

Emphasizing Performance Goals AND HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

Schools of the future will involve parents, will empower principals and teachers, will emphasize early childhood education, and will strengthen curricula in mathematics, science, English, foreign languages, and the social sciences, Mr. Cavazos predicts. Most of all, schools of the future will have more sensitivity to the differing needs of an increasingly diverse population.



PAPERS FROM THE DUKE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

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WHEN President Ronald Reagan asked me to join his Cabinet as secretary of education, I was delighted. My involvement in elementary and secondary education had been minimal, but I knew that our public elementary and secondary schools needed revitalization and restructuring. I was especially interested in enhancing the education of minorities. This aim had been a major focus of my tenure as a medical school dean and a university president. With my appointment as secretary, I brought to the office many years of experience in medical, graduate, and undergraduate education and a sharp focus on minority education.

LAURO F. CAVAZOS was appointed secretary of education toward the end of President Ronald Reagan's second term in 1988. A former president of Texas Tech University, he continued as secretary of education for the first two years of the Administration of President George H. W. Bush, stepping down in 1990. He is currently a professor of family medicine and community health at the Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, Mass.

Growing up in Texas, I received my early childhood education in two schools. One was a two-room school on a South Texas ranch, and the other was in a small town nearby. In both places, the school was a justified source of local pride. When I joined the Cabinet, I believed that the nation's future depended on what happened in the schoolhouse, and I remain convinced that there is no more important job than the education of our children.

When I assumed office, I knew that the major item on my agenda as secretary would be to provide leadership at the federal level that would help improve our public elementary and secondary education system. It was obvious to me that I would have to create an alliance of people committed to enhancing education. This alliance would have to include teachers, parents, students, school administrators, school board members, governors, and businesspeople.

I believed then and I still believe that education is the source that nurtures the freedoms we enjoy in all aspects of our lives. The idea of universal education, which spread across America in the 19th century, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Horace Mann, was critical for the building of a prosperous and democratic nation. As secretary I sought to have all Americans renew their commitment to universal education. I wanted to ensure that all people — regardless of race, gender, disabilities, or economic circumstances — would have access to schools of excellence.

During my tenure as secretary, I found that many educators, parents, employers, and teachers were aware of the need to enhance our school systems, and they worked diligently to improve the system. The need for this renewal had long been acknowledged. In 1983, under the leadership of Secretary Terrel Bell, the department published *A Nation at Risk*, which urged us to find ways to improve education.

Still, up to the time of my appointment, the nation had failed to undertake the thorough restructuring needed to reverse our educational decline. By restructuring, I mean fundamental, radical changes in the organization of our schools. The ultimate purpose of restructuring is to create schools that continuously change and adapt in response to the needs of both students and society. To me, academic restructuring is not an end but a process, leading to constant renewal of both schools and teaching. The precise nature of these changes must depend on local conditions and circumstances, but they have only one purpose: to allow parents, teachers, and administrators to respond to the needs of stu-

dents rather than to the requirements of a bureaucracy. Prior to my appointment, many efforts had been made to improve education, but we seemed to have just tinkered around the margins of real reform. Significant improvement of students' performance had not occurred.

Perhaps my major achievement as secretary and the principal issue that confronted me during my tenure was the establishment of the national education performance goals. Second was my work to improve the educational performance of Hispanic Americans. I believe that these two issues are linked.

NATIONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATION

The development of national education performance goals began the day President-elect Bush asked me to continue in his Administration. One morning in January 1989, we met at Vice President Bush's home and talked about his commitment to education and my interest in continuing as secretary of education. When he asked me to stay on, I responded that I would be pleased to work with him to enhance education in this nation. It was important to me that Vice President Bush had stressed in his campaign that he wanted to be known as the "Education President." Now that he was about to take the oath of office, he wanted to start planning the strategies that would help him deliver on his promise. At that meeting, I urged him to call a national summit to emphasize the importance of education in America. The two of us wanted to create a national movement that would focus on and seek to improve education.

In October 1989 President Bush convened the governors of the 50 states and the territories for a national summit on education. This was the third domestic summit in the history of the United States. The site for the summit was Jefferson's university, the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. The President, the governors, and the Cabinet members met there to rededicate themselves to excellence in education for all Americans. To achieve this goal, the President and the governors agreed to establish national education goals and to undertake a major state-by-state restructuring of our public education system in a framework of flexibility and accountability. Work on the goals proceeded quickly after the meeting in Charlottesville.

Credit for setting the goals belongs to many. These include President Bush, the National Governors' Association, the White House Office of Domestic Poli-

cy, the Department of Education under my leadership, and the Education Policy Advisory Committee. The last, a diverse group from many sectors in society with an interest in education, had been appointed by President Bush specifically to work on the goals.

