

CONFIRMATION OF ARNE DUNCAN

HEARING
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
ON
CONFIRMATION OF ARNE DUNCAN, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JANUARY 13, 2009

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CONFIRMATION OF ARNE DUNCAN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009,

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom Harkin, presiding.

Present: Senators Harkin, Mikulski, Murray, Reed, Sanders, Enzi, Alexander, Burr, Isakson, Murkowski, Hatch, Roberts, and Coburn.

Also Present: Senator Durbin.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HARKIN

Senator HARKIN. Good morning. The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will come to order.

Our Chairman, Senator Kennedy, has asked me to chair this morning's hearing of this committee.

A special welcome to Mr. Arne Duncan, who has been designated by President-elect Obama to lead the Department of Education in the new administration.

Since 2001, Mr. Duncan has been chief executive officer of the Chicago public school system. Prior to joining the Chicago Public Schools, he was director of the Ariel Education Initiative, which seeks to create high-quality educational opportunities for inner-city children on Chicago's South Side.

As a leader of Chicago Public Schools, Mr. Duncan has earned a national reputation for turning around a large, diverse, urban public school system.

Mr. Duncan, there is no question that schools across America can benefit from the same kind of fresh thinking that you have brought to the Chicago Public Schools. As you know very well, perhaps our greatest educational challenge is to improve the performance of urban and rural public schools serving high-poverty communities.

As I mentioned to you last week when we met in my office, I have been deeply influenced by the writings of Jonathan Kozol. In his book "Savage Inequalities," he talked about what happens in these high-poverty neighborhood schools, and I quote,

"One consequence of medical and early education denial is the virtual destruction of learning skills of many children by the time they get to secondary schools."

In our Nation's 35 largest cities, the dropout/attrition rate is 50 percent or worse. So Mr. Duncan, this is just one more crisis and

challenge facing the incoming Obama administration. If you are confirmed by the Senate, we will be counting on you for bold and aggressive leadership.

In addition, we need a new commitment to education funding from the incoming administration. Reform without new resources is just so much wishful thinking. Over the last 7 years, however, the title I program has been underfunded by \$55 billion, and we have failed to advance on our commitment to fund the education of children with disabilities.

We need a fresh perspective on No Child Left Behind, a program that you are intimately acquainted with as a big-city school administrator. The challenges you have faced in Chicago are faced by districts all across the country.

As we have talked about, the challenges facing special education have long been a priority of mine. It is time for the Federal Government—and I don't mean just you, but all of us—to make good on our promise to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

With regard to higher education, a top priority for the next Secretary must be to ensure that no young person is denied access to college for lack of access to a reasonable loan.

Should you be confirmed, you will be asked, along with your counterpart at the Department of Health and Human Services, to expand access to early education. The President-elect laid out a bold agenda that, if enacted, would increase access and improve the quality of early education. It would also require more from the Secretary of Education than has been asked of any of your predecessors.

The Secretary also has the important responsibility of administering the career and technical education and adult education programs. With so many people out of work and looking to retool for new jobs, these programs are more important than ever.

Mr. Duncan, we look forward to hearing your ideas for change and reform. More broadly, members of this committee are looking forward to hearing your commitment to consult and collaborate with us in the months and years ahead. This is a very diverse committee, with members who represent a wide variety of expertise and points of view.

When we met last week in my office, you expressed your openness to learning from members of this committee and from educators across the country. That attitude will serve you well.

Mr. Duncan, I admire your commitment to public service and to public education in particular. You have very impressive credentials and experience, as well as the confidence of the President-elect.

Again, I welcome you to the committee. I look forward to your remarks.

With that, I will yield to our distinguished Ranking Member, Senator Enzi.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ENZI

Senator ENZI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing.

Confirming the President's nominees is one of the most important constitutional duties of the Senate. And in terms of our country's future, education is one of the most critical issues we have to address.

I first met Mr. Duncan in Chicago a little over 3 years ago at an announcement by Secretary of Education, Spellings, of a pilot program for supplemental educational services. Even before we met, I was aware of the efforts he was making to reform Chicago Public Schools, always focusing on what is best for children.

He supports charter schools, public school choice, and merit pay for teachers and school leaders. His belief in holding schools accountable for results and maintaining transparency about school performance through public reporting has led to improved student achievement.

Your track record with a major urban school district is well known. But I must warn you that I am particularly concerned about the unique challenges that rural and frontier schools and students face, and I will remind you of these challenges as we work on issues such as the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, or whatever we call it next time. Or as I sometimes say, "no rural child left behind."

Since the fall of 2005, we have seen ongoing improvement in education that our children receive in our Nation's schools. I would say that even with the progress we have made, it has not been enough. I believe that education is a key factor in securing a sound economic future for our country. Everyone, regardless of their background, needs access to quality education and training throughout their lives.

Education has been a bipartisan issue, and we need to keep it that way. In fact, I believe that no major piece of education authorizing legislation has been passed by the Senate or sent to the President's desk that didn't have strong bipartisan support.

The HELP Committee has established a successful track record of getting legislation across the finish line and signed by the President. I attribute that success to focusing on the 80 percent that we agree on, while trying to find a third way for the remaining 20 percent.

There are going to be areas where we disagree, but my hope and expectation is that by focusing on solutions, we can produce meaningful results for our students and their families, for teachers, principals, and administrators.

Congress and the Department of Education need to work together to make sure that every school has the tools and the flexibility needed to help students develop the knowledge and skills required to be successful in the 21st century. We still have too many students leaving high school and college without completing their programs of study.

More students need to graduate from high school, on time, prepared to successfully enter college or the workforce. We also need to increase the number of students who enter college and complete their program of study. They should not leave with little to show for their time except bills and debt.

Some postsecondary education is critical to at least 8 out of 10 jobs being created. Over 6,000 students drop out every day, which

means that for every school hour, upwards of 275 students drop out. For those students, over their lifetime, we will lose about \$74 million in lost wages and revenues. That is too great a price to pay for the student, for the community, for our Nation.

I look forward to working with Mr. Duncan to chart a future course for the education success of all of our students. When Mr. Duncan and I spoke last week, we discussed our mutual belief that we need to improve the number of students who successfully enter and complete postsecondary education programs.

We have to build on the successes of No Child Left Behind. We have to coordinate efforts across programs, including career and technical education and workforce programs under the Workforce Investment Act, and reduce the barriers nontraditional students face to obtaining education that will provide the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the 21st century. Our country's future depends on our ability to reach this goal.

I have a number of questions for you, some of which I will ask during question and answer. It is likely, however, there will be questions I won't be able to ask and will provide for your written responses to be included in the record. So that we can accelerate consideration of your nomination, I would appreciate your quick response to these questions.

I do apologize. I will have to leave the hearing early. We have some other Cabinet-level positions that are being confirmed or heard at this point, as well as a few health issues we are trying to work on.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Chairman for calling this hearing. I would also like to thank Mr. Duncan for his willingness to take on the challenges of the Federal role in improving education for all students throughout their lifetime.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Enzi.

We welcome our distinguished Assistant Majority Leader to the committee, another great champion of public education in this country, for the purposes of introduction, Senator Dick Durbin.

Welcome, Dick.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DURBIN

Senator DURBIN. I want to thank Senator Harkin, Senator Enzi, Senators Mikulski, Alexander, and Hatch for joining us, and all the members of the HELP Committee.

It is my honor to appear before you today to introduce my friend Arne Duncan, who is the choice of President Obama to serve as Secretary of the Department of Education.

When Mayor Daley took a look at the great city of Chicago and its future, he decided there were two things that had to be done. First, you needed to bring safety to the neighborhoods and, second, quality to the schools. Arne Duncan was chosen as the CEO of Chicago Public Schools in the year 2001. For 7½ years, he has tackled the challenge of turning around the troubled schools in the city of Chicago. Chicago Public Schools is the third-largest school district in America with all the challenges of an urban school district—over 90 percent minority, over 90 percent poverty.

Arne is a leader. He has consistently surpassed expectations with hard work and clear dedication. If you take a look at how he grew up, you can understand it. His mother had a center in Hyde Park for inner-city kids, poor kids to go to, to be tutored. Arne would finish his day in the classroom in his school and then go over to his mother's center and tutor other kids. That is how he grew up. That was his after-school activity.

Many of his views about urban education were shaped by that experience, and you will learn about them during the course of this hearing. He also worked in the nonprofit sector with John Rogers at the Ariel Fund, identifying key schools where investments could be made and a difference could be made. Eventually, he was tapped by Mayor Daley to step back into the public sector, and he did willingly.

He has adopted a whole class of children and sent them to college. He started a school in Chicago built around financial literacy. Along the way, incidentally, he played a little basketball—that seems to be a recurring theme with the new Obama administration—including some time when he played professional basketball in Australia.

In his senior year at Harvard—I read this morning—as co-captain, his greatest moment was in playing Duke and leading his teammates, scoring 20 points. Harvard lost, but it was quite a game effort.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DUNCAN. Not enough.

Senator DURBIN. It is his work in the Chicago Public Schools that really stands out. I have had the honor of knowing and working with Arne for many years. We have been to so many different events at schools and press conferences.

I even recalled with his wife, Karen, this morning when Claire and Ryan and Arne and I were both holding shovels, digging a playground at a public school in a very muddy setting in the city of Chicago. So I know that he is a hands-on leader.

He lights up when he talks about the latest school that is beating the odds on a new program, reaching students who had been written off. He doesn't sugarcoat the challenges he encounters along the way. He is straightforward, thoughtful, honest, and decisive.

Last year, I visited a high school in Chicago and met with a group of students and then walked through the school. After I had finished that, I called Arne directly. I said to him, "Arne, I don't think I have ever complained to you about a school that I have visited. But that high school is out of control. I can't believe that anybody is learning anything there, as I walk through the corridors and look in the classrooms."

He said, "I will look into it." Two weeks later, he called me, and he said, "You were right. It was an experiment with the principal that didn't work, and he is moving on. We are bringing in somebody else."

I liked that. Here is a person who listened, followed up, and did the right thing.

Today, Chicago enjoys a reputation as a model of school system reform, and Arne's leadership has had a lot to do with it. Over 7½ years, he has raised test scores, lowered dropout rates, boosted col-

lege enrollment, opened more than 100 new schools, and expanded after-school and Saturday programs.

Through it all, he has maintained good relations with the business community, with the unions, and elected officials, even as he pushed tough reforms. Arne Duncan understands that real and meaningful change in our toughest schools depends on the participation and cooperation of everybody.

He knows when to compromise, and he knows when to hold firm. One of the toughest challenges he has had is closing a school. If you can imagine the reaction in the neighborhood and from the families and from the teachers, and he has weathered that storm time and again, never blinked, knowing that some of those schools that were failing just had to be closed for the best interests of the kids.

No other district in the country has been as aggressive about holding schools accountable for performance and willing to try new, innovative methods to improve schools. I think that is the spirit we need in the Department of Education.

American education is at a critical moment. Thirty years ago, the United States ranked first internationally in graduating students from high school and college. Today, our Nation ranks 15th.

This is not the time for America to fall behind. It is time to raise the bar. We need to make sure every student has a chance to excel.

This is a challenge and a priority for the Obama administration. I can remember speaking to the President-elect just days after the election, and we talked about the Department of Education, and a lot of names were mentioned. I said to him, and he nodded in agreement, "You know, we have somebody right here in Chicago who would be an extraordinary Secretary of Education."

Well, I am honored today to have the opportunity to introduce him to you in a formal way. I know that most of you have already had a chance to meet him.

We are going to miss him in Chicago, if the Senate confirms him, and I believe it will. We will know that he will be an excellent Education Secretary, and the students of America and their families couldn't have a stronger advocate on their behalf.

I am sorry that I have to step away at this point, but I will now turn it over to my friend and, I hope, the next Secretary of the Department of Education, Arne Duncan.

[The prepared statement of Senator Durbin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR DURBIN

President-elect Obama has asked Arne Duncan to serve as Secretary of the Department of Education.

Arne Duncan was appointed CEO of Chicago Public Schools in 2001. Since then, we have watched him tackle the challenge of turning around troubled schools in Chicago. Chicago Public Schools is the 3rd-largest school district in America with all the challenges of any urban school district.

Arne is a leader. He has consistently surpassed expectations through his hard work and clear dedication to Chicago's children. Arne understands the challenges of urban education. Education has been his life—starting as a child, when he spent every afternoon at his mother's tutoring program for inner-city children.

Many of his views about urban education were shaped by this experience, and you will learn more about those views over the course of this hearing.

Arne also worked in the non-profit sector. He adopted a whole class of children and sent them to college. He started a school in Chicago built around financial literacy.

You might also have heard that Arne has played basketball all his life—including professionally in Australia. He will tell you that the discipline and teamwork that he acquired on the court has helped him off the court.

But it is his work with the Chicago Public Schools that really stands out.

I have visited many Chicago schools with Arne, stood with him at public events and press conferences, and followed his reform efforts closely. He lights up when he's talking about the latest school that is beating the odds or a new program reaching students who had been written off. But he doesn't sugarcoat the challenges he encounters along the way. He is straightforward, thoughtful, and honest.

Today, Chicago enjoys a reputation as a model of school system reform, and I credit Arne's leadership—his work ethic, his focus, and his determination.

Over 7½ years, Arne has raised test scores, lowered dropout rates, boosted college enrollment, opened more than 100 new schools, and expanded after-school and Saturday programs.

Through it all, he has maintained good relations with business leaders, unions, and elected officials—even as he pushed forward tough reforms. Arne Duncan understands that real, meaningful change in our toughest schools depends on participation from all parties.

Arne knows when to compromise and he knows when to hold firm. One of his toughest reforms was closing down low-performing schools in Chicago. It was very controversial. But Arne knew that these schools were failing their students, and he never blinked. Today, the children who were in those schools are much better off.

No other district in the country has been as aggressive about holding schools accountable for performance or as willing to try new innovative methods of improving schools. He will bring the same high standards and focus on innovation to the Department of Education.

American education is at a critical moment. Thirty years ago, the U.S. ranked 1st internationally in graduating students from high school and college. Today, we rank 15th.

This is not the time for America to fall behind. It's time to raise the bar. We need to make sure that every student who wants a college education receives the academic preparation and financial support they need to achieve their goal. Every student who wants a college education should have the academic preparation and financial support they need to achieve their goal.

This is a challenge and a priority for the Obama administration. Arne Duncan is the right leader to carry that agenda forward. He has my complete confidence and highest recommendation.

Arne has been a tremendous asset to my state of Illinois. Chicago will miss his leadership. But he will be an excellent education sec-

retary. The students of America could not have a stronger advocate on their behalf.

It's an honor to introduce my friend, a great educator and a great leader, Arne Duncan.

Senator HARKIN. Senator Durbin, thank you very much, and I know you have other business to attend to as the assistant leader. Thank you very much for the introduction and for all your help and your support for Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Duncan, welcome to the committee. In keeping with the tradition that Senator Kennedy has set for this committee, I always ask the nominee to first introduce the family members who are with you. We would like to know who all your family members are.

Mr. DUNCAN. Sure. I would be proud to do that. Behind me is my wife, Karen, and my children, Claire and Ryan. If you guys could please stand.

Claire is 7 years old, and Ryan is almost 5.

[Applause.]

Senator HARKIN. A great-looking family. A handsome son, and since I raised two daughters, I am partial to daughters, obviously.

[Laughter.]

I think Claire is just beautiful, and is she going to try out for the part of "Annie" in a school play?

[Laughter.]

Mr. DUNCAN. They will be busy writing and drawing throughout the confirmation process.

Senator HARKIN. Mr. Duncan, again, your statement will be made part of the record in its entirety. You can proceed as you so wish.

