

**Education.** Today's Democratic Party knows that education is the key to opportunity. In the new global economy, it is more important than ever before. Today, education is the fault line that separates those who will prosper from those who cannot. President Clinton and Democrats in Congress have spared no effort over the last four years to improve the quality of American education and expand the opportunity for all Americans to get the education they need to succeed.

Every step of the way, we have been opposed by Republicans intent on cutting education. Now, they want to cut education from Head Start through college scholarships. They want to undermine our public schools and make borrowing for college more difficult for millions of students.

Today's Democratic Party will stand firmly against the Republican assault on education. Cutting education as we move into the 21st century would be like cutting defense spending at the height of the Cold War. We must do more to expand educational opportunity -- not less.

*Strengthening public schools.* We increased Head Start funding to expand early education for more children who need it. We passed Goals 2000 to help schools set high standards, and find the resources they need to succeed: the best books, the brightest teachers, the most up-to-date technology. We restructured federal education programs and eliminated federal regulations to give local schools, teachers, and principals the flexibility and help they need to meet those standards. We've worked to make sure our children have the best teachers by expanding teacher education. We applaud the work of state and local Democrats to develop innovative solutions to make sure our children get the best possible education.

In the next four years, we must do even more to make sure America has the best public schools on earth. If we want to be the best, we should expect the best: We must hold students, teachers, and schools to the highest standards. Every child should be able to read by the end of the third grade. Students should be required to demonstrate competency and achievement for promotion or graduation. Teachers in this country are among the most talented professionals we have. They should be required to meet high standards for professional performance and be rewarded for the good jobs they do. For the few who don't measure up to those high standards, there should be a fair process to get them out of the classroom and the profession. And we should get rid of the barriers that discourage talented young people from becoming teachers in the first place. We should not bash teachers. We should applaud them, and find ways to keep the best teachers in the classroom. Schools should be held accountable for results. We should redesign or overhaul schools that fail. We should expand public school choice, but we should not take American tax dollars from public schools and give them to private schools. We should promote public charter schools that are held to the highest standards of accountability and access. And we should continue to ensure that America provides quality education to children with disabilities, because high-quality public education is the key to opportunity for all children.

*Teaching values in schools.* Today's Democratic Party knows our children's education is not complete unless they learn good values. We applaud the efforts of the Clinton-Gore Administration to promote character education in our schools. Teaching good values, strong character, and the responsibilities of citizenship must be an essential part of American education.

*Safe schools and healthy students.* If young people do not have the freedom to learn in safety, they do not have the freedom to learn at all. Over the last four years, we have worked hard to keep schools safe and drug-free, and students healthy. When Senator Dole and Speaker Gingrich led Republican efforts to cut school safety funding, President

Clinton and Democrats in Congress wouldn't let them get away with it. When Senator Dole and Speaker Gingrich led Republican efforts to destroy the nation's school lunch program, President Clinton and Democrats in Congress stopped them cold. Now, we must work together at every level of government to launch a major rebuilding effort to make sure our children go to school in high-quality facilities where they can learn. We must help schools set the highest standards for good behavior and discipline in our schools. Children cannot learn -- and teachers cannot teach -- without order in the classroom.

*Technology in the classroom.* We must bring the 21st century into every classroom in America. There is a vast realm of knowledge waiting for our children to tap into. Computers are powerful tools to teach students to read better, write better, and understand math. President Clinton and Vice President Gore understand that technological literacy is essential to success in the new economy. The only way to achieve that for every student is to give them all access to a computer, good software, trained teachers, and the Internet -- and President Clinton and Vice President Gore have launched a partnership with high-tech companies, schools, state, and local governments to wire every classroom and library to the Information Superhighway by the year 2000.

*Preparing students for jobs.* We passed School-to-Work so young people can learn the skills they need to get and keep high wage jobs. The Republican Congress is trying to destroy it, and we pledge to stop them. We want to keep working with the private sector, to encourage community partnerships that build the bridge between a good education and a good job.

*Higher education for all Americans.* Finally, we must make sure that every American has the opportunity to go to college. Higher education is the key to a successful future in the 21st century. The typical worker with a college education earns 73 percent more than one without. America has the best higher education in the world. We do not need to change it -- we need to make it available for all Americans. Our goal must be nothing less than to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as the first 12.

Over the last four years, the Democratic Party under President Clinton has put an unprecedented college opportunity strategy in place: We reformed the student loan program, to make college more affordable for 5.5 million students -- and we saved money for the taxpayers by eliminating the middleman, cutting red tape, and cutting the cost of student loan defaults in half. We have expanded Pell Grant college scholarships for deserving students. And the President's national service program has already helped 45,000 Americans earn money for college by helping their communities.

*Tax cuts for college.* Over the next four years, we want to go even further: We should expand work-study so one million students a year can work their way through college by the year 2000. We should allow people to use money from their IRA to help pay for college. We should give a \$1000 honor scholarship for the top 5 percent of graduates in every high school. And we must make 14 years of education the standard for every American. The Democratic Party wants to create a \$10,000 tax deduction for families to help pay for education after high school. And we want to create a \$1,500 tax cut for Americans, modeled after Georgia's successful HOPE scholarships, to guarantee the first year of tuition at a typical community college, and the second year if individuals earn it by maintaining a B average. No tax cut will do more to raise American incomes than a tax cut to pay for college.