On 31 January 1990, in his State of the Union address, the President unveiled the six national performance goals for education. These goals were not about improving the education of our best students; rather, they focused on dramatically raising the level of educational achievement for all Americans. The goals focused on results, not procedures. I believed that the national goals could promote a renaissance in American education by committing the nation to a full decade of restructuring and revitalizing our education system. Let me briefly review the six original goals to be reached by the year 2000.

- The first goal was that every child should start school ready to learn. It was proposed that all disadvantaged and disabled children have access to high-quality preschool programs, that parents be involved as a child's first and continuing teacher, and that children receive the nutrition and health care necessary to arrive at school ready to learn.

- The second goal was to increase the high school graduation rate to at least 90%. At that time, the graduation rate was about 76%.

- The third goal called on students to demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography. It required schools to emphasize active thinking and problem-solving skills.

- The fourth goal was to take American students beyond competence and to make them first in the world in mathematics and science achievement. At that time our students scored at the bottom in mathematics and near the bottom in science when compared to their peers in other industrialized nations.

- The fifth education goal called for ensuring that every adult American be both literate and prepared for the lifelong learning that would be required for participating in the modern global economy and for exercising responsible citizenship.

- The sixth goal was that every school be free from drugs and violence and that a disciplined classroom environment conducive to learning be created.

Informally, I added a seventh goal that was, for the most part, ignored, but I often stated it in speeches. That was that, by the year 2000, every child be educated to his or her fullest potential. While it did not

become part of the national education goals, my goal is embossed on a plaque on a school bell monument in front of the U.S. Department of Education building in Washington, D.C. And a story goes with that bell. I believed that the Department of Education, the nation's schoolhouse, needed a school bell. I put out the word that we were searching for a large school bell that would be symbolic of the nation's commitment to excellent education for all its citizens. I was delighted when the good people of Milford, Pennsylvania, stepped forward with the offer of a beautiful school bell they had saved during the renovation of a public school. We dedicated the school bell monument in 1990, and it stands today in front of the Department of Education as a symbol of our commitment to educate every child.

In April 1989, prior to the establishment of the national education goals and less than three months after he had taken office, President Bush had submitted the Educational Excellence Act (H.R. 1675) to Congress. The bill contained seven important proposals, including Presidential Merit Schools, Magnet Schools of Excellence, alternative certification of teachers and principals, President's Awards for Excellence in Education, National Science Scholars, Drug-Free Schools Urban Emergency Grants, and endowment grants for historically black colleges and universities.

In my role as secretary of education, I worked the bill through the Senate, which approved a modified version of it. I was unable to move it through the House. The subcommittee treated H.R. 1675 in a highly partisan fashion. In April 1990 I testified before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, arguing that each program in H.R. 1675 supported achievement of one or more of the national education goals. I saw this bill as only a first step in attaining the national education goals. The President's Educational Excellence Act did not pass.

My greatest disappointment has been that, in spite of the work of many people, the nation did not reach its six education goals by the year 2000. However, I am hopeful that they can be attained in the near future.

IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF HISPANIC AMERICANS

Another major accomplishment in K-12 education during my tenure as secretary was the launching of an initiative to improve the educational performance of

Hispanic Americans. As a Hispanic American, I was dismayed at the low overall educational achievement of young Hispanics. At that time we estimated that, by the year 2000, about 12% of school-age children would be Hispanic. Thus I recognized that we could not reach our national education goals without improving the educational attainment of Hispanics. As a result of our discussions, the President asked me to work with the Domestic Policy Council of the Cabinet to form a task force on Hispanic education. We were directed to assess the participation of Hispanics in federal education programs, to identify barriers that might limit Hispanic participation, and to suggest alternative strategies to enhance Hispanic participation in federal education programs.

The efforts to focus on the education of Hispanics during my tenure as secretary become even more important when we look at the growth of the Hispanic population since my time of service. Today, there are about 25 million Hispanics in the U.S. They form a rich mosaic of culture, race, and ethnicity. While there are Hispanics in every state, 66% are concentrated in Texas, New York, and California. From 1980 to 1989, the Hispanic population grew 39%, versus 8% for the non-Hispanic population. Further, Hispanics are the most highly urbanized group in the nation. Ninety-two percent live in metropolitan areas, compared to 73% of non-Hispanics.

