnecessary, divisive and diversionary.

As Secretary of Education, I have the wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with students, teachers, parents, and community leaders in hundreds of schools throughout this great country. I have seen communities facing great adversity in their schools and I have seen communities that have come together and turned around failing schools. But in virtually every community I have visited, folks are getting very serious about their children's schools — concerned citizens are working together to develop solutions and support creative ways to improve their schools; to build firm discipline policies, to help their children master the basics, learn to challenging standards, and build a stronger future.

In our world today, there is no more important subject than education. Nothing else offers as significant an opportunity to create a better future — and nothing else so limits an individual's future when it is denied. Americans understand this crucial importance of education, and they know that public education must draw support from every corner of the community to be successful. Better education is everyone's business.

The Coverdell proposal would begin the unraveling of this uniquely American fabric— the public school that is open to all and gives everyone a fair chance to get ahead. A careful examination of his proposal reveals that it is another attempt to force private school vouchers on the 89 percent of Americans who are fighting to improve their public schools. Vouchers are bad public policy, for many reasons: (1) they divert attention and taxpayer dollars from public schools at a time when public schools need these resources more than ever; (2) they work to divide communities when we need to bring them together with concerned citizens working as partners for high standards and quality schools; (3) if you have a failing school you should fix them or close them down and shift to charter schools or some other public school option. Vouchers won't do anything to help; (4) they are politically inspired distractions from the real business of creating quality education. Instead of offering constructive options for improving teaching and learning, they present a "magic solution" that is no solution at all; (5) at their best, they would be available to only a small portion of the population; (6) they are very harmful to the quality of private and parochial schools and those who attend them, because they make them less private and less parochial; and (7) they have no accountability guarantees. The uneducated can easily fall prey to over-zealous entrepreneurs or extremists.

This is not the first voucher-like proposal that Senator Coverdell has made. But what is common to them, and what is the most destructive and divisive aspect of voucher proposals, is that their primary by-product is the damage to our local public schools by shifting public tax dollars to private schools of any type. They would erode community control over how hard-earned education tax dollars are spent. They would distract from conscientious efforts to improve public schools -- keeping drugs away from our children and schools, raising standards, emphasizing the basics, improving professional development of teachers, and getting computers and the newest technologies into every classroom. The last thing we need is to "bleed off" money to benefit a small number of students, rather than working to strengthen the existing system that is attended by more than 89 percent of the children in this country.

Where schools are troubled, people ought to work together to make it better. If they cannot succeed, they should reconstitute it or close it down. They should solve the problem. Private school voucher like programs don't solve the problem of a troubled school. They only make the problem worse.

President Clinton has made education the number one priority of his Administration -- not with the use of political gimmicks like vouchers, but with fundamental changes and improvements. We are working to make our schools safer, help bring challenging standards of learning to every classroom, and help make sure every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade and can handle basic math including algebra and some geometry by the end of the eighth grade.

Equally important, President Clinton has promoted the option of expanded public school choice -- including charter schools, magnet schools, schools within schools, and district wide controlled public school choice. All of these offer real alternatives to the traditional public school system while maintaining the kind of accountability that is crucial to ensuring a quality education and which build on community support and cooperation. Charter schools are independent, but because they remain public, they have strong accountability as set out in their charters and they do not siphon taxpayer dollars from the public schools.

Although this latest effort to sidetrack and divert attention from these successful initiatives is unfortunate, it is not unexpected. It is just the latest in a long line of attempts to shift the federal role in education from one that helps states and local governments serve all students and improve public education, to one in which only a small number of students receives the benefits of public tax dollars in the form of a subsidy for private and religious schools.

The Coverdell IRA/Voucher compounds this problem because its primary beneficiary will be only a small number of children of mostly well-to-do parents who want to send (or already do send) their children to private school and who already have the money available to set aside in a tax free IRA/Voucher. In contrast, the vast majority of middle income, working families, and certainly poor families, who send their kids to public schools and volunteer their personal time to make them better would have no need for this tax break. At the same time, their tax dollars would

3.

subsidize the tax-free IRA/voucher. The result is clear -- a special federal tax benefit paid by all Americans, but which supports the private schooling costs of the nation's citizens who have the money to afford private school..

Even if the benefit of a K-12 IRA/Voucher were not directed primarily at the wealthiest among us, the misguided nature of this kind of tax policy ought to sink this proposal. It is regressive to include a tax benefit for savings for elementary and secondary education. The goal of an individual retirement account and similar tax policies is to encourage long-term savings for major events later in life like retirement, home ownership, or a college education.

