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Teacher-Quality Proposal Outlined

Clinton: New Ideas, Expanded Programs

Here are excerpts from President Clinton's State of the Union Address:

So tonight let us take our look long ahead—and set great goals for our nation. To 21st century America, let us pledge that: Every child will begin school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. Every family will be able to succeed at home and at work—and no child will be raised in poverty. . . .

First and foremost, we need a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every child can learn. Because education is more than ever the key to our children's future, we must make sure all our children have that key. That means quality preschool and after-school, the best trained teachers in every classroom, and college opportunities for all our children.

For seven years, we have worked hard to improve our schools, with opportunity and responsibility: investing more, but demanding more in return.

Reading, math, and college entrance scores are up. And some of the most impressive gains are in schools in poor neighborhoods.

All successful schools have followed the same proven formula: higher standards, more accountability, so all children can reach those standards. I have sent Congress a reform plan based on that formula. It holds states and school districts accountable for progress, and rewards them for results. Each year, the national government invests more than \$15 billion in our schools. It's time to support what works and stop supporting what doesn't.

As we demand more than ever from our schools, we should invest more than ever in our schools. Let's double our investment to help states and districts turn around their worst-performing schools—or shut them down. Let's double our investment in after-school and summer school programs—boosting achievement, and keeping children off the street and out of trouble. If we do, we can give every child in every failing school in America the chance to meet high standards.

Since 1993, we've nearly doubled our investment in Head Start and improved its quality. Tonight, I ask for another \$1 billion for Head Start, the largest increase in the program's history.

We know that children learn best in smaller classes with good teachers. For two years in a row, Congress has supported my plan to hire 100,000 new, qualified teachers, to lower class sizes in the early grades. This year, I ask you to make it three in a row.

And to make sure all teachers know the subjects they teach, tonight I propose a new teacher quality initiative—to recruit more talented people into the classroom, reward good teachers for staying there, and give all teachers the training they need.



"First and foremost, we need a 21st-century revolution in education," President Clinton said.

We know charter schools provide real public school choice. When I became president, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. Today, thanks to you, there are 1,700. I ask you to help us meet our goal of 3,000 by next year.

We know we must connect all our classes to the Internet. We're getting there. In 1994, only

3 percent of our classrooms were connected. Today, with the help of the vice president's E-rate program, more than half of them are, and 90 percent of our schools have at least one connection to the Internet.

But we can't finish the job when a third of all schools are in serious disrepair, many with walls and wires too old for the Internet. Tonight, I propose to help 5,000 schools a year make immediate, urgent repairs. And again, to help build or modernize 6,000 schools, to get students out of trailers and into high-tech classrooms.

We should double our bipartisan GEAR UP program to mentor 1.4 million disadvantaged young people for college. And let's offer these students a chance to take the same college test-prep courses wealthier students use to boost their test scores.

To make the American dream achievable for all, we must make college affordable for all. For seven years, on a bipartisan basis, we have taken action toward that goal: larger Pell grants, more-affordable student loans, education IRAs, and our HOPE scholarships, which have already benefited 5 million young people. Sixty-seven percent of high school graduates now go on to college—up almost 10 percent since 1993. Yet millions of families still strain to pay college tuition. They need help.

I propose a landmark \$30 billion college opportunity tax cut—a middle-class tax deduction for up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs. We've already made two years of college affordable for all. Now let's make four years of college affordable for all.

If we take all these steps, we will move a long way toward making sure every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed.

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