

Originally Processed With FOIA(s):
1998-0004-F[1]; 2007-0107-F

FOIA Number:
S

FOIA MARKER

**This is not a textual record. This is used as an
administrative marker by the George Bush Presidential
Library Staff.**

Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Chief of Staff, White House Office of
Series: Sununu, John, Files
Subseries: Issues Files

OA/ID Number: 29153
Folder ID Number: 29153-008

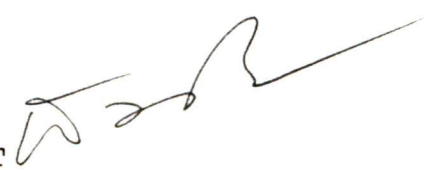
Folder Title:
Education Summit (1990) [2]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	15	25	1	5

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 20, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET

FROM: DAVID Q. BATES
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
AND SECRETARY TO THE CABINET 
SUBJECT: Background Information for the Education Summit

The Education Department and White House staff are completing work on briefing papers that you will receive for the President's Education Summit in Charlottesville, September 27-28. Those briefing papers will track the six topics that have been selected for discussion in the formal sessions of the Summit. The topics are as follows:

First Session (Wednesday, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30)

- Teaching Quality
- Learning Environment
- Governance

Second Session (Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 9:30)

- Choice
- Competitiveness and the Workplace
- Postsecondary Education

I am herewith enclosing supplementary background material. This package contains key documents about the President's education policies and excerpts from a recent general overview of the state of elementary and secondary education. The following materials are included:

1. Material on the Educational Excellence Act of 1989, the President's legislative program for fostering educational excellence.

a. Letter of transmittal to the Congress. The President's letter identifies and explains the four themes that he has articulated as the cornerstone of his legislative policy -- recognition of excellence; addressing need; flexibility and choice; accountability. These themes are reflected in great measure in the six topics to be discussed in the formal sessions identified above.

b. White House fact sheet on the Act.

c. "White House Wire" on Education, a fact sheet produced by the White House Office of Public Affairs.

2. Excerpts from American Education: Making it Work. This report was produced in April of 1988 by the Department of Education at the request of the President. Its purpose was to assess the state of the vigorous school reform movement that was largely set in motion by the 1983 landmark education report, A Nation At Risk.

The 1988 report has two parts: (a) a concise summary of the state of American education, primarily elementary and secondary education; and (b) a discussion of needed reforms. The first part ("How Far Have We Come?") briefly summarizes what our students know, how well they perform against students here and abroad, and provides data on graduation rates, length of instruction, and related matters. The second part ("What We Need To Do") contains five discrete essays that track quite closely what the President said about education in the campaign and has embraced in his legislative program. They develop themes such as choice, educating disadvantaged children and improving the curricula.

Attachments

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 5, 1989

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am pleased to transmit today for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Educational Excellence Act of 1989," a bill to provide incentives to attain a better-educated America. I believe that greater educational achievement promotes sustained economic growth, enhances the Nation's competitive position in world markets, increases productivity, and leads to higher incomes for everyone. The Nation must invest in its young people, giving them the knowledge, skills, and values to live productive lives. The "Educational Excellence Act of 1989" would move us toward this goal.

The initiatives included in this bill embody four principles central to my Administration's policies on education and essential for further education reform. These principles are:

- 1) Recognition of excellence. Excellence and achievement in education should be recognized and rewarded.
- 2) Addressing need. Federal dollars should be targeted to help those most in need.
- 3) Flexibility and choice. Greater flexibility and choice in education -- both for parents in selecting schools for their children and local school systems' choice of teachers and principals -- are essential.
- 4) Accountability. I support educational accountability, and toward this end, I am committed to measuring and rewarding progress toward quality education.

This legislation builds on the accomplishments of the last Congress, which enacted into law the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988. That law took significant steps toward improving elementary and secondary education by improving program accountability, reauthorizing the magnet school program and expanding parental choice, providing greater flexibility to local school districts in the implementation of bilingual education programs, enhancing parental involvement in programs for disadvantaged children, and stimulating education innovation and reform. My proposals have distinct differences from current law, but complement in numerous ways the important work of the 100th Congress in pursuing educational excellence.

The Educational Excellence Act of 1989 includes seven specific legislative initiatives aimed at fulfilling these important principles:

more

(OVER)

- (1) The Presidential Merit Schools program would reward public and private elementary and secondary schools that have made substantial progress in raising students' educational achievement, creating a safe and drug-free school environment, and reducing the dropout rate. This program would provide a powerful incentive for all schools to improve their educational performance.
- (2) A new Magnet Schools of Excellence program would support the establishment, expansion, or enhancement of magnet schools, without regard to the presence of desegregation plans in applicant districts. Magnet schools have been highly successful at increasing parental choice and improving educational quality.
- (3) The Alternative Certification of Teachers and Principals program would assist States interested in broadening the pool of talent from which to recruit teachers and principals. Funds would assist States to develop and implement, or expand and improve, flexible certification systems, so that talented professionals who have demonstrated their subject area competence or leadership qualities in fields outside education might be drawn into education.
- (4) President's Awards for Excellence in Education would be given to teachers in every State who meet the highest standards of excellence. Each award would be for \$5,000.
- (5) Drug-Free Schools Urban Emergency Grants would provide special assistance to urban school districts that are disproportionately affected by drug trafficking and abuse. These funds would be used for a comprehensive range of services appropriate to the needs of individual communities.
- (6) A National Science Scholars program would provide scholarships to high school seniors who have excelled in the sciences and mathematics. These scholarships, of up to \$10,000 a year, would recognize recipients' academic achievement and encourage them to continue their education in science, mathematics, and engineering. The President would select recipients after considering recommendations made by Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.
- (7) I am proposing to provide additional endowment matching grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, institutions that occupy a unique position and have a major responsibility in the structure of American higher education.

I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation. Taken together, these seven initiatives, for which I have proposed adding \$422.6 million in the 1990 budget, would help us advance toward the goal of a better-educated Nation.

In addition to these initiatives, I have proposed a budget amendment for \$13 million in new funds for experiments and data collection in support of education reform. I am also asking the Congress to fund fully the authorization in the

more

Stewart McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. This includes \$2.5 million to fund for the first time the Exemplary Grants program and \$2.7 million in additional funding for literacy programs for homeless adults.

GEORGE BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE,
April 5, 1989.

#

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 1989

FACT SHEET

THE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE ACT OF 1989

The President outlined today a program for fostering excellence in education. The need for reform is evident:

- o America is in an increasingly competitive world where investment in people, in human capital, is becoming a critical factor in a country's potential for economic growth and prosperity.
- o Many of our young people are performing well below their capacity and below the levels of young people in other countries in such important subjects as science and math.
- o Outstanding achievement by schools, teachers, and principals too often goes unrecognized and unrewarded.
- o Achieving excellence in education requires high expectations, low dropout rates, and safe and drug-free schools.
- o Parents lack adequate choice in the education of their children.
- o Schools often find that it is difficult to hire capable teachers and administrators, even though many people possess outstanding subject matter knowledge and management skills.
- o Projections of the future indicate an increasing shortage of people with advanced training in science and mathematics.
- o Our country's historically black colleges and universities struggle to maintain their commitment to educational excellence.

The Educational Excellence Act would authorize several initiatives designed to address these problems.

This legislation builds on the accomplishments of the last Congress, which enacted into law the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988. That law took significant steps toward improving elementary and secondary education by improving program accountability, reauthorizing the magnet school program and expanding parental choice, providing greater flexibility to local school districts in the implementation of bilingual education programs, enhancing parental involvement in programs for disadvantaged children, and stimulating education innovation and reform. The President's initiative proposes new efforts but complements in numerous ways the important work of the 100th Congress in pursuing educational excellence.

more

This legislation is based on four basic principles. These are:

1. Recognition of excellence -- Recognizing and rewarding our best schools, teachers and students will serve as an incentive for all schools, teachers, and students to improve their performance.
2. Addressing need -- This Administration believes that Federal dollars should assist those most in need.
3. Flexibility and choice -- Greater flexibility and choice in education -- both parental choice in selecting schools for their children and local school systems' choice of teachers and principals -- are important to providing the means and incentives for achieving educational excellence.
4. Accountability -- The Administration supports objective measurement and reward of progress toward quality education.

The Educational Excellence Act includes seven legislative initiatives aimed at fulfilling these important principles. Highlights of the individual initiatives follow.

Presidential Merit Schools

Program

- o The Presidential Merit Schools program would provide cash awards to public and private elementary and secondary schools that have made substantial progress in raising student educational achievement, creating a safe and drug-free school environment, and reducing the dropout rate. This program would provide a powerful incentive for all schools to improve the educational achievement of their students.

Funding

- o The legislation would authorize \$250 million for fiscal year 1990, increasing to \$500 million by 1993. These funds would be allocated by formula to the States, with State allocations based on school-aged population and State shares of funding under the "Chapter 1" Basic Grants program.
- o The amount of each merit award would depend on State-established criteria, including criteria related to the size of the school and the composition of the student body.

Implementation

- o Presidential Merit Schools would be selected by the State, assisted by a special State Review Panel, using State and Federal criteria. These criteria would focus on schools' progress in improving students' educational performance, creating or maintaining a safe and drug-free environment, reducing the dropout rate, and other, State-determined, factors. States could also give special consideration to schools enrolling substantial numbers or proportions of children from low-income families.

- o A school selected as a Presidential Merit School would use its award for any purpose that furthers its educational program, including development or implementation of special educational programs, purchase of computers and other materials and equipment, and bonus payments to teachers and administrators. Private schools would be prohibited from using Presidential Merit Schools funds to provide religious instruction or for other sectarian purposes.
- o The bill would also prohibit the reduction of other Federal, State, or local support to a school because of its receipt of a Presidential Merit Schools award.

Magnet Schools of Excellence

Program

- o Currently, the Department of Education makes Magnet Schools Assistance grants to school systems undergoing court-ordered or voluntary desegregation. Because of the success of magnet schools in increasing parental choice and improving educational quality, the bill would create a Magnet Schools of Excellence program to support the establishment, expansion, or enhancement of magnet schools, without regard to the presence of desegregation plans.

Funding

- o The bill would authorize \$100 million for Magnet Schools of Excellence for fiscal year 1990 and each of the three succeeding fiscal years.

Implementation

- o Local educational agencies (LEAs), intermediate educational agencies, or consortia of such agencies would apply directly to the Department for competitive grants. Applications would be selected for funding on the basis of the quality of the proposed project, the likelihood of its successful implementation, and the likelihood of its strengthening the educational program of the district or districts.
- o The Department would encourage applications that recognize the potential of educationally disadvantaged children to benefit from magnet school programs and applications to establish, expand, or enhance magnet schools which enhance the diversity of educational offerings to students.
- o No magnet school could be supported under the program for more than two years, or if the award would result in segregation or impede the process of desegregation.

Alternative Certification of Teachers and Principals

Program

- o The bill would provide assistance to States interested in expanding the pool of talent from which to draw teachers and principals. Funds would support such activities as training, program development, and evaluation. The bill would provide incentives for States to develop, expand, or improve flexible certification systems designed to draw into education talented professionals with demonstrated subject area competence or leadership qualities.

Funding

- o The legislation would authorize \$25 million for fiscal year 1990 only, for one-time grants to the States. States would apply for the amount of funds they need or an amount that is proportional to their school-aged population, whichever is less; excess funds would be reallocated on the basis of demonstrated need.

Implementation

- o Grants could support the design, development, implementation, testing, and evaluation of strategies for the alternative certification of teachers and principals, as well as training and recruitment activities.
- o States would be required to consult with teachers, principals, parents, and others in developing their applications. Subgrants to school districts, intermediate educational agencies, colleges and universities, and consortia of these agencies would be authorized.

President's Awards for Excellence in Education

Program

- o The success of American education depends heavily on the Nation's teachers. Because teachers who meet the highest standards of excellence deserve public recognition, respect, and appropriate financial rewards, our bill includes authorization for a new program of Presidential Awards for excellent public and private school teachers. The amount of each Presidential Award would be \$5,000. Teachers receiving awards would be permitted to use their awards for any purpose.

Funding

- o The bill would authorize \$7.6 million for each of the fiscal years 1990 through 1993. Funds would be allocated to the States on the basis of the number of full-time equivalent public school teachers in each State.

Implementation

- o In each State, winners of Presidential Awards would be selected by a Statewide panel, selected by the Governor, from nominations made by local educational agencies, public and private schools, parents, teachers, teacher associations, associations of parents and teachers, private businesses, business groups, and student groups. In making selections, the panel would use selection criteria developed by the State, subject to approval by the Secretary.
- o Each State would be permitted to use up to 5 percent of its allocation for administrative expenses, including the cost of convening the Statewide panel.

National Science Scholars

Program

- o The National Science Scholars program would encourage achievement in the sciences by providing scholarships to graduating high school students who have excelled in the sciences, and mathematics, and engineering. The scholarships would recognize the academic achievement of these students and would encourage them to continue their education in these academic areas at the postsecondary level.

Funding

- o The bill would authorize \$5 million for fiscal year 1990. The amount authorized would increase in increments of \$5 million per year to a total authorization of \$20 million for fiscal year 1993. These funding levels would ensure that the scholars would be supported throughout their undergraduate study and that a new group of 570 scholars would be selected each year.

Implementation

- o National Science Scholars would receive up to \$10,000 a year for each year of undergraduate education.
- o Each State would nominate between four and ten students per congressional district to receive scholarships. The President would select a total of 570 scholars after considering the recommendations of an advisory board (30 scholarships) and the recommendations of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives (540 scholarships). The scholars would be nominated in accordance with specific academic achievement criteria that would be developed by the Secretary in consultation with a panel of experts in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

Drug-Free Schools Urban Emergency Grants

Program

- o Prevention and education programs are frequently inadequate in urban areas with the most severe drug problems; more concentrated and comprehensive approaches are required. The bill would amend the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 to authorize a program of "Urban Emergency Grants."

Funding

- o The bill would authorize \$25 million for each of the fiscal years 1990-1993 for Urban Emergency Grants.

Implementation

- o This amendment would authorize a small number of special, competitive grants to urban districts that have the most severe drug problems, so that these districts can develop and implement comprehensive approaches to solving those problems.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Program

- o Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) play a vital role in the American system of higher education. In the past, these institutions offered many Black Americans their only opportunity for a higher education. Today, HBCUs enrich the range of educational choice. These institutions enroll approximately 220,000 students.
- o Many HBCUs are financially weaker than comparable institutions. This bill would strengthen HBCUs by providing additional support for endowment matching grants. Endowment building is an especially effective way to create financial strength and long-term financial security for HBCUs.

Funding

- o The bill would provide additional authorizations of \$10 million for fiscal year 1990, \$20 million for both fiscal year 1991 and fiscal year 1992, and \$10 million for fiscal year 1993.

Implementation

- o Federal funds would be available to match private sector contributions to the school's endowment fund. Income from the endowment fund could be used to improve academic programs as well as administrative management.
- o All HBCUs currently eligible under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 would be eligible to apply for grants.



... on Education

PRESIDENT TRANSMITS "EDUCATION EXCELLENCE ACT OF 1989" TO HILL

On April 5, President Bush sent a wide-ranging education reform package to Congress, entitled the "Education Excellence Act of 1989." This legislation embodies several principles central to education reform. First, excellence and achievement in education should be recognized and rewarded. Second, federal dollars should help those most in need. Third, greater flexibility and choice in education -- both parental choice in selecting schools for their children and local school systems' choice of teachers and principals -- are essential. Finally, the President supports educational accountability, and is committed to measuring and rewarding progress toward quality education.

The bill includes seven specific legislative initiatives:

The Presidential Merit Schools program would reward schools which make substantial progress in raising students' educational achievement, creating a safe and drug-free school environment, and reducing the drop-out rate. Public and private elementary and secondary schools would be eligible for cash awards.

A new Magnet Schools of Excellence program would support the establishment, expansion, or enhancement of magnet schools. Magnet schools are an important instrument of choice -- a means of promoting healthy competition to attract students and create an incentive for educational innovation.

The Alternative Certification of Teachers and Principals program would provide incentives for States to develop, expand or improve flexible certification systems designed to draw into education talented professionals who have demonstrated their subject area competence and leadership qualities.

The President's Awards for Excellence in Education would be given to public and private school teachers in every State who meet the highest standards of excellence.

Drug-Free Schools Urban Emergency Grants would provide special assistance for a comprehensive range of services to selected urban school districts that are disproportionately affected by drug trafficking and abuse.

A National Science Scholars program would provide scholarships to high school seniors who have excelled in the sciences and mathematics.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities would be provided with additional funding for endowment matching grants, an effective way to create financial strength and long-term financial security.

Urging the Congress to take prompt action on the legislation, the President said, "I believe that greater educational achievement promotes sustained economic growth, enhances the Nation's competitive position in world markets, increases productivity, and leads to higher incomes for everyone. The Nation must invest in its young people, giving them the knowledge, skills and values to live productive lives."

BUSH OUTLINES INITIATIVE IN SERIES OF EVENTS WITH STUDENTS

Over the last ten days, the President met with education leaders and students before announcing his legislative proposal. In a succession of events -- from a visit to local James Madison High School, to a question-and-answer session with students from the Close Up Foundation, to an address before the Association of Community and Junior Colleges -- President Bush reached out to those on the front lines of education reform.

He told students during the Close Up event on March 29, "These are your schools and they exist to serve you, and you have the right to demand the best from your teachers and from your

schools. You can expect excellence from your schools and you can make them work for you. So where school is concerned, it's not a matter of like it or leave it. It's like it or change it. "

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS LINE UP IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION

At the time the White House Wire went to press, key Congressional leaders in education issues had cosponsored the "Educational Excellence Act of 1989," including:

The Senate Republican leadership has moved quickly to line up support for the bill, led by Robert Dole (R-KS); Alan Simpson (R-WY); John Chafee (R-RI); Don Nickles (R-OK). Democrats David Boren (D-OK) and Claiborne Pell (D-RI), education subcommittee chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, have also cosponsored. The ranking member of the full committee, Orrin Hatch (R-UT), has joined the principal cosponsor in the Senate, Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS), who is the education subcommittee's ranking member. The ranking member of the Appropriations subcommittee on education, Arlen Specter (R-PA) in cosponsoring as well. There are a total of 34 Senate cosponsors to date.

In the House, the Republican leadership has marshalled strong support as well, led by Robert Michel (R-IL); Newt Gingrich (R-GA); Jerry Lewis (R-CA); Bill McCollom (R-FL); and Mickey Edwards (R-OK). The principal cosponsor, Bill Goodling (R-PA) is ranking member of the Education and Labor Committee, as well as of the education subcommittee. Also, Silvio Conte (R-MA), ranking member of the Appropriations subcommittee on education is cosponsoring, along with 69 other House cosponsors.

SUPPORT BUILDS ACROSS NATION FOR EDUCATION REFORM

Enthusiastic supporters of the President's goals for improving education are speaking out all over the country -- from elected officials, teachers, business leaders and members of the media. Giving parents and students educational choice, and promoting excellence in all classrooms are the talk of many concerned Americans:

"If we are to maintain our position as a leader among the industrialized nations and if we are to compete successfully internationally, we must attack the education deficit now. The Educational Excellence Act and other education initiatives proposed by President Bush hold solid promise of strengthening the education structure and fostering improvement throughout our education system." -- Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos

"This is an excellent initiative." -- Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI), chairman of the Senate education subcommittee

"To be successful, the new agenda for school reform must be driven by competition and market discipline ... the objective should be clear from the outset: complete restructuring ... The public schools must change if they are to survive." -- David Kearns, Chairman and CEO, Xerox Corp.

"We must remember who is ultimately responsible for children. Now is the time to empower parents ... Choice is the key." -- Governor Rudy Perpich (D-MN)

"Parental choice can provide the catalyst for educational reform by introducing a market mechanism to the public educational system." -- Sy Fliegel, former administrator, East Harlem District 4

"We propose an idea in the great American tradition: you can increase excellence by increasing choice." -- National Governors' Association, Time for Results

"The system needs a complete overhaul, and not just more tinkering." -- The Wall Street Journal, March 31, 1989

"We are extremely pleased that the alternate route to teacher certification, which has worked so well in New Jersey, is now getting support at the national level. President Bush's legislative proposal can help other states duplicate New Jersey's success in bringing thousands of qualified alternate route teachers into our classrooms." -- Governor Thomas H. Kean (R-NJ)

If you wish to continue receiving The White House Wire, please complete the following:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Return to:

The White House Office of
Public Affairs
OEOB, Room 122
Washington, DC 20500

Affiliation _____

Excerpts from

American Education: Making It Work

United States Department of Education
April, 1988

Part I
How Far Have We Come?

How Far Have We Come?

Shortly after *A Nation At Risk* appeared, the Education Commission of the States counted no fewer than 275 state and local task forces at work on education issues. Within twelve months, 35 states had strengthened their high school graduation requirements.¹ At the same time, the country saw a wave of reports and studies further evaluating the troubled state of our schools.

Some of these reports extended the agenda of reform beyond that set by *A Nation At Risk*. Others served to alert the American people to commonly forgotten or ignored truths about education: the need for solid curricular content; the value of high expectations and equal academic opportunity for all children; the need for schools to infuse their classrooms with a strong ethos of achievement; the importance of professional leadership by skilled teachers and principals; and the need for mechanisms designed to hold educators, schools, and school systems individually accountable for their students' learning and achievement.

Of course, the identification of such principles posed a serious challenge to all those responsible for the quality of our schools. Translating educational principles into practice requires work by parents, teachers, principals, and elected and appointed officials; by schools, school districts, states, and the federal government. All have their parts to play. But the greatest authority to effect real and lasting change belongs to the state governments, where primary constitutional responsibility for our schools has always rested. Consequently, it has been to the states that our nationwide campaign for educational excellence has issued its strongest call to arms.

By and large, governors and state legislators have responded conscientiously, sometimes admirably. A notable example is *Time For Results*, the August 1986 report of the National Governors' Association, which put the governors on record in support of basic reforms such as higher quality teaching, better school leadership, and increased parental choice. It also promised yearly assessments of state reform efforts and continued gubernatorial leadership.²

That leadership has been, in part, fiscal. In recent years most states have spent generously in an effort to improve their schools. Between 1981 and 1986, per capita state spending for elementary and secondary education increased nationally by more than 40 percent.³ In fact, education is now the single largest budget item in all but two of the 50 states.⁴

But more important than the size of education budgets has been state-level commitment to reform and improvement. Many of the most significant ideas advanced by the education reform movement are currently being put into practice—singly or in combination, by one state or another—with successful and promising results. New Jersey, for example, has conclusively demonstrated that we can and should look beyond teacher colleges when recruiting able instructors for our schools. Utah has shown that it is possible to reward teachers with salaries and professional status based on excellent performance, not mere length of service. Indiana has installed a new performance-based system of school accreditation. South Carolina is now in the third year of its incentive reward program,

which provides monetary awards to individual schools based on annual assessments of student achievement. Minnesota has instituted an open enrollment plan under which almost 100 school districts are offering parents and students their choice of attendance among local public schools.

In these and other states, in varying degrees, education reform is underway. Given these efforts, it is appropriate to ask: How much have we actually accomplished? What do the best available measures of achievement tell us about the effectiveness of our schools and the results of education reform? The answer to these questions properly begins with a review of student performance in the core academic skills and disciplines.

What Our Students Know

Scores on the Scholastic Aptitude (SAT) and the American College Testing Program (ACT) tests provide a broad measure of student achievement in core academic skills. SATs and ACTs are, to be sure, an imperfect standard of judgment. They may not capture the effect of reforms put into place only recently, and they are taken only by college-bound students. Yet that group includes students from every socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and geographic category. SAT and ACT scores are among the best available predictors of college performance, and they provide a serviceable means of measuring trends in student achievement according to constant norms.