## Improving Education

"At the center of all that afflicts our schools is a denial of free choice. Our public schools are in trouble because they are no longer run by the public. Instead, they're controlled by narrow special interest groups who regard public education not as a public trust, but as political territory to be guarded at all costs."

Bob Dole, July 17, 1996, in Minneapolis

The American people know that something is terribly wrong with our education system. The evidence is everywhere: children who cannot read, graduates who cannot reason, danger in schoolyards, indoctrination in classrooms.

To this crisis in our schools, Bill Clinton responds with the same liberal dogmas that created the mess: more federal control and more spending on all the wrong things. He opposes family rights in education and opportunity scholarships for poor children. When it comes to saving our schools, he flunks.

Americans should have the best education in the world. We spend more per pupil than any other nation, and the great majority of our teachers are dedicated and skilled educators, whose interests are ignored by political union bosses. Our goal is nothing less than a renaissance in American education, begun by returning its control to parents, teachers, local school boards and, through them, to communities and local taxpayers.

Our formula is as simple as it is sweeping: the federal government has no constitutional authority to be involved in school curricula or to control jobs in the work place. That is why we will abolish the Department of Education, end federal meddling in our schools, and promote family choice at all levels of learning. We therefore call for prompt repeal of the Goals 2000 program and the School-To-Work Act of 1994, which put new federal controls, as well as unfunded mandates, on the States. We further urge that federal attempts to impose outcome- or performance-based education on local schools be ended.

We know what works in education, and it isn't the liberal fads of the last thirty years. It's discipline, parental involvement, emphasis on basics including computer technology, phonics instead of look-say reading, and dedicated teaching.

Abstinence education in the home will lead to less need for birth control services and fewer abortions. We support educational initiatives to promote chastity until marriage as the expected standard of behavior. This education initiative is the best preventive measure to avoid the emotional trauma of sexually-transmitted diseases and teen pregnancies that are serious problems among our young people. While recognizing that something must be done to help children when parental consent or supervision is not possible, we oppose school-based clinics, which provide referrals, counseling, and related services for contraception and abortion.

We encourage a reform agenda on the local level and urge State legislators to ensure quality education for all through programs of parental choice among public, private, and religious schools. That includes the option of home schooling, and Republicans will defend the right of families to make that choice. We support and vigorously work for mechanisms, such as opportunity scholarships, block grants, school rebates, charter schools, and vouchers, to make parental choice in education a reality for all parents.

On the federal level, we endorse legislation - like the Watts-Talent Low-Income Educational Opportunity Act, which is part of the Community Renewal Act of 1996, and the Coats-Kasich Educational Choice and Equity Act - to set up model programs for empowering the families who need good schooling the most.

We will continue to work for the return of voluntary prayer to our schools and will strongly enforce the Republican legislation that guarantees equal access to school facilities by student religious groups. We encourage State legislatures to pass statutes which prohibit local school boards from adopting policies of denial regarding voluntary school prayer.

## The Republican Party 2

We endorse Bob Dole's pledge that all federal education policies will be guided by his Education Consumer's Warranty. The Education Consumer's Warranty says that all American children should expect to:

- attend a safe school;
- be free from educational malpractice at the hands of bad schools, incompetent teachers, timid principals, and intrusive bureaucrats;
- find out exactly how well they and their school are doing (in terms of achievement) in relation to how well they ought to be doing;
- learn the three R's through proven methods;
- learn the nation's history and democratic values and study the classics of western civilization;
- attend a school that is free to innovate and isn't tied down by federal red tape;
- be confident that their high school diploma signifies a solid education, suitable for college or a good job;
  - \* choose the school that's right for them
  - \* know that their tax dollars are reaching the classroom, not being siphoned off into overhead and bureaucracy
  - \* count on being able to arrive at college prepared to do freshman-level work.

To reinforce our American heritage, we believe our nation's Governors, State legislators, and local school boards should support requiring our public schools to solely dedicate one full day each year to studying the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

America's families find themselves on a college treadmill: the more they work to pay tuition, the faster it seems to increase. Tuition has escalated far in excess of inflation, in defiance of market factors, and shows no sign of slowing down. Billions of dollars are wasted on regulations, paperwork, and "political correctness," which impedes the ability of the faculty to teach. We call for a national reassessment of the economics of higher education, to stop the treadmill and restore fiscal accountability to higher education. Congressional Republicans budgeted a 50 percent increase in student loans while fighting Bill Clinton's intrusion of Big Government into their financing. Heeding the outcry from the nation's campuses, we will end the Clinton Administration's perverse direct lending program. We support proposals to assist families to prepare for the financial strains of higher education, like the American Dream Savings Account, passed by congressional Republicans but vetoed.

To protect the nation's colleges and universities against intolerance, we will work with independent educators to create alternatives to ideological accrediting bodies. We believe meeting the higher education needs of America will require new, public and private institutions that are flexible, able to apply new technologies, willing to provide access to all those who need it, cost-effective and that place no burden on the American taxpayer.