**STATEMENT OF ARNE DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
OF THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CHICAGO, IL**

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much.

I want to thank Senator Kennedy in his absence. We had a great conversation yesterday.

I want to thank Senator Enzi. Senator Harkin, I want to thank you for agreeing to chair this hearing and for your tremendous commitment to children, particularly those who are disabled and have not had the opportunities historically. Thank you so much for your leadership.

This is an extraordinary time in our country, an extraordinary time to be working on education. I want to begin by talking about something that I think the public hasn't picked up on enough that Senator Mikulski articulated extraordinarily well as we talked last week. I have really enjoyed my conversations with all the Senators over the past few days.

She talked about what she called the "Barack effect," the "Obama effect." What we have with the President-elect and his wife are two people who are living symbols, who embody the value of education.

They come from humble backgrounds, humble beginnings. Because they worked so hard, because they are so committed to becoming great people, what they did educationally was extraordinary.

Children throughout our country today, whether it is inner-city Chicago, whether it is rural Iowa or Wyoming, children around the country look at those two and say, "They worked hard. I can do it, too." What you see is children saying not just, "I want to be the President like the President-elect." They are saying, "I want to be smart like the President-elect."

We have a time, collectively, as a country, to capitalize on something I think is simply extraordinary. Never before has being smart been so cool and working hard been so cool.

I think we have a chance to build upon not just the substance of the education plan, but the symbolism of what the President-elect and his wife represent. I think that is going to be very, very special and that every child in this country has the chance to look at them and say, "If I work hard, look what I can accomplish."

The President-elect views education as both a moral obligation and an economic imperative. In the face of rising global competition, we know that education is the critical, some would say the only, road to economic security.

Quality education is also the civil rights issue of our generation. It is the only path out of poverty, the only road to a more equal, just, and fair society. In fact, I believe the fight for a quality education is about so much more than education. It is a fight for social justice.

I come to this work with three deeply held beliefs. First, that every child from every background absolutely can be successful. Rural, suburban, urban, gifted, special ed, ELL, poor, minority—it simply doesn't matter. When we, as adults, do our job and we give them opportunities to succeed, all of our children can be extraordinarily successful.

Second, maybe the flip of that, when we fail to properly educate children, we, as educators, perpetuate poverty, and we perpetuate social failure. That is not something that I want to be a part of.

Third, our children have one chance, one chance at a quality education, so we must work with an extraordinary sense of urgency. Simply put, we cannot wait because they cannot wait.

As we look ahead, I will begin with the President-elect's strong commitment to reform at every level and the compelling vision that he spelled out during his campaign. I am extraordinarily hopeful about what we can accomplish by working together.

First, he talked about the need to dramatically improve both access to early childhood opportunities and to have more high-quality opportunities there, and we know that the quicker we get to students, the earlier we get them involved in high-quality early childhood programs, the better they are going to do in the long-term.

Second, at the K to 12 level, we want to continue to dramatically raise standards and increase teacher quality.

Third, as those students progress from early childhood on to K to 12 and then on to higher education, we want to ensure greater access there and strengthen institutions like our community colleges—which you mentioned, Senator Harkin—which are critically important and can play a huge role, giving people a second chance, retooling skills, and getting back into the workforce.

As we look at those three buckets of work—increasing access and opportunity for early childhood, strengthening what we are doing

to K to 12, and increasing access to higher education—there are two themes that I think need to run through all of that work that are very important to me.

First, we must do dramatically better and we must continue to innovate. We must build upon what works, we must stop doing what doesn't work, and we have to continue to challenge the status quo. That spirit of innovation has been hugely important and will continue to be very, very important to me going forward.

Second, we must recognize and reward excellence. There are extraordinary teachers, principals, district leaders, State school chiefs, and community college presidents throughout this country. We have to elevate the teaching profession, we have to build upon this next generation of leaders in our schools and our State boards, and we have to find ways to scale up what works.

There are great, great pockets of excellence as we look across every State in this country. We have to find ways to scale up what works, to shine a spotlight on those educators who are doing an extraordinary job and going above and beyond the call of duty every single day.

I am absolutely convinced that if we can create better opportunities and raise expectations for everyone from our 3-year-olds to our 23-year-olds, if we can continue to innovate and challenge the status quo every single day, and if we can recognize and reward excellence throughout the country, I am absolutely convinced that we can transform education here in America.

Let me close briefly by just telling you a few things about myself. I have spent the past 10 years working for the Chicago Public Schools. I have been very fortunate to have that opportunity. For the past 7½ years, I have been the CEO of the Chicago Public Schools.

Our work is not done. There is a long way to go, but at the same time, we are proud of our progress. We have had 7 consecutive years of rising test scores, rising graduation rates, and reductions in dropout rates.

We have done everything we can to increase our time with children. I think our school day is too short, our school week is too short, our school year is too short. We have 150 community schools. We opened 200 schools on Saturdays this past year. We brought 15,000 freshmen back to school a month early during the summer on a voluntary basis because we wanted to get them off to a great start.

We are trying to really do everything we can to enhance the teaching profession. We have gone from 11 national board-certified teachers to over 1,200. We have gone from 2 applicants for each teaching position to over 10.

We have tried to make Chicago the place, the Mecca nationally for people who are passionate about public education and want to make a difference in students' lives. We have tried to create great new opportunities in neighborhoods that have been historically underserved, and I would argue have been underserved for decades.

We have closed schools for academic failure when we needed to do that. Those are not easy decisions to make. Very significantly, we have opened over 100 great new schools, again focusing primarily on communities that have been underserved. We couldn't be

more proud of the opportunities that children in those neighborhoods now have that haven't been there for far too long.

Perhaps the number I am most proud of is that last year our graduating seniors collectively won over \$150 million in competitive grants and scholarships. Given the fact that so many of our children are the first in their family to go to college, so many of our children are new to the country, we are so proud that colleges and universities around the country are recognizing the talent that our students have.

I tell them all the time that these are not gifts. These are investments in the future. People believe in what our students can accomplish as they go forward.

Twenty years ago, you may recall the former Secretary of Education Bill Bennett called the Chicago Public Schools the worst district in the Nation. We are proud to have made significant progress since that time and to really be a model of national reform. Again, the hard work is going to continue there, and it is far from done.

In the 6 years prior to joining Chicago Public Schools, I was fortunate to work with my best friend John Rogers and, along with my sister, to set up the nonprofit side of his business, the Ariel Foundation. We did two things. We ran an I Have A Dream program from 1992 to 1998. My job and my sister's job and the job of a great team of volunteers for those 6 years was to take 40 sixth graders and work with them all the way through high school—to tutor them, to mentor them every day, to work with their families to give them the opportunity to be successful.

At the end of that, we were proud that 87 percent of our students graduated on time, and 65 percent went on to college. The class one year ahead of us from that school, Shakespeare Elementary, had a 33 percent graduation rate, meaning 67 percent did not graduate. Sixty-seven percent the year before didn't graduate. Eighty-seven percent of our class did.

What we were trying to demonstrate is that, again, given students from high-poverty areas, given the challenges, with long-term support, with long-term opportunity and guidance, our students can be very, very successful.

About half way through that, in 1995, we started our own small public school, the Ariel Community Academy, which today remains one of the highest-performing neighborhood inner-city schools in Chicago. It has a very innovative financial-literacy curriculum, and I think it is a model from which we can learn a great deal going forward.

Those experiences, managing Chicago Public Schools, setting up a nonprofit, obviously were extraordinary learning opportunities for me. But I have to be honest, and Senator Durbin talked about it, probably the most important opportunity I had, the most formative experience of my life was the first 10 years of my life, growing up as a part of my mother's inner-city tutoring program.

Before I was born, in 1961, she began this program. She raised my sister and brother and I as a part of it. Literally, from the time we were born, we were there every day, and then every day after-school, and I ended up taking a year off from college between my junior and senior year to work with her full-time.

Most of my friends were becoming or thinking about becoming investment bankers and lawyers. I didn't quite think that was what I wanted to do in my life. I wanted to find out if this really was what I wanted to do. It was just an extraordinary experience.

There, everyone is taught to help everyone else. Probably my first job was as a 5-year-old, washing the books and cleaning tables at the end of the day. The 10-year-olds teach the 5-year-olds. The 15-year-olds teach the 10-year-olds. You learn by being taught and by teaching others.

I grew up with a set of children who didn't look like me, very few of whom came from two-parent homes, and all of whom were desperately poor. They went on to do extraordinary things. One, Michael Clarke Duncan, is a Hollywood movie star. Another one, Kerrie Holley, who actually taught me for many of those years, is one of IBM's leaders internationally.

Another one, Corky Lyons, is now a brain surgeon. Another one, Ronald Raglin, is part of my senior management team in Chicago Public Schools. All of these guys came from one little corner, 46th and Greenwood, on the South Side of Chicago.

What I saw, again, from the time I was born, was that despite challenges at home, despite challenges in the community that were sometimes unimaginable, our young people can be very, very successful. If we stay with them, work with them hard every single day, have the highest of expectations, and challenge them, amazing things can happen.

That was a formative experience. It was exhilarating, but I have to be honest. It was very, very tough, and we faced some real challenges.

One of my earliest memories was when I was about 6 years old, in 1970, the church that we were working out of was fire bombed by the Blackstone Rangers. I remember salvaging what we could from the church and walking around the block to another church, carrying crates of books, and asking that minister to allow us to come and work.

Our lives were threatened. My mother's life was threatened. I remember leaving work one night, and a guy coming by and saying if we came back the next day, we would be killed.

We had an interesting conversation that night at home at dinner. Our dinnertime conversations were maybe a little different than those of other families. We tried to figure out what to do and really decided that you can't run. Once you start running, you will be chasing your shadow eventually. We showed up the next day, and luckily, he didn't.

Unfortunately, given the level of violence in the community, many friends I had did not make it, and there were many people I was very close to who were killed growing up. Those experiences, when you are young, shape you, and I would go so far as to say scar you, in ways that are difficult. For me, they increased the tremendous sense of urgency about this work of giving every child a chance to be successful.

I have thought a lot about, as I have gotten older and became a father and raised my two children, what compelled my mother to take her three young children into this community every single

day and to face those kinds of challenges? Why did my father support my mother and his three young children doing this?

I think the answer is pretty simple, but also profound. They did this work every single day simply because this work was so important and because this work is bigger than all of us.

Finally, I just commit to you one thing: That if you see fit to support my nomination today, I will do everything in my power to work with the same sense of commitment, the same urgency, and most importantly, the same courage for the next 4 years that my mother has exhibited for the past 48 years.

Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Duncan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ARNE DUNCAN

Mr. Chairman, Senator Enzi, and members of the committee, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today as President-elect Obama's nominee for Secretary of Education. I am humbled by the collective wisdom, insight and experience of this committee and the full Congress, and by the vision and purpose of the new administration. Above all, I am honored and inspired by the call to serve America on an issue that is so important to our future.

I am joined here today by my wife, Karen, and my children, Claire and Ryan—so you can see that my interest in this issue is more than professional.

In today's era of global economics, rapid technological change and extreme economic disparity, education is the most pressing issue facing America. Preparing young people for success in life is not just a moral obligation of society. It's an economic imperative. As President-elect Obama has said many times, "The Nations that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow."

Education is also the civil rights issue of our generation—the only sure path out of poverty and the only way to achieve a more equal and just society. In a world where economic success is tied more closely than ever to educational opportunity, we are condemning millions of children to be less than they could be by consigning them to schools that should be so much more. That is a blight on our country and a brick on our progress.

If I am confirmed as Secretary of Education, I will work closely with you and with all of Congress, with the President, and with educators across America to bring about real and meaningful change in the way our schools teach and our children learn because we need to get better faster. Children have only one chance for an education and children who are in school now need a better education today if they are to thrive and succeed tomorrow.

I look forward to working with the HELP Committee because you offer so much experience and knowledge on this issue. Chairman Kennedy has long been the champion of educational opportunity for all. Senators Enzi and Kennedy and the entire HELP Committee have done great work on critical education legislation in the 110th Congress, including:

- The Head Start for School Readiness Act;
- The America COMPETES Act;
- The College Cost Reduction and Access Act; and
- The Higher Education Opportunity Act.

I am eager to hear your ideas for how the Department of Education can work with the States, and support local school districts. Having been a school superintendent for 7 years, I know that having a strong partner in Washington is critical—but I also know that an overbearing Federal bureaucracy can impede innovation and progress. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead to strike the right balance.

Education has been my life's work, starting on the South Side of Chicago where I grew up along with my sister and brother, as a part of my mother's inner city after-school tutoring program, Sue Duncan's Children's Center, where I learned to, as she says "cherish every child." Her remarkable courage and dedication has been a constant source of inspiration to me. The Children's Center is an example of the type of partnership needed to support the learning of every child—in this case through a partnership among parents, community volunteers, school staff, philanthropies, and a university. With different sets of partners, examples like this across the country, in urban districts and rural communities, have demonstrated that,

given opportunity and support, every child can learn. As the President-elect has said, these kids are our kids, and their education is the responsibility of us all.

I come to you after serving as the head of America's third-largest school district, serving over 400,000 mostly poor and mostly minority students. I am very proud of Chicago's progress. We have had 7 years of steady gains in test scores and attendance. Our dropout rate has steadily declined while college enrollment rates have risen. We have improved the quality of teaching through better recruiting and more support for existing teachers. We've held teachers and school leaders accountable for the performance of our children—all of our children. Where they've succeeded, we've rewarded them for their work. We worked hard to involve parents more deeply in the education of their children, recognizing that schools and teachers are no substitute for a mom or dad who reads to their kids and makes sure the day's homework is done.

This has not always been easy or without difficult choices. Chicago has been one of the few districts that have held accountable chronically low-performing schools—making the tough decision to close them down and reopen them with new leadership, new staff and new educational approaches. For the most part, the results of our school turnaround program have been dramatic—boosting test scores, attendance and school morale. For all of our progress, however, I am fully aware that challenges remain—in Chicago and in schools across America.

President-elect Obama has proposed a bold agenda for meeting our educational challenges. I want to briefly outline his priorities.

First, we must invest in early childhood education. Too many children show up for kindergarten already behind. Many never catch up. The President-elect's "Zero-to-Five" proposal calls for:

- Greater supports for working parents with young children;
- Early-learning challenge grants to States;
- Voluntary universal pre-school quality enhancements; and
- More resources to build on the successes of Head Start and Early Head Start.

The President-elect also plans to establish a Presidential Early Learning Council to better integrate pre-school programs and resources.

Second, we know that teacher quality must be addressed on many levels: recruitment, preparation, retention, and compensation. As a member of the HELP Committee, Senator Obama worked with many of you to include teaching residency programs in the Higher Education Opportunity Act. I know, from Chicago's experience, that residency programs work and President-elect Obama will make them a priority.

President-elect Obama and I will also work with you and with school leaders across America to ensure that our teachers are treated and valued as professionals. We must promote career advancement programs so that successful teachers can be instructional leaders for their colleagues. We must enable teachers to collaborate and learn from each other as members of strong professional communities. We must expand teacher compensation based on performance. For any of this to be effective, we must do more to develop and support strong and effective principals.

Third, we know that only about 70 percent of high school students graduate. America once led the world in high school graduation, and now we're falling behind other industrialized Nations. We can't continue down this path. We must identify students at risk of failure by the middle school years if not earlier—and target interventions to them. We have begun this work in Chicago, investing heavily in ninth grade transition programs. I look forward to sharing our experience with you and working with you on this issue.

We also know that many students who manage to graduate subsequently struggle in the workplace or in college. We have to increase rigor in high schools to prepare young people for the next stage of life—by boosting advanced placement participation, raising standards, and increasing learning opportunities so that they have the support they need to meet those higher standards.