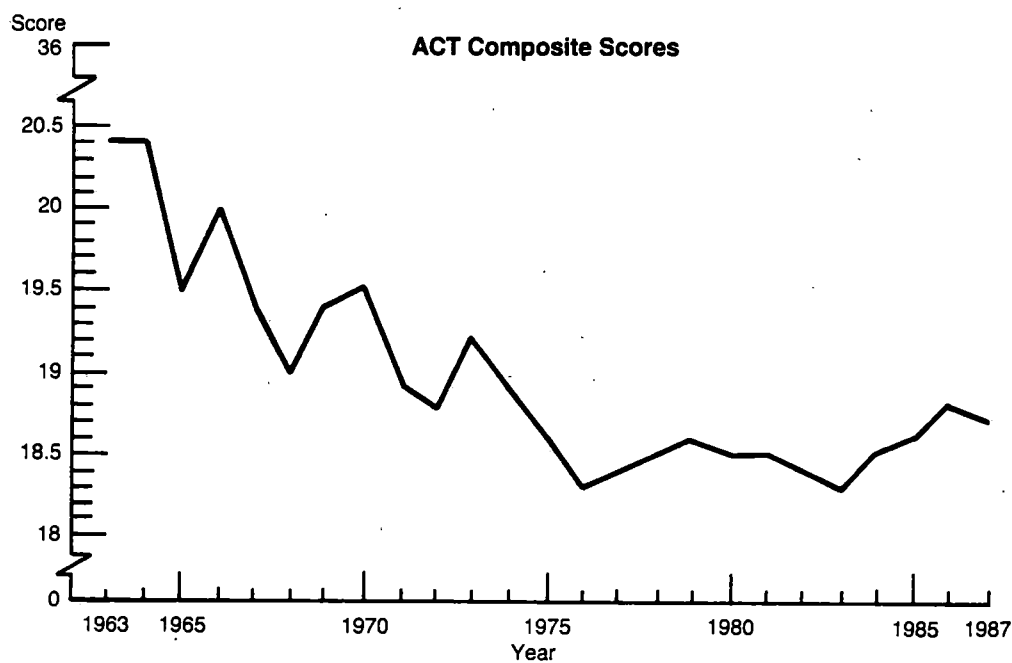
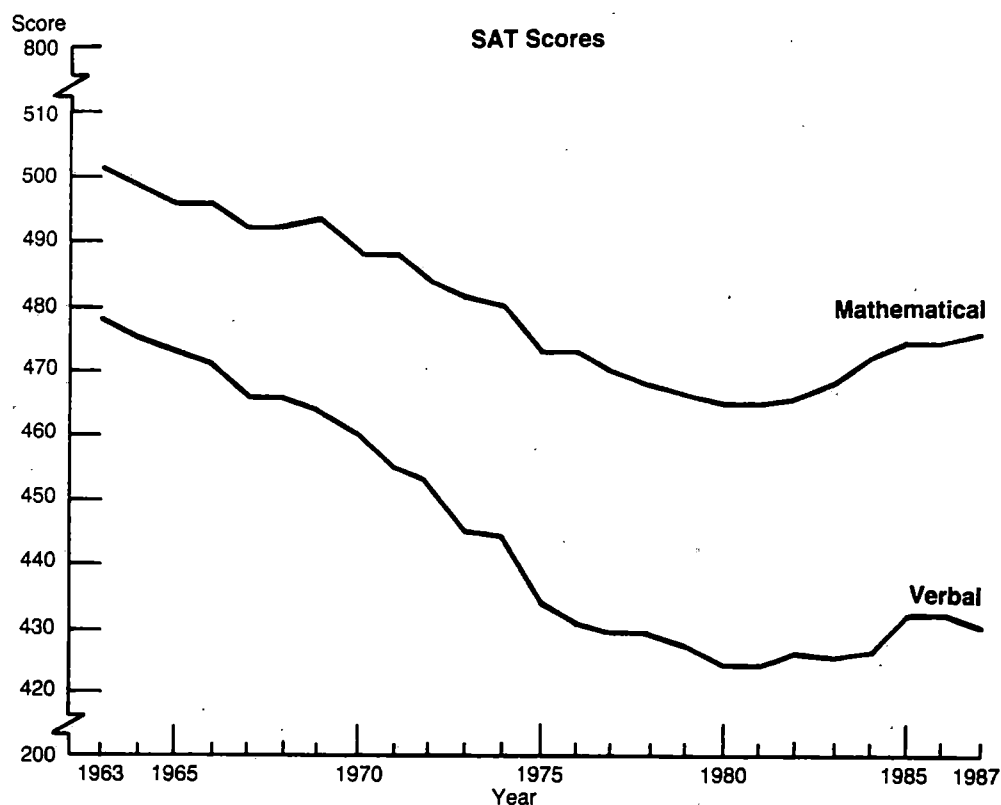
A sharp drop in SAT scores was noted in *A Nation At Risk*: between 1963 and 1980, combined average SAT scores fell 90 points. That plunge focused the American public's attention on a grave decline in student achievement. Since 1980, combined average SAT scores have recovered 16 points, though they have stalled for the last three years at an average score of 906. Chart 1 summarizes the recent history of SAT and ACT scores.

Among the highest achieving students—those scoring above 600 on either the verbal or the math scale—gains have continued. Between 1982 and 1986, high school graduates scoring better than 600 on the verbal SAT rose from 2.3 to 3.0 percent—a small but significant increase, restoring the proportion of high achievers to a level not seen since 1974. Gains in math during the same period were stronger still, with 6.8 percent of 1986 graduates scoring over 600, up from 5 percent in 1982.⁵

On the ACT examination, which measures knowledge of English, mathematics, social studies, and the natural sciences, scores were relatively flat between 1978 and 1983, rose half a point over the next three years, and dropped one-tenth of a point between 1986 and 1987.⁶

Test data show that black and Hispanic children are performing better. Minority participation in Advanced Placement exams has doubled since 1980.⁷ Minority participation in the SAT test also has increased. These test-taking gains are themselves a good sign, but minority test scores are up, too. Between 1985 and 1987, ACT scores of black students gained nine-tenths of a point on the 36-point ACT scale and those of Hispanics gained eight-tenths of a point, while those of white students increased just two-tenths of a point.⁸ The performance of minority students on the SAT has also been improving for the past decade, though scores for white students have declined slightly. Between 1976 and 1987, black students' composite scores gained 42 points (from 686 to 728), Hispanic students gained 22

Chart 1
Trends in College Entrance Examination Scores



Source: The College Board, the American College Testing Program, and U.S. Department of Education, *The Condition of Education* (Washington, DC: 1987), 20-22.

points (from 781 to 803), and white students lost 8 points (from 944 to 936).⁹ Minority students are beginning to make needed progress, but scores for all students are still far too low. The gap between black and Hispanic students on the one hand, and white students on the other, is still large and overall improvement is slow.

Student performance in key skill and subject areas can also be gauged from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other education surveys.¹⁰ For the most part, these measurements also show that improvement is taking place, but at a disappointingly slow pace and still at excessively low levels of achievement.

Reading. Specific indicators of reading ability among young Americans suggest slight gains during the 1980s. According to a NAEP household survey of 21- to 25-year-olds, the "overwhelming majority" of young adults can "adequately perform tasks at the lower levels." Nevertheless, "sizable numbers appear unable to do well on tasks of moderate complexity." Whereas 96 percent of young Americans read well enough to select a movie from television listings, NAEP finds fewer than 40 percent able to interpret an article by a newspaper columnist. And the situation is worse among minorities: just one in ten black young adults and two in ten Hispanic young adults can satisfactorily interpret the same newspaper column.¹¹

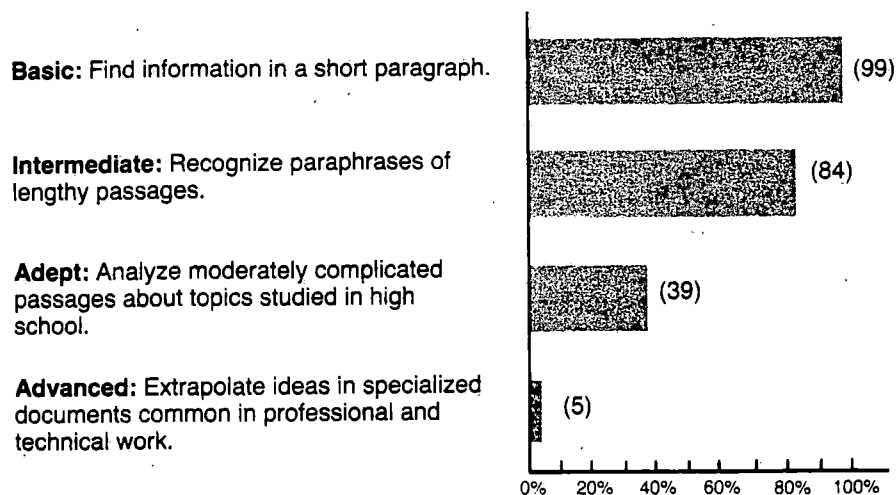
NAEP's most recent reading report, in 1986, shows virtually all in-school 17-year-olds (eleventh graders, for the most part) possessing at least a "basic" level of reading skill. Eighty-four percent are reading at an "intermediate" level, meaning they can answer questions based on longer written passages and can recognize paraphrases of that information. But fewer than 5 percent possess "advanced" reading skills, those which NAEP deems necessary "to comprehend material such as primary-source historical documents, scientific reports, or financial and technical documents"—in other words, reading skills "often needed to achieve excellence in academic, business, or government environments."¹² Chart 2 presents NAEP reading data along with a sample question at the "advanced" level—the level that 95 percent of our high school juniors have *not* attained.

Supplementary information about the reading skills of young adults is provided by tests given to United States military recruits by the Department of Defense. In 1981, the average reading grade level of recruits in all branches of the service was slightly below tenth grade (9.8). Since then, the military has become more selective in its recruitment; 92 percent of entering servicemen and women are now high school graduates, compared to 81 percent in 1981. However, their reading scores have barely inched up above a tenth-grade level (10.2). Indeed, in 1987, 40 percent of *high school graduates* entering the military read at the ninth-grade level or below—essentially junior high level.¹³

Writing. Among the generally high-performing students who take the College Board achievement tests—graded on the same 800-point scale as the SATs—English composition scores have risen ten points since 1979.¹⁴ NAEP reports that the writing performance of American eleventh graders has improved slightly since 1979.¹⁵ But the general picture for all students is still no better than it was in 1974, and NAEP's evaluation of its most recent (1984) writing assessment is that "performance in writing in our schools is, quite simply, *bad*."¹⁶

Fewer than one-fourth of all 17-year-olds tested in 1984 were able to perform at an "adequate" level on writing tasks considered essential to academic study,

Chart 2
Percentage of In-School 17-Year-Olds at or Above Various Reading Proficiency Levels



Sample Question—Advanced Level

There is a myth, very popular these days, that the Court is divided into "liberal" and "conservative" wings, or, as some would put it, into "activists" and those who practice "judicial restraint." Labels of this kind are convenient but not accurate. Members of the Court, applying general constitutional provisions, understandably differ on occasion as (6) to their meaning and application. This is inevitable in the interpretation of a document that is both brief and general by a human institution composed of strong-minded and independent members charged with a grave and difficult responsibility. But the inappropriateness of these labels becomes apparent upon even the most perfunctory analysis.

In line 6, what does the word "their" refer to?

- A Citizens
- B Conservatives
- C Liberals
- D Members of the Court
- ☒ E Provisions
- F I don't know

Only 5 percent of in-school 17-year-olds can answer questions at this level of difficulty.

business, and professional work. Only about 20 percent of them, when asked to write a letter to their principal requesting permission to take a particular schedule of classes, handled this relatively simple assignment satisfactorily. A similarly small percentage performed "adequately" when asked to write an imaginative passage describing a hypothetical situation and their reactions to it. Only 2 percent of 17-year-olds gained highest marks on this task by writing a clear, detailed, and coherent narrative.¹⁷

Literature. In 1986, NAEP conducted the first national research project designed to determine what American high school students know about major authors and works of literature. The answer turned out to be: not very much. A full national sample of 17-year-olds was asked 121 multiple-choice questions—mostly simple associations between titles and authors, or identifications of well-known literary passages. The average overall score was barely more than 50 percent correct. About half did not recognize F. Scott Fitzgerald as the author of *The Great Gatsby*. Similar numbers did not know Don Quixote was a fictional Spanish knight who attacked windmills, or that Byron, Keats, and Wordsworth were poets. Only 17 percent recognized Dostoevsky as the author of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Still fewer knew that Tocqueville wrote *Democracy in America*.¹⁸

Mathematics. Math performance by American students has begun to recover a bit from declines in the 1970s. According to a forthcoming report by NAEP, though math achievement by 13-year-olds managed only to hold steady between 1982 and 1986, achievement by 9-year-olds and 17-year-olds improved.¹⁹ And among the students who take the College Board achievement tests, math scores have moved up 11 points since 1979.²⁰

But the absolute level at which these welcome gains are occurring remains low. Our students are getting better at math operations that can mostly be performed by hand-held calculators. But in the forthcoming NAEP survey, only 51 percent of 17-year-olds could adequately handle "moderately complex procedures and reasoning" and only 6 percent could perform adequately on math questions requiring algebra or multi-step problem solving.²¹

American students consistently rate at or near the bottom of most international comparisons of math performance. In 1982 the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) found American 17-year-olds in the lowest fourth of all nations studied on five of six basic math topics. For example, in an advanced algebra test involving students from 15 countries, our students placed fourteenth.²² More recently, American first- and fifth-grade math students were found to be lagging badly behind similar groups of students in Japan, Taiwan, and China.²³

Even our best students suffer in such comparisons. In an analysis based on the same 1982 IEA test, the top 5 percent of 17-year-old American mathematics students in the most advanced math classes were judged against the top 5 percent from eleven other nations. The United States finished last in tests of algebra and calculus performance. In fact, the best American students scored worse than the average Japanese 17-year-old taking comparable classes.²⁴

Science. Recent years have produced some gains in science achievement by American students. The pervasive downward trend apparent through much of the 1970s appears to have been arrested. A forthcoming NAEP report shows that between 1982 and 1986, 17-year-old science students made up nearly all the

ground lost since the 1977 assessment. Black students scored particularly impressive gains on the NAEP test.²⁵ And scores on some of the College Board science achievement tests show modest gains since 1979—especially the physics test, where the mean score is up 17 points.²⁶

Again, it is important to remember that these improvements are taking place within a general range of achievement that is very low. A new assessment places American science students in rough international perspective. Our 10-year-olds seem about average, scoring in 8th place among 15 countries tested. But our 14-year-olds are far behind their peers around the world, placing 14th out of 17 countries, tied with Singapore and Thailand. Advanced American science students (seniors in their second year of study in given disciplines) fare even more poorly: 9th place out of 13 countries in physics, 11th of 13 in chemistry, and last in biology.²⁷

History. In 1987, the Education for Democracy Project—a joint venture of the American Federation of Teachers, Freedom House, and the Educational Excellence Network—issued a statement of alarm about young Americans' knowledge of history. "Many students," it concluded, "are unaware of prominent people and seminal ideas and events that have shaped our past and created our present."²⁸

Data from NAEP's 1986 humanities assessment underscore that conclusion. Even though nearly 80 percent of tested 17-year-olds were then enrolled in United States history classes, their average score was only 51 percent correct on 26 questions of basic historical chronology. No points were deducted for questions students skipped altogether, and their scores were somewhat inflated by guessing. Still, 43 percent of them could not place World War I between 1900 and 1950. More than two-thirds of them did not know when the Civil War took place. More than 75 percent were unable to say within 20 years when Abraham Lincoln was president.

Knowledge of historical personalities was only slightly better. More than one-fifth of the students could not identify George Washington as the commander of colonial forces during the Revolution. Almost one in three did not know that Lincoln was the author of the Emancipation Proclamation. And nearly half failed to recognize Patrick Henry as the man who said "Give me liberty or give me death."

Questions requiring somewhat deeper understanding of American history produced still more discouraging results. Half the students did not know the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine. Fifty-seven percent did not know that Senator Joseph McCarthy was involved in a controversy about communism. Almost 70 percent did not understand what Jim Crow laws were designed to do. (Many thought these laws were enacted for the *benefit* of blacks!) And nearly 80 percent could not say what Reconstruction was.²⁹

Geography. A small section of NAEP's 1986 humanities assessment measured rudimentary knowledge of geography. Here results were somewhat better—an average score of 71 percent correct on a group of 12 map questions. Still, nearly three in ten students failed to identify the Mississippi River on a map of North America. More than one-third could not find France on a map of Europe. And upwards of 40 percent did not recognize the territory acquired by Jefferson in the Louisiana Purchase.³⁰

Civics. A 1982 NAEP study revealed grave shortcomings in 17-year-olds' understanding of our system of government. The 1986 assessment shows little

improvement in knowledge of American political philosophy, the Constitution, and basic civil rights. One-third of students tested in 1986 did not know that the Declaration of Independence signaled the American colonists' break from England. Sixty percent did not know that *The Federalist* was written to urge ratification of the Constitution, and 40 percent could not say even approximately when the Constitution was written and ratified. Only three students in five were able to recognize a definition of the system of checks and balances that divides power among the three branches of our federal government.³¹ All students tested in that assessment have now attained full voting age.

What Our Students Study

Whether students succeed academically depends in large part on what they study—on the curricula schools offer them. It comes as no surprise that a serious deterioration in the rigor of American elementary and secondary curricula accompanied the precipitous declines in student achievement already noted.

A Nation At Risk had especially harsh words for high school curricula, which over the years had become "homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose." In 1983, the report concluded that "we have a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main courses." Its authors were distressed to find that 25 percent of credits earned by "general track" students were in "physical and health education, work experience outside the school, remedial English and mathematics, and personal service and development courses, such as training for adulthood and marriage."³²

To replace this smorgasbord of incoherent classwork, *A Nation At Risk* proposed a reinvigorated core curriculum for American secondary schools, one organized around a set of "New Basics": four years of English; three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies; one-half year of computer science; and, for those students planning to attend college, two years of a foreign language.

Today, five years after these recommendations were issued, we are still a long way from providing every American student with a solid academic curriculum. But there are now grounds for hope, and if visible improvements at the high school level are complemented by similar changes in the earlier grades—and are given a full chance to work—we may begin to see substantial benefits in learning.

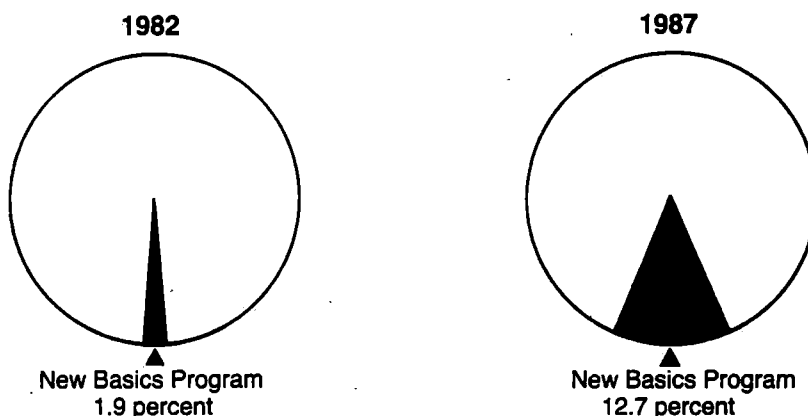
As part of its research for this report, the Department of Education undertook a national study comparing the transcripts of 15,000 1987 high school graduates with those of a comparable group of 1982 graduates. The news is encouraging. Less than 2 percent of the 1982 sample had completed the academic program suggested in *A Nation At Risk*; in 1987, 12.7 percent of graduating students had done so. When foreign language and computer science classes are omitted from the tally, improvement is more dramatic—from 13.4 percent of 1982 graduates to nearly 30 percent in the 1987 sample. Chart 3 summarizes these findings from the transcript study.

These figures mark a welcome break from a trend much lamented by *A Nation At Risk*: a 15-year migration of American high school students from solid academic work into vague "general track" courses. The proportion of students in the "general track" dropped from 35 percent in 1982 to 17 percent in 1987. Nearly all of this change reflects movement back into a more rigorous academic curriculum.

Moreover, the distribution of classes appears more focused on basics than it did in 1982. The Department's transcript study shows that 86 percent of 1987 graduates completed a United States history course; only 76 percent of 1982 graduates had done so. Seventy-one percent of 1987 graduates took at least one semester of civics or American politics, up from 57 percent in 1982.

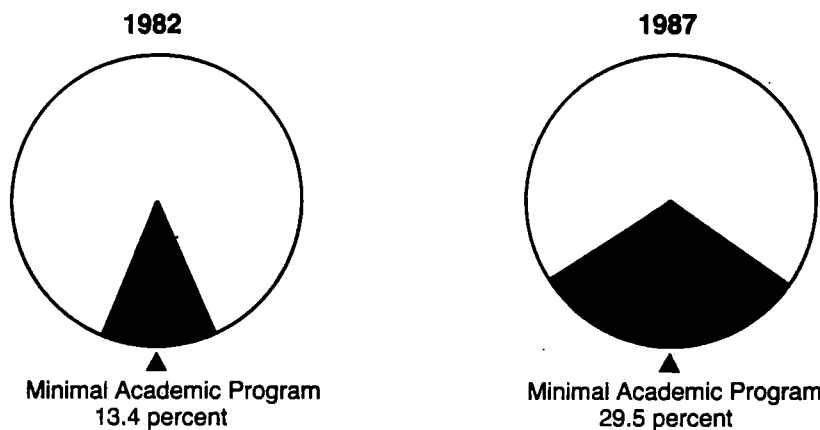
Students today also take an average of one semester more mathematics than did students in 1982, and enrollments in advanced math classes (geometry, second-year algebra, trigonometry, and calculus) are all up by at least a third. The number of students in pre-calculus has more than doubled. Enrollment in remedial

Chart 3
Percentage of High School Graduates Successfully Completing Various Combinations of Courses



New Basics Program

4 years of English, 3 years of Social Studies, 3 years of Math, 3 years of Science, 2 years of Foreign Language, and a half year of Computer Science



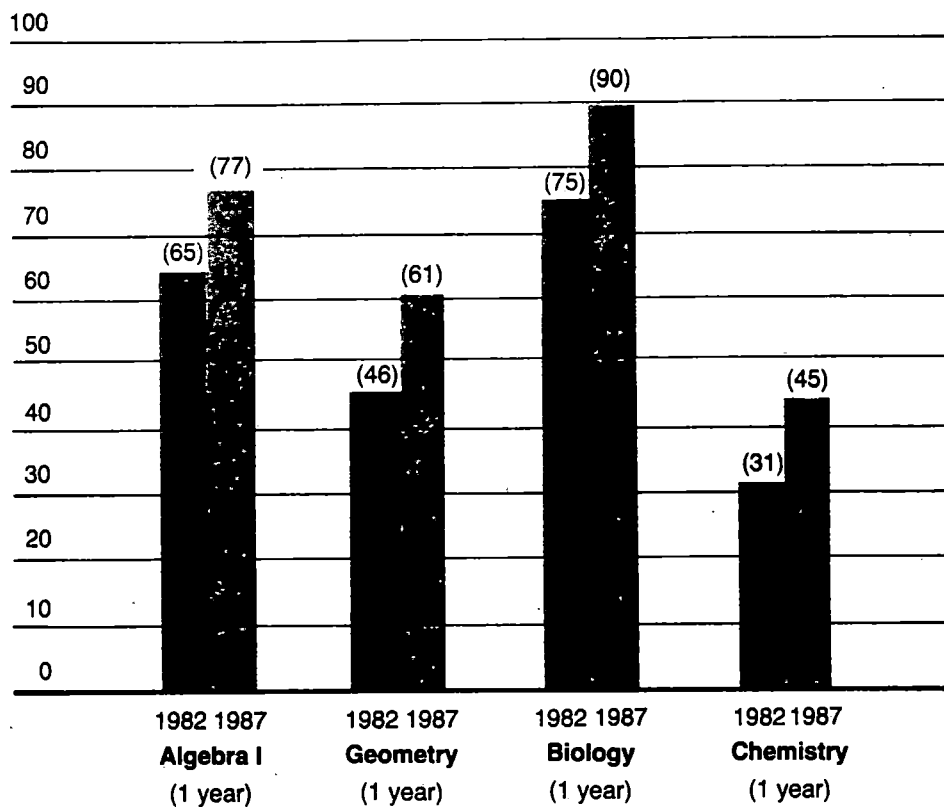
Minimal Academic Program

4 years of English, 3 years of Social Studies, 3 years of Math, and 3 years of Science

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "1982 High School and Beyond Transcript Study" and "1987 High School Transcript Study," unpublished tabulations.

or below-grade math is down by a third since 1982. Science shows similar improvement. Only 75 percent of all 1982 graduates had taken a class in general biology; 90 percent of 1987 graduates had done so. The number of students taking chemistry is up by half. Trends in math and science course-taking are summarized in Chart 4.

Chart 4
Percentage of High School Graduates Completing Various
Mathematics and Science Courses



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "1982 High School and Beyond Transcript Study" and "1987 High School Transcript Study," unpublished tabulations.