Under my leadership, we held five regional meetings on Hispanic education in San Antonio, Boston, Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles. We listened to testimony from teachers, parents, business leaders, school administrators, and students about ways to improve the education of Hispanics. We also worked closely with national Hispanic organizations. Our report to President Bush was thorough and extensive. It included strengthening parent involvement, emphasizing early language development, using a variety of bilingual education methods, improving correction strategies, and improving adult education. We also drafted for the President's consideration an Executive Order on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. This executive order included a number of steps that would increase federal support for the education of Hispanics and expand the participation of Hispanics in education policy making at the highest levels of the federal government.

On 24 September 1990, on the South Lawn of the White House, before 200 Hispanic leaders, President Bush signed the executive order. It provided for a Pres-

ident's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, which would advise the secretary of education on efforts to improve the quality of education for Hispanics. The work of the commission continues today. The order also created a White House Initiative Office, which was to provide support to the commission. In addition, the order directed Cabinet agencies to actively help to advance educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans. The work we started with our Hispanic education initiative was continued when President Clinton signed an executive order that was quite similar to the one signed by President Bush.

ACCOUNTABILITY

During my term as secretary of education, there was constant debate about the amount of money that should be spent on elementary and secondary education. Federal spending on education was minimal: only 7% of the money spent on education in the U.S. came from the federal government. The rest came from the local school districts and the states. There was an assumption that more dollars spent always resulted in better education. I argued otherwise and promoted restructuring the school systems rather than putting vastly enhanced amounts of money into them. During 1990-91 the nation spent about \$231 billion on elementary and secondary education. This was an increase of 7% over the previous year, when we had spent \$216 billion. This was more than a 34% increase above the 1980 level (adjusted for inflation). Still, during that decade, reading scores for ages 9 and 13 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress remained unchanged, and the average mathematics score rose only 10 points. Results such as these, unimpressive at best, caused me to believe that money was not the only solution to improving education.

Traditionally, accountability in education has focused on inputs — reporting dollars spent and the resources that the money buys. These reports often do not mention the quality of education that students receive. Consequently, parents, students, and communities have little or no information on what the schools are accomplishing. It was not until 1984, when the Department of Education released the first state education performance chart — or “wall chart” as it came to be known — that we were able to see comparative student performance data, state by state. Since then, there has been increasing effort by the states and school

districts to address accountability by providing measures of elementary, secondary, and vocational/technical education performance.

Today, the wave of testing students has continued to grow, and it is my impression that testing is rapidly becoming accepted as the single measure of student achievement. There is no question that better information on a school's ability to educate students is needed. We must come to understand what measures of academic success are meaningful. Tests should measure a student's comprehension of important concepts. It is unfortunate that, today, the use of high-stakes testing has become fashionable in many of our states. Diplomas can be withheld, or grades must be repeated, if students do not perform at an acceptable level on the tests.

Now the federal government is stepping into testing as a means to ensure enhanced education and increased student academic performance. The federal approach will be to use testing as a mechanism of ensuring accountability before funding is given to the states. I see the development and use of any sort of national test as fraught with enormous difficulties and possible negative outcomes. We know that too much testing is counterproductive, if valuable class time is used to continuously test students. Many schools already emphasize "test taking," and some "teach to the test." With the federal government stepping into the testing business, I am concerned that there may be more schools focusing on how to take tests than on what every student should learn.

Other factors to measure student achievement can be used. For example, data on courses taken and grades received, graduation rates, and college attendance rates can give considerable information on student progress. We need to examine critically the assessment tools we use and work to identify measures that are reliable and that recognize and reward excellence.

Identifying and reporting educational performance, however, will not improve education unless the information obtained is used to change outcomes. If schools, using a variety of measures, repeatedly fail to measure up to standards, they should be held accountable for their academic failure and required to improve. If they do not, the state should declare them academically bankrupt and take them over with the goal of markedly improving education for the students.

Accountability is the responsibility of everyone involved in the education of our children. For teachers, restructuring means nothing less than the freedom to

teach to the best of their abilities, in exchange for a willingness to be held responsible for the results. Teachers, parents, school administrators, and the business community should form lasting partnerships dedicated to restructuring the education system and thereby increasing the quality of our schools. Significant enhancement of our education system is at least a 10-year process. All partners must recognize their responsibility for bettering education, they must be willing to work together, and they must be accountable for the results.

NARROWING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Nowhere is America's diversity reflected more accurately than in our schools. During my term as secretary of education, minorities constituted over 30% of total public school enrollment. While I was in office, the 10 largest school districts in the U.S. were already 70% African American and Hispanic. We estimated that, by the year 2010, minorities would make up more than 50% of the enrollment of public schools in 12 states.