I know that the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind will be a priority for the 111th Congress. I have seen first-hand the impact of the Federal law on our students and schools. I have seen the law's power and its limitations. I agree with the President-elect that we should neither bury NCLB nor praise it without reservation. I support the core goals of high standards for all—black and white, poor and wealthy, students with disabilities, and those who are just learning to speak English. Like President-elect Obama, I am committed to closing achievement gaps, raising expectations and holding everyone accountable for results.

Fourth, we must make sure that our citizens have the means and the encouragement to aim for education and training beyond high school. Nearly half of the Department of Education's budget is committed to helping Americans pay for college. More than 5 million students from modest backgrounds receive Pell Grants, the

most important financial aid program in the Nation. President-elect Obama is committed to boosting Pell Grant funding and also ensuring that inflation does not eat away at their value.

One of the President-elect's signature proposals is the American Opportunity Tax Credit—\$4,000 for college in exchange for 100 hours of community service. This is more than a financial aid program. It's really a statement of our broader values: if you serve your neighbors, clean up the environment, care for the elderly, or tutor at the elementary school, you deserve help in paying for college. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, the President and the Treasury Department on this proposal.

Mr. Chairman, I congratulate and thank this committee and your colleagues in the House for the timely action you took to make certain that students would be able to get their Federal loans even in the midst of the unprecedented problems in the credit markets. Prompt action by the Congress and the Education and Treasury Departments prevented disruptions for students across the country. Eight million people of all ages take advantage of Federal loan programs. If confirmed, my first priority with respect to student aid will be to ensure that 100 percent access to student loans continues. Beyond access to loans, we need to make sure that the aid programs are managed in a way that protects taxpayers from unnecessary cost and risk, prevents students from taking on excessive and expensive debt, and offers borrowers affordable ways to repay their loans.

Federal aid is critical to helping millions of Americans attend college. Unfortunately, many talented young people who could and should be going to college are not taking advantage of that opportunity. Part of the issue is inadequate financial aid, but we must also ensure that students have the information and guidance they need to make good decisions and maximize the aid they can receive under current programs.

We should streamline the financial aid process by implementing the President-elect's proposal to allow students to apply for aid by simply checking a box on their tax forms. Enormous amounts of time and energy are wasted badgering kids to fill out this needlessly complex form. College counselors, teachers, parents and others are all pressed into service because it is so complicated. That's time they could spend more productively thinking about what to do with their lives, where to attend college, and planning their future. I applaud Congress for providing new tools under the Higher Education Opportunity Act to simplify the aid process. I vow to work closely with the higher education community and the Internal Revenue Service to advance this effort.

We also want to support community colleges, which serve almost 40 percent of America's college population. For some, community college is a more affordable route to a Bachelor's degree, while for others it's about getting job skills in growing fields like health care and technology. Many community college students are adults who are returning to school after years in the workforce or after raising a child. The President-elect has proposed additional support for community colleges and I want to work with you on that as well.

I also want to applaud the committee's efforts to boost college enrollment for students with disabilities, curb tuition hikes, and help more students to complete college. I want to underscore this issue of student success in college. I have seen talented students graduate from high school in Chicago, only to find they were not able to build on that success in college. Some responsibility may lie with their preparation, but it may also be that the college failed to provide the engaging courses and the support and guidance that would have led that student to a degree and to a great future. This is not only the student's loss, but the Nation's as well. This is an issue that the committee has recently addressed, making important advances: improving oversight for the accreditation process; insisting on more data about student success; and shining a light on the issue of college cost. If confirmed, I am ready to implement this legislation. Indeed, the timing of the regulatory process means that I will be working on these issues from day one. Secretary Spellings and her entire staff have been extremely helpful and cooperative on this transition process—especially with respect to issues that require immediate action. I am grateful to her and will look to her for input as we move forward.

There are many other issues that the new Administration and Congress will need to tackle, including:

- Appropriately supporting students with disabilities, making sure that they are assessed fairly, and making real and necessary learning gains to meet their full potential;
- Helping English language learners to be successful, not only in learning our common language, but in gaining the knowledge and skills they need for success;
- Promoting innovation that accelerates student learning; and

- Aligning our education system not only to prepare students for the jobs of the future, but also for the responsibilities of active citizenship in our democratic society.

Under the leadership of President-elect Obama, I am deeply committed to working with you to meet these challenges, to enhance education in America, to lift our children and families out of poverty, to help our students learn to contribute to the civility of our great American democracy, and to strengthen our economy by producing a workforce that can make us as competitive as possible. This is a matter of great urgency for me, and I know it is for you as well.

I also want you to know that it has always been my working style to be completely open and accessible. I believe that the best solutions are reached when every stakeholder has a voice and an opportunity to be heard. It's OK to disagree on issues, but it's not OK to refuse to listen and consider everyone's views. No one person alone has all of the answers, but together, I am absolutely confident that we can find all the answers we need.

I look forward to working with you, with your staff, with your constituents, with the White House and with people all across America who recognize that the education of our children is our solemn obligation, our fundamental responsibility, and our greatest opportunity.

Thank you for the chance to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions.

Senator HARKIN. Mr. Duncan, thank you for that very inspiring and elegant statement. We appreciate that.

It is my understanding that the committee has received a number of letters from individuals and organizations in support of Mr. Duncan's nomination. I ask unanimous consent that those letters be inserted in the record at the appropriate place, without objection.

[Editor's Note: The information previously referred to may be found in Additional Material.]

Senator HARKIN. I know that Senator Enzi has other commitments he has to go to, and I will yield to him. In keeping, again, with Senator Kennedy's strictures, we will have 5-minute rounds. We will start with Senator Enzi.

Senator ENZI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this extreme courtesy.

I thank Mr. Duncan for both his enthusiasm and his expectations.

One of the questions I have been asking all nominees that come before this committee is—and I am always hoping for just a one-word answer. This committee turns out a lot of legislation, and it is because of the great working relationship between the majority and the minority.

If confirmed, will you pledge to cooperate in this type of a working relationship with all Senators on the committee, Democrat or Republican, by promptly responding to any written or phone inquiry, sharing information as soon as it becomes available, and directing your staff to do the same?

Mr. DUNCAN. Absolutely.

Senator ENZI. Thank you.

And finally, if confirmed, do you agree that regulations promulgated under your authority should be based on legislative authority?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

[Laughter.]

Senator ENZI. Thank you.

I do have some questions that I would ask about rural education, about the Federal Family Education Loan and about preschool programs. I would mention that 12 years ago, I think, we had 115 preschool programs. We are down to 69 preschool programs. We keep trying to make the ones that are authorized more effective and better funded, and I hope you will participate in that process.

We know that a lot of IDEA kids are faced with an uncertain future once they leave high school, and we will be interested in your approaches to that along with greater alignment of high school graduation requirements so that high school students meet with college entry requirements, as you have done in Chicago.

I am very impressed with your presentation, and I thank you for your willingness to take on this job. I will be submitting questions in writing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Enzi.

Mr. Duncan, back in the 1980s, then-President Reagan had asked a group of business people to set up a committee to look at education in the United States and to look at it from the hard-headed business standpoint, not the sort of soft-sided social sciences type of standpoint, as to what was needed in education.

This group met, Jim Renier, I think, was the head of it. He was the head of Honeywell at the time. Then it spilled over into the first President Bush's administration.

I remember the first report came out. If I am not mistaken, it was 1989. I had assumed the chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee on Education at that time, and he delivered a copy to my office.

Now I had never met Mr. Renier, a very successful businessman, and he wanted to deliver the report. He wanted to point to the executive summary. The executive summary of this 2- or 3-year involvement of all these business leaders was summed up thusly.

"We must understand that education begins at birth, and the preparation for education begins before birth."

They got it. This was in the 1980s. As we discussed then and later on that so many of these kids come to school, they have had terrible diets. They have had a television as a babysitter for 4 years. They have come from really tough homes and tough neighborhoods, as you have pointed out. Maybe they don't have parents who read to them and take care of them, love them a lot.

They come to school, and we try to patch and fix and mend. A lot of times during those early formative years, as you know, is when the brain really develops. That is when learning really starts. Yet so many of these kids, we get them in kindergarten maybe, or if there isn't a kindergarten, first grade, and we have a tough time.

It has not been really the purview of the Department of Education in this area. That has sort of been over with the Department of Health and Human Services. Somehow, we have got to break this down. The two of you have got to get together.

We have got to get this melded so that we really focus on that early childhood education, whether it is Early Head Start, Head Start programs—how that is melded into education. Somehow, we have to make sure that every child comes to school ready and able to learn.

Any thoughts that you might have on that, I would appreciate.
 Mr. DUNCAN. I just echo your sentiments. I think there is nothing more important we can do than get our children off to a great start in their life. As you said, we have children—we see it all the time—who are in kindergarten, who have been read to, who come to school absolutely fluent in reading. And you have other children, tragically, that don't know the front of a book from the back of a book.

How are even the best kindergarten teachers supposed to handle that great spread in their classroom? It is very, very difficult.

The best thing we can do is to get to our children as young as possible to give them the highest quality of programs, to make sure what we are doing, frankly, isn't just babysitting and glorified babysitting, but really getting those early literacy skills, those early socialization skills intact so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn and ready to read.

I absolutely commit to working in partnership with Senator Daschle and with the HHS team in trying to do something dramatically better for the country around early childhood. We need to increase access. We need to increase quality, and we need to make sure that we are getting to our children as young as we can.

This is a better investment than all of the money we spend in prisons down the road. Whether it is from an economic standpoint, whether it is from a human-potential standpoint, this is the right thing to do, and I will commit to do whatever I can to work in partnership with him and with HHS to do something dramatically better for children.

Senator HARKIN. I am glad to hear that. We have just got to somehow break this thing down and get these two together in how we focus education on these young kids.

I will be, as a member of this committee, but also as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, looking for suggestions and advice from you on how we might do that, and also from Senator Daschle and, of course, the President. I want the President involved in this.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, as you know, the President has talked about setting up this early learning commission, this early childhood commission, which I think is very important. I think we have to look at this not as leaders of bureaucracies, but just practically: What is right for children?

Whatever is right for children, we just need to get it done. I want to bring that spirit to this work.

Senator HARKIN. I appreciate that very much. Thank you, Mr. Duncan.

Now I will yield to Senator Alexander.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks very much.

This brings back memories for me, Mr. Duncan. Eighteen years ago, I came before this committee sitting in your place, my family behind me. I was very innocent, and I nearly got my head taken off by the Democratic majority, which included Senator Kennedy, Senator Harkin, and a number of others.

We later developed a very good relationship.

Senator MIKULSKI. Aww.

[Laughter.]

Senator ALEXANDER. That toughened me up, Barbara.

That is not going to happen to you, and it is not just because you are a Democratic nominee before a Democratic majority. President-elect Obama has made several distinguished Cabinet appointments. From my view of it all, I think you are the best.

I hope I still think that a year from now, but that is clearly my view today. I am very impressed by what you have been able to accomplish and what you have been able to do.

As I mentioned to you, you will find your Cabinet seat is at the end of the table. You are at the bottom of the line of succession. If the country wakes up and finds you reassuring it that everything is all right, that means everything is really in trouble.

Mr. DUNCAN. We are in big trouble.

Senator ALEXANDER. We are in big trouble by the time we get there, but I am very impressed by what you have been able to accomplish.

I hope we can talk more about standards and whether they should be—there is a difference between national and Federal standards, standards imposed from Washington. I hope we can talk more about—and Senator Mikulski and I have had several conversations about this—whether our well-meaning rules and regulations about higher education in some cases actually interfere with cost and quality. I hope we can talk more about that.

I hope you will use the—as you follow up on Senator Harkin's suggestion—the new Head Start approval included centers of excellence, which governors may pick in their States to try to use the large amount of Federal money already appropriated for early childhood in a coordinated way and show good examples.

The two areas I would like to hear from you about are ones that after a long time of looking at education come—seem to me is the most important. It seems to me that parents are first, and teachers and principals are second, and everything else is about 5 percent. It is very hard to pass a better parents law.

How are you going to be able, using the Teacher Incentive Fund or other ideas, to help the country do more of what you did in Chicago to reward outstanding teaching? And second, how are you going to be able to help persuade the country that public charter schools are basically places to give those outstanding teachers a chance to use their common sense to help the children that have been delivered to them to help succeed?

Mr. DUNCAN. Those are great questions, and I look forward to spending a lot more time with you, Senator. I learned a lot just in our brief conversation last week and look forward to continuing to pick your brain regarding some ideas.

In the education business, talent matters tremendously. We can have the best curriculum. We can have the best technology. We can have a great facility. If we don't have great teachers in every classroom, the rest of it just isn't as important.

Whatever we can do to, again, support great teaching, recognize it, reward it, grow it, that is the most important thing we can do. Leadership matters. It is a cliché. Any good school in Chicago, and I would venture to say across the country, any good school we see, there is a good principal there.

It is much harder to build a good school than it is to tear it down. I have seen great principals build a school over a decade, and 6 months after they are gone, if you don't have the right succession plan in place, that school is a disaster. So we are in the talent business.

One of the best things I think Secretary Spellings has done—and I have learned a lot from her, and she was a great partner to us in Chicago—was the Teacher Incentive Fund, that we were able to use to recognize and reward excellence in some of the toughest communities of Chicago.

This has been done in partnership with the union. This has been led by a group of great teachers. I have a teacher advisory council that I work with every single year. They shaped this program. They built it, and we thought we had some great ideas. We got a very significant grant from the Department of Education. We wondered if anyone would be interested. We had 120 schools show interest.

The more we can reward excellence, the more we can incent excellence, the more we can get our best teachers to work in those hard to staff schools and communities, the better our students are going to do. I plan on spending a lot of time thinking about how we continue to innovate and how we continue to incent great talent to come into teaching and then keep that great talent once it is there.

Second, obviously, I have been a strong supporter of charter schools, and I will just take a brief second why I think that is important for us.

First, we have been very, very strict about who we allow to open a school. This has not been “let a thousand flowers bloom.” We have had a very rigorous front-end process before we allow a group to open a school. We turn down many more applicants than we actually select. We only want the best doing this work.

Once we approve a group, we give them significant autonomy, and we want to free them from the bureaucracy and give them a chance to innovate. We also have a 5-year performance contract and clear accountability, and I think that combination of autonomy and accountability is very, very powerful. One without the other, and I think the balance gets a little bit out of whack.

Ultimately, what I say is that these are our children. These are our tax dollars. If you ask any second or third grader, they don't know whether they are going to a traditional school or a magnet school or a gifted school or a charter school. A third grader, all they know is does my teacher care about me? Does the principal care about me? Are they working hard?

The more we create great schools of any form or fashion, the better our children are going to do. We have to improve dramatically.

Our dropout rate is unacceptably high in Chicago. It is unacceptably high around the country. We have to continue to build upon what works, do a lot more of it. Things that aren't working, we have to have the courage to challenge the status quo.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Duncan.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Alexander.

As I said, Mr. Duncan, you can see we have a lot of expertise on this committee. Another one who is also an expert in education, Senator Mikulski.

Senator MIKULSKI. Thank you, Senator Harkin.

Good morning, Mr. Duncan, and to your family and to John Rogers as well.

I certainly enjoyed our conversation together, and based on that and reviewing your record, it will be my intention to support you for confirmation. I think you are a high-altitude, high-achieving guy, and I think you will absolutely lead our Department of Education.

I want to thank you for agreeing to serve. You have a great momentum going in Chicago, and your family is well established. Your children are in grade school. We know that with you coming to Washington, you are essentially going to be going through the same things that our first family is.