In another sign of improvement, the proportion of American high school graduates who have taken Advanced Placement (AP) exams has more than doubled, from 4.7 percent to 9.7 percent. A few states have registered startling gains in AP participation. South Carolina's rate has more than tripled to 17.3 percent, and Utah now has more than a quarter of its high school graduates take AP exams. Nationwide, more schools had candidates sit for AP exams than ever before—7,776 schools for the 1986-87 school year, compared to just 5,827 in 1982-83.³³

Yet we still have much room for improvement; curricular foolishness has not been eliminated from American high schools and not all students have shared equally in the national trend toward stronger curricula. Compared with public high schools, private and parochial schools still do a somewhat better job of

ensuring that their students take the "New Basics" recommended in *A Nation At Risk*. At the same task, suburban schools do a better job than either rural or urban schools. More Asian students (26 percent) take all the "New Basics" than do either whites (13 percent) or blacks (9 percent), though racial differences in course-taking have narrowed since 1982. Most discouragingly, students remaining in the vocational track are still taking far too few courses in the core disciplines. Among 1987 graduates, only 20 percent of students in vocational education programs took a geometry course, as against 80 percent of their academic track peers. Only 4 percent of them took a science sequence that included both biology and chemistry, compared to 66 percent of students in an academic program.³⁴

Although the high school curriculum is stronger today than it was five years ago, the figures summarized above suggest the need for still greater improvement. Students are spending more time in a solid academic course of study, but we are not yet seeing a corresponding improvement in their knowledge and skills. This suggests that as improvement in our schools continues, we need to pay more sustained attention to the content of courses, in addition to the number and type of courses scheduled. Time on task is not a meaningful yardstick of achievement if our students are not being given a challenging, rich curriculum.

How Our Schools Perform

Even a perfect curriculum will falter in a badly managed school. How a school is organized and managed is almost as important as what it teaches. As preconditions for academic success, our schools must, at minimum, attract students to class every day; make efficient use of time allotted for instruction and, if necessary, create more of it; establish firm programs and policies to prevent drug use, student misbehavior, and other distractions from learning; and ensure that students stay in school, grade by grade, until graduation. In short, schools must strive to create an ethos of order and success. How well are they satisfying these requirements today? Let us look at four indicators of school performance.

Attendance. American schools were challenged by *A Nation At Risk* to do whatever was necessary to reduce the amount of instructional time lost to absenteeism. In 1981, average daily attendance was 93.7 percent. In 1985, the last year for which we have reliable national data, 94.2 percent of students showed up for classes on an average day. This small nationwide gain includes significant improvements in some jurisdictions. During that period, for example, New Mexico boosted its attendance rate from 88.7 percent to 95 percent.³⁵

Time for Instruction. *A Nation At Risk* expressed concern that many American schools make inefficient use of the class time at their disposal. School and classroom management varies widely across the country, but the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported that schools were devoting, on average, only 22 hours of a 30-hour week to academic instruction—and some schools were spending as few as 17 hours.

Things may be improving. In a survey of high school principals commissioned for this report, 73 percent noted that their schools currently offer programs to train teachers in efficient use of classroom time. Sixty-five percent said that these programs had been instituted or strengthened since 1983.³⁶

Homework is a familiar and effective means of extending instructional time beyond the school day. *A Nation At Risk* expressed alarm at its infrequency and

shallowness—two-thirds of high school seniors surveyed in 1982 reported doing less than one hour of homework a day. A 1984 survey showed significant increases in the number of students reporting homework assigned the previous day, and a slightly higher percentage reporting more than an hour of homework. Still, almost 60 percent of high school juniors reported doing less than one hour of homework the previous day. Interestingly, 43 percent of high school juniors and 64 percent of eighth graders reported watching three or more hours of television a day.³⁷

Today, American schools are still much too cavalier about homework. Fifty-three percent of American high schools have no policies requiring homework. Again, however, there is some evidence of recent progress. Among the 47 percent of our high schools that do have homework policies, more than half have implemented or strengthened those policies since 1983.³⁸

A Nation At Risk also noted that it is not unusual for high school students in other industrialized countries to spend eight hours a day at school, 220 days each year. In the United States, by contrast, a typical school day lasts six hours, and the school year runs 175 to 180 days. *A Nation At Risk* recommended that school districts and state legislatures consider increasing instructional time by implementing a seven-hour school day and a 200- to 220-day school year, a recommendation that has been largely ignored.

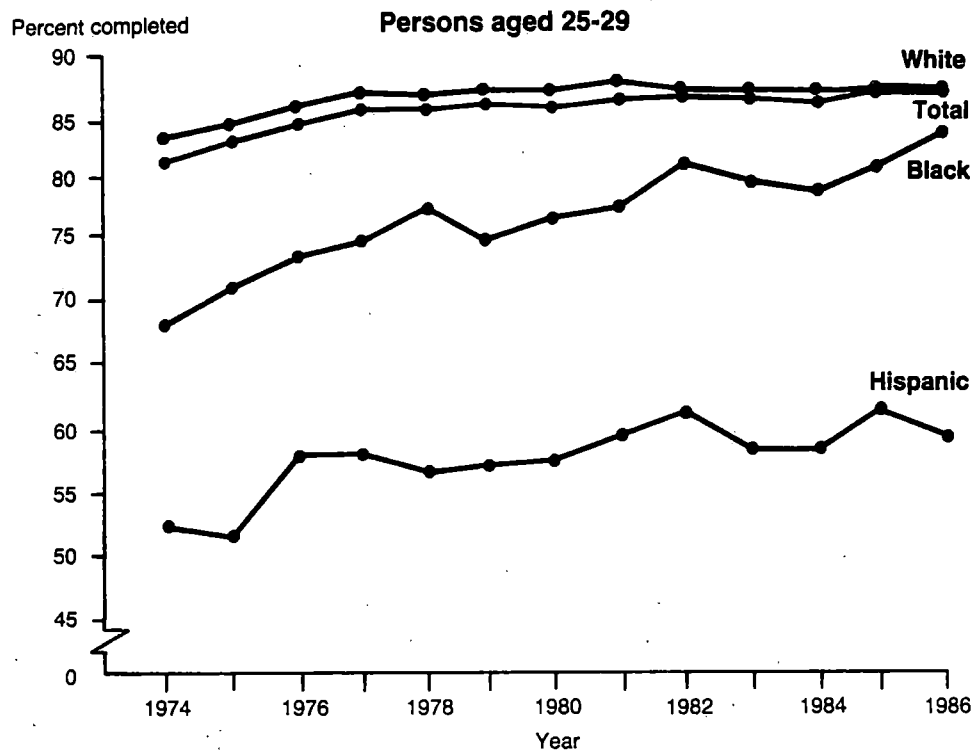
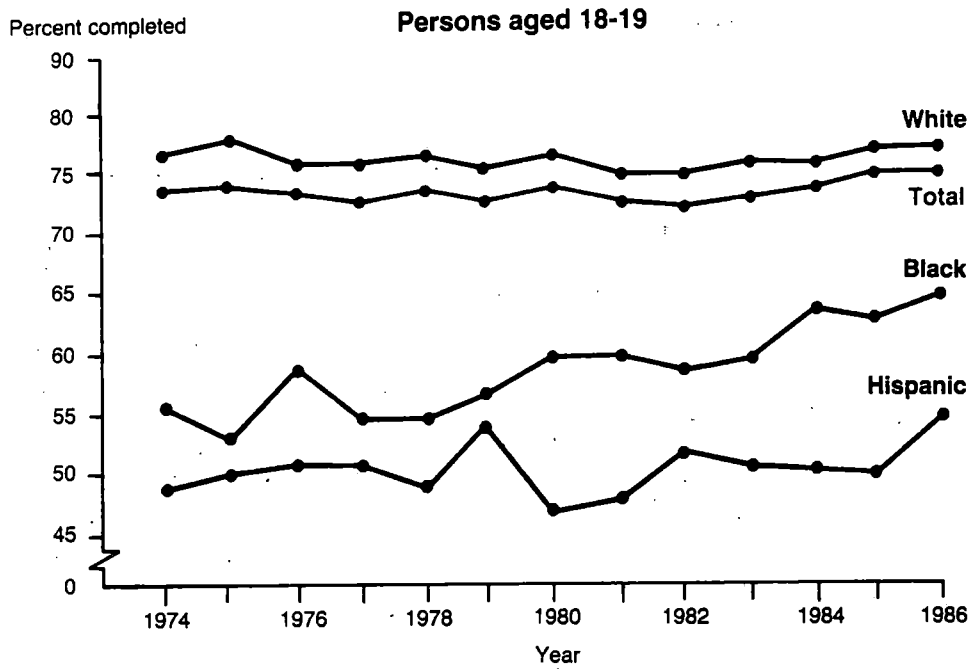
American teachers prefer their current nine- or ten-month contracts,³⁹ and their union leaders have opposed most legislative efforts to lengthen the school day or year. Since 1983, such proposals have been considered in 37 states. But a longer school year has been adopted in only nine of them—and all of those states merely extended their unusually short calendars to the more common 180-day standard. Only five states have lengthened the school day—none to more than six-and-a-half hours.⁴⁰

Distractions. The most dangerous and crippling distraction from learning—student drug use—remains entirely too prevalent among our youth. Yet there is evidence to suggest that efforts to reduce drug use may be having some success. Between 1980 and 1987, the proportion of high school seniors reporting use of marijuana at any time in the previous 12 months fell from 49 to 36 percent. Although in 1987 there was a significant drop in cocaine use, still one in six high school seniors had tried cocaine and 54 percent said it would be “fairly easy” or “very easy” for them to obtain the drug.⁴¹ Schools alone cannot eliminate drug use, but many must and can do better.

Learning is impossible in an atmosphere of disorder, and poor student discipline is another significant impediment to school success. In the 1987 Gallup Poll on education, disruptive student behavior was named as the second biggest problem facing our schools, after drug use.⁴² Nearly all respondents to the Education Department’s survey of high school principals said their schools now have strict sanctions against disruptive students, and half of all these policies have been toughened since 1983.

Still, it is unclear whether these policies are working well enough. Almost three-quarters of high school *principals* surveyed in 1985 believed that the incidence of student disorder in their buildings had declined between 1980 and 1985.⁴³ But just last year 44 percent of elementary and secondary *teachers* told researchers that the frequency of disruptive behavior in their classrooms had increased since 1982. Forty percent of teachers felt that student misbehavior interfered with their work to a “moderate” or “great” extent. Almost 20 percent of them reported

Chart 5
High School Completion Rates, by Race and Hispanic Origin



Source: Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20.

having been threatened by students, and eight percent said they had been physically assaulted. Twenty-nine percent of American teachers said they had seriously considered quitting their jobs because of student misbehavior.⁴⁴

Graduation Rates. A high school diploma is a prerequisite for adult success, and graduation rates are a basic measure of school performance. Judging by all available data, the dropout rate is alarmingly high, particularly so among black and Hispanic males. Because different schools and school districts use conflicting measures of dropout rates, a useful way to depict national trends is to determine how many 18- and 19-year-olds have completed high school.⁴⁵

The high school completion rate among blacks ages 18 to 19 is 10 percent lower than the national average of 75 percent; the completion rate for Hispanic youths of the same age is even more disturbing—only 55 percent.⁴⁶ Chart 5 displays high school completion rates at two age levels. For many, failure to complete high school results in a lifetime of poverty and dependence. An Education Department analysis reported that “the estimated unemployment rate for dropouts shortly after they leave school is more than twice that of high school graduates of the same age.” Those who fail to complete high school have average lifetime earnings \$441,000 lower than that of high school graduates.⁴⁷

Of course, many of those who drop out of high school later return to school or pursue an “equivalency” certificate. Of all Americans between the ages of 25 and 29, 86 percent have now completed four years of high school. For minorities, that figure has jumped from 77 percent in 1980 to 84 percent in 1986.⁴⁸

In short, student achievement and school performance earn a mixed grade for progress during the past five years. Despite encouraging improvements in patterns of course-taking, gains in student learning are slight and the average level of student skill and knowledge remains unacceptably low. Overall school performance is up a little bit since 1983, but by almost any standard we are still not where we need to be.

Part II of this report examines five key principles that should guide continued reform of American education.

Part II
What We Need To Do

Strengthen Content

Part I of this report summarized evidence showing that, despite some gains over the past five years, too many American students are not now getting the education they deserve. Most students have a fair grasp of rudimentary skills, but many of them have not learned to build upon those skills—to master tasks requiring more complex reasoning, advanced literacy, and problem solving.

The Core Curriculum Debate

Common sense tells us, and education research confirms, that youngsters rarely learn what they do not study. Since students study what adults teach, it is important for adults to define essential knowledge and resolve to teach it well. In recent years Americans have carried on a lively national conversation about what our children need to know. Teachers, parents, students, and scholars have taken part in this debate, as have proponents of diverse political and philosophical viewpoints.

At times the debate has been heated—even about the basic proposition that there are some things that all children should learn. As historian Paul Gagnon writes: “Of all the recommendations of the several reform reports issued since 1983, the call for a common core—even of the most partial, modest sort—is the most violently attacked.”¹ Americans properly cherish local control of schools, and some may fear the imposition of lessons at odds with school or community priorities. Americans also take justifiable pride in our nation’s cultural diversity, and some may fear that a common curriculum will arbitrarily exclude particular ideas and traditions. These are concerns that must be addressed by any proposal for a core curriculum; they will be considered in this chapter.

But these concerns must not overshadow the very real and harmful consequences of abandoning altogether a rigorous core curriculum. The effects of such abandonment are not merely a matter of speculation—as anyone familiar with the recent history of American education can attest.

A confusion swept through our schools in the 1960s and 1970s, confusion characterized by adult reluctance to articulate what was academically important and what was not, and by adult indecision about what we expected our schools to do. This confusion weakened the foundations of American education as a whole, but it had particularly destructive effects on school curricula—effects we still feel today. As already noted, *A Nation At Risk* criticized what it called the prevailing “cafeteria-style curriculum”—one lacking substance, coherence, or consistent structure, and filled instead with largely faddish, trivial, or intellectually shallow courses.²

Replacing the cafeteria curriculum with a well-balanced academic menu has been an overriding goal of the education reform movement since then. Without the right curriculum, efforts to improve teaching, governance and school accountability will make little difference. The transmission of knowledge and skills is, after all, what we aim to hold schools accountable *for*. If we allow schools to avoid

or be diverted from this task, we cannot legitimately complain if student achievement remains low. School time is limited—it will either be spent on important subjects, or it will be frittered away in what author Maya Angelou has termed “East Indian nose flute courses.”³

The Need to Improve

Providing a strong curriculum is a requirement even of the earliest school grades; too often our schools delay the introduction of serious academic material for too long. Children should leave elementary school able to read and write, and possessing a solid foundation in history, geography, civics, mathematics, science, and the arts. Elementary education should also support parents in the work of developing their children’s character, moral judgment, and sense of personal responsibility. The first eight or nine years of formal education form the foundation in knowledge and skills upon which all further study must rest. Improving elementary and middle school curricula should therefore be a basic reform priority.

But kindergarten through eighth grade curricula are to some extent determined by the secondary schools they seek to prepare children for, and curricular improvement in the upper grades is critical, too. What are the goals of a good program of high school study? Despite varied emphases and possible disagreements over particulars, most Americans agree about the goals. We want our students—whatever their plans for the future—to take from high school a shared body of knowledge and skills, a common language of ideas, and a common moral and intellectual discipline. We want them to know math and science, history and literature. We want them to know how to think for themselves, to respond to important questions, to solve problems, to pursue an argument, to defend a point of view, to understand its opposite, and to weigh alternatives. We want them to develop, through example and experience, those habits of mind and traits of character properly prized by our society. And we want them to be prepared for entry into the community of responsible adults.

Fully accomplishing these goals now requires advancing the national debate about curriculum a step beyond the widely endorsed position established by *A Nation At Risk*. That report performed an invaluable service by sensibly proposing the number and type of courses our high school students should take. Yet it described those courses—the “New Basics”—only in terms of broad subject categories. Part I of the present report provides encouraging evidence of progress in the number of students who are taking most or all of the “New Basics.” But as Part I also makes clear, gains in student achievement have not kept pace with improved patterns in course-taking. This suggests that it is important now to concentrate not just on which subjects our students study, but on the *actual content* of the courses they take. “You could require *five* years of math and still not get through second-year algebra,” one school superintendent has pointed out. “Sure it’s good to set standards, but it’s a hollow standard when you just add time instead of *expectation*.”⁴

If we require students to take three years of science and mathematics, for example, what are they likely to get? According to a study commissioned by the National Science Foundation, “the content of science and mathematics instruction in school is often inappropriate. . . . Science curricula tend to emphasize encyclopedic coverage of material; mathematics curricula emphasize the repetitive cov-

erage of computational skills and arbitrary assignment of 'advanced' topics (algebra, geometry, calculus) to particular grades."⁵

What are students really offered in the humanities? In their social studies courses, for example, what history do they actually study? The Education for Democracy Project noted a "significant decline over several decades in the amount of time devoted to historical studies in American schools, even in the college preparatory track."⁶ A majority of high school students already take four years of English, but does it acquaint them with the important literature of our common culture? Apparently not, as novelist John Barth laments: "In the same way you can't take for granted that a high-school senior or a freshman in college really understands that the Vietnam War came after World War II, you can't take for granted that any one book is common knowledge even among a group of liberal-arts or writing majors at a pretty good university."⁷

So calling for more of the right courses is only a start. The next step is to improve the content of those courses—to focus more clearly on what is to be taught in the core curriculum we want for all our children.

Defining the Curriculum and Improving Its Content

Some argue that our nation's cultural and ethnic diversity makes it impossible to construct a core curriculum appropriate for all students and schools. They may concede that curricular deterioration is a problem, but they resist the obvious solution, believing instead that our sprawling, heterogeneous culture defies any attempt to codify an American "canon" of essential learning.

This view is unduly pessimistic and it is at odds with a basic tradition of American education. Our pluralism has always posed formidable challenges to our schools. But our history demonstrates that for more than two centuries American education has welcomed, accommodated, and celebrated diversity while joining our students in a cooperative undertaking. Today, still, every American child has an equal claim to a common future under common laws, enjoying common rights and charged with common responsibilities. There follows the need for common education, now and in the future. In fact, a general American consensus does exist about the most compelling ideas and books and authors our students should know.

In 1984, when I was chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, I invited a number of distinguished scholars, and the general public, to send me their recommendations for a short list of books any high school graduate should have read. I received hundreds of replies naming many different texts and authors. But on most lists, repeated with remarkable regularity, were a small number of works: Homer's *Odyssey*, the Bible, a few of Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, and a novel by Charles Dickens. This short list later became the nucleus of the English program described in *James Madison High School*, a model high school curriculum published by the Education Department in late 1987.

That book set out in detail the actual content of a recommended program of basic high school courses. Chart 6 reproduces the course descriptions of its English core requirements. The *James Madison* curriculum was intended as a spur to discussion and as one effort to explain what a curriculum inspired by the "New Basics" might contain. It was not a statement of federal policy; the power to set school curricula for American students does not belong to the federal government,

Chart 6

English Course Descriptions From *James Madison High School: A Curriculum for American Students*

Introduction to Literature (9th grade)

The syllabus is limited to allow close reading and is confined to recognized masterworks of Western literature. A good selection might include a few books of Homer's *Odyssey*, parts of the Bible, sonnets and plays of Shakespeare, *Huckleberry Finn*, and a Dickens novel. These readings serve as models of good writing and as subjects for students' own writing exercises, which are emphasized throughout. Students review grammar and then study sentence and paragraph structure. They learn how to craft a strong thesis; how to write a cogent, coherent, and concise essay to support it; and how to revise and edit their own work, in consultation with their teacher. Also, students are given periodic practice delivering oral reports in class. *One year, required.*

American Literature (10th grade)

Students read a careful selection of American fiction, drama, and poetry. A good syllabus designed to spotlight the distinctive American achievement in literature might include Franklin, Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, Whitman, Twain, Melville, Dickinson, Faulkner, Wharton, Hemingway, O'Neill, Fitzgerald, Frost, Ralph Ellison, and Robert Penn Warren. Regular writing assignments are made and continued emphasis is placed on clarity, precision, and frequent revision. Students are given increasing experience in classroom speaking. *One year, required.*

British Literature (11th grade)

Students examine a broad selection of British fiction, drama, and poetry. A good syllabus might include Chaucer, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Swift, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Austen, the Brontes, Dickens, George Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, T.S. Eliot, and Shaw. Regular writing assignments are made and continued emphasis is placed on clarity, precision, and frequent revision. Students are given continued experience in classroom speaking. *One year, required.*

Introduction to World Literature (12th grade)

Students read a careful selection of European and non-Western fiction, drama, and poetry in translation. A good syllabus might include a small number of works by authors from classical Greece and Rome (Sophocles and Virgil); a more generous selection from noted authors of Europe and Russia (e.g., Dante, Cervantes, Moliere, Balzac, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Zola, Mann, and Ibsen); and depending on the instructor's knowledge and interest, a small number of works from Japan, China, the Near East, Africa, or Latin America. Regular writing assignments are made throughout, and a senior research paper is required. Students' work in classroom speaking continues, culminating in a substantial prepared talk before their classmates. *One year, required.*

and for good reason. Schools must adapt to local circumstances. Different parents want different things for their children, and they want different schools to provide them. Choices about which particular books students should read are decisions best left to school districts and schools—to teachers, principals, parents, and school boards.

But even given the need for local refinements, a core body of knowledge and ideas remains important for all students. "In our pluralistic society," writes Roger Shattuck of the University of Virginia, "the humanities have a core the way the river has a shape. The very process of discovering and gradually modifying that shape lends meaning and excitement to the intellectual life of a community."⁸

Encouraging efforts to articulate a broad-based core curriculum are already underway. As part of its comprehensive reform package, California is revamping its entire syllabus, subject by subject. California's new kindergarten through twelfth-grade plan for history and social science is rooted firmly in the American tradition, using it both as a source of lessons applicable to today's problems and as a lens through which to focus students' understanding of people and events in the rest of the world. Students are introduced to Columbus, but also to the pueblo culture of the Southwest that predated his voyage; they study the influence of Islam and Buddhism along with Judaism and Christianity. But the central tenets of the Western political tradition remain the curriculum's heart, preparing students for life in a diverse but well-functioning democracy.

The California plan incorporates serious study of geography as well, stressing knowledge of place and topography, the relationship of land and people, and the importance of location to settlements and conflicts. Taught this way, geography builds upon knowledge of names and places and contributes to an understanding of how historical events are shaped.⁹

There is no reason why other parts of the country cannot do for all the basic academic subjects what California is doing for social studies.

Student Differences

The advocacy of a rich and rigorous core curriculum need not ignore the fact that individual students present their schools with distinctive requirements, interests, and problems. Students possess a range of abilities. There are many students who speak English as a second language, and some who speak no English at all. There are students with learning disabilities and handicaps of varying kind and severity. For these students, most school districts provide a variety of particular classes—from advanced placement math to remedial reading, bilingual programs, and special education. There will always be students who require extra attention and it should be provided by the local authorities who are best able to respond to their individual situations.

Recognizing student diversity, many schools "track" students according to ability or future aspirations. Grouping by ability, especially for specific subjects, can be a useful instructional strategy. But tracking as it is actually practiced has been shown to deliver radically different and not always appropriate content to some students.¹⁰

For example, in place of the basics, vocational education too often drills students in overly specialized and frequently obsolete "job skills." It is not surprising, then, that a recent study of vocational education in California high schools found

that "on the whole, vocational classes as currently offered . . . are not demonstrably effective in helping students find jobs after they graduate, or in retraining would-be dropouts."¹¹ In too many cases tracking of students has involved serious neglect of fundamental content. No employer wants employees who lack basic knowledge and real skills. The personnel director of a multinational corporation recently begged a group of educators: "Will you please teach these students how to learn and how to live? We will train them."¹²

Whether we address ability differences by means of grouping, by adoption of new approaches to vocational education, or through some other school restructuring, one principle should remain paramount: All children should have access to a rich common curriculum. Most American students can handle it if properly prepared. There are, of course, some children—too many, in fact—whose present preparation for high school is inadequate to the task. That is an argument for further improvements in elementary and intermediate education. It is not, however, an argument for abandoning any high school student in the present. If one student, for whatever reason, cannot learn algebra and geometry in two years, then he should be given the additional time and help he needs. But he should learn algebra and geometry. We may vary our pedagogy to achieve our educational goals, but we must jealously retain and guard those goals: mastery of a common core of worthwhile knowledge, important skills, and sound ideals.

Textbooks

Matching curriculum with the tools needed to teach it is an essential step toward educational improvement. Textbooks are one such tool. Almost all high school reading is done from textbooks; our teachers depend on them to provide the foundation of their lessons and their instruction. No pedagogical innovation or new technology will likely displace the book as an integral part of American education. We need good books and we need them in every subject. But many of our schools use inferior ones. Why?