This confused policy stands in sharp contrast to the very sensible tax incentive recently added to the tax bill to help families save and pay for college. Free public education from Kindergarten through 12th grade is a guaranty to all children provided for in State Constitutions. But for higher education, the young adult student is on his or her own. Thus, tax credits for higher education to help the student are appropriate, while tax credits for K-12 private schools are duplicative and amount to a tax benefit on top of a constitutional guaranty of free public education. Additionally, a college education is becoming increasingly important in our society, and saving for this goal is clearly a long term investment.

There are other serious practical and administrative problems with vouchers. For instance, while public schools must accept all children who apply, regardless of their socioeconomic status, language proficiency, race, physical disability, or gender, private and parochial schools, by their very nature, are largely exempt from these legal requirements. They play under a different set of rules. This is inappropriate in schools that receive public monies, as these "private" schools would under a Voucher or IRA/Voucher program. These so called technical issues reveal the heart and value of our public school system and our democratic heritage and demonstrate why a diversion of taxpayer dollars for private use would be inappropriate at best, and unconstitutional at worst. Furthermore, they invite regulation of non-public schools.

Equally problematic for advocates of private and parochial schools is the issue of maintaining the quality of those schools. As many new schools spring up as the "free money" becomes more available, and without the normal accountability that public schools face, these new private schools could develop their own non-traditional, even extremist agendas and curricula. On a less dramatic level, this lack of accountability might rear its head in financial improprieties, as has been the case in some schools in Milwaukee where a voucher program is being tested. The result is not simply misappropriation of tax dollars, but the harm that comes with abruptly closing a school in the middle of the year. Again, it is the children who are hurt.

A final key point to consider is that education IRA/Vouchers are likely to actually hurt private schools because they will ultimately make them more public, forcing them to lose their private/parochial features. With religious schools accounting for 85 percent of private school enrollment in the United States, religious groups are likely to feel this impact more than any other segment of the population.

In short, vouchers make private schools less private and parochial schools less parochial. I strongly support quality private and parochial schools as valuable parts of educational variety in our democracy. We should not consider any action that would interfere with a religious school's ability to make its particular beliefs a major part of its curriculum.

There is no credible evidence that vouchers or IRA/Vouchers represent a success in education. Anyone who has ever thought about educational improvement understands that it requires more than a magic potion to fix a school. It requires hands-on involvement and long term community commitment, a focus on building quality schools for all students that put young people on the right course. We don't need additional efforts that would polarize communities when we should be bringing them together in support of better education.

Every parent has the right to choose to educate his or her child in either a public or a private or religious school. But having that right doesn't mean having the guarantee of a federal subsidy. Public schools have always had a special mission in this nation. They have been, and are, the foundation for our democracy and free enterprise system — a guarantee that everyone has a fair chance to get ahead without having to pay tuition, and regardless of skin color, religious faith, or other individual characteristics. We don't need additional efforts that prevent us from strengthening the system — and in fact harm it — by diverting limited taxpayer dollars. We need partnership, not partisanship. We need to come together in support of public education that can be second to none.

EDUCATION WEEK, April 23, 1997, P. 64**Vouchers: A Questionable Answer to an Unasked Question****by Gerald Tirozzi**

Providing vouchers to private and parochial students has been offered as the answer to reforming public education--ah, but what was the question? Some public officials and policy gurus are advancing vouchers as the "silver bullet" to improve America's public schools. Unfortunately, they have not paused to clearly frame the central question underlying the problem they seek to resolve, nor have they considered other questions which emerge as a result of their rush to judgment.

It is not a time for school reformers to celebrate private victory gardens for a selected few, when what is needed is an amber-waves-of-grain commitment to serve all students in our public schools.

As is often the case in the educational reform policy arena, there is a serious disconnect between the issues which need to be addressed and the solutions put forth. In effect, answers are provided to questions which have not been asked, and questions which beg a reply are dismissed or disregarded.

To those who support public funds being used to supply vouchers for students to attend private and parochial schools, the following 10 questions (and answers) are offered for consideration:

(1) What impact will vouchers have on reforming public education?

Almost no impact. The reality is that there are 46 million students currently enrolled in America's public elementary and secondary schools. Private and parochial schools accommodate about 6 million students. A simple mathematical exercise will immediately point out that the numbers don't work. A voucher system, regardless of the amount of money provided, can only accommodate a minimal number of public school students. To think of vouchers as a credible solution to the problems of public education is to disregard most of America's students. This is further exacerbated by the fact that K-12 enrollment in public schools is projected to increase in *each* of the next 10 years. By 2006, we will have an additional 3 million students attending public schools.

Meaningful and comprehensive school improvement can only be achieved when a significant majority of students experience its effect. Any lesser attempt, such as vouchers, represents "tinkering" on the fringe of reform, offering no resolution to the central question, "How do we improve education for all of America's public schoolchildren?" It is

not a time for school reformers to celebrate private victory gardens for a selected few, when what is needed is an amber-waves-of-grain commitment to serve all students in our public schools.