I want to thank Karen for being willing to sign up and suit up as well and your girls for being willing to do this.

The others, I want to acknowledge the presence of Mr. John Rogers, the founder and chairman and executive leader of Ariel Mutual Fund, your best friend, as you said. Mr. Rogers, would you stand up? I would like the committee just to note your presence.

Mr. Rogers is a real financial entrepreneur, started a mutual fund, and made, by all Morningstar ratings, one of the most solid mutual funds in America. While he has been involved in financial investments, he also put his money into social investments.

Mr. Rogers, I want to thank you and hope this friendship is sustained. He is going to need all of the pals he can get. The Obamas are getting a dog. You get one, too.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DUNCAN. We got a cat.

Senator MIKULSKI. Mr. Rogers, I am not saying this to flatter you. Really, if more Wall Street guys had spent time on Main Street the way you had, I think both Wall Street and Main Street would have been better off.

Now, Mr. Duncan, you talked about our conversation with the "Obama effect." I would like to follow that up in my questions with you related to teachers. Let me say this to my colleagues.

One week from now, we will be heading to the platform for the inauguration of President-elect Obama. America will then see what I think it is already experiencing, three things. The Obama family itself—our President-elect, our first lady, the Obama girls.

What they are seeing is a wonderful family, where the family is intact. The family relates to each other. There is a strong mother, a strong father, and all the wonderful things they do. I think that is going to create its own effect.

There is the Obama administration that wants to put the hopes and dreams of the people who voted for this new President into action. That is your job. What we all have a chance to do, all of us, including the Congress, is to harvest the Obama effect.

I believe that there is a new spirit in the country, that people want to serve. Not only do they want to sign up for public service and come to work in Government or in teaching or in my field, so-

cial work, or whatever. They want to be involved and make a difference.

What we are seeing is teachers are re-invigorated like they have never been. Young people want to come in to public service. What we are seeing is even with students in my own hometown of Baltimore for a summer math program, instead of 10 kids, over 100 showed up, and more on a waiting list. They actually came even wearing Obama buttons.

This gifted Maryland Teacher of the Year, when she said to this little boy, "What do you want to be?" And he said, "Smart." She felt she had to leave the room, that in her 25 years in Baltimore public schools, no kid had ever said, "I want to be smart."

This is what is out there in America, and this is what I hope that we can achieve. That is what I mean by the Obama effect, where we can really make a difference.

Now this takes me to teachers. Every school reform begins at finger-pointing teachers. Teachers are the first in line to be blamed, and they are first in time to be regulated. If the Security Exchange had regulated Wall Street the way we regulate teachers, we wouldn't be in this financial mess.

Now, my question is, given the Obama effect, how do you see recruiting and retaining and retooling our teachers because they are the front line in the classroom?

Mr. DUNCAN. One of the biggest reasons for our success in Chicago has not been anything that I have done. It has been the extraordinary hard work of teachers and what they are doing every single day. I think there is this groundswell of young folks who are committed, who are passionate and want to make a difference.

We have an extraordinary opportunity, and frankly, given the tough economic times, that actually helps our chances of recruiting great, great talent to come into the teaching profession.

I intend to take some of the lessons that we learned going from 2 to 10 applicants for each teaching position in Chicago. I want to take some of those lessons, travel the country, and get the best and brightest from our universities around the country to come into teaching.

We have a generational change. We have a baby boomer generation that is moving toward retirement. We are going to see significant turnover, and we have a chance to bring in just an extraordinary generation of talented folks into teaching.

I look forward to that. I am excited by that opportunity, and again—

Senator MIKULSKI. How will you retain them? Because what we observe in Maryland is many of our most talented leave after 3 years.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes. You need great mentoring programs. You need great support. What you find, unfortunately, is some young people who are idealistic and come into it for all the right reasons. They don't feel listened to. They don't feel supported. They struggle with classroom management skills. And guess what? Two or 3 years later, they leave.

We know teaching is an art. It is not a science. Your best teachers don't get there until 10, 15 years into the profession. We have to retain those great teachers.

How do you do that? You do it through great mentoring induction programs. You do it through clear career ladders so they can see a way to grow and continue to improve their skills. You do it by training principals to really support those buildings.

I view principals as CEOs. They have to manage their team. They have to create a climate where folks want to work. Where you see great leadership from the principal's seat, you see real stability within their workforce.

Great mentoring induction programs, particularly in those early years, are absolutely critical for helping those young teachers be successful. Any first-year teacher, the best first-year teacher in the world, is going to struggle. This is extraordinarily hard work.

We have to help our great teachers get through those tough times and get through those nights when they go home crying, thinking, "I am never going to be any good at this," and get them over the hump and give them a chance to be successful long-term.

Senator MIKULSKI. Well, thank you. My time is up.

Mr. Chairman, if I could just ask Mr. Duncan to do one more thing? It doesn't require an answer.

Senator Alexander talked about higher ed regs, but I want to talk about Congress. We tend to look at things in a boutique way. We love to pass lots of legislation, where we either look for single solutions or silver bullets.

Could you work with us to identify those things where it is too many good-old micro line-item programs, and we can then work with you and get real bang for the buck and harvest this Obama effect?

Mr. DUNCAN. I appreciate that. We have to be focused. We can't be all things to all people. We have got to try and be world class and work extraordinarily hard in a couple of high-leverage activities. That is what I want to do.

Senator MIKULSKI. Go Obama.

[Laughter.]

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much.

Next would be Senator Roberts. But Senator Murray has to leave, and Senator Roberts has graciously ceded to Senator Murray for this round of questions.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you so much for your accommodation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to go replace another chairman who is doing an oversight hearing as well.

Mr. Duncan, thank you so much for agreeing to do this tremendously important job, and for the sacrifice of your family as well. I saw your wife shaking her head at the dog. Just so you know, it is not going to happen back there.

Mr. DUNCAN. I am well aware.

[Laughter.]

Senator MURRAY. I really appreciate it. It is tremendously important that we have somebody at the head of this agency who is really going to tackle a lot of issues to get this country back on track.

I think education is no doubt one of the most important issues that we have to tackle with this new Congress and administration. As a former educator myself, it is very near and dear to my heart.

In this time of economic turmoil, I can think of no better way to improve our economy and maintain that competitive edge for the

coming decades than investment in skills for our students today to make sure they can secure good jobs tomorrow.

We want to create a new green energy economy. We want to have a strong healthcare system. We need mechanics and laborers who have the ability to weld and those kinds of skills, too. We have a lack of people today with the skills to fill high-skill jobs.

When I travel around my State, business leaders, local community leaders tell me, "We have job openings. We have people who are unemployed. We don't have the skill set matches to make sure the unemployed have those jobs."

Making sure that we empower our local communities to provide a pathway for all of our students to the careers of tomorrow is extremely important. I will be introducing legislation this year to bring those communities and employers and schools together to help provide those pathways for our students to succeed.

I wanted to ask you this morning how you think, as Secretary of Education, you can help our communities identify and create ways for all of our young people today to get the skills they are going to need tomorrow?

Mr. DUNCAN. There has been a disconnect between educators and the business community. I think we should really work hand-in-hand. As you said, there are jobs that are going unfilled because we are not preparing students, and yet we struggle with unemployment rates.

We need to think more about a host of skills—nursing being one—that are never going to be exported, that are never going to go overseas, where people can come out of high school and get some additional training and be extraordinarily successful.

Community by community, city by city, State by State, we need to really be working in partnership in helping to prepare our students for 21st century skills. I think we have a moral obligation to do that. We have a huge opportunity to do that.

We need to think about apprenticeship programs and internships and giving our students a chance to get a sense for why this work is so important and the opportunities they have. Some of our young people don't live in communities where many people are working. It is hard for them to even imagine what that looks like.

By working in partnership with the business community, by listening, by creating better educational opportunities and really exposing our students to the opportunities that are available, we can do a lot better.

Senator MURRAY. Well, I appreciate that. The mantra of the last 8 years has been No Child Left Behind. I would like to see that changed so that every child has the skill we need.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator MURRAY. I hope that we can work on that together.

My colleagues had a chance to talk to you about early childhood education, an issue near and dear to my heart. I hope that you and the Secretary of HHS can break down some of those barriers and work together on Head Start and early childhood education as well. I assume you will do that.

In just the minute I have left, I did want to mention, Mr. Chairman, that we have had several issues requiring the oversight of our Federal student loan program over the past Administration. Hun-

dreds of millions of dollars in subsidies were improperly paid to some of our lenders.

Today, community college students are struggling to get loans at a time when we need them to be getting good skills. We see the credit crunch affecting this. It will require a lot of strong oversight from you.

In my last few seconds here, if you could comment on that because I am extremely concerned about it?

Mr. DUNCAN. As am I. I want to commend this group here in Congress and Secretary Spellings for working to shore up some of those challenges. We need to view all of these issues through the lens of what is right for our students, who are trying to improve and trying to go to the next level. That is how I am going to view this.

We need to expand access. We need to expand affordability and to create more opportunities for students. This is an area where I want to spend a lot of time and attention.

One thing that hasn't come up that is just a real basic thing I want to try and work on early is the actual form, the financial aid form for going on to college, the FAFSA form. I don't know if any of you have completed one lately, but you basically have to have a Ph.D. to figure that thing out. In and of itself, it is a huge barrier.

Think about all of our children who are first generation or ELL students, and who are trying to do well and succeed: the form itself is a hindrance.

Impediments like that—anything that isn't working in the best interests of our students who are desperately trying to go on to some form of higher education—community colleges, 2-year colleges, 4-year universities, whatever it might be—we have to be smart and pragmatic and thoughtful in trying to remove those barriers.

Senator MURRAY. Well, thank you very much. Thank you for the conversations we have had, and I do look forward to working with you as the head of this critical agency.

Senator Roberts, Senator Harkin, thank you so much for your accommodation.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Murray.

Senator ROBERTS.

Senator ROBERTS. I thank you, Senator Murray, and Boeing forever. A little inside comment there, Mr. Duncan.

I don't ride with the expert education posse. I simply read to kids. I used to be a classroom teacher before Senator Alexander got his head taken off by Senator Harkin, which he is pretty good at doing that on occasion, and usually it works pretty well.

At any rate, thank you for coming by my office. Thanks for the very good, good, good visit. I think you have made an excellent statement. You are making an excellent impression. I think you are going to come through with flying colors.

I have three questions, and the answer to the three are yes. So we can get done real fast.

[Laughter.]

Impact Aid is based on enrollment figures from 2 years ago. Then we have the BRAC. We have several Impact Aid areas in Kansas

due to Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth. We need to address this issue to make sure that our schools are up to date and adequate with large increases in student enrollment. I know you will do that, right?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, sir.

Senator ROBERTS. Science and math competency is increasingly essential to this country. We had a science and math program in one of the bills we passed last year. All of the committee supports that not only because of the global economy, but because of national security.

I know that you are a strong supporter on what needs to be done to encourage students to pursue studies in math, science, and technology, right?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, sir.

Senator ROBERTS. Now here is the one that if there are any cameras, they will start clicking.

[Laughter.]

They don't click at me, but they will click at you. It is a funny thing. You will sit there like this, and you will say something terribly important, and obviously, they won't take your picture. If you raise your hand like this or point or maybe pound a fist like that—

[Laughter.]

Yes, OK, get ready, guys. Because this is the biggie. This is the biggest unfunded mandate that the U.S. Congress has foisted on the American public and the American school system ever since conceived.

Thirty years ago, we promised that we would pay 40 percent of the excess cost of educating a special needs youngster, IDEA—40 percent. Now we are nowhere near—I think it is 14 percent now, Mr. Chairman. I don't know.

Senator HARKIN. Sixteen.

Senator ROBERTS. Sixteen. Well, it is 16 in Iowa. It is only 14 in Kansas. At any rate—

[Laughter.]

That needs to be changed. I think Senator Harkin, Senator Hagel, and myself were the three musketeers who voted for full funding, full funding for IDEA. Think of what would happen to the school districts all throughout Illinois or Kansas or Iowa or Oklahoma or wherever, if, in fact, we paid that, which is simply an unfunded mandate.

It is a good program. On the other hand, if you had a school that is really doing its job and they are doing a great job with the special need kids, under No Child Left Behind, you don't measure growth, all of a sudden you can be penalized. We talked about that.

I guess my question to you is or my statement to you is, please, help us to do everything we can to get that funding up to 40 percent. As far as I am concerned, it ought to be fully funded. I am sure you will do that, right?

Mr. DUNCAN. I appreciate your tremendous commitment here, and I can just say I have lived on the other end of the unfunded mandate to the tune—

Senator ROBERTS. Wave your arms so they can take a picture.

[Laughter.]

No, that is surrender.

[Laughter.]

That is what the French do. We don't do that. You know, give it a chop. There, like that. Come on, guys. OK.

Mr. DUNCAN. I have lived on the other side of the unfunded mandate to a tune of about \$250 million. So I know. I have lived how tough the flip side of that is.

Though you didn't ask about it, I just want to commend you on the reading to children that you do here. I think it is the Everyone Wins! program that you and a few other Senators participate in, which I think is something that would be great for me and my team to do to really stay connected to kids in classrooms. I look forward to learning more about that and perhaps joining you in that program.

Senator ROBERTS. Well, you made a commitment to come out to Kansas City or actually to real Kansas, which is west of there, and read to kids, which I do a lot. It is the Reading Is Fundamental program. It has been around for about 35 years. Then we had the first lady, Laura Bush, come out and read to our youngsters.

I only read to second and third graders. You can take the fourth graders. They are a little too sharp for me.

Mr. DUNCAN. Stick to your sweet spot.

Senator ROBERTS. That is a good comment.

[Laughter.]

Tom, write that down for me.

All right. Do you know why those teachers left after 2 years that Senator Mikulski was talking about? It is called money. It is called raising a family.

Now if you are not married, if you are a single teacher, OK. It is called money. We talked about opening up the back door to education, to people who have had experience in business and the military, whatever. I know that there is all the rigmarole that you have to go through to get there from here to become eligible for whatever criteria each State has.

The one I love the best is the standard deviation test, which nobody uses because you can't have enough time to use the thing. I suppose it is helpful for somebody sitting there who dreamed it up, but anything we can do to help in regards to teacher pay. I don't expect you to have any sudden answers to that.

That has been a real problem, except for IDEA. If we could fund IDEA, guess what would happen? All sorts of good things would happen.

I am done. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

Senator HARKIN. Mr. Duncan, you have just observed what I have said many times, that Senator Roberts is a rarity here on the Hill. He is actually as funny as he thinks he is.

[Laughter.]

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

Senator REED. I think the President has made a very wise choice. Your experience and your commitment is obvious, and I think you

will make a real difference in the Department of Education. I welcome your appointment very, very much. Welcome to your family.

I think it is significant that so much of what we have all talked about—Senator Alexander, Senator Mikulski, Senator Murray—has been teacher preparation, teacher retention. As we discussed in our meeting, and I absolutely agree with you, that that is probably the key, the key point of leverage in any education system.

Last year, in Title II, the Higher Education Act, we tried to focus on the preparation of teachers, trying to induce education schools to provide a clinical experience, trying to have a plan for mentoring and continuity afterwards. That is the law. I would hope you would be able to tell us you are going to put your shoulder behind the law and money behind it to make these provisions in title II very effective and real in the process.

Mr. DUNCAN. We need to work with higher education to really make sure, as you said, that teachers are being very well prepared for the practical reality. And yes, you need the pedagogical skills. Yes, you need the theory and the philosophy. You need to be in classrooms working with children and getting used to that.