Excessive state regulation is part of the problem, even when motivated by the best of intentions. In 22 states, textbook selection is a matter of uniform statewide adoption rather than decision by teachers and principals.¹³ Under pressure to produce higher test scores, a state adoption committee may mistakenly conclude that textbooks alone can do the job. The result is long and elaborate lists of curricular objectives—specific facts, concepts, or events that a state's textbooks must "mention," down to the smallest fungus in a science book. Too often, publishers have responded to the states' myriad and conflicting demands by producing encyclopedic but lifeless textbooks. In a 1987 study, education researcher Gilbert Sewall found most history textbooks "mere catalogues of factual material about the past, not sagas peopled with heroic and remarkable individuals engaged in exciting and momentous events."¹⁴ A new book by the Council for Basic Education argues that "the current system of textbook adoption has filled our schools with Trojan horses—glossily covered blocks of paper whose words emerge to deaden the minds of our nation's youth."¹⁵

Textbook adoption committees are concerned about more than just test scores, of course. Women, ethnic minorities, environmentalists, the elderly, the handicapped—even nutritionists—all demand that textbooks present their interests fairly. That's reasonable enough. But again, state and local agencies too often use

crude formulae in an attempt to guarantee appropriate "social content." They count the number of women in a book's photographs or the number of Catholics mentioned in its text. Or they may publish lists of items and ideas meant to be emphasized or downplayed. Until 1986, for example, California took a dim view of books with photographs of luncheon meat or butter because these items have too much fat and too much salt. This approach to textbook selection opens well-meaning efforts and deserving causes to ridicule. And more important, it denigrates and unnecessarily complicates an already difficult task—the provision of high quality books to our schoolchildren.

The reform movement has demanded a higher threshold of quality for textbooks, and there are some encouraging signs of progress. A few publishers have lately shown that it is possible successfully to enter tough textbook markets with good materials. But we need to do better—much better. If they are to be held accountable for the results of their work, teachers and principals all over the country must be given a stronger voice in decisions about what books they will rely upon in their classrooms.

Testing

Tests are another instructional tool that needs to be improved. The problem is not testing *per se*; we want and need accurate assessments of student progress. Rather, the problem is tests that allow for guesswork, provide no measure of ingenuity or thinking skills, and are so one-dimensional that their scores can be improved by coaching in test-taking skills.

Test results must provide honest measures of achievement. One new study by a group called Friends of Education finds what has been termed a "Lake Wobegon Effect." Just as in Garrison Keillor's mythical town, where "all the children are above average," the Friends of Education survey of all fifty states found that "no state is below average at the elementary level on any of the six major nationally normed, commercially available tests."¹⁶ In other words, every state in America reports itself above the national average, an impossible situation that seriously calls into question the validity and scoring of our most commonly used tests.

Models of sophisticated and accurate standardized tests do exist. A recent literacy survey by the National Assessment of Educational Progress is one example; by establishing differential levels of subject and skill competence and then fine-tuning its assessment instruments, NAEP has helped reshape the national debate on literacy by providing us far better information about our real levels of achievement. The challenge now is to develop a new generation of tests for use at the national, state, and local levels, tests that will serve as diagnostic tools for teachers while giving parents and policymakers sound information about student achievement and school performance.

A sound curriculum is basic to educational improvement. In the last five years, significant progress has been made in student course-taking in basic subjects, as recommended by *A Nation At Risk*. But time spent on a subject is no guarantee that students will master it, and recent assessments of achievement make clear that it is time to strengthen the actual *content* of elementary and secondary school classes. Part of this effort must include modifications of textbook selection procedures and improvement of auxiliary instructional tools, such as sound standardized tests.

Ensure Equal Intellectual Opportunity

All American students have a claim to the solid core curriculum proposed and described in the preceding chapter. Better academic content brings improved academic achievement for all children. And so all children deserve it.

A wealth of recent research suggests that what a student studies in high school—regardless of race or family background—is the best predictor of educational success. The High School and Beyond project, a massive study which tracked the educational and social progress of 12,000 American high school students, discovered that among black and white students with similar test scores as sophomores, almost all differences in senior-year achievement could be explained by what courses they took. A separate analysis showed that black and white students who performed equally well in high school went on to college at essentially the same rate. In fact, a slightly higher rate of college attendance was observed among black students, and the researchers concluded that “blacks’ enrollment in college would increase dramatically if blacks’ academic achievement in elementary and secondary grades increased to a level comparable with the achievement of whites.”¹⁷

Of course, education is important for its own sake, and its intrinsic benefits are color-blind. But Americans have always also believed in education for the social and economic advantages it confers—as the key to success in adult life, and as one of the surest paths out of poverty. This faith has been justified by our experience of more than two centuries of immigration. And it is confirmed by research on the socioeconomic status of disadvantaged and minority Americans. For young blacks and Hispanics, as well as whites, completing the last two years of high school reduces by about 60 percent the likelihood of adult poverty. More than 90 percent of all Americans with high school diplomas have family incomes greater than twice the official poverty rate. A 1986 Rand Corporation study of the economic progress of blacks since 1940 stated the facts succinctly: “The safest and surest route to permanent black economic mobility lies in additional education in a good school.”¹⁸

Opportunity for education has long been a proper goal of the civil rights movement in America. The Supreme Court’s 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* finally made equal access to public education the law of the land. And for nearly 35 years since then we have done well by our commitment to keep school-house doors open to all students. Yet what happens inside those doors must command our attention as well. Real educational opportunity means equal intellectual challenge for all students. As the Carnegie Foundation noted in its recent report on urban schools, to expand access without improving school quality “is simply to perpetuate discrimination in a more subtle form.”¹⁹

Too often we have not provided disadvantaged students with the first-class elementary and secondary education they deserve. I believe that quality education is now the central civil rights challenge facing us today. To realize the goal of equal opportunity generally, we must provide our students with equal intellectual opportunity in school.

Access to Quality

Striking evidence exists that the higher educational expectations associated with school reform have especially benefited students from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds. The high school transcript research summarized in Part I shows that these students are taking more classes in basic subjects; ethnic and racial differences in high school course-taking have narrowed in the past five years. Student achievement data show corresponding improvement. Combined average SAT scores for all students increased 16 points between 1980-81 and 1986-87; in the same period, black students' scores rose 34 points.²⁰ And black and Hispanic 17-year-olds have also scored comparatively greater gains than white students on several of NAEP's writing tasks.²¹

Still, wide ethnic and racial gaps remain on most measures of student achievement, and persistent differences in the academic programs that are offered to our students may help to explain why. Most American students study similar subjects in high school, but they do not yet study these subjects in the same depth. Consider the important case of high school mathematics. Just about all students graduating in 1987 took some math, but not all of them pursued the subject past basic levels. Asian students were almost twice as likely as whites and three times as likely as blacks and Hispanics to have taken a 3-year math program that included geometry and trigonometry. And black and Hispanic students were about twice as likely as whites to be in remedial classes.

Our schools cannot afford to provide an inferior academic program to those of our students who most need improved educational opportunity. And we needn't accept this double standard when there are many American schools that are providing disadvantaged and minority children with first-rate instruction. In 1987, the Department of Education documented and described the success of many of these schools in its book *Schools That Work*. But such schools remain the exception and not the rule. We need more of them, and we need to face squarely and honestly the real obstacles preventing us from getting them.

False Obstacles

Demographic changes are often cited as excuses for instructional failure or as impediments to needed education reform. By the year 2000, we can expect a combined public elementary and secondary school population about 5.6 million students larger than today's.²² Also by 2000, about one-third of the total student population will come from minority groups.²³ Many of these children will grow up under less than ideal circumstances. Today, one-fifth of all American children live below the Census Bureau's established threshold for poverty; many of them—78 percent of poor black children—are being raised by single mothers. Each year, more than a million children see their parents' marriages end in divorce.²⁴

In some quarters these statistics become grounds for a pessimism that says some children can't learn because their color, class, or family background gets in the way. By these lights, efforts to restore high standards and high expectations look foolhardy, even mean-spirited. For example, one state school superintendent opposed curriculum improvements last year by saying: "We will have taken the high jump and raised it from five to six feet for a group of youngsters that couldn't jump it at five feet without extra help."²⁵

Such defeatism ultimately harms those whose best interests it claims to serve. The statistical and demographic trends adduced as evidence are incomplete and, in the final analysis, unpersuasive. In most respects, in fact, available data describe a student population different only by degree and detail from that which our schools have long served. For example:

- The increase in public school enrollments expected in the coming decade pales before that produced by the post-war "baby boom" of the 1950s and 1960s. An all-time high of 46.1 million students was registered 17 years ago in 1971, and we will not surpass it at any time in the foreseeable future.²⁶
- Minorities already comprise 28 percent of America's school-age population. The slight increase in this figure expected by the year 2000 hardly constitutes a radical change in classroom composition.²⁷
- The estimated impact of current and future immigration on our schools is dwarfed by historical precedent. In 1909, according to the U.S. Commission on Immigration, "57.8 percent of the pupils attending schools in thirty-seven of the big cities were either foreign born or were children of immigrants." Yet our schools educated them.²⁸

Yes, we face large challenges. Children from troubled families, troubled neighborhoods, and impoverished circumstances have a longer and more arduous road to travel. But in the past, our schools have served classrooms full of the poor, the rich, and the in-between; they have welcomed the children of slaves and immigrants; and they have taught well through war, depressions, and civil unrest. They can teach well today and in the years ahead despite the demographic changes we expect. Apocalyptic analyses and Chicken Little stories about an onrushing wave of "unteachable" students should be rejected. In fact, the analyses and stories themselves—and the attitudes they reveal—belong at the top of any short list of *real* problems now facing American education.

What's To Be Done

Mastering a solid curriculum isn't easy for any student, and for disadvantaged youngsters it may take more learning time and creative teaching strategies. The essential point is that all must have a chance at rich and fulfilling learning. According to Patricia A. Graham, dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education: "Historically, when we felt obligated to teach children to whom academic learning did not come easily, we modified the curriculum to make it easier for them to learn. . . . That tactic needs to be changed. . . . The curriculum, filled with the subjects that do endure and do enlighten a child, needs to remain. The means of teaching it to all children will vary."²⁹

And since decisions about what coursework students take—and how hard they study—rest to a great extent with students themselves, we need to pay attention to factors that may encourage them to make unwise decisions. In her study of an inner-city high school, anthropologist Signithia Fordham made several troubling discoveries about why some black students avoided Advanced Placement and Gifted and Talented courses: "[The courses] were perceived to be beyond their career and job expectations; they were 'protected' by the school administrators and counselors from the detrimental effects of failure and consequently the

rewards of success; and they lack the support of a peer group to buffer them from the accusations of 'acting white.'"³⁰

These findings present parents and educators with a serious challenge. Nothing influences learning so much as attitudes and beliefs about what produces it. Educational achievement by students comes of clear purpose, high expectations, strong and persistent teaching, and hard work. But achievement can be torpedoed by the idea that it is mostly a matter of luck, wealth, or native ability—an idea altogether too prevalent in American education today. "We expect too little of our children, are too easily satisfied, and don't really believe in the power of hard work," one leading researcher recently concluded.³¹

The problem can begin at home. A forthcoming comparative study by Harold Stevenson and his colleagues at the University of Michigan makes some interesting points about cultural attitudes associated with learning. American mothers, they found, tend to believe more than Japanese and Chinese mothers that school success is the result of innate ability. They also tend to be relatively complacent about disappointing academic performance. It is no accident, then, that Japanese and Chinese students outperform their American counterparts on a wide range of skill and subject matter assessments. "The importance of hard work is diminished to the degree that parents believe that native ability is a basis for accomplishment," Stevenson writes.

When such hands-in-the-air resignation about achievement is reinforced by school administrators—who ought to know better—our national effort to provide equal intellectual opportunity to all our students is undermined. "Holding this belief," Stevenson continues, "provides an excuse for offering some children less challenging curricula and making fewer demands for their mastery of the material."³² The instinctive reaction of too many school leaders to criticism of their students' performance is to point at the students themselves—at their color or class or family background—on the unstated assumption that such factors by themselves explain educational failure.

It cannot be said too many times: Though there are now too many schools that fail to teach well, there is rarely anything "unteachable" about their students. As Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has argued: "If we adjust class content up or down to the differences students come to us with, we will perpetuate those differences. If we expect all students to master a rich common core curriculum, there will still be differences, but they will be far narrower."³³

Today many able and eager American children are not learning enough, and too often it's because of an unwarranted pessimism that leads to lower expectations for disadvantaged children. Of course many disadvantaged students face serious obstacles to achievement, obstacles outside the control of schools. But this makes it all the more important that schools do everything they can to provide all their students with the best education possible. Poor and disadvantaged children deserve an equal chance at a solid education. Providing it for them mainly takes hard work and a healthy respect for achievement, an ethos that needs to be restored to American education at every level.

Establish an Ethos of Achievement

In a new book, *The World We Created at Hamilton High*, Gerald Grant, professor of education and sociology at Syracuse University, traces the 35-year history of a rather typical public high school in a medium-sized northeastern city. "Hamilton High"—Professor Grant has disguised the school's real name—began its life in 1953, in a middle-class residential neighborhood. For years the school was well-run and its students were high-achieving. But by the early 1970s—as a consequence, Grant concludes, of well-intentioned yet badly implemented social reforms—Hamilton High was a mess: violent, purposeless, educationally bankrupt.

Today, like thousands of similar schools around the country, Hamilton is engaged in a slow but steady comeback. Violence has abated, the academic program has been toughened up a bit, and test scores have begun to rise.

Still, despite this progress, Grant is unhappy with the way things are at Hamilton High—and, by extension, at countless other American secondary schools similar to it. And one fact disappoints him more than any other: the school's failure to restore a "positive ethos." Students routinely skip school assemblies. Cheating is pervasive. Hamilton's drug counselor doesn't think it's right to tell kids what not to do. Teachers don't bother much with discipline. In other words, Hamilton High School is adrift, without moral order or ethical compass—a machine of utilitarian bureaucracy. Its students absorb from it what skills and knowledge they will—and then move on.³⁴

It doesn't have to be this way. There are many elementary and secondary schools throughout America where a spirit of achievement and success thrives, apparent even to casual visitors. These schools' hallways may not be new, but they are clean. Their teachers lead classrooms with vigor and easy confidence. Their students' work hangs proudly on bulletin boards. In the past five years, the Department of Education has recognized more than 1,000 such schools for their excellence. Close study of these schools makes clear that there is nothing mysterious about their shared ethos of achievement.

It turns out that these schools succeed for simple and obvious reasons. They have strong principals who express clear educational goals and who hold both teachers and students to high standards of achievement. They have teaching staffs of competent professionals who believe it important to shape students' character as well as intellect. They enforce discipline consistently and fairly. They have, in other words, the "hidden curriculum" of success. And, consequently, they have students who learn and grow.

These are good schools, solid places conveying sound, straightforward messages about hard work and citizenship. But today, even after five years of national attention to education reform, they remain the exception rather than the norm in American education. Too many American schools are merely plodding ahead without clear purpose or firm grasp of the broader values and principles central to real achievement. Too many American schools, in short, are like Hamilton High.

In three particular areas—the teaching of basic moral principles, the establishment of order and discipline, and the encouragement of solid work habits—our schools need marked improvement if they are to develop a true ethos of achievement.

Moral Lessons

Thomas Jefferson, listing for citizens of his day the essential elements of a sound education, wrote of writing, calculation, and geography—but also of “the improvement of one’s morals and faculties.” This same blending of character and ethics with knowledge and skills still has a place in American education today—or ought to. Responding to a 1984 Gallup Poll, the American people said they wanted two things above all others from their schools: first, that schools teach our children how to speak and write correctly; and second, that they help students develop reliable standards of right and wrong.³⁵

Some educators may fret over the American people’s insistence that our schools impart virtue along with facts, raising inevitable and time-worn doubts about “Whose values will be taught?” and “How?” The important thing to remember, however, is that both of these questions have answers. A large majority of Americans with school-age children believe it possible for schools to develop a sound basis for character education.³⁶ And there is also wide agreement about the kinds of character we want to encourage.

Surely no one would deny that honesty is a trait our schools should reinforce. No one would argue that courage is less than admirable. These two virtues do not belong exclusively to any one subgroup in American life; they are consensus ideals that we all honor. And there are others—including integrity, generosity, independence, fidelity, kindness, respect for law, patriotism, diligence, fairness, and self-discipline.

How should such elements of good character be imparted by schools? Most powerful moral lessons come from actual example—from exposing children to high character and from encouraging its imitation. Our teachers and principals must be men and women willing to articulate ideals and convictions to students, and, of course, to conduct themselves accordingly. “You cannot teach morality without being committed to morality yourself,” Oxford University’s Mary Warnock has written, “and you cannot be committed to morality without holding that some things are right and others wrong.”³⁷

Neutrality before important ideas is in many respects an educator’s worst sin; it is an evasion of his central responsibility. As the theologian Martin Buber has suggested, the teacher is distinguished from other influences on a child’s development precisely “by his will to take part in the stamping of character and by his *consciousness* that he represents in the eyes of the growing person a certain *selection* of what is, the selection of what is ‘right,’ of what *should* be.” In this will and consciousness, Buber says, the “vocation as an educator finds its fundamental expression.”³⁸

Does this mean browbeating or indoctrinating students into particular points of view? Must it involve classroom attempts to resolve the most controversial and difficult public questions of our day—like abortion, affirmative action, or United States policies toward Central America? Is it necessary for our schools to develop entirely new theories and curricula for character education?

Not at all. A school satisfies its responsibility for moral education through its practice of an ethical candor and honesty that violates no student's rights; through its concentration on questions of right and wrong that are basic and appropriate to the ages of its students; through its refusal to muddy those questions with unnecessary complexity; and through its understanding that no educational wheel must be reinvented before children's moral faculties can be exercised and improved.

Subtle help comes from the curriculum that a good school should already be pursuing. Many of the clearest moral lessons can be found in classic stories from literature and history. Teachers needn't preach about honesty. They might simply recount the tale of Abraham Lincoln walking three miles to return six cents—and, conversely, the fable of Aesop's shepherd boy who cried wolf. Do we want our children to know what kindness and its opposites involve? Then we might have them read *A Christmas Carol* or *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and later on *King Lear*. We want our children to respect the rights of others, so we should have them read the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and Reverend King's "Letter from Birmingham City Jail." There are, of course, hundreds—thousands—of other examples and possibilities.

Order and Discipline

By themselves, committed school professionals and strong curricula are insufficient means of communicating character and inspiring achievement. Students must first understand that they are in school to learn and that a structure of school authority and order is necessary for them to do it. Articulating and securing that structure should be the first priority for schools seeking real improvement.

"Get order," a classic 1917 textbook on classroom management advised teachers and principals. "Remember that your success in your life work depends upon your success in this one feature of that work more thoroughly than it depends on anything else. You have the law back of you, you have intelligent public sentiment back of you."³⁹ Those words still ring true today. In national surveys, Americans have named disorder and indiscipline as the biggest problem facing our schools for 16 of the past 18 years. And there is wide public support for sensible methods of restoring order.

A large part of any school's ethos derives simply from its physical tone. A school with broken window panes, graffiti on its walls, and littered floors is, strictly speaking, a school without order. The character of an environment can sink deep into the souls of those whom it surrounds, and a disorderly school environment is bound to affect student character and attitudes toward learning.

Even more basic to the establishment of a positive school ethos is student discipline. Regular and prompt attendance, respect for teachers, and good conduct go hand in hand with academic success. In one recent survey, high school sophomores who got "mostly A's" had two-thirds fewer absences or incidents of tardiness per semester than those who got "mostly D's." The same students were far more likely to have their homework done and much less likely to have been in trouble with the law. Good behavior as a sophomore predicted better grades and higher achievement as a senior.⁴⁰

Behavior is learned, of course, a habit that comes of rules and the routines that reinforce them. Students must be given clear standards of conduct; they must know what is expected of them. They should also know the consequences of

wrongdoing. Effective discipline is fair, predictable, consistently enforced, and appropriate to the offense.

Some forms of misconduct—the use or sale of drugs during school hours or on school grounds, for example—should not be tolerated. Lesser violations of a school code, like class disruptions or attendance problems, should incur carefully articulated and logical penalties. Punishment that inadvertently rewards misbehavior—responding to student absenteeism with suspension from school, for instance—ought to be avoided. And all disciplinary actions should seek to involve the parents. Parents need to know when their children are breaking rules. For some students, the knowledge that their parents may be brought into school will itself help to deter misbehavior.

Parents can and should help in more active ways as well. Students bring to school habits and attitudes they learn at home. Not all teachers are parents, but every parent is a teacher—the child's first and all-but-indispensable teacher. Many parents can do more than they are accustomed to doing today. According to one recent survey, majorities of both parents and teachers think that "most parents fail to motivate their children so that they want to learn in school." Half of teachers and nearly 60 percent of parents believe that "many or most parents fail to discipline their children."⁴¹ Parents have a responsibility to contribute to a good school ethos by sending to school children who are respectful, self-disciplined, and prepared to work hard and to learn.

Hard Work

To be sure, student discipline is not the end of education. It is only a means. Schools must insist on order in and near their buildings, not pay for it by abandoning what ought to be their ultimate goals: good teaching and effective learning. Yet too often a quiet but insidious "deal" is struck in American classrooms—minimal demand from teachers in exchange for minimal disruption by students.

In his book *Horace's Compromise*, TheodoreSizer described this pact—the "agreement between teacher and students to exhibit a facade of orderly purposefulness"—as a "Conspiracy for the Least, the least hassle for anyone."⁴² And a team of researchers at Michigan State University has recently described that conspiracy's essential features. Where the conspiracy is in place, they report, teachers allow "the 'negotiation' of class content, assignments, and standards" and they show "relatively little concern for academic content" and "a willingness to tolerate, if not encourage . . . the substitution of genial banter and conversation for concentrated academic exercises."⁴³ Almost nothing of lasting value comes easy or free—especially in education—and the continued pretense in too many American schools that learning is possible without persistent effort has had devastating consequences.

There is a simple explanation for the fact that virtually all international studies show American students being outperformed by their foreign counterparts: children in many other countries spend more time in class and their teachers use that time more efficiently. In other words, both teachers and students in other countries *do more work*.⁴⁴

The work ethic has a large part in American tradition. It needs to be strengthened—or revived—in American education. Of course, moral purpose,

school discipline, and a commitment to hard work cannot simply be bought or legislated for our schools. These are qualities that come from people—teachers and principals with vision and talent. We need to find more such people and bring them into our schools. And we need to recognize and reward the many we already have.

Recruit and Reward Good Teachers and Principals

The most important determinant of a school's ethos is its staff. In any enterprise, whether manufacturing automobiles or teaching children, success depends upon competent personnel and able management. In education, as in business, the way to build a staff of outstanding professionals is to search broadly for talent, hire those who are best able to do the job, and then offer rewards and advancement to individuals who perform well. Those who fail to measure up should be given the opportunity to improve; those who don't should be shown the door. Teachers and principals should be given wide latitude and responsibility to do the best job they possibly can, and should then be held accountable for their students' performance.

Though all this may seem like common sense, it is far from common practice in most school systems. We cannot expect our schools to improve, nor our children to achieve, so long as we adhere to a hiring and promotion system that rewards longevity over performance; that puts more stock in paper credentials than in knowledge, energy, and enthusiasm; and that pretends good teachers and good principals are to be found only among graduates of schools of education.

Getting Good Teachers

A Nation At Risk was sharply critical of how American teachers were trained, recruited, and rewarded. That report called for major changes: higher standards for teacher education; higher salaries, based on performance; 11-month contracts; career ladders to distinguish among beginning, experienced, and master teachers; and the use of nontraditional personnel, especially those holding math and science degrees, to solve pressing shortages in certain fields.

Subsequent reports recommended additional reforms. The Holmes Group, an alliance of education-college deans, advocated replacing the four-year undergraduate education degree for prospective teachers with a liberal arts degree in the teacher's chosen subject, followed by a year of graduate work in education. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy recommended giving teachers a more active role in running schools and proposed a national board to establish professional licensing standards.