(2) What criteria will be used in admitting voucher students? A large majority of private and parochial schools use various test and/or admissions procedures in selecting students. These practices, if continued under a publicly funded voucher system, would constitute an unfair and unjust situation. Public schools accept all children, regardless of academic readiness, race, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, or special education needs. Therein lies the power of the public system of education--*it is truly public.*

Over the years, the public education system in this country has fought some long, hard battles to ensure educational equity for student populations that are often ignored and discriminated against. Are private and parochial schools ready to make the same commitment to educating all students? A voucher system that allows public funds to be used for private and parochial schools should never be allowed to discriminate against special-needs students.

(3) Could private and parochial schools return voucher students to the public schools? If private and parochial schools can send students back to public schools because they do not meet academic standards, become discipline problems, or refuse to pray a certain way, they are playing by a different set of rules than are the public schools.

When public school students come to school with challenging problems, the public schools cannot--nor should they--refuse to educate these students. The public schools must try harder. A reasonable question which voucher proponents should be required to address is: "Are private and parochial schools ready to agree that once voucher students are accepted, they have a right to stay--regardless of academic achievement or behavioral problems or costly special needs?"

(4) What will be the quality and orientation of new "voucher driven" private schools? If voucher money does become available, it is reasonable to expect that there will be a rush to develop new private schools and academies. But at what cost and at what risk will these schools operate? It is imperative to understand that these new private ventures will operate outside the scope of any public authority or without public accountability. They will be free to develop their own programs and curricula and to hire their own staff. In effect, public funds could be used to support schools sponsored by extremists or others with questionable societal motives.

When public school students come to school with challenging problems, the public schools cannot—nor should they—refuse to educate these students.

Conceivably, there could be no public safeguards regarding the competencies of the staff or any requirement for background checks for their employees, including a check for criminal records. There would also be little, if any, accountability to the public for the expenditure of funds. Note that within the past year, three of 17 schools in the Milwaukee voucher school program closed because of financial problems, and two of these schools' directors face fraud charges.

(5) Why do we think vouchers will help improve the achievement of public school

students? As of this moment, there is no credible evidence that public school students participating in voucher programs are achieving at higher levels than those in public schools. A recent evaluation duel in Milwaukee showed two highly respected assessment experts producing evaluation reports on the same voucher system with very different findings. One researcher concluded that voucher students perform at slightly higher levels than do public school students while the other found no evidence to support this claim.

(6) Won't the spirit of competition cause public schools to improve?

Proponents of vouchers say that public schools become more competitive and more accountable operating within a voucher system that allows students the option to leave, but do we know this to be true? The reality is that for every public school student who leaves, districts lose significant dollars that are never replaced. It seems illogical to suggest that school districts, especially urban districts already plagued with significant fiscal problems, will improve as public education funds are removed.

Many people also say that vouchers will inject necessary and healthy competition into the public education system. As noted before, a voucher system will likely spur the creation of many new private schools and academies. These new education ventures will likely represent the best and worst of the American entrepreneurial spirit. Some school plans will be carefully designed and implemented, using the latest education research and attracting the best teachers and staff. Others will be fly-by-night, looking to make a quick profit by capitalizing on people's desperation and misfortune. What becomes of the students whose education is put on hold when a new school venture fails?

(7) What impact will vouchers have on the mission of private and parochial schools? Most likely, the initial reaction of private and parochial schools to vouchers would be positive: more students and more fiscal resources. After the euphoria passes, however, these schools will need to pause and think about what is on the horizon. It can be predicted that over time, as more public dollars are spent to support

voucher students, there will be increased pressure for greater public scrutiny and accountability for the public expenditures. These schools will likely have to be involved with state teacher-certification requirements, state-required testing programs and course offerings, special education compliance, and local and/or state audit reviews.

One cannot imagine a long-term scenario whereby governmental bodies would simply write checks, without exercising their fiduciary, program, and equity responsibilities. Private and parochial schools are an important part of the heritage and future of American education. Slowly but surely, vouchers would force these schools to become less private and less parochial.

(8) Will voucher monies be restricted to new students and their families? It would be logical to expect that the answer is no. Private and parochial schools would be treating the parents of presently enrolled students unfairly if they did not allow them to use the newfound public windfall. This outcome is evident in the Cleveland voucher system, in which 27 percent of the 1,864 students enrolled in the program were already in private schools.

A large percentage of voucher funds could be used to underwrite tuition costs for parents who had already made a decision and fiscal commitment to enroll their children in private and parochial schools. If this is the case, the amount of money available for new students to exercise the voucher option is proportionately reduced. This will not be a problem for the private and parochial schools because they will be in position to use public dollars to underwrite their present operating costs.