There is one university that we have worked with back home, Illinois State, that actually has students spending 6 months in the communities with us. We have actually sort of created a dorm-like setting in Little Village, a Hispanic community in Chicago, where students live for 6 months, become part of the community, part of the culture, and teach in classrooms. That kind of thinking outside of the box, I think, is extraordinary.

There are teacher residency programs. I think there is great talent that, frankly, doesn't come through higher education or through schools of education. We have done a lot around alternatively certified teachers. We have brought 1,200 alternatively certified teachers in.

We have, again, a wealth of talent and commitment and interest around this country, and the more we can harness that and bring it into our classrooms, there are only benefits for our children by doing that well.

Senator REED. Well, again, I hope you can harness those practical experiences you have to the title II legislation and really provide the kind of movement on this mentoring and induction problem.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator REED. There is another area which complements this, and legislation that I was pleased to co-sponsor with the President-elect, the School Improvement Through Teacher Quality Act, which would provide a separate source of funding right to title I schools for this whole issue of mentoring not just the first- and second-year teachers, but the whole school community.

Because I think, in addition to retaining teachers—we have focused on that—school improvement is a direct function of the ability to continually mentor and upgrade the skills of every teacher. Can you comment upon that? Can you support that initiative?

Mr. DUNCAN. I just think the day we stop learning and growing is the day that we start to let our students down. Whether it is 2-year teachers, whether it is 5-year teachers, whether it is a 20-year

veteran, we all have to continue to learn and grow and get better at what we do.

I think that, philosophically, that is exactly the direction we have to go. What you see around the country is you see your best teachers continuing to improve their skills and get better. They set an extraordinary example, and we have to make that the norm and do everything we can to support those efforts.

I talked earlier about these career ladders for teachers. How do you help teachers continue to grow and learn, take on additional leadership skills?

Some great teachers want to become principals, and that is fantastic. Some great teachers want to teach for their 35-, 40-year careers, and we need to really support them and enable them to have a high impact and great leadership as they progress throughout their career.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much.

Let me quickly switch gears in the remaining minute or so. At the higher education level, we have and I have been particularly active in supporting the LEAP program, Leveraging Education Assistance Partnership. It is, as the name implies, a grant program, a partnership between the State and the Federal Government.

We try to incentivize the States to put money in to help low and moderate income students with financial assistance. This is part of the whole panoply of Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, assistance to people who need assistance, that have talent but need the resources to go to college.

I would hope that you would not neglect this part, the LEAP program, that you could successfully incorporate it to complement these other efforts.

Mr. DUNCAN. I just really appreciate your tremendous leadership on this issue. Again, we have to dramatically increase access and affordability for all students to go on to some form of higher education. I think that is what your work is about. That is what you are trying to accomplish.

To conclude, I really appreciate your leadership and look forward to doing everything we can collectively to get more students, particularly students from poor communities and poor families, particularly first generation students, not just thinking about college, but graduating from high school. Those are the students that need these opportunities, and we have to do everything we can to support them and help them to be successful.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, and good luck. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator Coburn.

Senator COBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome. Probably the most important question that hasn't been asked is the rumor that you can beat Barack on the round ball court. Is that true?

Mr. DUNCAN. We have a lot of fun together.

Senator COBURN. That is what I thought.

[Laughter.]

He knows how to answer questions already, doesn't he?

A couple of things, just specific. One of the problems that we are having today with special ed is a ruling that has come out of the Department of Education on the fabulous special ed teachers that we have, that not only do they have to be highly qualified in one area, they have to be highly qualified in every area in which they teach.

In Oklahoma, we are experiencing, or we are about to experience, the loss of our best special ed teachers because if they don't have a master's degree in every area, they are no longer going to be eligible to teach those kids who need their skills. My hope is that you will help us solve this dilemma before we lose some of the greatest teachers we have throughout the country.

A second point that I would make is—and I actually talked to President-elect Obama last night about your nomination and our conversation. One of the things that has given hope and promise for change in this country is his declaration that line-by-line reviews are going to take place in every agency.

Government programs that aren't performing, that are wasteful, duplicative, or obsolete are going to be gone. Paying for commitments for new programs by eliminating the ones that aren't working, and rooting out redundancy, and the fact that every Federal contract above \$25,000 is going to be competitively bid.

Is it your intention to honor that as you work in the Department of Education?

Mr. DUNCAN. I think our resources are desperately scarce, and I think as much as we want to fund more for education, we can never do enough. I think we have a moral obligation to use every dollar wisely.

It is easy to start things. It is much harder to stop doing things, and we have struggled with that in Chicago. We want to do everything we can to get every scarce dollar to schools and communities and children that need them the most.

Senator COBURN. You do plan on doing a line-by-line review within your department?

Mr. DUNCAN. I will need a team to help me do that. I can't do it alone. Again, my focus is taking scarce resources and putting them into those high-leverage activities that are making the biggest difference. That is the only way we can—

Senator COBURN. OK. I am trying to get you on record saying you are actually going to perform the review, as he promised that we would do, that we would do a review of the agencies.

Mr. DUNCAN. I would be happy to. I need to. I have to perform a review to figure out what is working and what is not.

Senator COBURN. OK. The only other question, I must say I have been very impressed with my conversation with you and the research that I have performed and your commitment not to an idea, but to our kids and the future of this country.

One of the things that the President-elect and I did was the Transparency and Accountability Act. He is going to work hard to make it happen, but I am going to ask you the question anyhow.

Under that law, you are required, every agency in the Federal Government all the way down to the United Nations and our contributions, are required to report where the money goes, who gets it, the contracts, the subcontracts, the grantees, and the sub-

grantees. Will you assure this committee that you will enforce that within the Department of Education in compliance with that law?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, absolutely. Again, that is simply how we have done business back in Chicago, that every contract above \$25,000 is competitively bid and goes through the board. Again, we have this obligation to spend tight tax dollars absolutely as wisely and thoughtfully as we can.

Senator COBURN. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have no other questions.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much.

I guess back and forth, but Senator Isakson goes next.

Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I have been involved in education my entire public service career and never had a more enjoyable conversation with anyone than I had with you when we met the other day. I want to commend you on what you have accomplished.

Although I did not hear your testimony because I am on Foreign Relations, and Mrs. Clinton is going through that confirmation today, if everything you said earlier before I got here is equal to what you said in my office, you are going to be a great Secretary of Education.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

Senator ISAKSON. Senator Coburn raised a question and then asked a second one. The first one never got asked, and I want to start with that. The highly qualified requirements of No Child Left Behind in practical application, particularly with regard to special needs, do not work.

You and I talked about this in my office when we met, and I talked to you about alternative certification, which I learned is something you had an interest in as well. It is probably the only way we reach the demand of having enough teachers in the 21st century to teach our children.

Would you address that subject, particularly in regards to highly qualified and special ed?

Mr. DUNCAN. Let me take both of them, and they are related. Obviously, as I stated earlier, I have been a big fan of alternative certification. Over the past 5 years, we have brought in 1,200 alternatively certified teachers. These are people with great skills and experiences—chemical engineers, biologists, physicists—who want to come work with our children.

These are folks that historically were locked out of public education. Couldn't come teach our kids. We tried to break down those walls and give them an opportunity to make a difference with our students.

In terms of looking at sort of the highly qualified rules for teachers, as we go into No Child Left Behind reauthorization, we need to really think again what is practical, what is right for teachers, what is right for students. Where things are working, we need to stick with them and stay the course. Where things are impractical or have had consequences that were maybe unintended, we should just be thoughtful and pragmatic and fix those things.

Senator ISAKSON. I appreciate that recognition. You know, you will be under a lot of pressure, and I imagine we will, too, as mem-

bers of the Senate and members of the House, to dismantle parts of No Child Left Behind. I think it is important to recognize that it has achieved its stated purpose, which is improving or lowering the gap between those who are inner-city poor title I kids, rural poor kids and the best achieving, and that in math and reading comprehension they are improving.

I will acknowledge there is some work that needs to be done to improve it, and two other areas I want to mention real quickly. One is the assessment of special needs kids. It is very difficult to have a one-size-fits-all paper and pencil assessment vehicle for special needs children, who have a multiplicity of problems all individual and unique to themselves.

I have long advocated letting the IEP, which is the individual education program that the parent and the teacher come together every year and decide on, to be the determining factor for what the assessment of a special needs child is, and I would appreciate your response to that.

Mr. DUNCAN. I appreciate your thoughtfulness. Senator Harkin and I had a lengthy conversation about this. I really tend to agree with you. I think we need just to be thoughtful and pragmatic about this, and to have a one-size-fits-all mentality doesn't make sense in this category.

If you look at the ELL population as well, you want to have assessments that accurately assess students' abilities. If you give any child an assessment that they can't read or can't comprehend, what benefit is that to the child? What are we, as adults, learning from that? Probably more importantly, what lessons or what messages are we sending to children?

Working with teachers, working with parents, working with school psychologists or social workers, working with whomever else might be engaged, we can be thoughtful and figure this out at a local level.

Senator ISAKSON. I think I have got enough time for one more question that begs an answer of some distance probably. One of the other major issues is the issue of AYP, and one disaggregated group failing to meet AYP and an entire school becoming "needs improvement" when, in fact, by and large, it is achieving at very satisfactory rates.

Oftentimes—particularly in rural systems, but also in urban systems—it is the disaggregated special needs group that will cause that to happen. You and I discussed the growth model or disaggregated circumstances or some way to bridge from "not achieving" before you go into "needs improvement." Would you address that subject?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, and what I really do respect about what has happened in the past is that we now have to disaggregate data. We have to look at subgroups. We can't hide behind the aggregate and sweep children under the rug who historically have not been, frankly, served well. I think that is very, very important.

Having said that, to label a school itself as a failure, an entire school, because one child and one subgroup didn't hit a mark or didn't hit a bar, to me, represents a lack of pragmatic logic.

If individual children need additional support and additional tutoring, let us do that. Let us make sure the medicine fits what is

going on there. Let us not take too blunt an instrument to an entire school or to a school community where that doesn't make sense.

I am a big fan of the growth model. I am really interested in how much students are learning and gaining and growing each year. The best teachers in the world take kids who are very far behind and accelerate their rate of growth. They may not hit an absolute target that year, but those teachers are not failures. In fact, they are actually heroes.

Again, I want to find those students, and just take one quick moment on this because this is important. If the average child, let us say, is gaining 1 year's growth in math or English for a year's instruction. If, in a given classroom, and we see this throughout the country, we have students gaining 1.7 years, 2 years of growth for a year's instruction, those teachers are doing a Herculean job, and we need to recognize that. We need to reward that. We need to incent that.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, my time is up. I will just comment, the biggest challenge our teachers face in America is the discipline challenge with students in the classroom. To you and your wife, who have done such a great job with Ryan, who is so well behaved, I hope you can do that with every child in America's classrooms. [Laughter.]

Mr. DUNCAN. They are on their best behavior today.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Isakson.

Senator SANDERS.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you, Senator Harkin.

Mr. Duncan, thanks so much for coming in the other day. Enjoyed our conversation. And thanks for the work you have done in Chicago.

Let me start off by making this point and asking you to comment on it. We talk a lot about wasting money in Government, and one of the ways we waste money is by not putting funds into prevention, allowing situations to deteriorate, whether it is in healthcare and education or many other areas.

In America today, Mr. Duncan, as you probably know, 18 percent of our children live in poverty. That is, by far, the highest rate of poverty for children of any major country on Earth. Meanwhile, the other side of that equation is we have more people in jail than any country on Earth, including China. Amazing fact.

In your judgment, is there a correlation between the high rate of childhood poverty and the fact that so many kids drop out of school, intellectually drop out by the time they are 8? Do drugs, do crime, do self-destructive activity. We end up spending \$50,000 a year keeping them in jail rather than investing in education, rather than investing in childcare.

Part of that question, what are you going to do to deal with the disaster in terms of childcare and early childhood education so that in Vermont and all over this country, working families today at the most important moment in a child's life cannot find high-quality, affordable childcare?

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, as the President-elect has talked about repeatedly, and he has a huge passion and commitment around this, he totally understands, totally gets the fact that the best thing we

can do for children is give them access to high-quality early childhood programs.

The more we are getting to our young children before they hit kindergarten, the more this is not glorified babysitting, but really getting their early literacy skills, their early socialization skills intact, so they hit kindergarten ready to read and ready to learn, the better our students are going to do.

As a country, if we can invest more in education and less in jail cells, I think that is absolutely what we all have to be thinking about.

Senator SANDERS. Specifically with regard to childcare, do you agree that our current early childhood education situation is totally inadequate? What can you tell us will happen in the next 4 years?

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, again, as the President-elect has said repeatedly, he wants to increase not just the quality, but also access to early childhood education. I will tell you in Chicago we have each year increased by 1,000 to 1,500 seats the number of children able to go into high-quality programs for 3- and 4-year-olds.

The President has, from day one, reiterated his tremendous commitment to improving both the quality and the access around the country.

Senator SANDERS. Would you agree that our goal should be that every parent in this country should be able to find access to high-quality, affordable childcare?

Mr. DUNCAN. I think we have to move toward that opportunity for universal access. Again, the more we are getting to our children early, the better they are going to do.

Senator SANDERS. In terms of prevention and protecting people's well being and saving money—I know Senator Harkin has been a leader on this. In terms of healthcare, primary healthcare, I know in Vermont, we are beginning to have a little bit of success with dental facilities in schools, healthcare facilities.

Does the idea of bringing healthcare into the schools so that we can detect kids' problems early on make sense to you?

Mr. DUNCAN. This is a larger point, and I touched upon it earlier in my statement. I think the more our schools become community centers, the more they become centers of community and family life, the better our children can do.

The days in which schools are open 6 hours a day, and the child goes home for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich at 2:30 p.m. with mom at home—that doesn't work for two-parent working families. That doesn't work for single moms working two or three jobs. That doesn't work for, in Chicago, 9,000 homeless children.

Senator SANDERS. It certainly doesn't work in Vermont. The world has changed, and we have not recognized that anymore.

Mr. DUNCAN. The more we are creative in thinking about how our schools are open not 6 hours, but 12 hours and Saturdays and over the summer, the more we are co-locating services—GED, ESL, healthcare clinics—the more those schools become the centers of community life, the better our children are going to do.

Senator SANDERS. Now I know that President-elect Obama has been very strong on this issue, as I am, and I am sure many other members of this committee are. That is the concept of expanded education.

To make it clear that after-school programs should be available, that Saturday programs should be available, that summer programs should be available so kids, especially lower income kids, don't lose what they have learned. Does that make sense to you?

Mr. DUNCAN. It has been a huge fight and passion of mine in Chicago. Many of the opportunities I had going to a great private school in Chicago—the things that were the norm for me, a chance to experience arts enrichment or cultural enrichment or debate or model U.N. or chess—are somehow seen as extra, not important for public school children.

We have fought very, very hard to dramatically increase—whether it is during the school day or, again, during the nonschool hours—opportunities for every child to develop their skills, to develop their unique interests and talent, and give them reason to be motivated to come to school every single day.

Maybe it is the chess team. Maybe it is debate. Maybe it is yearbook. We want every child to have those kinds of opportunities to grow their unique skills and interests.

Senator SANDERS. Well, Mr. Duncan, I am certainly going to very strongly support your nomination, and I look forward to working with you. You have just an enormous responsibility on your shoulders because we have not done well by the kids of this country, and there is so much to be done. I look forward to working with you to make those changes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Sanders.

Senator Burr.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Arne, welcome. My apologies for my tardiness. I was downstairs with the President's nominee for energy.

Mr. DUNCAN. You have got a few things going on.

Senator BURR. Clearly, I, in one morning, have the two smartest nominees that the President has made in you and Dr. Chu, and that makes it challenging. More importantly, when Tom Coburn was asking his questions and you answered, I realized that competitive bidding is something that is not unfamiliar in Illinois, is it?