All of this attention has begun to produce change. The most obvious change is in salaries: average salaries for elementary and secondary teachers rose to an estimated \$28,300 in the current school year—an increase, after adjusting for inflation, of 20 percent since 1980-1981. Better salaries help to explain the marked increase since 1982 in the number of college freshmen who express an interest in becoming teachers.⁴⁵

There are legislative changes as well. Since 1980, over 1,000 pieces of new teacher-related legislation have been proposed in the states. Not all this change is progress, of course, but much of it is. Twenty-seven states have passed tougher requirements for admission to teacher preparation programs, and many states are demanding more courses in the liberal arts and fewer "methods" courses within such programs.⁴⁶

These are steps in the right direction. But we must do more if we are to see real, lasting improvement in the quality of our teachers. We need to act upon three basic principles: wider recruitment, demonstrated competence, and pay for performance.

Opening the Profession. What are the attributes of a good teacher? First, a thorough knowledge of the subject he or she proposes to teach. Second, the ability and desire to communicate that knowledge to students. And third, sound character. These attributes are to be found in individuals from many walks of life—they include, but are by no means limited to, graduates of education schools. It makes no sense to erect artificial barriers to the teaching profession when we need all the talented, energetic individuals we can find. Richard Lamm, the former governor of Colorado, captured the irony of our current situation when he noted that thousands of American parents are pulling their children out of public schools, where education is free and teachers are nearly all certified, and putting them into private schools, where they pay tuition and many teachers are uncertified.

Many states have begun to react to this anomalous situation. Thirty-one states—up from eight in 1984—have instituted teacher recruitment programs designed to attract individuals with expertise and experience who may lack formal education school course credits.⁴⁷ Six states (California, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas) provide internships or apprenticeships for these new teachers.⁴⁸

These new alternative certification programs are proving their effectiveness. Under New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Program, for example, individuals holding degrees in given subject areas can be certified to teach after passing a rigorous knowledge test. Candidates undergo a year-long internship. Then, upon recommendation by their school principals, successful candidates receive standard teaching certificates. By the start of the program's third year, it was producing 18 percent of New Jersey's new teachers. Their scores on the National Teacher Examination exceeded those of conventionally prepared teachers, and their job-attrition rates were significantly lower than average.⁴⁹

Demonstrated Competence. Parents must have confidence in the knowledge and abilities of their children's teachers. We should test current teachers as well as new teachers for competency, and the tests must be demanding enough to screen out those who have no business in our classrooms. Forty-six states now require tests of minimum competency for new teachers—up from 12 in 1980. Three states (Arkansas, Georgia, and Texas) have applied such tests to teachers already in the classroom as well.⁵⁰

Tests are meaningless, however, if virtually anyone can pass. And that seems to be the case with many current teacher exams. According to a recent study by the Department of Education, on most teacher exams only a minimal level of literacy is required to earn a passing score.⁵¹ When Texas tested current teachers, for example, nearly 99 percent passed—but the reading proficiency required for the test was so low that one fourth grade teacher was prompted to remark that "a lot of my students could have answered those questions."⁵²

Paper-and-pencil tests for teachers are necessary, but they are not sufficient guarantors of instructional competence. Regular evaluations of actual teaching performance, carried out in the classroom by peers and administrators, need to

become part of the management routine of every school. Done well, they not only identify teachers in need of improvement, but also provide part of the basis for well-functioning career ladders, merit pay, and other rewards for teaching well.

Pay for Performance. It has been true for too long that the best and brightest of America's college graduates look askance at teaching as a possible career. In surveys of college freshmen, most of those declaring an intention to teach have been students with below-average test scores. Our schoolchildren deserve better.

If we want to attract the best people to teaching, and keep the good teachers we already have, we must begin paying not simply for seniority or paper credentials, but for actual performance—for how well our teachers teach and for how much their students learn. Until good teachers are paid more than bad ones, our efforts to improve teaching and learning will be frustrated.

Some states and localities already reward merit. Twelve states have established teacher incentive or career ladder programs, while eight other states are funding pilot programs and six have statewide programs under development. Eight states either have implemented or are experimenting with teacher incentive programs linked to student performance.⁵³

Getting Good Principals

Over the past three and a half years I have visited many outstanding schools. Without exception, each had an outstanding principal. Good schools have good principals—leaders who articulate clear goals, leaders who show the ability and authority necessary to get teachers and students working toward those goals.

At present, good principals are far too rare. Too many of our principals are ill-trained as leaders; too few are given the full administrative authority they need; and too many avoid initiative and risk-taking. Many also seem estranged from the concerns of the parents they are supposed to serve. A recent survey found that 75 percent of public school principals believe the schools in their communities have improved over the last five years; another survey shows that only 25 percent of the public agrees.⁵⁴

We need more good principals, and to get them we must look beyond customary sources of recruitment. We must provide our principals with better training, we must give them far greater authority—and then we must hold them accountable for our children's success.

Recruiting Talent. Nearly 40 percent of current public school principals say they will leave their jobs over the next five years—a golden opportunity for American education to open the profession to all those who have the necessary interest and ability. *First Lessons*, the Department's 1986 report on elementary education, suggested such a "deregulation" of the principalship, and proposed that we consider for top school jobs not only exceptionally able working educators but also men and women who have demonstrated leadership in other fields. Not unexpectedly, that suggestion was scorned by principals' organizations. Yet some months later, New York City's Commission on the Year 2000 essentially reiterated the proposal, saying that "the pool from which principals are chosen should be opened up to managers from other fields, including business, higher education, and government."⁵⁵

That idea is now being embraced across the Hudson River. New Jersey's Commissioner of Education has proposed an alternative entry program for principals that matches in some respects the state's plan for teachers. Under its provisions,

principal candidates without public school teaching experience would be eligible for jobs if they had a master's degree in management, passed a formal assessment (including a written exam), and then completed an internship in a public school district.

New Jersey's plan is only one example. Other states and localities may have different ideas about how to expand the potential pool of first-rate principals. But the rule remains the same: if we are to produce a new and better generation of school leaders, we must break the grip of convention and welcome talented leaders into our schools.

Better Training. Whether they come from teaching or other professions, principals need better training than most now get. The California Commission on the Teaching Profession properly criticized the manner in which teachers amass credits toward a principal's job: "Current training for an administrative credential is hopelessly inadequate, depending on a collection of courses spread over several years on the margin of the teacher's work day."⁵⁶ According to the National Governors' Association, principals themselves have testified to the shortcomings of their training, and a recent survey has documented the problem further: while 25 percent of public school principals rate their own training as "excellent," fully 74 percent believe it to have been only "pretty good" or "fair."⁵⁷

More Authority. Today, the principalship of an ordinary school in a sizable school system is not so much a leadership position as a middle-management job attained through increments of seniority and credentialism. Most principals have little power to hire and fire teachers, to manage their own budgets, or to solicit school grants from foundations or other government agencies. A Department of Education survey reveals that virtually no public secondary school principals have genuine authority over teacher salaries, bonuses, or supplements. Only 8 percent report control over teacher performance standards, and a mere 11 percent control teacher assignment to their schools. Only 13 percent can make independent decisions about how to spend their schools' budgets.⁵⁸ Unless given some specific dispensation from the school district, the principal enjoys little real management latitude.

Yet despite their lack of authority, principals are not, as a group, demanding more of it. Fifty-five percent think that insufficient authority to manage their school is "not a problem or obstacle." Asked if they would want greater decision-making autonomy combined with accountability for results, more than one-third said no.⁵⁹

Those aren't the right answers. Someone needs to be responsible for the performance of our schools, and principals—as their chief executive officers—are the logical choice. Real educational responsibility demands the authority to make decisions about school budgets and personnel. Good principals want that authority. Principals who don't may be in the wrong line of work.

We cannot, in conscience, demand more of our students than we do of those who teach in and administer our schools. Every day of their working lives, many American teachers and principals perform acts of selflessness and dedication. They need to be rewarded commensurately. At the same time, we urgently need to improve our methods for locating able and talented teachers and administrators, for encouraging and promoting them, and for penalizing those who consistently fail to do their job.

Institute Accountability

Of American education as it currently operates, we can say this: In general, if you do well educating a group of students, nothing good happens to you or for you. Similarly, if you do badly educating a group of students—again, nothing happens to you or for you. There are greater, more certain, and more immediate penalties in this country for serving up a single rotten hamburger in a restaurant than for repeatedly furnishing a thousand children with a rotten education. This must change.

We must establish a more direct link between acts and consequences in our nation's schools. Schools and educators need good, tangible reasons to avoid failure and they need good, tangible reasons to strive for success. If we are to improve our schools, we must have ways of identifying and rewarding schools that work, methods that work, and principals and teachers who work. We must also have ways of identifying those who fail to do their jobs satisfactorily and, if necessary, ways of removing them. We naturally want to encourage people who do a good job. As for those who do not, we want them either to improve or to stay clear of our children. As the nation's governors put it in their report *Results in Education: 1987*, "Someone has to pay a penalty for continued failure, but it should not be the students."⁶⁰

Accountability—holding educators responsible for the results of their work—is not an abstract principle. It has four concrete and imperative elements: spending wisely, providing choice, monitoring productivity, and rewarding success.

Spending Wisely

This year, the United States will spend about \$309 billion on education. Of that, \$185 billion—about 4.1 percent of our Gross National Product—will go to elementary and secondary schooling.⁶¹ This figure represents an increase of \$56 billion since 1982. "The nation," education finance expert Allan Odden confirms, "has followed reform rhetoric with substantial new funding resources."⁶² In constant 1986-1987 dollars, we spent \$4,300 per pupil in 1987—up a healthy \$626 since 1983; up a remarkable \$3,083 since 1950.⁶³

Of course, these are aggregate figures. They do not show whether every school district is adequately financed; they certainly do not reveal whether school funds are wisely and efficiently allocated within districts. But the numbers clearly show that the American people as a whole are extraordinarily generous when it comes to education. In truth, we are spending enough on education to do the job well. The trouble is not our level of investment; rather, it is the low rate of return we get for it.

Numerous studies confirm the commonsense proposition that money alone cannot buy quality education. Overall education spending correlates only weakly with student achievement.⁶⁴ But spending, if on items only tangentially related to the instructional mission of our schools, can and does affect educational quality—negatively.

Learning happens primarily in the classroom, so it stands to reason that money spent for improvements in learning should be directed first to teachers, books, and necessary technology. Ironically, however, as the United States has in recent years raised and spent unprecedented revenues for education, the proportion of education spending actually devoted to classroom instruction has declined. While total instructional expenditures per pupil went up 64 percent between 1960 and 1980, spending on administration and other non-instructional matters rose 107 percent. The number of non-classroom instructional personnel in our school systems grew by 400 percent between 1960 and 1984. And during those years, money spent on teacher salaries dropped from over 56 percent to under 41 percent of total elementary and secondary school spending. Too much money has been diverted from the classroom; a smaller share of the school dollar is now being spent on student classroom instruction than at any time in recent history.⁶⁵

It should be a basic goal of the education reform movement to reverse this trend toward administrative bloat and to reduce the scale of the bureaucratic "blob" draining our school resources. Future education reform will require better spending of our education dollars. Some public leaders are recognizing the need for fiscal accountability. Chicago's mayor, for example, recently called for a 5 percent cut in that city's central school administration, noting that "for years the Chicago school system bureaucracy has gone up while student enrollment and achievement scores have gone down."⁶⁶

But problems with inefficient educational allocations are not limited to any one city or just a few states. The federal government also has a responsibility to ensure that the billions it spends on education include reasonable guarantees of accountability. For example, under programs funded by Chapter 1, the nation's \$4 billion compensatory education program, the Department of Education has proposed rewarding effective efforts and requiring ineffective ones to improve. In drug education, the Department has proposed legislation whereby schools would not receive money year after year if their programs did not succeed in reducing student drug use. Similarly, Americans should not be expected to pay for vocational education programs whose students fail to learn basic skills or are left unprepared to work in fields for which they have been trained.

Today, budget increases urged in the name of education reform are commonplace. In some cases they may be necessary. But we must not allow the easy satisfaction of spending money for a good cause to divert us from our equally important obligation to ensure that it is spent well. At all levels of American education, we must target and channel our generosity to make schools more accountable for results.

Providing Choice

In a free market economy, those who produce goods and services are ultimately answerable to the consumer; if quality is shoddy, the consumer will buy someone else's product. It doesn't work that way in public education, however. Even when armed with adequate information about school quality, parents in most places around the country cannot choose to shift their child from a bad school to a good one.

Still, the idea of choice—allowing parents greater flexibility to determine which schools their children will attend—has lately been gaining public favor,

despite opposition from much of the organized education establishment. The latest Gallup Poll shows that 71 percent of the American people back choice. The National Governors' Association report on education, *Time for Results*, also strongly endorsed parental choice.

And choice advocates have a collection of remarkably convincing success stories to point to. One of the best known examples is District 4 in New York's East Harlem. In the early 1970's, District 4 was an educational basket case. Among all the city's 32 school districts, it ranked last in reading scores. Then, under the leadership of superintendent Anthony Alvarado, the district allowed parents to choose for their children from among a wide variety of newly-restructured schools, each offering a particular instructional focus: science, the arts, and so on. In some instances, several mini-schools were created within the same building.

Today, East Harlem's teachers are energized and motivated. Lynne Kearney, director of District 4's Manhattan East School, says why: "People are here because they want to be. . . . The last time [my teachers] referred to the contract was a long time ago. . . . There's a camaraderie, because this place doesn't have to exist. We can go out of business tomorrow. If it didn't meet needs, it would fold."⁶⁷

And District 4 is meeting needs. Today, 63 percent of its students read at or above grade level. The district now ranks 16th in the city in reading. Critics said choice could not work in inner-city schools because parents lacked the necessary education to make informed choices. They were wrong. Says Seymour Fliegel, deputy superintendent of District 4: "In New York City, they print the reading and math scores in the paper. But the kids *know* and the parents *know* who the best teachers are, and which are the best schools. They make selections based on experience and word of mouth."⁶⁸

Another success story is Cambridge, Massachusetts. Since the inauguration of a "controlled choice" program in that city in 1981, the percentage of students passing Cambridge's basic skills test has climbed from 74 to 87 percent, and there has been a significant movement of children from private schools back into the public schools.⁶⁹

Magnet schools are another major form of public school choice. Originally developed as a voluntary and effective alternative to mandatory busing for desegregation, these schools with specialized curricula or pedagogical styles have succeeded in upgrading the quality of entire school systems—especially those serving low income and minority children. For example, students at Davis Alternative Elementary, one of Jackson, Mississippi's two magnet schools, are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. The student population reflects the socioeconomic makeup of the city, but achievement is way above the citywide norm. Last year, 49 percent of Davis fourth graders scored above the 71st percentile in the California Achievement Test, and in 1983, mean scores at Davis were the highest in all of Jackson's 37 elementary schools.⁷⁰

Los Angeles has magnet programs at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. For the past several years, students in these programs have been at or above district and national levels on tests of reading and math achievement. The longer students stay in these magnet schools, the higher their achievement relative to children in the city's other schools.⁷¹

In 1984-85, New York State conducted a thorough study of 41 magnet schools in eight districts receiving state aid. Researchers found that schools joining the magnet program showed markedly improved performance. Daily attendance rates

were higher than average in 98 percent of the schools, and 65 percent of the schools exceeded the average in student mathematics scores. New York's study also provided evidence that the establishment of magnet programs is associated with improvements in non-magnet schools in the same districts.⁷²

Magnet schools and other programs that promote parental choice inject into public school districts some of the vigor of the free market—and create one of the most effective accountability systems possible. If all parents were given greater choice, it is likely that a few irredeemably awful schools might temporarily close their doors—but for the most part, bad schools would improve and good schools would become yet better. In the words of Michigan Governor James Blanchard, who recently proposed a choice system for large school districts in his state, “the result should be an explosion of creativity and innovation, with significant increases in quality for the entire system.”⁷³

Monitoring Productivity

There can be no accountability without accurate information for evaluation. Principals have to know whether a teacher is teaching well. Superintendents need reliable information on district attendance, dropout rates, and student achievement. Governors and state legislators need to know where and how well their education budgets are being spent. Parents need ready access to student performance data when trying to determine which school has the best program for their children.

For a system of accountability to work well, we need to monitor the *productivity* of our schools. But a recent survey shows that in many states, it is virtually impossible for ordinary citizens to get good information on how well their schools are performing. Of the 44 states that have provisions for student achievement testing, 17 do not report school-level results to parents, the general public, or the media.⁷⁴

Some states are beginning to recognize the public's right to know. California has developed a “state report card” that provides performance assessments from the state education department to each of the state's schools. This information—available to the public as well—enables schools to compare their own performance with that of similar schools. Illinois has instituted a comparable system of accountability based on performance reporting, issuing annual school “report cards” on every one of its nearly 4,000 public schools. South Carolina has one of the nation's most comprehensive and explicit state accountability programs, with test results compared both to state goals and to prior performance. The program is helping to produce real success: South Carolina leads the nation in cumulative points gained on SAT scores since 1983.⁷⁵

Perhaps the most decisive measure a state can take to ensure accountability is to intervene directly in the management of a failed school district. In 1985, for example, South Carolina designated six districts “impaired.” All were instructed to formulate improvement plans; all did so, and the designation was lifted from all six districts the following school year.⁷⁶ Six states are legally empowered to declare failed school districts “bankrupt” (New Jersey's 1988 legislation is the first to use the term) and run them directly.⁷⁷ In most cases, intervention includes investigating the conditions that led to failure and possibly removing school administrators responsible for chronically poor performance. While actual state

takeovers of schools will occur only infrequently, the fact that someone is watching—and the implied threat of action—will undoubtedly serve as a spur to improvement.

Rewarding Success

Rewarding excellence is a commonsense management principle too often ignored in our schools and communities. Recognizing and rewarding extraordinary school employees is one of the most important and direct ways of instituting increased accountability. American schools are blessed with many dedicated men and women who share their great talent and affection with our children. For these people, fair salaries, merit pay, or some form of career ladder are not special rewards, but simply what is reasonable and what is due.

American education should make special efforts to recognize success—to celebrate exemplary schools and educators. The Department of Education has in recent years honored more than 1,000 outstanding public and private schools in its annual School Recognition Program. Local efforts to reward inspired principals and teachers can provide an important boost to the teaching profession, give constructive focus to civic pride, and encourage private sector generosity. For example, this year school officials and business and community leaders in Lee County, Florida held a televised awards banquet for six public school teachers, winners in the first round of the Lee County annual Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Awards.

But while we are rewarding success, we must at the same time hold incompetent teachers and unsuccessful administrators fully accountable. They should be given opportunities to improve, but if they do not improve they should be dismissed. Until schools are free to hire the best and fire the worst, other important reforms will be stymied.

In sum, accountability means responsibility for results. At every level, someone must be responsible, responsible for ensuring that our schools are doing the job they are supposed to do, and for improving those schools whose students are not learning. Accountability is the linchpin of education reform. Without it, all the enriched curricula in the world will not produce the results we hope for. With it, many other seemingly intractable dilemmas facing our education system will suddenly reveal themselves to be susceptible of resolution.

Conclusion

We have all heard the arguments of those who believe education reform will fail—that it will take much more steadfastness than the American people possess; much more money than we are willing to pay; or a more fundamental transformation of society than we are willing to bring about.

I reject these arguments. American education *can* be made to work better, and it can be made to work better now. Every reform measure recommended in this report is already in place and working today in various schools, communities, and states. Each can be replicated in most, quite possibly all, of our 50 states, 16,000 school districts, and more than 100,000 schools. And this work can be done soon.

Education reform is a two-step process. The first step is to identify where we stand and what needs to be done. That step has largely been finished. We know what needs to be done. But there is a second step: We must exert the will and demonstrate the resolve to overcome the obstacles that block reform. We must make education reform a reality. If we now act forthrightly and decisively, American education tomorrow will work much better than it does today. And we will provide our children with the schools they deserve.

Notes

Part I—How Far Have We Come?

1. U.S. Department of Education, *The Nation Responds: Recent Efforts To Improve Education* (Washington, DC: 1984), 15-16.
2. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results* (Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, 1986), 3, 6, 7.
3. John Augenblick, Gordon Van de Water, and Mary Flanigan, "Trends in State Support for Education 1980-81 to 1985-86," unpublished paper (Denver: Augenblick, Van de Water & Associates, 1987).
4. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *State Government Finances in 1986* (Washington, DC: 1986).
5. U.S. Department of Education, *Condition of Education*, 1987 ed. (Washington, DC: 1987), 20-22; and College Entrance Examination Board, *1987 Profile of SAT and Achievement Test-Takers* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1987), iii.
6. U.S. Department of Education, *Condition of Education*, 1988 ed., forthcoming.
7. College Entrance Examination Board, *Advanced Placement Program: National Summary Reports, 1980, 1987* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service).
8. American College Testing Program, ACT News Release (Iowa City, IA: 22 September 1987), 5.
9. College Entrance Examination Board, *1987 Profile of SAT and Achievement Test-Takers* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1987), v.
10. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a federally funded survey that periodically measures the knowledge of elementary and secondary students in various subjects.
11. National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986), 4, 15-16, 18, 21.
12. National Assessment of Educational Progress, *The Reading Report Card* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986), 15-16, 28.
13. U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services: Fiscal Year 1986* (Washington, DC: 1987), I-10, II-20; and supplemental data provided by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Management and Personnel, Office of Accession Policy, Department of Defense, March 1988.
14. College Entrance Examination Board, *Profiles of SAT and Achievement Test-Takers*, 1979 and 1987 editions (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service).
15. National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Writing: Trends Across the Decade, 1974-84* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986), 49.
16. National Assessment of Educational Progress, *The Writing Report Card* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986), 3.
17. National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Writing: Trends Across the Decade* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service), 20, 31, 34, 41.
18. Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 85, 87, 89, 90, 96, 115.
19. National Assessment of Educational Progress, "The Mathematics Report Card: Are We Measuring Up?" (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, February 1988 draft report), xiii.
20. College Entrance Examination Board, *Profiles of SAT and Achievement Test-Takers*, 1979 and 1987 editions (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986). The scores cited in the text are Level-I math scores.
21. National Assessment of Educational Progress, "The Mathematics Report Card: Are We Measuring Up?" (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, February 1988 draft report), xvi.
22. Curtis McKnight, et al., *The Underachieving Curriculum: A National Report on the Second International Mathematics Study* (Champaign: Stipes Publishing Co., 1987), 22-23.

23. Harold W. Stevenson, "Adapting to School: The United States and China," unpublished paper (University of Michigan, 1988); and James Stigler et al., "Curriculum and Achievement in Mathematics: A Study of Elementary School Children in Japan, Taiwan, and the U.S.," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 74, no. 3 (1982), 321.
24. M. David Miller and Robert Linn, "Cross National Achievement With Differential Retention Rates," unpublished paper (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1986).
25. National Assessment of Educational Progress, "1986 Science Assessment," unpublished preliminary results (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1987).
26. College Entrance Examination Board, *Profiles of SAT and Achievement Test-Takers*, 1979 and 1987 editions (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service).
27. International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement, *Science Achievement in Seventeen Countries: A Preliminary Report* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 3, 51-53.
28. American Federation of Teachers, Educational Excellence Network, and Freedom House, *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles* (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, 1987), 9.
29. Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 46, 48-50, 54, 71, 78, 83.
30. *Ibid.*, 51.
31. *Ibid.*, 48, 57-58.
32. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk* (Washington, DC: 1983), 18-19.
33. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation, *Fifth Annual Wall Chart of State Education Statistics* (Washington, DC: February 1988); and College Entrance Examination Board, "Advanced Placement Program: Annual Advanced Placement Program Participation" (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service).
34. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "1982 High School and Beyond Transcript Study" and "1987 High School Transcript Study," unpublished tabulations (March 1988).
35. U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1987 ed. (Washington, DC: 1987), 44.
36. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Public High School Principals' Perceptions of Academic Reform," Fast Response Survey System *Bulletin*, forthcoming.
37. National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Homework: What Do National Assessment Results Tell Us?* and *Television: What Do National Assessment Results Tell Us?* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, December 1986), 5.
38. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Public High School Principals' Perceptions of Academic Reform," Fast Response Survey System *Bulletin*, forthcoming.
39. Emily Feistritzer, *Profile of Teachers in the U.S.* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information, 1986), iii.
40. National Education Association, *Extending the School Day and School Year* (Washington, DC: 1987), 6-7.
41. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse, "The 1987 National High School Senior Survey" (Washington, DC: 1988), 1, 5; and unpublished tabulations.
42. Alec Gallup and David Clark, "The 19th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1987), 28.
43. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Discipline in Public Secondary Schools," Office of Educational Research and Improvement *Bulletin* (Washington, DC: September 1986), 10.
44. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Public School Teacher Perspectives on School Discipline," Office of Educational Research and Improvement *Bulletin* (Washington, DC: October 1987), 1, 3, 5.
45. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, has recently undertaken a major research effort to obtain better national dropout data. A detailed discussion of available data is found in an article by Aaron M. Pallas, "School Dropouts in the United States," *Condition of Education*, 1986 ed. (Washington, DC: 1986), 158-170.
46. U.S. Department of Education, *Condition of Education*, 1988 ed., forthcoming.