As secretary, I found it lamentable that the educational attainment of African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics lagged significantly behind that of the general population. Dropout and illiteracy rates were high, and academic achievement was minimal. Many minorities and children from economically disadvantaged groups were not reaching their full academic potential. As secretary, I urged that we act soon to improve substantially the elementary and secondary education that these children were receiving. I pointed out that our education system had the same enormous interdependence found elsewhere in our economy and society. Weaknesses in any part, I insisted, would be felt throughout the system. The poor elementary and secondary education provided to many minorities and economically disadvantaged students was reflected in their low enrollment and graduation rates at our colleges and universities.

Today, little has changed. Minorities and economically disadvantaged children are still not reaching their full academic potential. Some of the restructuring that we urged has taken place, though to a limited degree. Some school districts have installed school-based management, permitted academic choice, created after-school programs, adopted longer school years, permitted home schooling, and seen the development of charter schools.

But many inner-city schools are still segregated. They are struggling to provide a high-quality education for

large numbers of minority and economically disadvantaged students. The almost three-quarters of a million students who drop out of secondary school each year face a lifetime of low wages and a low standard of living. Tens of millions of Americans are functionally illiterate. These few examples dramatize the large cracks in our current system of education and suggest the frustration and diminished life chances of many of our students. Throughout the nation, the majority population has fled the urban setting and moved to “better schools” in the suburbs. A high-quality education is crucial for everyone, so we must provide the highest-caliber education in order to bring all students into the mainstream of American life.

We need to know what factors strengthen the educational process in a school and apply them. Data suggest that poverty and low income are directly related to student achievement. At least one urban school system is considering student assignment based on family income rather than on minority or majority status. The plan is to have no more than 50% of the students in a school from low-income families. This initiative bears close watching.

Partnerships can help address and narrow the gap in student achievement across ethnic and socioeconomic lines. Teachers, parents, students, school administrators, and the business community must work together to improve schools. Furthermore, colleges and universities in the community should participate fully in the restructuring of elementary and secondary schools. One essential part of restructuring — particularly important for minorities or economically disadvantaged students — is to fit the school to the student rather than the student to the school. Restructuring is therefore critical to our efforts to educate an increasingly diverse society.

Universities and schools of education can provide invaluable assistance to school boards and schools engaged in restructuring. This assistance might include staff development for school-based management teams, the provision of resources or facilities for use by local elementary and secondary schools, and evaluation of program effectiveness. Mobilizing university students, especially minority students, to tutor pupils in the community and to discuss education and career options would be an important contribution. It follows that, when working in the community to improve education, universities must strive to involve the community residents as full partners in the effort. Failure to do so can lead to resentment and lack of cooperation.

I believe that the single most important predictor of a child’s educational achievement is parent involvement. Clearly, there are additional factors, but a parent’s concern for his or her child’s education is independent of these and can make all the difference in the world. We know that parents are a child’s first teachers. Parents should emphasize the importance of an education to their children and send them to school ready to learn. It is important to understand that parent involvement can make an immediate difference, unlike other reform proposals that can take many years to implement. Our children cannot wait that long.

BALANCING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT WITH CHARACTER EDUCATION

As secretary of education I often appealed to the values of the people to whom I spoke. When speaking to various groups about what needed to be done to turn our schools around, I invariably raised the issue of values. Although I spoke about academic choice, school-based management, multicultural education, early childhood education, and a host of other education reform proposals, I often returned to values. For example, I would propose four strategies to help improve our elementary and secondary schools. They were *raising awareness* of the problems faced by our schools, *caring* about the problems, *raising expectations* for all children, and *working together*. Three of those four strategies rely on value-based concepts.

During our Administration, teaching values was controversial. Some people did not even like to talk about the idea of teaching values because they were afraid that doing so meant attempting to impose a particular ideological or religious belief system on impressionable children. We even saw school systems proudly adopting what were called “value-free” textbooks, thereby draining history and literature of meaning in an effort not to expose young minds to any kind of bias.

At present, I see teaching values in our schools as a vital part of preparing children for the inevitable challenge and occasional pain of real-life decision making. I believe that teaching values can enhance education. We know that values can be positive or negative, depending on circumstances, and a values-based education is an education in thinking, in weighing and making choices, in exploring consequences, and in working through problems to find which approaches are helpful in reaching positive, healthy solutions.

Values education should help students find their place

in the world and should build their self-confidence. Values in a school curriculum add a dimension to the benefits of academic achievement. Values provide perspective, largely by putting the individual into a community context. For example, during my tenure as secretary of education, the department introduced a model curriculum for drug education and prevention. It was built around the theme of civic responsibility, the idea that young people have a responsibility both to themselves and to their communities. This emphasis on civic responsibility helped students understand that drug use was not solely a personal choice with only personal consequences. Students learned that drug use harmed both individuals and society as a whole.