[Laughter.]

Mr. DUNCAN. I apologize on behalf of my State.

Senator BURR. First question, most important, did you watch the Wake-Carolina game on Sunday night?

Mr. DUNCAN. I didn't, but I saw the results, yes.

Senator BURR. For a guy who takes great pride in having close games against Duke, I think it would stimulate you greatly to see Carolina get beat. It was a good game.

I was going to ask you about the FAFSA, but you are on the record. We need to change it. This is insane. Let me go to a couple of other areas, if I can.

The United States is now the only industrialized Nation in the world where a kid has a lesser chance of graduating from high school than their parents did. Last year in the United States, we graduated 70 percent of our 9th through 12th graders on time. In my State of North Carolina, it is 69 percent.

If you are African-American, it is 55 percent. If you are Latino, it is 52 percent. Some studies suggest that if you take the 12 largest metropolitan areas in the country, that the high-water mark for African-American graduation, 9 through 12, on time is 25 percent.

That is what is fueling the prison construction and prison costs, welfare payments that are increasing, food stamp payments that are increasing. Because today's 21st century economy requires a minimum of a high school diploma not to be able to fill out an application, but to be invited for an interview.

We are fooling ourselves if we believe that, as a country, we can sit here with a 70 percent graduation rate from high school on time and that those other 30 percent of our kids are going to have the tools to compete. It is not going to happen.

I know from the conversation you and I have had that you get it. As Secretary of Education, what are you going to do to try to change that?

Mr. DUNCAN. A couple of quick comments, and this is a huge issue. I think what you have seen is the United States hasn't so much fallen behind as other countries have passed us. Other countries have taken this much more seriously, and whether you look at high school graduation rates or college graduation rates, we have been sort of stagnant or dropped a bit. Others are really soaring.

That is not a good thing from any view. From an economic standpoint, from a human standpoint, we have to do something dramatically better.

A couple of thoughts. Despite those very, very sobering statistics that are real and that present huge challenges, we today have examples—not just in Chicago, but around the country—of extraordinary schools in the heart of our toughest communities where 95 percent of students are graduating, where the overwhelming majority are going to college and, guess what, graduating from college.

These examples, frankly, are new probably in the last 10 to 15 years. I want to push very hard to scale up what works, to continue to innovate. We don't have to look overseas for great, great examples. We can learn something there, but we have them in our back yards across this country today.

We have a chance to take to scale those things that are making a difference in students' lives, and there is a set of extraordinary schools and programs that are doing that every single day.

Second, I think we have to continue to shine a spotlight on this dropout issue, and I intend to do that. We have to tell the story—the good, the bad, the ugly. Unfortunately, it is not something any of us can be proud of.

I am proud that we have seen 7 years of reductions in the dropout rate in Chicago, but it is still unacceptably high. We have to, as a country, challenge ourselves to change those numbers pretty significantly.

I would argue that while third grade test scores are important and that is how many of us were measured, if my third grade test scores are fantastic and my dropout rates are too high, I am not helping my students be successful. I am not changing their lives.

In as many ways as I can, both from the bully pulpit as well as strategically, I want to shine a spotlight on this and see if we can reverse those trends significantly.

The final thing I will say, and you know this so well, is that if we are serious about reducing the dropout rate, we can't wait until 11th or 12th grade. Those kids are gone. They are on the streets. We have had a huge push on dramatically changing what happens between eighth and ninth grade.

That ninth grade year is so critical to us. We have to stem this problem before it begins, and I am committed to trying to do that.

Senator BURR. You mentioned college graduation, the success from that. Every year, more than a million full-time, first-time degree-seeking students start college. Yet fewer than 40 percent of those students pick up their degree in 4 years, and barely 60 percent pick up their degree in 6 years.

My question is going to be sort of strange to you. How long should the Federal Government be obligated to extend Pell to a full-time student who can't find a way to graduate?

Currently, we extend Pell for 18 months. If that were extended to—or excuse me, 18 semesters. If that were extrapolated for a full-time student, that would mean that they could stay in 9 years, and we would still be subsidizing what most students achieve or try to achieve in 4 years. Do we need to rethink this?

Mr. DUNCAN. That is a good question that I don't know the answer to and need to take a look at it. I will say a couple of things. I think, again, we have to really think about how we try to dramatically increase the high school graduation rate and the college graduation rate.

I absolutely recognize that there are many students, particularly, who might be 22, 23, coming back to school to be retrained and to get those skills they need to enter the workforce today. There are many folks who need to work part-time and maybe raise a family. It might be a single mom who is taking classes in the evening and trying to make ends meet, and I want to do everything we can to support those folks.

I don't have a concrete answer to your—should there be a final cutoff at the end of the day? For young people who are trying to go to the next level and see going back to school as a way to do that, I want to be supportive of those efforts.

Senator BURR. Well, I hope for those that are shocked by the 70 percent graduation rate in high school, that they are even more shocked today to hear that barely 60 percent of our higher education students graduate in 6 years.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator BURR. I think that should be shocking to most of us.

Mr. Chairman, could I indulge you for one more question since it is just you and me and the Senator from Vermont?

Arne, you and I talked last week about attracting the best and the brightest teachers in our classrooms. Especially as it relates to low-income, underperforming schools, how crucial that is to the success of that school and to the students.

In North Carolina, three school systems—Guilford, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Cumberland—have gone to a pay-for-performance model. You did that in Chicago. They have been successful at the

attraction of talent. You were successful and continue to be at the attraction of talent.

What can you do as Secretary to help put pay for performance in the game for more systems, and is that one of the models that we should try to increase the ability for systems that are failing to get the teachers they need?

Mr. DUNCAN. I think the challenge of getting great talent into the communities that need it most is a huge one. Let me tell you, it is one of the areas where I am, frankly, most optimistic because I have seen, every day, extraordinary talent walk away from other jobs, other professions, other opportunities because they are so committed to these children and these communities, and they want to make a difference. We have to find a whole host of ways to support that great talent go where it needs to go.

I stated earlier one of the things that most helped us, and for which I really want to commend Secretary Spellings, was the Teacher Incentive Fund. The Department of Education created a significant fund. It was of great benefit to us in Chicago and other places, and that is something that I want to not just support, but potentially increase.

That is a piece of it. We want to reward excellence. You want to get great folks working where you want them and where you need them the most. We talked earlier about creating real career ladders and leadership opportunities for teachers to stay there. I think we can't do enough to reward and recognize and incent excellence and get the best and brightest working in communities where great talent has fled historically.

Historically, there has been an out migration of that talent. We have to find ways to reverse that and bring those folks in. I know we can do it. I have seen it happen. I want to work very hard in that area.

Senator BURR. Well, let me thank you for your comments today. More importantly, let me thank you and your family for your willingness to do what you are doing.

Mr. Chairman, it is important that I point out this is not only a guy that gets it, he gets better as time goes on. As a sophomore, he fouled out of the Duke game.

[Laughter.]

As a junior, he scored 20 points and was instrumental in almost pulling off a victory, and I think this is a talent we need to expeditiously get in place. I encourage the Chair to move it quickly.

Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Senator Burr.

I was just making some notes here, Mr. Duncan, on talking about teacher quality and enticing teachers and getting the best teachers. I am sure you must be familiar with Wendy Kopp and Teach For America.

A high percentage of those students who graduate and join Teach For America eventually stay in teaching. All of the data that I have seen indicates that they have become very excellent teachers.

Yet, we don't put much money into it. I asked for the figure. I fund it through our Appropriations Committee at the level of \$14

million for a year. They could use a substantial amount more than that.

Give me your thoughts on Teach For America and how it might also help provide quality teachers.

Mr. DUNCAN. Sure, I am happy to do that, and I am a huge fan of Wendy's. Let me just start there. I think there is a generation of what I call education entrepreneurs who are really helping to change the face of education. Wendy Kopp is one of them. John Schnur is here today, who runs New Leaders for New Schools, which trains great principals to go into communities that have been underserved.

We have seen a great, great partnership with Teach For America in Chicago. Actually, I worked on that before I got this job. When I was working for the previous CEO, Paul Vallas, I helped to bring Teach For America to Chicago. They have done an extraordinary job, again, of bringing the best and brightest from around the country into teaching.

Many stay. What has been interesting to me and that I didn't fully appreciate or understand early on was that not only are there great teachers coming through the program, but it is a great pipeline of talent. Many of the new schools that we have opened, a disproportionate percentage of the principals who are running those schools are Teach For America alumni.

You get these people who have this great vision and this entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to innovate. The leader of my curriculum for all of my high schools, for 110 high schools, is a Teach For America alumni. We have many Teach For America alumni within my management team.

Yes, they produce great teachers. Programs like that bring talent into our field where we desperately need that kind of talent. I want to support the whole generation that Wendy Kopp and John Schnur and others represent, who I think are changing the face of public education. I want to do everything I can to support their efforts.

Again, if something is working, we need to scale it up and do a lot more of it and do it as fast as we can.

Senator HARKIN. There is another program called Follow The Leaders program, but I will talk to you about that—

Mr. DUNCAN. OK. I am not familiar with that one.

Senator HARKIN. We have it in Iowa and a few other States, and we have been funding it. All of the indications are that it has been a great success. We will look at that more later on.

I am glad that you are supportive of Teach For America, even though Wendy went to a different school than you did. I am glad you are not holding it against her because she went to Princeton, right? You are not holding it against her?

Mr. DUNCAN. I could care less about any of that.

Senator HARKIN. Mr. Rogers here will keep you on track on Princeton.

Two other things, just for the record, we talked in the office about kids with disabilities. It came up again. And you know about the 1 percent and the 2 percent rule.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator HARKIN. It has the effect right now of just cutting out 30 percent of kids with disabilities and saying we don't even have to account for them. As I said to you in the office, that would be like saying to any minority group 30 percent of you just don't count.

We wouldn't do that for African-Americans or Latinos or anybody else. I hope that you will take a look at that 2 percent rule and give us some suggestions on a new policy that would be more supportive of kids with disabilities.

Mr. DUNCAN. I absolutely commit to you to doing that, and I philosophically absolutely agree with directionally where you want to go on this.

Senator HARKIN. I have two other areas. One of the results of No Child Left Behind that I have seen in Iowa and other States that I have visited, and I hear it a lot, is that, because of the testing requirements for reading and math, that one of the first teachers to go because of the lack of funding is usually the art teacher or the music teacher or the phys ed teacher. Those are the first ones to go.

I want to just focus on the physical education part of it. Right now, 10 million young people are considered overweight. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, by 2010, 20 percent of children and youth will be obese.

Yet, less than 10 percent of our schools are providing physical exercise every day to the kids, less than 10 percent, 1 out of 10, or its equivalent for the entire school year. Almost a quarter of all schools do not require students to take any physical education at all.

I use a quote from a principal, I have to say, in Atlanta. A principal who said, in response to the fact that they had built an elementary school without a playground, "We are in the business of educating kids and not letting them play on monkey bars."

Very short-sighted. Very short-sighted.

When I was a kid, not only did we have 15 minutes in the morning and 15 in the afternoon and a half hour at lunch, we did an hour a day of physical exercise.

Then, when we went home in the evening, we played pick-up basketball. We played sandlot baseball. We didn't have TV and things like that. We didn't have Nintendos and those kind of games.

Today, when kids are less active after school, and they are doing more on Nintendo games and talking together on their Facebooks and things, we don't even do anything in school for these kids. I have co-sponsored legislation, the Fit Kids Act. I don't need to get into that. Somehow, we need your leadership to start prodding schools to build in physical exercise every single day for these kids.

Now the other part of that equation is what they eat. Now I wear another hat as chairman of the Agriculture Committee, as you know, and this year is the reauthorization of the child nutrition bill. We have got to get better food to our kids in school for their breakfast and for their lunches and for their snacks.

That is half of it. The other half is we have got to get them exercising, too, during the day.

I look to you. You told me your wife is a physical education teacher and an athletic director at a K to 12 school. I am really glad you have someone close to you that will talk to you about the need for physical exercise for our kids in school.

I know about your own background, too. I know that you also keep physically fit. Would you just address yourself a little bit to this lack of physical exercise for kids, especially in elementary school?

Mr. DUNCAN. Sure. My wife will absolutely keep me on the straight and narrow on this one. It is a huge issue you bring up, and there aren't easy answers. The more we instill in our children early in life these habits that will last them a lifetime, the better they are going to do.

We try to do what we can to expand those opportunities before school, during the school day, after school. We have had great non-profit partners who have helped us do that in Chicago in running programs. We had a group of our high school students actually run the Chicago marathon. When students are exposed to those kinds of opportunities, it is going to change them for the rest of their life.

We have to find ways to do this. I will just say, personally, I was lucky to go to school where I had PE 4 days a week and recess. I was one of those young boys who would have had a very hard time sitting through a full day of school and would have been tough on my teachers.

Just from a personal standpoint, I know how critically important it is to have those breaks and have a chance to get up and run around a little bit. Again, I worry a lot about the sedentary nature of so many of our young people today. As you said, not just during the school day, but after school.

The more we can, from the early stages, build habits—and again, the kids love this. This is fun. They like to eat healthy. They like to get out and run around and play. None of the stuff we have done has been mandated. The kids are looking for these kinds of opportunities.

We need to be creative. We need to think about the use of time. We need to think about great nonprofit partners who can come in and provide these kinds of opportunities. I would argue, frankly, that at the end of the day, this is going to help us a lot academically. This doesn't take away from our core mission. This is central to that core mission.

I want to find ways to be creative and think it through and see if we can expand significantly over time the number of young people with these kinds of opportunities that will shape them until the day they die.

Senator HARKIN. As I have said many times to Secretary Spellings, both in open meetings and in meetings in my office, No Child Left Behind ought to mean that we are not leaving them behind in their health either. That ought to be just part and parcel of No Child Left Behind. How do we build that into the structure to meet certain goals?

I mean, if we are going to meet certain goals in testing on reading and math, why shouldn't we have certain goals in terms of their body mass index, their exercise, their heart rates, their obe-

sity index, all those kinds of things that we can build in? That ought to be a part of it, I would think.

Mr. DUNCAN. Again, this has just been so hugely important to me and my wife and to our family, and I fully intend to look at this very seriously.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Duncan.

I see that another great leader on child nutrition is also here, Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you on the childhood nutrition and your comments about just the physical health of our children and share your comments.

Mr. Duncan, it is a pleasure to meet you. We haven't had an opportunity to speak one-on-one. I look forward to that. I will tell you my first impressions of you are very strong and very favorable.

You have got a beautiful family behind you. I am quite pleased that your young son is sitting there reading books instead of amusing himself with the latest electronic gadget. As a mom of two boys, I know that it is tough to kind of keep them in their seats. But you are doing right.

I welcome your wife. If you ever have any questions about what we need to be doing in our schools and to engage our kids, don't forget to ask your own. I am always asking for input from my boys and learning a lot.

My first request to you is a big one. I do have high hopes that you will fulfill it. I extended an invitation to both Secretary Paige, when he was Secretary of Education, and Secretary Spellings, when she was Secretary of Education, to come to Alaska to see some of our challenges as they relate to how we are able to educate children in a State that is as vast and as broad as it is.

Secretary Paige, as we were traveling across the State—this was at a time when Alaska was trying to get an exemption from the provision that said if you fail to meet AYP, you have to send your kids to the next closest school. Well, that school that we flew to from Nome to Savoonga was the same distance as between Washington, DC, and New York City.

As we were flying over the ocean, looking down over the icebergs, he is very quiet, and he says to me, he says, "I thought I knew what rural was." He said, "I am getting a different picture."