(9) Why is it considered a problem to provide public funds to private and parochial schools when public funds are regularly used to provide support to colleges and universities? This represents an apples-and-oranges comparison. All states have statutes which require that a free and public education be provided for each child. State laws also require that children, generally between the ages of 7 and 16, attend school. The operative words here are free, public, and required, and the mandate is a commitment to access and equity in elementary and secondary education.

In effect, public dollars must be provided to ensure that all American children have access to what translates into a quality K-12 education. There is no constitutional mandate or state statute that provides free public access to postsecondary education--whether it is public, private, or parochial. Also, public elementary and secondary schools have no admission fees or costs. Institutions of higher education charge substantial tuition--with the highest costs generally found at the private and parochial institutions.

(10) What are the reform alternatives to a voucher-driven system? If

our national commitment is to educate all children to high standards, then our school reform efforts must include strategies and initiatives that are comprehensive and built upon solid research. State education agencies and local school districts are now adopting many innovative strategies within the public school system to achieve these goals.

Recent reform efforts that show great promise for all students include establishing high academic standards; implementing rigorous tests to monitor student progress; aligning curriculum and instruction with established standards and assessments; holding educators and school board members accountable for improved student achievement; increasing parental involvement; determining consequences for both successful and failing schools; improving the preparation, induction, and career opportunities for teachers along with salary increases; ensuring high-quality preschool and early-childhood education; and financing the poorer school districts in a more equitable manner.

To think of vouchers as a credible solution to problems of public education is to disregard most of America's students.

Moreover, public-school-choice models are important components of a comprehensive school reform agenda. Magnet schools, charter schools, schools within schools, and districtwide controlled public school choice represent examples of viable alternatives within the public system for students and parents. These schools operate within the public domain and are the responsibility of local school boards. In effect, they operate under the jurisdiction of legally constituted public bodies, which are accountable for their fiscal and academic performance. This public system also ensures that where public school models are in place, all students have an equal opportunity to participate.

In summary, vouchers lead us away from the basic American tradition of a free, quality public education for every student and undermine the kind of comprehensive, systemic school reform that is working in many parts of the country right now. Offering silver-bullet solutions for small groups of students is not reform. We need to improve our public education system as a whole for all students.

We can only hope that as the voucher debate intensifies, legislators and policymakers will pause and bring into clear focus what the real essence of public school reform demands, and carefully assess and analyze why a voucher-driven system leads us away from our desired goals. Such an understanding is only possible if the questions are asked before the answers are provided. Please ask.

Q AND A ON CLEVELAND VOUCHER PROGRAM

1.) What is the Cleveland voucher program?

The Cleveland voucher program is formally called the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Grant Program. In fall 1996, it became the first publicly funded private school voucher program in which religious schools may participate. It gives preference to low-income students.

2.) How many students participated?

Although approximately 30,000 Cleveland school children were eligible, only 6,246 applied for vouchers in the 1996-97 school year. For a variety of reasons, (e.g. ineligibility, decision not to use the vouchers because individual private schools were oversubscribed), a voucher was not offered to every eligible student that had applied. As of February 1997, 1801 students had accepted and were using vouchers to attend approved private schools. Of these, 640 were former Cleveland public school students, 526 were former private school students, and 635 were kindergarten students with no prior enrollment history. Of those voucher students in grades 1-3, 55% were former Cleveland public school students and 45% were already attending private schools when they received vouchers. All voucher students were

enrolled in 41 private schools (29 Catholic, 3 Islamic, 6 Protestant, and 3 non-religious).

3.) Who conducted the research study? What was the purpose of the study?

In spring 1997, a team of researchers from Indiana University began a longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the Cleveland voucher program. The researchers focused on two issues:

- How do the characteristics of voucher students and their families compare to those of non-voucher students and families?
- What were the effects of the vouchers on student achievement?

In the first year of evaluation, researchers analyzed the test scores and background characteristics of third-grade voucher and non-voucher students.

4.) How was the research study designed?

The researchers compared students' current achievement, controlling for prior achievement and pre-program differences. They administered the Terra

Nova Test, which includes reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies components.

5.) Who were voucher students?

The researchers found that the voucher program has attracted the better-achieving students away from the Cleveland public schools. The beginning academic achievement of the voucher students was significantly higher than non-voucher students.

6.) How do the test scores of third-grade voucher students compare to those of non-voucher students after controlling for background and demographic characteristics?

The researchers concluded that voucher students did not outperform non-voucher students after adjusting for background and demographic characteristics.

7.) How much did this experiment cost?

According to an Ohio state audit of the program, \$1.9 million of public money has been spent over the past two years. And most of this money has

been spent on taxis. More than \$1.4 million has been used to transport children to and from private schools.