47. The lifetime earnings figures refer to high school graduates who do not go to college; those who did have a still larger earning advantage. See U.S. Department of Education, *Schools That Work: Educating Disadvantaged Children* (Washington, DC: 1987), 7. For a discussion of dropout prevention strategies, see U.S. Department of Education, *Dealing With Dropouts: The Urban Superintendent's Call to Action* (Washington, DC: 1987).

48. U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1988 ed., forthcoming.

Part II—What We Need To Do

Strengthen Content

1. Paul Gagnon, Education for Democracy Project, *Democracy's Untold Story: What World History Textbooks Neglect* (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, 1987), 25-26.

2. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk* (Washington, DC: 1983), 18.

3. Maya Angelou, "Maya Angelou Says," *The Quality Review* (Fall 1987), 12.

4. Quoted in Carol Innerst, "Diploma Standards Still Short of 'Foundation for Success,'" *Washington Times*, 29 July 1987.

5. Michael S. Knapp et al., *Opportunities for Strategic Investment in K-12 Science Education* (Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 1987), 7.

6. American Federation of Teachers, Educational Excellence Network, and Freedom House, *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles* (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, 1987), 9.

7. Alvin Sanoff, "What Americans Should Know," *U.S. News & World Report*, 28 September 1987, 88.

8. Roger Shattuck, "Perplexing Dreams: Is There a Core Tradition in the Humanities?" (Address to the American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, DC: 24 April 1987).

9. California State Board of Education, "History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve," (California State Department of Education, 1988).

10. See John Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984).

11. David Stern et al., "One Million Hours a Day: Vocational Education in California Public Secondary Schools" (Report presented to the California Policy Seminar, June 1985), 46.

12. Quoted in letter to author from Governor George Sinner of North Dakota, 18 September 1987.

13. Association of American Publishers, "NASTA State Textbook Adoption Schedule, 1987-1992."

14. Gilbert Sewall, *American History Textbooks: An Assessment of Quality* (New York: Educational Excellence Network, 1987), 65.

15. Harriet Tyson-Bernstein, *A Conspiracy of Good Intentions: America's Textbook Fiasco* (Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education, 1988), vii.

16. John J. Cannell, *Nationally Normed Elementary Achievement Testing in America's Public Schools: How All Fifty States are Above the Average* (Daniels, WV: Friends for Education, 1987), 1.

Ensure Equal Intellectual Opportunity

17. Stephen Chaikind, "College Enrollment Patterns of Black and White Students," unpublished paper in the ERIC system prepared for U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation (Washington, DC: 1987), 1-2; and M. Smith, "Analysis of the 1982 Wave of the High School and Beyond Study," cited in Willis Hawley et al., "Good Schools," *Peabody Journal of Education*, vol. 61, no. 4 (Summer 1984), 95.

18. Charles Murray and Deborah Laren, "According to Age: Longitudinal Profiles of AFDC Recipients and the Poor by Age Group," unpublished paper, September 1986; U.S. Department of Education, *Schools That Work: Educating Disadvantaged Children* (Washington, DC: 1987), 7; and James P. Smith and Finis R. Welch, *Closing the Gap: Forty Years of Economic Progress for Blacks* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corp., 1986), xxix.

19. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3.

20. College Entrance Examination Board, *1987 Profile of SAT and Achievement Test-Takers* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1987), v.
21. National Association of Educational Progress, *Writing: Trends Across the Decade, 1974-84* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986), 52.
22. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Public Elementary and Secondary Enrollments: Outlook to the Year 2000," Office of Educational Research and Improvement *Bulletin* (Washington, DC: March 1987).
23. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Projections of the Population of the United States by Age, Sex and Race: 1983 to 2080, Current Population Reports*, ser. P-25, no. 952 (Washington, DC: 1984); and *Projections of the Hispanic Population 1982 to 2080, Current Population Reports*, ser. P-25, no. 995 (Washington, DC: 1986).
24. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, *Characteristics of the Populations Below the Poverty Level; Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States*, various years; *Statistical Abstract of the United States: Historical Statistics of the United States to 1975, Current Population Reports*, ser. P-25, nos. 311, 519, 917, and 1000 (Washington, DC); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, various years; and *Vital Statistics of the United States*, various years (Washington, DC).
25. Quoted in Carol Innerst, "Diploma Standards Still Short of 'Foundation for Success,'" *Washington Times*, 29 July 1987.
26. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Public Elementary and Secondary Enrollments: Outlook to the Year 2000," Office of Educational Research and Improvement *Bulletin* (Washington, DC: March 1987).
27. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Projections of the Population of the United States by Age, Sex and Race: 1983 to 2080, Current Population Reports*, ser. P-25, no. 952 (Washington, DC: 1984); and *Projections of the Hispanic Population 1982 to 2080, Current Population Reports*, ser. P-25, no. 995 (Washington, DC: 1986).
28. Mark Krug, *The Melting of the Ethnics: Education of the Immigrants, 1880-1914* (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976), 87.
29. Patricia Albjerg Graham, "Schools: Cacaphony About Practice, Silence About Purpose," *Daedalus*, vol. 113, no. 4 (Fall 1984), 49.
30. Signithia Fordham, "Promoting Black Students' School Success: 'Acting White' Black American Style," testimony before the Subcommittee on Education and Health, Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, 10 November 1987, 13.
31. William J. Bennett, *James Madison High School* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1987), 26.
32. Harold W. Stevenson, "Culture and Schooling: Influence on Cognitive Development," *Child Development and a Life-span Perspective*, Hetherington, Lerner & Perlmutter, eds. (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Press, forthcoming in May 1988), 19; and Harold W. Stevenson, Shin-ying Lee, and James Stigler, "Math Achievement of Chinese, Japanese, and American Children," *Science*, 14 February 1986.
33. Albert Shanker, "High Goals Narrow Differences," *New York Times*, 26 April 1987.

Establish an Ethos of Achievement

34. Gerald Grant, *The World We Created at Hamilton High* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
35. George M. Gallup, "1984 Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1984), 37.
36. Alec Gallup and David Clark, "The 19th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1987), 24.
37. Mary Warnock, *Schools of Thought* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 140.
38. Martin Buber, "The Education of Character," in John Paul Strain, *Modern Philosophies of Education* (New York: Random House, 1971), 488.
39. William Bagley, *Classroom Management: Its Principles and Techniques* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 96-97.
40. U.S. Department of Education, *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning*, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: 1987), 61.

41. Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., "The American Teacher 1987: Strengthening Links Between Home and School" (Survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., New York, 1987), 17.

42. TheodoreSizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 156.

43. Michael W. Sedlak et al., *Selling Students Short: Classroom Bargains and Academic Reform in the American High School* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986), 7.

44. Harold Stevenson and his collaborators have spent over 800 hours in detailed observation of classroom behavior in 5th grades in Minneapolis, Taipei, and Sendai (Japan). Results show that due to more hours of school per week and more class time spent in academic activity, Chinese fifth graders spend about 40.4 hours per week at school engaged in academic activities, while Japanese students spend 32.6 and Americans 19.6. The students' teachers themselves spend about 51 hours a week at school in Japan, 47 in China, and 43 hours per week in the U.S. American teachers spent more class time *not* interacting with students than did Asian teachers. American teachers spent only 21% of class time imparting information in comparison to 58% of the time for Chinese teachers and 33% for Japanese. Harold W. Stevenson et al., "Classroom Behavior and Achievement of Japanese, Chinese, and American Children," in R. Glasser, ed., *Advances in Instructional Psychology* (New Jersey: LEA Publishers, 1987), 159, 164, 171, 172.

Recruit and Reward Good Teachers and Principals

45. National Education Association, Annual Estimates of School Statistics, (Washington, DC), various years; Alexander W. Astin et al., *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1987*, University of California at Los Angeles, Higher Education Research Institute (Los Angeles, CA: 1987), 3.

46. Linda Darling-Hammond and Barnett Berry, *The Evolution of Teacher Policy*, Center for Policy Research in Education (New Brunswick, NJ: Rand Corp., 1988), v, vii.

47. U.S. Department of Education, *Fifth Annual Wall Chart of State Education Statistics* (Washington, DC: 1988); and Linda Darling-Hammond and Barnett Berry, *The Evolution of Teacher Policy*, Center for Policy Research in Education (New Brunswick, NJ: Rand Corp., 1988), 22.

48. U.S. Department of Education, *Fifth Annual Wall Chart of State Education Statistics* (Washington, DC: 1988).

49. Ellen Schecter, "The New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program: A Third Year Report" (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey State Department of Education, 1987), 1, 5, 9-10.

50. Linda Darling-Hammond and Barnett Berry, *The Evolution of Teacher Policy*, Center for Policy Research in Education (New Brunswick, NJ: Rand Corp., 1988), ix, 23, 36.

51. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, *What's Happening in Teacher Testing: An Analysis of State Teacher Testing Practices* (Washington, DC: 1987), 7.

52. David Maraniss, "Texas Teachers Take Test: 210,000 Seek to Prove Competency and Students Get Day Off," *The Washington Post*, 11 March 1986.

53. Southern Regional Education Board Career Ladder Clearinghouse, *More Pay for Teachers and Administrators Who Do More: Incentive Pay Programs, 1987* (Atlanta: 1987), 9; and U.S. Department of Education, *Fifth Annual Wall Chart of State Education Statistics* (Washington, DC: February 1988).

54. Emily Feistritzer, *Profile of School Administrators in the U.S.* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information, 1988), 34.

55. Report of the Commission on the Year 2000, *New York Ascendant: The Commission on the Year 2000* (New York: June 1987), 76.

56. California Commission on the Teaching Profession, *Who Will Teach Our Children?: A Strategy for Improving California's Schools* (Sacramento, CA: 1985), 33.

57. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results* (Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, 1986), 53; and Emily Feistritzer, *Profile of School Administrators in the U.S.* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information, 1988), 82.

58. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, "Public High School Principals' Perceptions of Academic Reform," Fast Response Survey System *Bulletin* (Washington, DC: March 1988), Table 5.

59. *Ibid.*, Tables 3 and 9.

Institute Accountability

60. National Governors' Association, *Results in Education: 1987* (Washington, DC: 1987), viii.
61. Calculations by U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics.
62. "In terms of revenues per pupil," Allan Odden further notes, "funding rose 28 percent in real terms in the 1970s, but already is up 29 percent in the 1980s; these numbers are more impressive since a significant portion of the 1970s rise was due to declining enrollments, while enrollments have risen just a bit in the 1980s, so the real increase is due totally to more money." Allan Odden, "The Economics of Financing Education Excellence" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, April 1987), 11.
63. U.S. Department of Education, *Condition of Education*, 1988 ed., forthcoming (Table 1: 8-1) and unpublished tabulations.
64. Eric A. Hanushek, "The Economics of Schooling: Production and Efficiency in Public Schools," *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol. XXIV (September 1986), 1141-1177.
65. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation, "Resource Allocations and Staffing Patterns in the Public Schools: 1959-60 to 1983-84" (Report prepared by Joel D. Sherman, Pelavin Associates, Washington, DC, 1984), iii, v, vi, 14.
66. Mayor Eugene Sawyer of Chicago, in *Chicago Tribune*, 9 April 1988.
67. Joe Nathan, ed. forthcoming book (San Francisco, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1988).
68. Seymour Fliegel, deputy superintendent of District 4 schools in New York, comments at U.S. Department of Education seminar, 30 October 1987.
69. Data provided by Robert Peterkin, Cambridge superintendent of schools.
70. Mary Anne Raywid, "The Accomplishments of Schools of Choice," unpublished paper (January 1988), 10-11.
71. *Ibid.*, 15-16.
72. *Ibid.*, 17-19.
73. National Governors' Association, *Governors' Weekly Bulletin*, vol. 22, no. 11 (1988), 2.
74. State Education Assessment Center, Council of Chief State School Officers, "Accountability Reporting in the States: Report of a Survey—1987," draft, Table 1 (Washington, DC: forthcoming).
75. U.S. Department of Education, *Fifth Annual Wall Chart of State Education Statistics* (Washington, DC: 1988).
76. Business Education Partnership Committee and the Committee for Financing Excellence in Education, *An Evaluation of the Educational Progress from South Carolina's Education Improvement Effort: Fourth Annual Report on the South Carolina Education Improvement Act* (Columbia, SC: 1988), 18.
77. Chris Pipho, "Academic Bankruptcy—An Accountability Tool?" *Education Week*, 17 February 1988.

Governors Urge National School Goals

9/19/89

By David S. Broder
Washington Post Staff Writer

The nation's governors reported yesterday that education reform efforts are steaming ahead in the states, but said national goals and standards are needed to prod improvement in the content of the curriculum.

"We need to spell out what we expect from the schools and then give them the resources and the flexibility to get there," said Iowa Gov. Terry E. Branstad (R), chairman of the National Governors Association, in releasing its third annual report on school reforms.

Branstad said the report showed that 27 states are restructuring their school systems. "However," he said, "it will matter little if what is taught and how it is taught doesn't get better."

The report, "Results in Education: 1989," is the third scorecard in a series of five the association pledged to issue after promising in 1986 to mount a sustained effort to improve schools in all 50 states. The timing this year made it, in effect, a status report on public education in advance of the "education summit" of President Bush and the governors on Sept. 27-28 in Charlottesville.

Branstad and New Mexico Gov. Garrey E. Carruthers (R), chairman of the Education Commission of the States, made it clear they do not expect Bush to pledge during the meeting to increase federal aid to education.

"I'm not going to the summit to ask for more federal dollars," Carruthers said. "I want the president to heighten expectations" of the schools "and put education on the front burner."

The governors' report highlighted the capital needs of education, saying that the projected costs of repairing existing school buildings and building new ones total \$125 billion in the next 20 years. But it put its main emphasis on what goes on in the schools.

It said few states have acted on the "growing consensus that the curriculum most prevalent in American schools is significantly flawed . . . highly fragmented and repetitious and emphasize[s] narrow skills over deep understanding."

"The need for improved curriculum and a better-educated workforce is a national concern, not limited to state or region," the report said. "While states and localities have primary responsibility for education . . . it is time to set national education goals that reflect the performance the nation needs from the education system as it approaches the 21st century."

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SEPTEMBER 14, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR GOVERNOR SUNUNU

THROUGH: DAVID DEMAREST, ^{AA} ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

FROM: BOBBIE KILBERG, ^{BK} DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC LIAISON
JEFF VOGT, ^W ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PUBLIC LIAISON

SUBJECT: BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEETING

This is in reponse to your request for a more specific agenda for the proposed meeting between the Business Roundtable's education task force and the President. Pursuant to the President's June 5 request to "hear from the business community by next Labor Day," the Roundtable's education task force met yesterday and has provided a framework for discussion for a possible meeting with the President prior to the Education Summit.

"The Roundtable members are prepared to make a 10-year commitment of personal time and company resources to a cooperative effort to reinvigorate our nation's education system...The time for studying and complaining about education is over. It is time to act." (Roundtable Report)

GOALS:

- o Develop national consensus on the vision for a world class education system.
- o Ensure acceptance for national goals for improving student achievement and for developing a sound measurement system.
- o Develop partnerships with federal and state governments, educators, parents, businesses and all parties involved in education reform.
- o Help shape public opinion to support restructuring; promote more direct communication between schools and the people they serve.

ACTIVITIES:

- o Policy Development: Work with government and educators to promote education reform policy; emphasis at state level.
- o Partnerships: Work with school districts to replicate successful programs/partnerships between education and business.

- o Public Awareness: Will communicate the urgency of this situation to all businesses; promote success stories of courageous public figures and educators who are effectively working for systemic educational change.
- o Information Exchange: Broaden base in coordinated, targeted program to train business people and conduct seminars to help others forge business/education partnerships.
- o 1000 Points of Light: Roundtable companies will develop programs to mobilize its 10 million employees, their families and the public to work together to improve the quality of education.

AP 9-16-89

AM-Education Summit, 1164

Money, Flexibility, 'Choice' Will Battle for Attention at Summit
Eds: Also moved in advance Sept. 13 as b0627.

By TAMARA HENRY-

AP Education Writer-

WASHINGTON (AP) The nation's governors, preparing for the first presidential summit since the Depression, are tackling a tough assignment: how to shore up America's failing school system.

Few substantive results are expected from the Sept. 27-28 session at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, but some governors say the summit may bring much-needed attention to the issue.

"Most Americans still believe that when we talk about a crisis in education we are talking about someone else's kid in some other school," said New Jersey Gov. Thomas H. Kean, who has earned a reputation as an education leader in his nearly eight years in office.

"If the presidential summit can turn that attitude around and highlight the need for a national focus on education, that will be a major achievement."

Florida Gov. Bob Martinez said the presidential emphasis on education will make it "a major issue in every state."

The White House has not released an agenda, but governors responding to a pre-summit poll by The Associated Press said the three key issues were expected to be increased federal financing, less government meddling and more parental control popularly called "choice."

The governors expect the sessions will be closed to allow open discussion between them and Bush.

The meeting is only the third such policy session called by an American president. Theodore Roosevelt held a meeting in 1908 to deal with the ravaging of forests, and Franklin Roosevelt called an emergency meeting in 1933 for economic recovery talks in the midst of the Depression.

The decline of education first gained nationwide attention in 1983 with the government's "Nation at Risk" report that warned of students' academic failures. Statistics have shown little improvement since.

The cost of education continues to soar, with the administration projecting that federal, state and local spending will reach a record \$353 billion.

The federal government spends a little under 2 percent of its overall budget, or \$22 billion, on education. The federal share of the nation's total education spending has fallen to about 6 percent from around 9 percent in 1980.

Bush has offered a \$441 million package of increases that include money to reward good schools and teachers, create magnet schools and promote alternate teacher certification systems.

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo criticized the Bush administration for worrying more about summits than spending federal money on education.

-2-

°°If the education summit becomes a cheerleading session in which the president encourages us to raise local taxes, we don't need a summit,' said Cuomo, a Democrat. °°We don't need to be encouraged to spend. We need help.'°°

Another Democrat, Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus, complained that the federal government has decreased its funds to the state by more than 7 percent a year for the last two years, mainly by changing various educational formulas.

°°We at the state level are making an honest effort to make progress,' Andrus said. °°The (Republican) Legislature is working with us. We're making an effort, but everytime we take two steps forward they take some federal money away and we lose a step.'°°

Ohio Gov. Richard Celeste said a °°dramatic retreat'°° in college grants and financial assistance means more students must turn to loans to continue their education. That keeps many blacks and Hispanics from college because °°they view those loans as a form of servitude,' Celeste said.

Indiana Gov. Evan Bayh said the federal government should fully finance such early childhood programs as Headstart. The highly acclaimed program provides education, social, medical and nutritional services to only 20 percent of the low-income pre-school children who need it.

Gov. George Sinner of North Dakota said Bush should target more federal aid to rural schools, which need money to expand their often limited courses.

°°The key is to make sure that we help him find the money and that it's focused on things like early childhood education, drug education, rewarding excellence, employability, dropout reduction, good citizenship,' said Michigan Gov. James Blanchard, a Democrat. °°We need to put some ... meat on the Bush proposal.'°°

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad said the best hope was to persuade the administration to give the states more flexibility.

°°When they give you the money they're going to call the shots,' said Montana Republican Gov. Stan Stephens. °°And I think the shots are best called for education at the local level first, the state level second and the federal level third.'°°

Many states face high dropout rates, but even those states with relatively low rates are worried.

South Dakota Gov. George Mickelson said his state's dropout rate, still among the nation's lowest, is creeping upward. The state ranked fifth lowest in 1982, eighth lowest in 1986 and now is 12th lowest.

The centerpiece of Bush's education initiatives is °°choice,'°° allowing parents to decide what school their children will attend. Among the governors, however, there is no clear consensus on the issue.

Minnesota Democratic Gov. Rudy Perpich is a key promoter of the choice programs under way in his state and has touted the concept nationally.

Gov. Michael S. Dukakis of Massachusetts favors parental choice programs °°if they contain careful safeguards to prevent discrimination and resegregation.'°° The state Legislature is considering such a program.

-2-

°°Our educational policy," said Tennessee Gov. Ned McWherter, °°favors the concept of neighborhood schools whenever possible to allow communities and parents to have more involvement."

Virtually all the governors oppose national standards for education curriculum, but consider uniform standards for teachers more palatable. However, a recent nationwide poll of parents found strong support for national curriculum standards.

Rhode Island Gov. Edward D. DiPrete says standardized curricula °°often resulted in rather unexciting, seamless textbook versions of all manner of essential debates that have their place in history, science and literature."

°°While a minimum level of performance might seem a rational response for the nation, it runs the risk of simply becoming the least common denominator," DiPrete said.

Some governors are expected to tout pet projects at the summit.

Oklahoma Gov. Henry Bellmon favors longer school years and °°even a longer school day," while Nevada Gov. Bob Miller has signed into law a plan to lower the pupil-teacher ratio in public schools.

Gov. Gerald L. Baliles said Virginia has begun a literacy program requiring students to pass reading and math tests before being admitted to high school. State schools also are being required to keep track of dropouts, interviewing students and parents about why the student wants to leave school.

°°The opportunity for the governors and the president to sit down and discuss openly education issues and a national agenda for education will be invaluable," said Kansas Gov. Mike Hayden, a Republican.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 14, 1989

09 SEP 14 P6:16

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROGER B. PORTER *RBP*

SUBJECT: International Comparisons in Education

This is the third in a series of background memorandums on education as you prepare for the Education Summit Conference with the Governors. Much attention has focused on the apparent decline in the educational attainment of America's students relative to those of other advanced industrialized nations. A recent international comparison of educational achievement levels, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, pronounced nape) international study, suggested that if major strides are not made toward improving our schools, the U.S. may face a grim future as a competitor in an increasingly technical global economic environment.

This memorandum considers some of the disturbing evidence of our international performance as well as outlining the strengths of our educational system. It then considers some of the main differences in educational approach between the United States and our economic competitors.

Disturbing Evidence

1. The U.S. placed last in mathematics and in the bottom group in science in a comparison of U.S. 13-year-old students with their peers in 11 nations and 4 Canadian provinces.

For example, only 40 percent of U.S. students could perform a two-step math problem vs. 78 percent of Korean students and about 60 percent of students in most countries.

In the science tests, only 42 percent of U.S. 13-year-olds were able to analyze experiments, compared with 73 percent in Korea and about 58 percent in most countries.

2. Particularly disturbing is evidence that the gap between U.S. students and those in other countries increased as students progressed through the educational system.

In the fifth grade, the U.S. ranked eighth out of 15 countries in science. By the ninth grade, the U.S. had dropped to third from the bottom. By the time students left the system, in grade 12, the U.S. students scored an average ranking of 11th out of 13.

By the 12th grade, even average Japanese students were outscoring the top 5 percent of U.S. students in college preparatory math. We were lowest overall in algebra skills and among the lowest in calculus.

3. U.S. students also performed poorly in the social sciences such as geography.

Our students ranked 7th out of 9 nations in their ability to identify places on a world map. Surprisingly, our young adults who were fresh out of school were less able to identify places than were people aged 55 and over.

Strengths of the U.S. Educational System

1. At the very top of the educational ladder, our top research universities are the envy of the world.

Each year 360,000 foreign students attend school in America. More than 20 percent of our science Ph.D.s, nearly half of our mathematics Ph.D.s and nearly 60 percent of our engineering Ph.D.s are granted to citizens of other nations.

2. The emphases in this country on equal access and on providing educational opportunity are widely viewed as models to be copied by other nations.

In Japan and France, students are steered into educational streams that narrow the types of careers they may pursue. In West Germany, a child's academic future may be decided by age ten. Nearly twice the proportion of young adults enroll in post secondary education in America compared to other developed countries.

Our system is also quite tolerant of students who try and fail, and then try again. For example, in 1986 roughly 1 million students did not graduate with their class. But, in the same year, 428,000 Americans received High School General Equivalency Degrees (GEDs). This indicates that nearly half of all dropouts may return and get their degrees at some point in their lives.

3. The U.S. system of higher education is a model of flexibility, individuality, and choice.

The Japanese National Council on Education Reform recently stressed "the importance of increasing individuality, choice, and flexibility throughout the educational system" in Japan. Our system's tolerance of students who change course during their educational career is crucial to allowing creativity and individual development.

Currently one college student in six is over age 35. By 1997, that fraction is expected to rise to almost one in four.