We would like to show you a different picture in Alaska not only of our challenges, but how we have been very creative in our use of tele-education and distance learning and how we are able to meet some of our challenges. That is my first request to you, and I would welcome your family to join you in that. I think it would be a real eye-opener.

Kids, we will show you some bears and some other things like that that might make it more interesting.

I do want to make sure that you are aware of some of the challenges that our Alaska Natives deal with. One of the things that we have learned from No Child Left Behind that has been made more clear with the statistics is, our education statistics are not anything to be proud of as they relate to our Alaska Natives in terms of achievement, dropout rates, college enrollment. The gaps

are wide, and they are unacceptable, and we are working aggressively to deal with it.

You know that the Federal Government has a trust responsibility with relationship to our Alaska Native tribes, but we don't have Bureau of Indian Affairs schools or funding to address that. What Congress had authorized was the Alaska Native Educational Equity Act, and this act provides funding for programs like the remedial and gifted education, dropout prevention, community engagement—a whole variety—curriculum development, teacher training, and recruitment.

The competitive grants that are funded under this program, we believe, are making a difference. They are still very, very necessary to ensure that Alaska Native children have educational equity with their nonNative peers across the country.

I just use this time to make sure you are aware of it and to ask for your commitment to work with us to ensure that we do have continued funding for these programs.

Mr. DUNCAN. I appreciate your comments, and I have never been to Alaska. I would absolutely take you up on the offer to go there.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Wonderful. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. My daughter's favorite animal is the polar bear. She is a polar bear nut. If we could see some polar bears—

Senator MURKOWSKI. You don't want to get too close to those guys.

Mr. DUNCAN. You and a number of other Senators have been really courteous and offered me the chance to come out and visit some schools with you, and I need to get out. I need to listen. I need to learn. There is a whole lot I need to comprehend and to figure out.

I will absolutely take you up on that request. I would be honored to do it.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Great. The other thing that I would let you know in terms of priorities and things that I am working on, in addition to healthy children, I mentioned the dropout rate, the graduation rate. In Alaska, again, our numbers overall, not just with Alaska Native students, but our dropout rate is not acceptable.

This is an initiative that I am taking on and looking to work with several of my colleagues. I want to know that we can work with you on this. I know that Senator Burr had mentioned it to you. I know it has been an initiative of Senator Obama, when he was in the Senate.

I am just looking for your commitment to work with me on what I feel is a very, very important area.

Mr. DUNCAN. It is a huge issue, and I don't think there is a State in this country that could be really, really proud of that number. As a country, I don't think we can proud of what that number is today.

It is something that I need to have a laser-like focus on. This is complex in many factors. I want to spend a lot of time figuring out how we dramatically increase the graduation rate. Obviously, not overnight, but over time.

When our children drop out today, as you well know, we basically condemn them to social failure. There are no good jobs out there today with a 9th grade, 10th grade education. It just doesn't exist.

I have often said in Chicago that if you go back 30 years ago, there was an acceptable dropout rate. You could drop out and go work in the stockyards and steel mills, and you could support a family and own your own home and do OK.

As we know, that is a distant memory from a bygone era and we have to work collectively to be creative, to be thoughtful, to innovate, and to try, over time, to significantly change those numbers, which I think, frankly, none of us can be really proud of today.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Well, I appreciate that statement. I think we recognize that it is not just some decision in senior year of high school that a young man or woman decides, "I am done with this. I am out of here."

Mr. DUNCAN. Right.

Senator MURKOWSKI. These decisions or these thoughts come about much, much earlier in middle school. One thing that I would like to have an opportunity to chat with you about in the future, we have put a great deal of focus with No Child Left Behind on the early years and giving those basics. Now we are looking at the high school end and making sure that we have taken care of our students there.

I just got through the middle school years, thank goodness, with my sons. There is—we don't put the focus on those ages when kids are—kids are either checking in or checking out. We can't have a gap in any part of this educational system where it is kind of OK for you to slough. It is kind of OK to not have that incentive there to perform well.

I don't want our kids in those middle school years, when adolescence is hitting them and all kinds of things are coming at them, to say, "Well, education is just not a priority for me now." I would hope that that would be an area that we would also be able to work together and focus on.

Mr. DUNCAN. No, again, I just appreciate your thoughtful comments, and I am a big fan of Geoffrey Canada, who runs the Harlem Children's Zone in New York. He was asked a question—I was on a panel with him recently—and people were saying, "Is it early childhood? Is it high school? Is it middle school?" And he said, "It is all important."

Senator MURKOWSKI. Yes.

Mr. DUNCAN. It is complex, but that is the truth. That we have to start early, we have to stay with kids all the way through, and it makes the job harder. It is more comprehensive. It is more complex. But it is the absolute truth.

We have to have a continuum from birth to whatever it is, 22, 23, 24, or 25, whatever it might be, of real opportunities, of real high expectations, and really driving students to be successful. If we think there is a magic bullet at one point, we are really kidding ourselves. It is not that simplistic.

I wish there was a magic bullet. Our lives would be a lot easier. As you know as a parent, it is just not that simple, and we have to have this continuum of opportunity and high expectations all the way through and continue to challenge kids every single day.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Well, Mr. Duncan, I appreciate your comments, I certainly like what I hear, and will look forward to work-

ing with you. Again, I will welcome you to Alaska when that time is appropriate.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much. That would be an extraordinary opportunity.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Look forward to it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HARKIN. The only advice I have, Mr. Duncan, is go there in the summertime.

[Laughter.]

Thank you.

Senator Sanders.

Mr. DUNCAN. I will plan it well.

Senator HARKIN. Senator Sanders.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you, Senator Harkin.

Mr. Duncan, I know you have been to Vermont, and we don't have polar bears. We would love to welcome you to our State because there are a whole lot of educators there who have a lot to say. Summertime is also a good time.

I would be remiss if I didn't touch on higher education because my wife is the president of a small college. I think your point about looking at our problems as a continuum are absolutely right. There is no magic bullet anywhere along the line.

I think one thing that happens is if young people—elementary school, middle school, or high school—get the feeling they are never going to make it to college, they kind of drop out intellectually and do self-destructive activities.

Now I don't have to tell you, because you know it better than I do, that we have a crisis in terms of the affordability and access to college in America today. We have hundreds of thousands of qualified young people who have given up on the dream.

Equally alarming is the fact that millions of young people will leave school \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 in debt. Graduate school, \$100,000 in debt. They carry that burden on their shoulders for many, many years. It also heavily influences their choice of careers.

You want, I want, Senator Harkin wants the best people in this country to go and become a teacher or a childcare worker. Well, they aren't going to do that if you leave school with a \$50,000 debt.

In the last couple of years, we have begun to make some progress, a little progress, but nowhere near enough. We passed a debt forgiveness proposal, which says that if you go into teaching, for example, after 10 years of work in a nonprofit organization, your debt will be forgiven. Well, 10 years is a long time.

Can you give us some specificity as to how we can make college opportunity more affordable for the young people of America so that more of them can go to college and so that more of them will not leave college with these very oppressive debts?

Mr. DUNCAN. As you well know, the President-elect is just passionate and absolutely committed on this. He has set a real goal for us of increasing the Pell Grant amounts. He has set a goal of passing the American Opportunity Tax Credit. He has talked a lot about loan forgiveness for folks that want to go into teaching and go into other professions.

I think what has been so appealing to me about his vision, it is really to me this idea of reciprocity or mutual responsibility. That we are going to give you these opportunities, but also expect you to come back to the community and help out. I think that spirit is so important.

I think there are some very significant ways going forward that we can work together with you, with the President-elect, to increase access, to increase affordability, and to your point, Senator, to make sure that those folks who would prefer to teach and not go to Wall Street, that they not be compelled to go in a different direction because of their loan obligations.

I remember well the conversation with your staffer, who is facing very, very significant loan challenges.

Senator SANDERS. Here she is.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator SANDERS. She is still facing those obligations.

Mr. DUNCAN. Again, we want to get the best and brightest to come into these fields, and we need to find ways to make it possible for them to chase their dreams.

Senator SANDERS. Well, thank you very much for that, I think, excellent answer.

On a very specific issue, there is the work-study program in college, and most of the money, as we discussed in my office, which I just recently learned as well, goes to on-campus activity—working in the library, working in the cafeteria. Do you think we could take a look at expanding that so that students get work-study money working as a mentor in a public school or a childcare center?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, that was a great point. That is an area where I need to really learn more, and that was the first time I had heard that was talking to you.

As I talked about earlier, we have hundreds and hundreds of college students, probably thousands, who are in our schools every single day in Chicago. My mother's inner-city tutoring program has been staffed for years and years by phenomenal talent from the University of Chicago and others. That has been sort of the lifeblood of her program.

I need to better understand the facts and the challenges of what needs to happen there. Philosophically, if you could get more students these kinds of opportunities, I think the benefits for our children around the country would be great.

I think, very importantly, when our college students get exposed to the possibilities of teaching and the possibilities of working in community centers and healthcare clinics, that may influence their career choices.

I think there are lots of benefits there, and I want to understand the intricacies or the challenges. Directionally, I love where you are trying to push.

Senator SANDERS. OK. Thank you very much, Mr. Duncan. Again, what an opportunity you have to transform education and improve the lives of millions of young people, and I am very excited about the possibility of working with you.

Mr. DUNCAN. I am thrilled with the possibility as well. Thank you.

Senator HARKIN. Well, Mr. Duncan, thank you very, very much for being so candid. Again, my thanks for your willingness to take on this task.

You have, as you can see, a lot of support here in this committee on both sides of the aisle. I have no doubt that you will be confirmed, I hope unanimously, from this committee and also by the Senate.

You have a big job ahead of you. I don't think there is any Secretary whose decisions, whose statements, public posture has more effect on the American people intimately than yours. Maybe the Secretary of Health, too. Maybe. Education affects every family in America.

How we progress as a country and how we are going to maintain our standard of living, our way of life, and provide for equality of opportunity for all our kids really comes down to what kind of education system we have.

You know, the Secretary of Defense always gets a lot of publicity and stuff. I have thought about this a lot. The Secretary of Defense and the committees here that fund defense—and I am on that Appropriations Committee—they are charged with the responsibility of defending America.

The Secretary of Education, along with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, they have the task of defining America, who we are and what we are as a people and how we progress and what kind of society we are going to be.

I look forward to your leadership, as well as that of your counterpart in Health and Human Services, for taking the leadership in defining America perhaps better than what we have had in the past.

I don't mean just the recent past. I mean just in all of our past, that we redefine America truly as a country where someone like you, coming from your background, can get the kind of education you had. Where someone like me, whose mother was an immigrant and whose father was a coal miner, can get to where I am.

Where kids of color, where kids whose parents are recent immigrants and who have English as a second language, who are struggling to learn the language, where they can also see that America is for them, too.

I don't mean to be overly heavy on this, but having been here for so many years and serving on both the Appropriations Committee and on this wonderful committee—we really have to do better in education in this country and on health and human services. I look upon the two of you as working together.

It is a big job. From what I know of you and from your appearance here this morning, I think you are up to it. I look forward to working with you and doing all we can to better define America as really that land of opportunity for all our kids.

I thank you very much, Mr. Duncan. I thank all of your family for being here.

The record will be kept open for additional questions that may be proffered to you in writing, and we look forward to your early confirmation and swearing in.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much. I think this is just an extraordinary opportunity to do something better for our country's chil-

dren, and I am amazed by those possibilities. I look forward to working very closely with you and your colleagues to make that happen.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you.
[Additional material follows.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR DODD

Thank you Chairman Kennedy. I want to welcome and congratulate Mr. Arne Duncan on his nomination to be Secretary of the Department of Education.

I've served on this committee for 26 years, and rarely have I seen a time where the potential to make a positive impact on our Nation's education system has been so great. Over the coming months, as we face difficult economic times, there will be many discussions on the importance of making smart investments—how can we best make the critical decisions needed to rebuild our economy?

Today, we all recognize that if our children fall behind for a decade, America falls behind for a century. It's that simple. The flip side of that equation is that if we get the challenge of educating our children right—and I believe we can—everything else will follow. Whatever the issue, America's leadership—its economic and national security—rests on her commitment to educate and prepare our children to succeed in a global economy, from pre-k to college.

To be sure, no one knows this better than my colleague, Chairman Kennedy. From his shared commitment to early childhood education to his work last year reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, Senator Kennedy has worked tirelessly to provide quality education to all Americans. I look forward to continuing our work together to improve our Nation's schools.

Mr. Duncan, I know you recognize that the state of our education system is troubling. One out of four high school freshmen fails to graduate within 4 years. Among those who do make it to graduation, only a third have the skills they need to succeed in college. American students are finding it more difficult to compete against their international peers in our increasingly interconnected world. Despite the efforts we have made in education, we are failing to meet the needs of students of all ages across the Nation.

That is why I am encouraged that President-elect Obama has chosen you to lead the Department of Education. I am also heartened by his commitment to early childhood education and look forward to strengthening current programs like Head Start, CCDBG, and title I to benefit our children and their families. The Department of Education as well as the Department of Health and Human Services are collectively responsible for our early childhood education. These two agencies must work in a cooperative and coordinated manner to comprehensively address the needs of our children. We know that investing in our youngest Americans pays off in their readiness for school, their health, job creation now and in the future, and the need for fewer social services later in a child's life.

In the last Congress, I introduced the Early Childhood Investment Act to establish public-private partnerships to strengthen existing investments in early childhood development by awarding grants to local community initiatives and programs that serve young children and their families. We see many low-income children entering Kindergarten behind their peers. Already, by the age of five, there is a documented achievement gap in education.

We must do a better job of investing our time, money, and energy in strengthening and expanding programs that help our youngest children enter school healthy and ready to learn, and I look forward to working with you to ensure we do.

Of course, once these students enter kindergarten, our work is far from over. Reforming No Child Left Behind is long overdue—the law has been implemented in a manner that is inflexible, and many times, unreasonable.

No one argues with the basic tenets of the law. No one argues that providing a high quality education for all students is our highest priority. No one suggests that the importance of closing the achievement gap across demographic and socioeconomic lines is critical to our future.

We have failed to give States and districts the tools and resources they need to help students be successful. Instead, No Child Left Behind has become confusing and even daunting to many teachers, schools, and States who are doing heroic work to make a difference in students' lives under often extraordinary and difficult circumstances.

Mr. Duncan, I look forward to working with you and my colleagues to reform No Child Left Behind. As I have outlined in the No Child Left Behind Reform Act, I believe it is important that we consider the best ways to support students, teachers, and schools. Schools should not simply be *permitted* to use added academic measures in assessing student improvement—they should be encouraged to do so.

Assessment is critically important. But, in the process of assessing the performance of our students in the classroom, we should not forget to assess what really counts. Whether they're *learning* in the classroom.

In my view, we ought to examine implementing growth models into the legislation and provide support to schools and students who fail to meet adequate yearly progress.

In the 2006–2007 school year, 315 of Connecticut's schools—nearly a third—did not make adequate yearly progress. Instead of penalizing schools that are identified as needing improvement, we should put a system in place that invests in them. I look forward to working together to expand and strengthen programs that have already made a positive difference in the lives of students, such as afterschool programs.

Additionally, I am pleased that President-elect Obama has nominated someone who has worked so closely with teachers. In such a critical moment for the future of education, we must put aside our ideological differences and focus on programs and ideas that work. You and I both know that supporting teachers will be central to improving our Nation's schools—they are the single most underutilized resource in reforming our education system.

I have stood with teachers throughout my entire career in public service, because I know that they work tirelessly to support and educate children across America. The debate ought not to be about the quality of teachers in the workforce—as far as I am concerned, no one works harder and gives more than our public school teachers.