In an attempt to balance academic achievement and character education, schools and teachers must respect the primary role of the parents and family. Particularly in view of the growing cultural diversity of our society, it is important to recognize that a child's earliest values will be learned through the example and teaching of his or her parents. Teachers must be careful not to create barriers between parents and children by contradicting or questioning values maintained in the home. If we are to avoid this pitfall, we must improve communications between parents and schools and persuade parents that teachers want to work with them to provide the best education possible for their children. Important values can be reinforced both at home and in school.

TRAINING TEACHERS AND THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

During my tenure as secretary of education, teacher education was under pressure to improve markedly. Teacher educators were pushed to reform their programs, and many innovative changes in teacher education resulted. As secretary, I saw the improvement of teacher education as paralleling the reform of elementary and secondary education. I wanted the changes taking place in American education to reflect a new respect for the teaching profession. I strongly supported school-based management, because I believed that this type of change created an entrepreneurial environment that would reward a teacher's professional initiative and innovation. President Bush requested \$400 million in his 1991 budget, an increase of 38% over 1990, for 11 federal programs that supported teacher training. We also requested funds for a new initiative to improve the training of school principals.

Before I assumed office, many earlier efforts to im-

prove the quality of teaching were prescriptive. They imposed requirements governing not only what to teach but how and when to teach it. These requirements, coming from state capitals, amounted to a message to teachers that the legislators "know better than you how to teach the children in your classrooms."

I am pleased that the reforms taking place in recent years are aimed at undoing the mistakes of the past by empowering professional educators to organize their schools and teach to the best of their abilities. Rising enrollments at colleges of education suggest the growing appeal of teaching. Although still lagging, the salaries for elementary and secondary teachers have improved somewhat in recent years. We must pay our teachers far better than we are doing today, and this matter still needs attention.

To my mind, there are two major policy issues that must be addressed regarding teachers: enhancing the numbers of minority teachers and preparing teachers to work with an increasingly diverse student population.

Despite the growing numbers of minority students, the proportion of minority teachers has remained steady at about 10% in the last 15 years. This means that many of our children will never have the opportunity to be taught by minority teachers. This is unfortunate because minority teachers serve as important role models for minority students in communities where education may not be valued as much as it should be. A shared background may help a teacher demonstrate and communicate the importance of learning to students who otherwise would see little purpose in attending school. Of course, nonminority teachers can achieve great success in teaching minority students, but they must often overcome a certain cultural distance to do so. The absence of this gap may give some minority teachers an advantage in discovering the most effective ways to teach students who are experiencing difficulty in school.

Teachers must understand and deal with the cultural diversity in our schools. Many students, especially in our urban schools, speak a language other than English at home. From my own experience, I know that it is possible to learn two languages while growing up and going to school, but social and cultural diversity can present extra challenges to teachers. One strategy would be for teachers to be able to communicate with students and parents in their home language. For that reason, I have proposed that colleges of education place a new emphasis on language proficiency

in their undergraduate curriculum. They might consider making proficiency in a second language mandatory.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Education reform has not come easy and still has a long way to go. Despite changes, the overall performance of many of our schools, especially in the inner cities, needs vast improvement. Although many new strategies to strengthen academic programs for students have been implemented, the U.S. has not achieved its national goals. I am pleased that this nation is focused on improving education and that many people are seeking changes that will improve education. I believe we will see even more effort to restructure schools.

I sense a remarkable consensus on the kinds of changes needed. Schools of the future will involve parents, will empower principals and teachers, will emphasize early childhood education, and will strengthen curricula in mathematics, science, English, foreign languages, and the social sciences. Most of all, the schools of the future will have more sensitivity to the differing needs of an increasingly diverse population. I do believe that,

as a nation concerned with the education of our children, we have the courage and imagination to risk doing something new in education, to move beyond “more of the same,” and to educate our children in a different and productive fashion.

In the past decade, we have seen several new models for bettering education. These include academic choice in the public schools, the establishment of charter schools, various voucher proposals, and the emergence of home schooling. It is possible that all these strategies are viable and can enhance the education of our children. However, I urge that we continue to focus on improving our public elementary and secondary schools. Voucher programs, charter schools, and home schooling tend to take attention, funding, and students away from the public school system. My hope for the future is that we focus especially on ways to improve our urban public schools. We must not abandon them. We must continue to restructure them and bring them to academic excellence.

There is no need to create a new system of schools. Once, we had the finest public elementary and secondary schools in the world. We can again. **■**

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