What Do Other Countries Do That We Can Learn From?

1. Parental involvement is crucial to improving the performance of students.

In Korea, students are given two sets of textbooks on their first day of classes: one for themselves and one for their parents. Survey data indicate that American mothers are more likely than Japanese or Taiwanese mothers to believe that school success is determined primarily by innate ability.

2. The quantity of time devoted to learning and the expectations set for student accomplishment and discipline play a major role.

Taiwanese students spend 40.4 hours per week and Japanese students spend 32.6 hours per week in the classroom. In the U.S. students average only 19.6 hours per week in the classroom.

Sixty-two percent of U.S. students reported having less than one hour of math homework per week. This contrasts with only 32 percent of Korean students who have so little homework.

3. Students in competing countries are exposed to more rigorous academic curricula than in the U.S. Students cannot learn what they haven't been taught.

In the eighth grade, U.S. students are still learning arithmetic while Japan provides an intensive treatment in calculus. By the latter secondary grades, U.S. students are learning algebra while Japanese students are learning calculus. Only one-fifth of advanced U.S. math students take calculus in high school. Nearly all advanced students in other countries take calculus.

In Japan, about 11 percent of 17- and 18-year-old students are enrolled in physics courses. In the U.S. only one percent take physics.

4. Money is not the answer. The U.S. spends far more than most other countries on educating its students.

For example, the U.S. spends about 60 percent more than Japan on each student and nearly 15 times more than Korea does on each student.

Last year, the U.S. spent 6.8 percent of its GNP on education. The comparable figure for Japan was 5.1 percent. Germany, France, and the United Kingdom all spent smaller portions of their GNPs on education than did the U.S.

Average per pupil expenditure for K - 12 public schools

School year '87 - '88 - ^{ESTIMATE}~~Actual~~ cost: \$4,709

School year '88 - '89 - Estimate cost: \$4,938

School year '89 - '90 - Estimate cost: \$5,246

Cost per full-time equivalent student for higher education

School year '87 - '88 - ^{ESTIMATE}~~Actual~~ cost: \$13,403

School year '88 - '89 - Estimate cost: \$14,176

School year '89 - '90 - Estimate cost: \$14,923

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

9/18

Date: _____

TO: THE CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: JAMES W. CICCONI
Assistant to the President and
Deputy to the Chief of Staff

The attached has been forwarded
to the President.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 16, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROGER B. PORTER *RBP*
SUBJECT: Educational Reform in Historical Perspective

The attached memorandum, prepared by Larry Lindsey on our staff, is a remarkable review of the recollections of a family of educators over the past several decades.

Two persistent themes come through in these recollections. First, many of the principal reform themes today -- magnet schools, alternative certification, etc. -- are variations on the past. Second, in the end, there is no substitute for accountability.

It is a memorandum that is both interesting and useful as you prepare for the Education Summit Conference later this month.

Attachment

cc: Larry Lindsey

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 8, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR ROGER B. PORTER

FROM: LARRY LINDSEY

SUBJECT: A Family of Educators View of the Education Summit

Last week was the first school opening in this century that occurred with none of my direct ancestors in the classroom. (An aunt and five cousins were still there to greet the students.) My great grandmother began this family tradition in 1852. She quit to get married in 1864, as it was unseemly for married women to be out of the home back then. The continuous record begins with my grandfather who started teaching in 1896. All told, my aunts, uncles, and ancestors have logged nearly 4 centuries in the classroom.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the education business is the constant topic of conversation in the Lindsey family, much as the oil business is discussed by the mythical Ewings of Dallas. During the August break, I sounded out this family of educators for advice on education reform. The following is a summary of their observations, insights, comments and suggestions.

1. The President should be aware that there aren't a lot of really new ideas to be tried. While the family wishes the President well in improving the quality of education, in four centuries of teaching we've seen just about everything. It may be that change for its own sake serves a useful role in stimulating the educational system, but don't expect much real change from any single new idea.

Magnet Schools. The country's most famous magnet school, the Bronx High School of Science was founded in 1938. In general, magnet schools require large school districts. Smaller districts may not be able to spare a whole school. They achieve the effect of the magnet by a process known as tracking. In tracking, "smart" students are grouped together to learn at an accelerated rate, average students at an average rate, and slower students at a slower rate. With some creative scheduling it is possible for a student to be in an accelerated science program and an average history class, thus tailoring the pace to the student's actual abilities.

Tracking has been around a long time. My grandfather used it (he was a superintendent as well as a teacher) in the 1920s. My father, who is now 72, was tracked -- in the seventh grade he

was in placed in Grade 7-A plus, for example. During the 1930s and 1940s, the use of tracking declined as the view grew that tracking was elitist and undemocratic.

It took Sputnik and the perceived need for top quality scientists and engineers to revive tracking. So, my father (who was a high school principal as well as a teacher) revived tracking in our local public high school. I was tracked in group "S" (for superior, to give you an idea of just how undemocratic and elitist the nomenclature is) in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The pendulum swung back to the anti-elitist camp in the early 1970s. Sociological evidence showed that slower children learned more when exposed to brighter children in the classroom. It should be noted that similar evidence formed the basis of school desegregation. In Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka it was found that separate but equal was inherently unequal because black children were denied exposure to, and therefore the ability to learn from, socio-economically more advanced white children. Topeka spent roughly equal amounts on both black and white students and maintained that separate really was equal. The courts held that this equal spending could not compensate for the educational benefits that would derive from mixing.

Today, magnet schools and tracking are making a revival as the demands for quality are overwhelming the demands for equality. This family has seen the pendulum swing enough to predict that in a few years magnet schools will be attacked as the ultimate in elitism. It is also possible that they will be attacked as racially discriminatory as the magnet schools will tend to attract people with similar backgrounds. In the meantime, the magnet schools will raise both the level and the disparity of educational attainment of the nation's children.

Alternative Certification. The pendulum has swung back and forth on this issue as well. Early in this century there was a move to professionalize teaching. The schoolmarm (like Great Grandmother Johanna Cole who taught in the 1850s and 1860s) usually had 8th grade educations and no formal training as teachers. My grandfather, who attended a school with no classes beyond the 8th grade took the 1890s version of today's High School Equivalency exam before he began teaching. He then attended NYU at night to get a college degree and become a "professional".

By the 1920s it became in vogue for professional teachers to get Masters degrees after a few years of teaching if they expected to advance. The Masters degrees were usually granted in the new field of Education. My father and uncles earned these degrees in summer school programs.

The trend toward professionalization was stopped by World War II. Manpower needs were directed to the military. Standards were dropped to allow individuals with little or no formal

training to fill the vacant slots.

The peacetime revival of professionalization was slowed by post-War demographics. As baby boomers flooded the schools in the early 1950s the demand for teachers rose. Supply was retarded by the fact that the baby bust of the 1930s had produced few people of age to enter the profession. In addition, there was a dearth of college graduates during the early 1940s. The teacher shortage was so acute that my father would journey from New York to as far away as West Virginia to hire teachers -- no Masters degrees needed.

As supply and demand conditions moved toward a surplus of teachers in the early 1960s, professionalization made a comeback. Administrators such as my father and uncles could be fussier. Furthermore, school boards became concerned about the perceived "quality" of their staffs. Having a high percentage of teachers with Masters degrees was a way of showing the voters that the district was competitive in attracting teachers.

Currently, the supply of teachers is declining as those people hired just after World War II to teach the baby boomers begin to retire. Excuse the Lindsey family's skepticism, but isn't the renewed call for alternative certification just another swing of the pendulum, a response to the forces of supply and demand?

For all the degrees accumulated in the family, no Lindsey would maintain that a degree in education has much to do with ones quality as a teacher. Good teaching is a function of attitude, not years spent in the classroom. So alternative certification may be a good way to get people into the classroom to see if they like it. But, someone with a good teaching attitude will also become interested in learning how to become a better teacher. Maybe the best approach to professionalization of teaching is the one used in the 1920s: entry for all with a Bachelor's degree, accumulation of a Master's degree after a few years for those who find they really like it and want to learn more.

Other teaching fads. Family legend includes stories of lots of fads that have come and gone. Examples are modular scheduling, the open classroom and team teaching. Every technological innovation is supposed to have the potential for "revolutionizing" education.

Morton Lindsey wrote his Master's thesis during the 1920s on the effect of a new invention -- the school bus -- on the possibilities in education. Back then, the size of a school was limited to the amount of children who could easily walk to the school grounds. Hence, rural schools were small, often one room school houses. The school bus began the trend toward large centralized school districts and made specialized teaching possible.

Still, the basic teaching function remained the same. Education, like society in general, will incorporate new inventions, and evolve with them. But, don't expect any one item -- including the computer -- to revolutionize teaching.

2. The President's goals of excellence, choice, accountability, and targeting the needy are good ones. But the key to improving the quality of education is accountability. Without that, excellence is impossible and programs to increase choice and targeting will prove futile.

Accountability for Teachers. Alternative certification is fine, but it only increases the supply of teachers. It doesn't ensure that they will do the best job they are capable of. The Lindseys think that the best judges of the quality of teachers are the students. Merit pay and teacher recognition are frequently criticized by teachers' organizations as an invitation to favoritism by administrators. In many cases they may be right. Let the students evaluate the teachers and decide which ones deserve special recognition. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals are judged by their clients. Why shouldn't teachers?

This family of educators feels that there is no magic way to be a good teacher. Some people are naturally better than others because of their personalities. But, like genius, good teaching is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. The best recommendations for teachers from teachers who have been in the school business for half a century involve nothing new or innovative:

- o "Respect is earned. If teachers want to be respected as professionals, tell them to wear a tie to work and set an example in their own lifestyles that deserves respect."
- o "To get kids excited about what you teach, you've got to get excited yourself. At the very least, get off your duff when you teach a class."

Accountability for Students. A student's performance depends first and foremost on himself. One of the unintended consequences of the complaint that society is not spending enough on its schools is that it provides a student with an excuse for his failure.

- o Unruly students who interfere with the education of others should be thrown out of school. Particular criticism was expressed by the Lindseys for judges who side with the expelled students and order them reinstated. This breaks down the notion of accountability.
- o Parents play an important role in shaping their children's attitude toward school. Test statistics indicate that

student scores rise with parental education and income levels. This has less to do with genetics than with the establishment of an academically successful role model at home. Successful students from less affluent homes generally have parents who stress education as the key to success and urge their children to work hard in school.

Accountability for Schools. Choice is the key to accountability. It is the key to quality in any market. Quality has become Job One at Ford only because Chevrolet and Toyota are out there as well. But choice works only if it is reciprocal and if all of the sellers are on an equal competitive footing.

- o Non-public schools have the right to reject any student they don't want. This naturally gives them a significant head start when it comes to the quality of their product and their cost structure. They don't have to educate high cost students (such as the handicapped) or devote resources to unruly students. If non-public schools are going to be included in a package of educational choices, then they should be on the same footing as public schools with regard to accepting students.
- o Unacceptable Students. While a car buyer can choose between Ford and Toyota, the car showroom also has the choice NOT to sell the car to someone if he's a bad credit risk. Schools should not be forced to accommodate students who will disrupt the educational process.

Accountability Within Schools. In any business, the chain of responsibility and command is an important part of the production process. The same is true of teaching.

- o Make teachers the Kings of their Classrooms. Teachers should have the ability to run their classes and enforce the rules that they see best in their effort to teach the students. They should not be unnecessarily restricted by bureaucratic intervention or the threat of law suits.
- o Administrators should support the teachers. No successful business has its middle management constantly second guessing the decisions of the front line managers. If a teacher is consistently failing to do his job he should be replaced. Otherwise, administrators should facilitate the teaching process as much as possible.
- o School Boards should support the administrators. Nothing breaks down morale and the production process in any organization more certainly than having the Board of Directors second guessing and reversing the decisions of management. School Boards should set general goals and should be responsible for hiring competent people to carry out those goals. Then, they should allow the people they have hired carry out their mission.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 18, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROGER B. PORTER *RBP*

SUBJECT: Adult Literacy

One of the topics for discussion at the Education Summit Conference later this month is adult literacy and how we can increase it. John Hersey, who writes beautifully, recently published a volume entitled Life Sketches which includes a chapter on Private John Daniel Ramey.

It is a sobering and inspiring chapter that is not only fun to read but that carries with it a message worth remembering. It first appeared forty-four years ago in the New Yorker under the title "The Brilliant Jughead."

Attachment

Private John Daniel Ramey

Until a few days ago, Private John Daniel Ramey was a jughead. That, at any rate, is what the permanent cadre of the Army school for illiterates near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, calls the students, and up to very recently Ramey was one of them. The school, officially known as the Special Training Unit of the 3384th Service Unit, is a remarkable place at which an absolute illiterate can, in about three months' time, pick up the equivalent of a fifth-grade or sixth-grade facility in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The Pennsylvania S.T.U. now turns out brand-new literates at the rate of two hundred a week, and since its activation, on July 12, 1943, the school has graduated a hundred and five classes, or something over thirteen thousand men.

The Pennsylvania unit is not the only Army school for illiterates. It could not possibly handle the traffic alone. Most of us have come to take literacy for granted, and yet there are still five million illiterates in the United States, one person in every thirty. In due course the able-bodied men among the illiterates have been drafted. There are, in all, fourteen Special Training Units like the one in Pennsylvania to take care of them. So far, these schools have taught more than two hundred and fifty thousand men to read and write. That is the equivalent of

seventeen American divisions; thirteen divisions won the Battle of the Bulge, six took Okinawa. In a sense, at least, by a kind of displacement, the men whom the Army's schools have salvaged from illiteracy have made possible some great victories. But far more important than that, these schools have given a very large number of Americans a marvelous new skill. The Special Training Units have opened blind eyes; they have given men, quite suddenly, the thrilling, frightening trick of knowledge.

To the soldiers of the permanent cadres that run these units, the excitement implicit in their work is understandably dimmed by everyday living with men much less educated than they themselves are. The members of the cadre at the Pennsylvania school cannot be blamed, really, for the mild intellectual snobbery that makes them call the students jugheads. But in many cases the epithet is unjustly applied. It certainly is in that of Private Ramey. There is some debate around the post about the origin and the exact definition of the term "jughead." The word antecedes the school, but there is at least one sergeant in the cadre who thinks he invented it. An officer of the post, a Southerner, recollects it from his boyhood. "A jughead," he says, "is a human mule. I grew up trying to push jugheaded mules around on the farm." A definition attributed to the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Wellington B. Searls, requires some acquaintance with the habits of fowl, for he compares a jughead to "a duck in a thunderstorm." During electrical storms, a duck, in dull panic, hunches his wing shoulders forward, withdraws most of his head under the forward part of one wing, and tucks his bill under the other, so that he seems not to have any head at all. One of the students of the school, who, like many of his fellows, is a Virginian from the hills, put the matter to me this way the other day. "What," he asked, "has a jug got in it when you pour all the liquor out of it into your neck?"

A few of the students are heartbreakingly slow, but not

many. The school has been able to graduate ninety-three per cent of the men assigned to it, and only two per cent have been discharged under Section Eight, which defines men who are hopelessly unqualified for military life. The rest of the discharges have been medical or disciplinary. When draftees come up for induction, they are given a literacy test consisting of what seems to most men very simple questions. There are thirty-five questions. Anyone who cannot answer at least nine correctly is classed as illiterate. Illiterates are then given two further tests, which screen out most of the unsalvageables. Men who pass these screening tests are assigned to Special Training Units.

Private Ramey, who was assigned to the Pennsylvania school toward the end of March, 1945, could hardly be called a typical jughead. There is, in fact, no typical illiterate, any more than there is a typical college graduate. Ramey is above whatever average there is. He finished the course, which usually takes twelve weeks, in ten. By jughead standards, Ramey is brilliant. He says that he was often embarrassed, when he was a civilian, by not being able to read and write, but the surprising thing about his life before the war is how much he, an illiterate, was able to do for himself: at one time he owned a house, ran a small coal mine employing twenty-eight men, and had two automobiles, the better of which was a Mercury with, as he says, "one of them cloth tops on it," bought brand-new. The fact that he is above average makes him especially grateful for the opportunities, the amazements, opened up for him by being introduced, for the first time in his life, to the written word.

Ramey is thirty years and eight months old. He is a small, quiet man. He has blue eyes, black hair, and a deeply ruddy complexion, and two of his front teeth are crowned with

gold. He has a rather intense face and a look of solid, if untutored, worth; his Army record has, in capital letters in the space of "Character," this assessment: "VERY GOOD." His voice is quiet and he almost never swears. His best friend at the school, a redhead named Harold Edward Rutherford, says he likes Ramey because "he don't talk like some of the men, he always talks nice to you; when you're worrying about something, he always talks good to you—you always have company with him." Mrs. Elizabeth Harpel, who was Ramey's teacher all the way through the school, came to have quite a bit of respect for him. "He doesn't jump around like some of them," she told me on the last day of his course. "He's quite a study, that young man. I looked at him today and he seemed to speak to me through his eyes; he has very strange eyes; did you notice his eyes? They get so big—and he's a rather intelligent-looking man. His skin has a strange shine to it; did you notice his skin? It makes me think maybe he has liver trouble. But he would never mention it unless you asked him. Some of them complain—oh, their eyes hurt and they tell me all their troubles and if they have a toothache I know it. But not him. I think he's rather deep."

Ramey was born and grew up, the third of five children, on a farm near Norton, in Wise County, Virginia. He says he didn't learn to read and write because it was too far to walk to school. His parents did not tutor him, because his father, Tom Ramey, was a drummer for the Broadwater Feed Company, Wholesalers, and was seldom at home, and his mother "was kind of sickly—she never did feel up to schooling us kids; I had a good home, as far as that goes." John was fifteen before he left the farm, and by then, he says, "why, I reckon I just like any other boy; I thought I was too big to go to school—something like that. I wanted to do a job of work, I wanted to make my own living—in fact, I never did realize till it was too late what a education could mean." Off and on through the years

he thought of taking time out to get some learning, but life went too fast and things seemed to run along O.K.; he just never did.

In his first few jobs, being an illiterate did not seem to make any difference. After he left home, he worked at a filling station, and that simply meant cranking a pump and making change. When he was seventeen, he went to a government employment agency and signed up for a job with General Motors, in Detroit. Out there he became a gasket cutter. "All we had to do," he says, "was to lay the material on, mash a button, and then pick it off—it was automatic electric." He returned to Virginia shortly after reaching his majority and worked in a C.C.C. camp near Richmond; he drove a half-ton surveyors' truck. He settled in Clintwood, Dickenson County, Virginia, in 1937, and there met his wife. She is the daughter of a preacher named McFall, who follows the faith of the Freewill, or soft-shell, Baptists. Ramey remembers very well the first time he met Irma Joyce McFall. It was in church. "Her father 'bout to kill her for letting me go home with her," he recalls. "I'd been going to church several times there, but I never paid any attention to her till one time she got right in front of me and, well, I got to paying attention to her." His paying attention to Joyce rather than her father's sermons continued week after week, and was intensified, and John and Joyce were married a year later, on her birthday, Christmas Eve. The marriage has worked out very well.

Mrs. Ramey is three months younger than her husband, four inches taller, and thirteen pounds lighter. She has long black hair and is quite pretty. The marriage rewarded Ramey with two daughters, Gaynell and Danta, and somewhat compensated for his illiteracy. Joyce's father is an educated man, and she herself went through the eighth grade. She taught John addition, subtraction, and the multiplication tables, but she never tried to teach him to read and write. Mrs. Ramey inherits



HERSEY AND RAMEY

*"They can take away my Gun also my Uniform but they
wont ever take away how to read and write."*

from her father, soft-shell though he may be, a tenacious purity of spirit. "She's always been a Christian woman," Ramey says. "She'll visit with people and listen to the radio; otherwise, going to a show, anything like that, she won't have a thing to do with it. I slip off sometimes and go to a show. I never did think there was so much harm in going to a show, if you just went to a show and saw a show and didn't take to it like you would something to eat. She would say, 'It don't help anybody, going to a show.' I always say anything that won't help anybody won't hurt anybody."

During his courtship, Ramey became an entrepreneur. He took over a "wagon mine." Wagon mining is common practice in parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania; when a small, isolated seam of coal lies on the surface of the earth and seems not to be worth exploiting on a large scale, the mining firm that owns the right turns the seam over to a man with a truck—in the old days, a wagon. Ramey opened up a seam near Banner, Virginia, and took out lump coal. He paid the Bannerville Coal Company fifteen cents a ton royalty and sold the coal to householders for \$2.85 a ton. What with wages to twenty-eight men and upkeep of equipment—"so much dead work and dead money"—he cleared only about fifty dollars a week. Nevertheless, he saved enough money to build a small house. He chose a site half a mile from Clintwood, looking down the whole length of a seven-mile valley. He built the house himself, to his own plan. It has a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and a bedroom on the ground floor. There is a bedroom upstairs, too, even though, he says, "I didn't get my walls as high as I was going to on the sides; I meant to make them ten feet, but then I thought that was a little high and my lumber was kind of short that I wanted to start the frame with." The whole family sleeps in the downstairs bedroom. The house is wood outside and beaverboard inside, and has both electricity and plumbing. For his water supply, he built a concrete reservoir,

which holds sixteen hundred gallons, around a spring trickling from a vein of coal on the hill above the house. In the kitchen there is an electric stove, which cost \$209 new, and a refrigerator, which Ramey bought second-hand for \$80 from a friend who was moving to Detroit. Over the years, he has put more than \$4,000 into the house, and he is proud to be able to say, "I never borrowed a penny of money from the bank or anything in my life."

About eighteen months after his marriage, Ramey "got shet of" the coal mine and went to work for the Haysi Motor Company, the Chevrolet agency in Haysi, Virginia, as a metal worker and spray painter. That has been his line of civilian work ever since. It was at this point that illiteracy began to bother Ramey. Although his wife's and father-in-law's literacy made things easier for him, their learning made him, by the same measure, conscious of his lack. In Detroit, it had not particularly bothered him, when the work sheets were posted each evening with the assignments for the next day, to ask a friend to read them for him. But now all sorts of embarrassments cropped up. He would buy some paint and put the cans on a shelf and next day would have to ask someone to find him the right color for a certain spray job. He would slip off to a show and stand right in front of the billboard out front and have to ask someone what was playing. "I like to never got a driver's permit," he says. "I had an awful time there. I think I made six or seven trials." The Clintwood cop, Dewey Buck Hannon, would patiently take him the rounds of the driving test and then would put the Virginia motor-vehicle codebook before him for the literacy test; and Ramey would say, "Dewey Buck, you know I can't read." Finally, with Dewey Buck's encouragement, he found a solution. He had Joyce sit down with him and read the codebook over and over. She must have read it a hundred times before he had memorized every word. Then he passed his test. But out on the roads he would have to stop

at a fork that was cluttered up with road signs and ask his way. People always pointed to the signs first; he would have to explain. The miracle was that with all the rubs and humiliations, Ramey never lost his temper and almost never got a contemptuous answer. He says, "I always tried to be kind in everything, always tried to ask everything in a kind way. I try to express myself before I ask a question."

The climax of Ramey's frustration, and in a way the turning point of his life, came in January of this year. He had worked since July, 1943, as a camouflage spray painter at the Portsmouth Navy Yard. He was earning \$1.38 an hour, which, with overtime, came to \$114.87 a week. The men, and especially his foreman, liked him. One day the foreman came to him and offered to make him a group leader, at \$1.52 an hour. He was taken to the yard headquarters and an application form was put before him. When he said he could not write, a yard official told him he would need at least a fifth-grade education to be able to handle the pencilwork as leader. "I got so mad at myself," Ramey says, "that I could have kicked myself out." In fact, he did just that. He went home to Clintwood, terribly discouraged. Since he was no longer doing essential work, the local draft board took him.

Ramey entered the Army on March 19th. At the induction center in Roanoke, he signed his name, John D. Ramey, on a form. This much he had learned to do. But when he was told to spell his name out in full, he did not know the letters for Danul, as he had always pronounced his middle name, much less Daniel, as he had been christened. Nevertheless, he scribbled something. Later he was given the literacy test; his score was zero. But in the screening tests his innate intelligence showed itself. He was accepted. About the time the inductees were lining up outside to be marched away, he heard his name called. He was taken back into the building to an officer at a desk—"a tall man with a little old bald head," he recalls. The officer's words embarrassed Ramey more than anything else in

his life ever had. "At your age," the man sneered, "can't even write your own name!"

This was the sort of raw material that arrived at the Special Training Unit late in March this year, ready—in this case more than ready—to learn to read and write. For the first few days Ramey bunked in white barracks, listened to lectures by platoon sergeants about Army spirit, marched up and down, and took tests. On April 5th he moved to green barracks and was assigned to Unit A, the beginners' class. Not all the men at the S.T.U. go into A. Those who have had a little schooling start out in more advanced groups. Ramey started from scratch.

Ramey was lucky in the teacher he drew. Originally the teachers at the school were all Army men, mostly noncommissioned officers. Later, civilians were taken in, both men and women, at a salary of about two thousand dollars a year. Ramey's teacher, Mrs. Harpel, has had wide experience, both in teaching and in life, and is a wise and charming lady. She is a widow of indefinite age. When pressed to place it within a decade, she says she believes she is "anywhere between sixty and seventy." When congratulated on her wonderful appearance (she looks fifty), she replies, "They all say that. It's because I'm interested." From her youngest days, her mother urged her to become a teacher. "My mother," she says, "had a hard time. She was born in Ireland, but she grew up in England on a farm—they were poor. But she was so eager to learn that a woman of the nobility took an interest in her. This woman taught a class in—I believe it was in some part of the Church. My mother was so anxious to learn that she soon was teaching the other children, helping this woman, and for that she got a little heirloom in the family and I wish I had it now; it's the dearest little black-walnut case, has a little drawer for spools and things, and there's a cushion on top. My oldest sister has

it, don't you know. You can see why my mother wanted me to be a teacher." It was only natural that after Mrs. Harpel got through a Sisters' school and high school in Detroit, she went to the Detroit Training School, a school for teachers. After that, she went to Wayne University for a year. Her teaching experiences include everything from a two-room, two-teacher primary school in Detroit to an adult-education course in civics in Cleveland. She has taken a course in short-story writing at the University of Chicago and worked in a hardware store, and she even took up the study of law and passed the Ohio bar exams because "the stories in the book of cases were so exciting."

The classes at the S.T.U. are small; they range from six or eight in the beginning to twenty toward the end. Ramey found himself, on his first day, with a group of seven other total illiterates, sitting in a small classroom fitted out with long, backless benches, narrow tables, and a blackboard across the front wall. Mrs. Harpel had been waiting for them. After a brief introductory speech, in which she at once established herself as a nice, motherly grab bag full of anecdotes, she started in with the alphabet. She wrote the letters on the board, told the soldiers the names of the letters, and then gave their sounds. Since one of the tenets of the school is that reading and writing should be integrated all the way, she had the men write the letters after her, then went around to check on the various shapes they had drawn. Since another S.T.U. rule is, in the jargon of the teachers' manuals, to "make use of the concepts which as adults the trainees can be assumed to have brought into the classroom already developed in good measure," she often used the letters as heavily stressed initials of words with which they had lately become very familiar: "This is 'S.' The sound is 'sss.' 'S' is for 'ssergeant.'" From day to day, she went quite fast, not stopping to make sure that every letter was learned by every man; she hoped to achieve that gradually, by

repetition. If one man could not answer a question, she went quickly to another, operating on the manual's theory that pausing over one man's forgetfulness only produces a disabling emotional tension in him, and on her own that life is too short to hurt anybody's feelings. Very soon she began giving the men simple words, teaching them to think of the sound of the initial consonant, plus the vowel, plus the following sound that completed the word. She chose words that are spelled the way they sound, like "dad," "tag," "job," "top," and "net." She told stories to go with some words and drew pictures to illustrate others. Toward the end of the three weeks the men spent in Unit A, she began giving more complicated words, with two consonants at the beginning. She taught the reading of these words by what the school calls "phonic analysis." She taught "brake" as "b-rake." By the end of the three weeks she had given Ramey and his classmates about three hundred simple words, most of which would be useful in the "phonic analysis" of the more complicated words they were soon to learn.

Meanwhile, Ramey was exposed to other facets of Army life. His classes began at seven-thirty-five each morning and, with a ten-minute break every hour, lasted until lunchtime. Chow was heavy, monotonous, and good. In the afternoon, the men drilled. The evenings were free. Most of the time Ramey just sat in the barracks and talked or sang with his friend Red Rutherford, whom he had met at the induction center. One night, when they had nearly finished Unit A, they sang a song called "Precious Memory," which made Ramey homesick:

Precious memory, how it lingers,
How it ever fills my flitting soul!
In the stillness of my homelife . . .

Ramey decided then and there to write a letter to his wife. He was far from equipped to do so, but Mrs. Harpel had given

him confidence and he decided to try. Here is the first letter of his whole life:

Arpil 15 1945
Pul John Ramey
Co B STU
33914278

Joyce I got last 5⁰⁰ Dile you sene me lat night. Joyce I am Fine and hope you R the cam. Yousse gott \$22.00 Mond and the take \$7.20 off an me and \$7.50 Fore Bond Joyce lat oline lase me \$12.30 and old the love in my hort. Yall shold whit love fom

Pul John Ramey
Co B STU
33914278

The handwriting was jagged. The letters were formed laboriously and often had breaks between them. The thought was practical. Joyce undoubtedly knew that he meant he had received five dollars from her the night before, that he was fine and hoped she was the same, that she would get twenty-two dollars a month (for her allotment) and they were taking \$7.20 "off'n" him (for insurance) and \$7.50 for bonds, and that this left him only \$12.30 (his arithmetic, despite her tutelage, was off by one dollar), and that he sent all the love in his heart. The final reproach, "You all should write," was a proud invitation from a writing man to correspond. In later letters the serial number after his signature was replaced by amorous crosses and circles, the secret of which he learned not from Mrs. Harpel but from another student.

On April 18th, Ramey entered Unit 1, after having passed an informal test given by Mrs. Harpel. In Unit 1, he be-

gan, for the first time, to read a book—*Technical Manual 21-500*, which jugheads know as “Private Pete.” On the first page, at the top, is printed, “This is Chapter 1.” Below, under a full-length drawing of an impossibly handsome soldier, are the words “A Soldier—Private Pete.” The second page has a picture of men on parade with rifles slung, and under it is the sentence “The soldiers march.” Within a surprisingly few days, Mrs. Harpel had her class, now twelve men, on Chapter 2. There, aided by pictures to illustrate nearly every sentence, they read, “A soldier keeps his things in order in the barracks. There is a place for everything. He keeps everything in the right place. Every soldier has a place for his things in the barracks. Pete’s locker is near his bed. The soldier blows the bugle in the morning. The bugle call wakes the soldiers. Soldiers must get up when they hear the bugle call. Soldiers wash in the morning. They also take showers. Soldiers shave in the morning. Private Pete gets dressed. He puts on his socks. He puts on his shoes. He puts on his shirt. He puts on his trousers. He puts on his tie. He puts on his cap. Here is Private Pete in his uniform.” And the final picture shows him fully clothed and surrounded by a dazzling light much like the one which enveloped the Wizard of Oz.

Mrs. Harpel’s technique in Unit 1, and throughout the course, was about the same. Before each lesson in “Private Pete,” she would survey the day’s text and note down the unfamiliar and difficult words. These she would give the men by phonic analysis. Gradually, the words got more complicated. “She kept raising the words,” Ramey says. To keep the earlier words fresh in their minds, she constantly reviewed, both by combining old words with new ones and by flashing cards with the old words stenciled on them. All the time she drew on her years of experience to illustrate the words. One of the things the school stresses is “word concept,” which means that a man should understand a word when he sees it and

not just read the sound without thought for the meaning. The Army judiciously mixes modern ideas—word concept, filmstrips, flash cards, and phonic analysis—with the tried and true method of the little red schoolhouse. Mrs. Harpel's storytelling helped build "word concept." Unlike most of the teachers, who draw on the movies, radio, and big-league baseball for examples, "traveling," as the manuals say, "from the known to the unknown," Mrs. Harpel kept telling Ramey's class homely parables and episodes from her own life.

Mrs. Harpel's classes never dragged. One day she began by saying, "Good morning, boys—or men, I should say. I know you still like to be called boys."

She read the roll. Then she asked, "Well, how do you feel this morning?"

A chorus rose: "Oh, we feel great . . . rugged . . . O.K. . . ."

She said, "Let us put our pencils down. Sit up like soldiers. We are going to review our sounds and combinations of sounds this morning." She wrote the letter "E" on the board. "May I have an example of the short sound, please?"

"'Exercise'!" said Ramey.

"'Fret,'" Mrs. Harpel said. "Let's take 'fret.' A baby frets. What is the difference between 'to fret' and 'to worry'? A person must think to worry. Babies don't think much, do they? I saw a baby just a month old last night, a healthful codger, but it was fretting. I went up and talked to it calmly and that little rascal just listened to me. We can't tell what they're thinking, can we? I wonder how we spell 'split'?"

"S-l-i-t!" one of the men said.

"That's right," Mrs. Harpel said, not wishing to hurt anyone's feelings. "That's right, s-p-l-i-t. Now, here's a word." And she wrote "sin" on the blackboard. "That's a little word we do not like, but sometimes we must say it anyway. Look! We can make it nice just by putting a letter in right here." She trans-

formed "SIN" into "SPIN." "What does that mean, Davis?" she asked.

Davis said, "Well, it's like spinning wool."

"That's right! They used to spin wool by hand. Do they now, Lam?"

Lam said, "I never have been to a cotton mill. I been down around Chatham, where they raise a little cotton, but I never did get in a mill."

"Is that Virginia?" Mrs. Harpel asked. "Seems to me a lot of my boys are from Virginia. Stand up, you Virginians."

Seven of the twelve men stood.

"My, what a fine lot of men. How tall are you, Lam?"

"Five foot ten, Ma'am."

"How tall are you, Rutherford?"

"Five foot eleven."

"How tall are you, Ramey?"

"Five foot six and a quarter inches."

"Well, you didn't happen to grow. How tall are you, Pearsall?"

"I don't know, Ma'am."

"You ought to know that. You go over and stand against the measuring post," she said, pointing at one of the uprights of the rear wall, a two-by-four that had about thirty pencil marks on it, where other men had already been measured. "Who will volunteer to measure Pearsall?" Mrs. Harpel asked.

Smith, who was not a Virginian, put his hand up. He marked Pearsall's height on the beam, then measured it with a ruler. "Five foot ten, exact," he announced.

Mrs. Harpel said, "How in the world did we get this far when we started with the word 'spin'? That's the way the mind works; it gets from one thing to another. I'm going to give you a long word. It's the study of the mind. I'm going to write it down." She wrote "PSYCHOLOGY." She had several of the men pronounce it.

"Now," she said, "here's another little word. 'Ore.' What is the difference between ore and iron, Ramey? Stand up. Let's see how tall you are."

"It's like mining," Ramey said. "Ore's got to be taken from under the ground and it's brought out and as it comes to the mill it's washed and the dirt is washed from the ore stone, and the stone is run into the furnaces. The ore comes out of the stone, out of the shale, and the shale goes out; it's a waste. The ore is poured into forms and makes pig iron. The form is a small steel frame; it's got a sand pack on the inside of it, has some kind of chemical into it that'll make it bind and stick together, otherwise to hold the pig iron in the forms till it cools off."

Mrs. Harpel said, "Oh, that's very interesting! I want you to teach me a little more, Ramey."

"Well," he said, "it gets smaller when it cools. Any kind of metal expands when it's hot. You take sheet steel for a ship—you have to allow for expansion where you're welding; if you don't she'll buckle."

"Will you tell me how they weld this sheet metal?"

"Which one you want, acetylene or electric?"

Mrs. Harpel dodged that one nicely. "What did you do before you came here, Ramey?" she asked.

"Spray-painted," he said. "Camouflage in a shipyard."

"We were talking about ore. That's a big jump to welding, isn't it? Well, that's how the human mind moves from place to place." She pointed a finger at "PSYCHOLOGY."

Then she said, "I'm going to tell you a story I know about ore. I went to an auction store one day and I saw a lamp and this lamp was all metal from the base right to the top, so it must have come from ore. A woman, she was standing next to me, she said, 'That's a valuable thing, that's a Chinese incense burner; it's not supposed to be a lamp.' It was taller than I am. I got interested because I like antiques. I said to this woman,

who was a stranger to me, by the way, 'How much do you think it's worth?' She called this clerk over and the clerk said, 'Ten dollars.' I was so anxious to get such a rare thing—what does 'rare' mean?—that I said I'd take it. Well, I got interested and I got some books and I studied up on it. The work is called cloisonné. Some of you might get interested in cloisonné someday. Say 'cloisonné.' . . . Here is how they make it. They take little wires and fasten them on the incense burner in the form of pictures; they draw people and faces with the wires, and the book says they fuse the wires on the metal. On my incense burner there are little saints with halos. Halos must be hard to draw with wire because they have to be a perfect circle. Something irregular would be easier. What is something irregular?"

"A flower," one of the men said. "Even in nature you get flowers so they grow irregular."

"Well, they get everything just right with these little wires, even the eyes. What would happen if they got the pupils of the eyes wrong? Lam, what would happen?"

Lam said, "The saints might be cross-eyed."

"That's right! Well, they fill in between the wires with this beautiful enamel. The faces are white, the clothes are Chinese red and turquoise blue. Saints usually have blue eyes; that's the color of the beautiful sky. The whole incense burner is copper. Sometimes I think it's brass, because in places it looks like a brass penny." She hesitated. "Do you *really* want me to talk about my lamp, men?" she asked.

The men shouted together, "Yes!"

"Well, these human figures on it are climbing ladders . . ." And she told many more details about her incense burner. Finally a bell rang, marking the end of the first period. "Oh, dear," Mrs. Harpel said. "Men! Don't forget 'ore.' O-r-e. Look at it! Don't forget it! Class excused."

I doubt that the men who were there will ever forget the shape of that small word.

Ramey was not the most brilliant pupil Mrs. Harpel had had, but before he passed into Unit 2, she had begun to take special notice of him. There were several reasons. For one thing, he had had wider experience than some of the men, and could tell an illustrative story himself if he had to. For another, he was more serious-minded than some, and each evening he read the work for the next day, so that he would have the jump, for self-esteem was apparently important to him. He says that he will always remember the word "determination" and the night he came across it. "Straight I say that word, I don't have to spell it out—I can see it," he told me. Long words like that, especially if they are meaningful, are easier for the men than the everyday small change of literacy—"am," "they," "are," "but"—and Ramey still has to think harder about those small words than he does about "determination." Ramey stuck to his work better than some, and, perhaps on the theory that what won't hurt anybody won't help anybody, did not even go to the enlisted men's dances on Wednesday nights. He was also assisted in his progress by a relatively good memory. He has an excellent memory for names. When he is asked about his two gold teeth, which he acquired in Detroit twelve years ago, he promptly says, "I remember the old doc who put them in—Whittaker, Dr. Whittaker, George A. Whittaker. I remember him well. I broke one of my teeth out and the other one was rotten; it got a little speck in it and I never did think much about filling teeth—I thought I'd just have it ground and crowned. Doc Whittaker, he didn't have much mercy on mankind at all, it didn't seem like. He wouldn't let you shut your mouth or swush your mouth out; he'd just want to get through. Never will forget him. George A. Whittaker."

Ramey moved into Unit 2, still under Mrs. Harpel, on May 2nd. At the end of each unit, the men take an examination. In

the test before going to Unit 2, Ramey scored thirty-two out of a possible thirty-five points. "Private Pete" appears in Unit 2, which is mostly concerned with military drill. "Integration" is one of the catchwords of the Special Training Unit; reading is integrated with writing, and the students never do one without the other; arithmetic, which students begin in Unit 2, is integrated with both, for the problems are written out, and the students must read the problems, solve them, and write the answers in words and numbers; and the reading matter provided them is all integrated with Army life. So, in Unit 2, Ramey read all about drill, and learned something, too, about military courtesy. On page 59 of "Private Pete," he read, "The captain came to our drill field on Saturday. Our sergeant gave the command, '1. SQUAD, 2. HALT!' Then we stood at attention while the sergeant saluted the captain. We did not move or talk." Ramey and his companions were still drilling every afternoon. One of the greatest handicaps for most illiterates is lack of confidence. The drill at S.T.U. eventually gives them confidence, for after graduation, when they move on to another camp for ordinary basic training, they find they are smarter soldiers than some men who have been to college. The school gives the men a new and exciting sense that perhaps they are not so dumb after all. In class they compete with fellow-illiterates; everybody is in the same boat. One man in the Pennsylvania S.T.U. recently said, "I thought I was the dumbest man in Virginia until I came here and saw all my friends and neighbors." The camp life also gives the men a group spirit. Ramey wrote me a letter a while ago in which he said, "Drill make you keep your mind on what you are doing it make you think it keep you on the alert. I like to drill whith other men."

After he had been in Unit 2 a week, Ramey wrote his second letter to Joyce. His progress was certainly measurable. This time the letters were much better formed and much bolder, and the breaks between letters were less frequent. He wrote:

May 9, 1945

My love I will write yow a fuile line to late you yeare forme
 me Joyce have yow got your Mone and the Boond Joyce i have
 35 day to stare yere then i will Be coming home sune i maeste
 you all vere muche Till the baby bihaves and Be good BaBy
 ontal i come home, Joyce how are they gating a lorne out home
 i gate a lettre frome home May 4 and toled me how they wirre
 at home Joyce you ort to see me in my uniforme it looke good
 on me i hope you will sune Joyce write me sune your love
 John Ramey.

xxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxx

oooooooo

oooooooo

The next day, Ramey wrote his father-in-law a short postcard, and two days later he wrote his wife another letter. Both were in the same vein, the same hand, the same grammar, and at times the same words as the earlier letter, except on the postcard Ramey said, "Kinle write me a fiver good Pop." Evidently the \$13.30 Ramey got from the Army after deductions was not enough. Ramey had his father-in-law much in mind during his stay at the school. The two had been on excellent terms ever since Mr. McFall's flare-up about John's walking home with Joyce that first night. Ramey now has great admiration for his father-in-law. "Better man never did breathe, to my notion," Ramey says. "Now, some other people may have their minds made up different; otherwise he's liked by everybody in that country. He preaches more funerals than any man I ever guess I saw. He's always preaching a funeral—every week, sometimes a couple. They send for him from everywhere; everybody knows him from a hundred miles square, everyone picks him for their funerals. It's because he always do come out pretty plain, says what he feels, hit or miss, hurt or

feel good." On the day Ramey graduated, with a score of thirty-one out of a possible thirty-five, from Unit 2 to Unit 3, he wrote his father-in-law, with a skimpy but nevertheless respectful number of kisses and hugs at the bottom of the page, as follows:

May 23, 1945

Dare Pop I am geting long fine and hope you are geting long fine at home Pop I have time to write you a fule lines to lite you here fom me I like to get litter forme home you write me sune and lite me no how you all are at home now I get might lonesome up here Pop I hope you are haveing good meatings do that now how are you geting long whith your mine now are you mining it now you sed you had not been mining it Pop do not forget to Pare for me Pop I pare for you I will stay your friend love to all of them left at home, John Ramey

xxxx

oooo

Units 3 and 4 seemed to go fairly fast. Ramey had reached his "plateau," the point at which his rapid accumulation of words stopped and he leveled off to a brief period of forgetfulness and despair, in Unit 2; once he was past that, he was in good shape. Most men reach their plateau in Unit 3. In Unit 3, Ramey and "Private Pete" took up the question of money, which Private Ramey had been discussing in longhand since his first letter. He read about how Private Pete drew his pay and about the sensible things he did with it. There is a high moral tone about *Technical Manual 21-500*, and at times even Mrs. Harpel gets tired of such a goody-goody soldier as Private Pete, who never sees the inside of a guardhouse. In Unit 3 arithmetic, Ramey took up division. In Unit 4, he read about world affairs, about citizenship and freedom and the reasons for the war, about the qualities of a good soldier, about living

with other people under the Golden Rule, about the United Nations and global war, about George Washington and Tom Paine.

While he was in Unit 3, Ramey went to Harrisburg with Red Rutherford one day. Red wanted to walk up and down the streets and find a girl or two, but Ramey wanted to drop in at the U.S.O. There was something he had heard about that he wanted to try. He went to a table, picked up a magazine, and sat down, like any other man, to read it. He was so excited that he can't remember what magazine it was; he thinks it may have been *Look*, or perhaps *Collier's*. Later, on the street, he bought a newspaper. He has done that several times since, but he doesn't like papers. "I don't know whether it's the words or the way it's printed up or what those countries are always doing in there," he says. "Don't know what it is. Seem like I can't hardly stand to read it."

During Unit 4, Ramey began "remedial work," which is actually no more than a review. The Army wisely gives the men a second teacher for remedial work; this serves as a check on any weaknesses of the first teacher, and is an attempt to make certain that all gaps are filled. Ramey's teacher for remedial was Dorothy Over, the pretty young wife of a soldier who fought across Europe with the Third Armored Division. Her background for this job was teaching home economics in a junior high school in Harrisburg. Mrs. Harpel carried on with new material in the mornings and Mrs. Over's remedial class took the place of two hours' drill in the afternoons. Mrs. Over says, "The only way to make people remember is repeat, repeat, repeat, and then sometimes repeat." Roughly, that describes remedial. One day, Mrs. Over started class by asking, "Can you tell me the words we had yesterday?"

"Bet I can tell you every one of them," Ramey said. "'Loyal'—you had that yesterday."

Mrs. Over didn't wait for him to finish. She picked up a

piece of chalk and wrote on the blackboard, saying the words as she wrote them: "‘Alert,’ ‘determination,’ ‘surprise,’ ‘praise,’ ‘loyal’—here it is, Ramey, that’s for you—‘faith,’ ‘teamwork,’ ‘know,’ ‘defend,’ ‘training,’ ‘production,’ ‘property,’ ‘route,’ ‘rugged,’ ‘protect,’ ‘strong.’"

For fifty minutes she drilled the class on those sixteen words. She had each man read them. She analyzed them. She erased them and had the men write them. She repeated, repeated, repeated, until the men had learned.

At last, on June 14th, Ramey came to his final examination. This he passed as he had his previous tests, with honor. Then he was indoctrinated for graduation exercises. The Pennsylvania Special Training Unit is very thoughtful about the morale of its men. Each Wednesday night a fresh class of literate men is marched to the gymnasium, seated in a triangular formation in the presence of guests, many of them proud families, and given a graduation address by Colonel Searls, the commanding officer. A West Point commencement has no more gravity and dignity. It would be easy for Colonel Searls to grind out the same speech week after week, but he takes pride in his graduations and makes a new speech every time. One week he used the analogy of seeds planted in the ground, from which fine flowers and huge trees would grow if proper care was taken; another week he used the laying of a keel, from which a Liberty ship or a battleship might rise if proper workmanship went into it; another week he used the digging of foundations. On each occasion he seems to make the men feel that they are educated, ambitious, and equal to other men in the land. After Colonel Searls' address, the men step forward, salute, receive a diploma, shake hands, salute again, and move on. Ramey's diploma says, "This is to certify that Private John Daniel Ramey has graduated from the Spe-

cial Training Unit, 3384th Service Unit." It is signed by Colonel Searls and by the master sergeant, W. Nace. At the bottom is a gold seal, embossed with incontrovertible words: "U.S. ARMY—OFFICIAL."

The noncoms of the cadre are all in favor of morale, but they think that you can have too much of a good thing. Accordingly, their instructions for the graduation exercises are concerned not with the dignity but with the abasement of man. The process of saluting, receiving the diploma, handshaking, and saluting again is hard for some of the men to remember. An indoctrinating sergeant roared at a platoon of Ramey's class, "Any you jugheads can't keep that straight, you're going to come over here after graduation, take a toothbrush, a butt can, and a cake of soap, and brush down that entire barracks staircase! You hear that, you fatheads?" Another cadre sergeant explained to me later, "He said that just so they won't think they're a bunch of Princeton men or something."

On that last day, the morning before his graduation, I asked Ramey for a sample of his handwriting. What he wrote might disappoint a pedagogue; certain habits of nearly three decades of humble grammar could not possibly have been erased in ten weeks, and some of his spellings and punctuation needed further drill. Nevertheless, Ramey had come a wonderfully long way from his first letter, just two months before. And from another viewpoint—that of human hope and the satisfaction still to be had from a life already half spent in the uneasy shadows of illiteracy—the sample was good, very good. Here is what he wrote:

14 June 1945

the United States of America

John D. Ramey

I come in the Army the date of 19 day of March as a civilian.
I had no education but now this is the first time that I have

had in my life to get a education and I am glad to be in the Army to get a little education. I can tell what the Army have did for me. As a civilian I could not read anything and it made it hard for me to get a beter job. After the war I can get a job as lead man at the Place I Work befor. I want to learn some more. I would not take all the Furloughs in the Army for What I learned at STU. I tell you when they let me out of this Army they can take away my Gun also my Uniform but they wont ever take away how to read and write. -