Rather, our policies should be about identifying where teachers need the most help and, for a change, giving them that help. I am sure that, given your reputation as a collaborator, you will do the same in the coming months.

Lastly, I look forward to working together, Mr. Duncan, to helping make college accessible and affordable for all Americans. If you talk to families today, among their primary concerns in this economy is their ability to provide for their children's education. American families know that education, particularly a college education, is vital to their children's lifelong success. According to the most recent statistics, a college education can increase an individual's earnings by as much as \$800,000 over a lifetime. Higher education is the key not only to the economic security of individuals, but to the economic security and global competitiveness of our Nation as a whole. Yet, American families today are greatly concerned about their children's prospects for a higher education—specifically as it relates to the cost of tuition. Today's tuition levels are, in many cases, spiraling beyond the reach of many hard-working Americans. Clearly, we must do more to ensure that skyrocketing tuition rates do not put out of reach the dream and ability of obtaining a college degree.

It is clear, Mr. Duncan, that we have much work to do. At a time when many States, including my State, are slashing education budgets, and our country faces extraordinary challenges, we must commit to reinvesting in our Nation's future—we have no other choice. I believe you have the experience and heart needed to excel as Education Secretary, Mr. Duncan, and I look forward to working with you, Chairman Kennedy, and my colleagues on the committee to provide a quality education to all children.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (ACSA),
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814,
January 12, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
U.S. Senate,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY: We are writing in support of Mr. Arne Duncan, nominee for U.S. Secretary of Education. As an education association of over 17,000 school administrators from throughout California, we are pleased to support an educator with the depth of experience held by Mr. Duncan.

With the many challenges facing our public schools, Mr. Duncan is well positioned to embrace them and work with the education community to move forward on the goal of providing a superior education for all students. As the chief executive officer of the Chicago Public Schools, Mr. Duncan has first-hand experience in working with a diverse student population with below average test scores and a high dropout rate and working tirelessly to boost scores and decrease the dropout rate.

Through his work in the third largest school system in the country, Mr. Duncan understands the hard work necessary in turning around low-performing schools, raising graduation rates, and the challenges of sustaining these successes. From this practical experience, he has done the work to improve teacher quality and understands the importance of school site leadership and district leadership in these efforts.

We look forward to working with Mr. Duncan as he leads the Federal department of education and moves forward on an ambitious agenda of improving achievement for all students.

Sincerely,

BOB WELLS,
Executive Director.

ADLER PLANETARIUM,
CHICAGO, IL 60605,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
317 Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
379A Russell Senate Building,
Washington DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: It is my pleasure to endorse the nomination of Arne Duncan for the position of U.S. Secretary of Education. Most likely you are already aware of much of Arne's history. A *magna cum laude* Harvard graduate who has been involved in Chicago education programs since 1992, Arne was named CEO of Chicago Public Schools by Mayor Richard M. Daley in 2001.

In 2006, Arne joined the Adler Planetarium Board of Trustees. The Adler Planetarium's mission to *Inspire the next generation of explorers* is one that Arne wholeheartedly embraces. More than simply a name on the Trustee roster, Arne has been an active Board member, serving on the Education Committee and hosting meetings focusing on the Adler's efforts to improve math and science education in Chicago Public Schools. Arne's practical approach to education and his strong advocacy for excellence and accountability in the Chicago Public School system has been evident through his Education Committee work. Arne has been instrumental in supporting our successful partnerships with the CPS offices of Early Childhood, Bilingual, Math and Science, and more recently our After School Science enrichment programming. His facilitation of these partnerships with the Adler resulted in hundreds of teachers and thousands of students positively impacted by our collaborative programming.

Arne has a talent for creating positive partnerships, advocating forward-thinking programs, and promoting progressive teamwork. His role as an Adler Trustee has been a natural extension of his leadership efforts in reforming CPS, helping to improve student performance and lower the dropout rate.

For the United States to remain competitive in the global marketplace, it is imperative that its citizens be sufficiently educated and encouraged to embrace learning. Arne Duncan is eminently qualified to spearhead such efforts throughout our country. In endorsing Arne for this position, I echo the sympathies of Rufus Williams, President of the Chicago Board of Education, in saying that Chicago's—and the Adler's—loss is the Nation's gain. The Adler Planetarium endorses without qualification this nomination, and we wish the Senate all goodspeed in ratifying Arne Duncan as the next U.S. Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

PAUL H. KNAPPENBERGER, JR., PH.D.,
President.

ADVANCE ILLINOIS,
CHICAGO, IL 60602,
January 8, 2009.

DEAR SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY AND SENATOR MICHAEL ENZI: It is an honor to write this letter in support of Arne Duncan's nomination to become Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. I have known Mr. Duncan for close to 20 years and believe him to be a man of extraordinary character and intelligence. He has a demonstrated ability to work with people of all backgrounds and a commitment to keeping the best interests of children front and center in all that he does.

I first met Mr. Duncan when he was heading the I Have A Dream program for the Ariel foundation, a job that involved shepherding a group of children through

school and into college. My family and I had “adopted” a group of students through the I Have A Dream program in Chicago as well, and had the opportunity to collaborate with Arne on a number of substantive projects, including starting a charter high school on the city’s west side. In tackling these efforts, as well as in working with his Dreamers, Arne displayed quiet determination and a willingness to find creative ways around entrenched problems.

I was delighted when Arne was selected to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools. As trustee of a family foundation actively engaged in improving educational outcomes for students on the west side of Chicago, and now as Executive Director of Advance Illinois—a statewide education policy and advocacy organization—I have been involved in school reform efforts for going on 20 years. Arne’s ability to galvanize and engage community and civic leaders in the city’s public schools has been nothing short of remarkable. He has sought out innovative ideas for vexing problems and been willing to tackle some of the most complex challenges facing our schools.

During Arne’s tenure the Chicago Public Schools has focused intensively on improving literacy, on recruiting, supporting and retaining effective teachers and principals, and on expanding school choice to families that have historically had few options. Having invested in National Board Certification training, literacy coaches in schools across the district, performance pay plans, and an ambitious program to close and “turnaround” chronically failing schools, Arne can point to a number of critical successes. The number and caliber of people interested in teaching in Chicago public school classrooms has swelled, as have the number of quality school options in historically underserved communities. In addition, graduation rates and dropout rates are each moving in the right direction, and elementary reading and math scores have been steadily rising. In short, while there is much work left to be done, Arne has put Chicago Public Schools on the path of meaningful growth and change.

In addition to my professional commitment to public schools, it is worth noting that my three children attend Chicago public schools. As a parent and as someone deeply involved in public school policy in Illinois, I will miss Arne’s leadership. He has brought confidence in the system to a new high, and leaves behind an inspiring and productive tradition of inside-outside partnership.

As a longtime friend and someone who cares about the future of our economy and our citizenry, I applaud his nomination and think that President-elect Obama could not have chosen someone with a stronger skill set, a deeper commitment, or a more compelling vision to fill this position.

I wholeheartedly support this nomination and am happy to provide whatever further information or insight might be desired.

Sincerely,

ROBIN M. STEANS,
Executive Director, Advance Illinois.

AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION,
WASHINGTON, DC 20005,
January 16, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
HELP Committee,
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI, *Ranking Member,*
HELP Committee,
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY AND RANKING MEMBER ENZI: On behalf of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), I am pleased to offer our endorsement of Arne Duncan to serve as Secretary of the Department of Education. Secretary-designee Duncan is a demonstrated leader in education, having served in significant leadership positions throughout his career in the Nation’s third largest public school system.

As the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration examine and address our Nation’s education issues, it is imperative that the government has leaders that can seek bipartisan solutions and provide leadership and guidance on important education policy issues. Secretary designee Duncan has developed the necessary experience and skills in his career managing a large, complex public school system.

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the AOA as the accrediting association for osteopathic medical education in the United States. We encourage the Secretary-designee to address Federal financial aid and student debt issues. We urge the Senate to confirm Mr. Duncan's nomination quickly so that these and other important education issues can begin to be addressed by the Department.

Sincerely,

CARLO J. DIMARCO, DO,
President.

ARIEL INVESTMENTS,
CHICAGO, IL,
January 11, 2009.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE HELP COMMITTEE: My personal journey from the youngest of 6 raised by a single mother, to the presidency of one of the largest minority-owned mutual fund companies in America is powerful proof that education is the key to hope as well as the path to success for low-income children.

With that in mind, I want to offer the strongest possible endorsement for Arne Duncan for Education Secretary of the United States. I know Arne as a friend, as a colleague, and as a public official and in every role he embodies integrity, courage, insight and honesty. His low-key but determined style of leadership effectively brings together people with opposing viewpoints and always finds a way to advance broader goals. He is neither intimidated by power nor seduced by it and he is equally comfortable taking direction or giving it. He is the rare leader who also listens.

Arne Duncan's only interest is children. It has been his life work, and I am absolutely confident he will help our country meet its solemn obligation to educate this most precious resource.

Sincerely,

MELLODY HOBSON,
President, Ariel Investments.

ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT,
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22311-1714,
January 15, 2009.

HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), representing over 175,000 educators from all aspects of the profession, requests your support to confirm President-elect Barack Obama's nomination of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education.

During his tenure as the chief executive officer of Chicago Public Schools, Secretary-designate Duncan's reform efforts transformed a struggling large urban school system into a national model of innovation and improvement. We believe that his experience in making schools the center of their communities, recruiting and retaining the best and brightest teachers and educational leaders, and effectively intervening in low-performing schools will prove invaluable as the Nation's premier educational leader.

ASCD members agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Duncan's beliefs that a student's education begins even before entering school. Staffing schools with the most effective teachers and educational leaders is key to the success of all learners, and every child deserves a comprehensive and well-rounded education.

Toward that end, we appreciate the Secretary-designate's commitment to focus greater attention on access to and quality of early childhood education, recruit and retain the best and brightest teachers and education leaders, and advocate the need for educational programs and services that support the whole child.

Based on his 7 years leading Chicago's public schools and from his testimony before the Senate Education Committee, it is clear that Arne Duncan has a commitment, passion, and record of success in ensuring that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Our Nation is facing one of the greatest economic hardships in our history and education is one of the primary means by which we will return to prosperity. Arne Duncan will be the kind of partner that educators, parents, and students can rely on to help improve our public schools and the kind of national leader we need in these challenging times.

We hope that the Senate will unanimously support Mr. Duncan and strongly encourage you to vote for his confirmation as Secretary of Education. Should you have any questions, please contact Tina Dove, ASCD legislative advocate, at 1-703-575-5641 or tdove@ascd.org.

With warmest personal regards,

GENE R. CARTER, ED.D.,
Executive Director and CEO.

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE HEADQUARTERS,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036-1133,
January 8, 2009.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am writing to support the confirmation of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education. I know Arne through the Aspen Urban Superintendents Network, which for 8 years has brought together about a dozen superintendents for semi-annual professional development retreats. Arne has been a Network member since taking on leadership of the Chicago Public Schools. I have also had the opportunity to work with a number of Arne's senior staff through Aspen's networks for chief academic officers and central office literary and mathematics leaders.

In these settings, I have found Arne to be extremely thoughtful, open to learning about new approaches, and committed to examining and responding to data and evidence. Perhaps most striking is Arne's consistent focus on Chicago's young people and what they need to succeed despite the inevitable distractions and political pressures in leading the third largest district in the Nation.

In pursuit of his goals, Arne has been a pragmatic leader willing to try a range of approaches to get the job done. For example, the quality of new teachers has risen dramatically under his tenure as a result of aggressive recruiting from traditional teacher education programs as well as from non-traditional sources such as Teach for America and the cutting-edge Chicago urban teacher residency program. The district is developing and improving retention of excellent teachers by heavy support for National Board Certification and through a pilot pay-for-performance initiative. Importantly, his commitment to exploring new approaches has been coupled with an equal commitment to gathering data about results, recognizing missteps, and making needed mid-course improvements. Moreover, perhaps because of his ability to listen and his pragmatic nature, while leading sometimes controversial teacher reforms, Arne has still earned a reputation with the teacher union as an honest and trustworthy partner.

Arne has also recruited a great deal of new talent into the district's central office. It is worth noting that district staff I have worked with think the world of Arne. He is praised for his consistent leadership, commitment to students, and his generosity in giving support and credit to those who work for him.

I believe that Arne is poised to be an excellent Secretary of Education. He comes to the position with an in-depth understanding of the realities of urban communities and schools and the credibility gained from success in Chicago. His effective leadership of a large school system bureaucracy augurs well for the management of the U.S. Department of Education. These attributes, in addition to his recognized integrity and commitment to better life chances for children, make him a superb nominee.

I respectfully encourage you to confirm Arne Duncan as the next Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

JUDY WURTZEL,
Co-Director, Aspen Education Program.

BOARD OF EDUCATION,
CITY OF CHICAGO, IL 60603,
January 9, 2009.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: It is my pleasure to recommend to you Chicago Public Schools Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan as the next U.S. Secretary of Education in the administration of President-elect Barack Obama.

During his tenure as CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, Arne has demonstrated, an extraordinary ability to create an environment of collaboration within the school district while fostering outside partnerships with the business, philanthropic, religious and grassroots communities. It is this exceptional quality that has helped him accomplish what many school district chiefs have failed to do in the past—focus and engage a wide variety of people on the issues of education.

Most important, Arne has been a courageous and innovative reformer, bringing about changes in a school system once labeled “the worst in the Nation.” Having come from a family that holds dear the importance of offering a quality education to *all* children, Arne has long been dedicated to improving the lives of our students, from the time he helped start a small school in an impoverished neighborhood of Chicago to the last 7 years in which he led the third-largest district in America.

Arne also has provided steadfast leadership throughout the district and will leave behind a legacy of lowering the district’s dropout rate, increasing the graduation rate, improving student and teacher attendance, elevating test scores and creating better educational options for children in each neighborhood of our city.

While our work in Chicago is not done, the district has made substantial improvement during Arne’s tenure and we will continue in his quest to challenge the status quo and to bring equity throughout our school system.

Our entire district is very excited about the prospect that Arne’s experience, perspective, and passion for education reform and innovation can finally be realized at a national level. It is for these reasons that I urge you to approve the nomination of Arne Duncan for U.S. Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

RUFUS WILLIAMS,
President.

BILL BRADLEY,
U.S. SENATOR, RET.,
January 6, 2009.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

Attention: Joe Kolinski

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS: I have known Arne Duncan for over 10 years. I have watched him work. I have watched him grow. I have watched him lead. I strongly support his confirmation as our Nation’s Secretary of Education. I urge the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions to approve his nomination.

As the head of the Chicago public school system, he has been a successful reformer—he has turned around and rebuilt a broken and highly troubled educational system. Arne’s commitment to our children’s educational needs remains unsurpassed.

I can think of no finer public servant in this position than Arne Duncan. On the day he is confirmed, all Americans should feel lucky.

Sincerely,

BILL BRADLEY.

THE BROAD FOUNDATION,
LOS ANGELES, CA 90024,
January 6, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
379A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: I extend my strong support for Senate confirmation of Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education.

Over the course of the last 6 years, we have worked closely with Arne on our mutual efforts to improve student achievement in Chicago Public Schools.

We have been more than impressed with his strong leadership skills, strategic vision, openness to employ innovative approaches that work for students and commitment to get the job done. Indeed, his leadership in overseeing tens of thousands of district employees while remaining squarely focused on systematic changes necessary for students to succeed was central to my decision to invest more than \$7 million in Chicago's education reform efforts.

Arne also enjoys a strong reputation across the American educational community. His leadership has resulted in consistent student achievement gains in an era when students in far too many large urban districts are falling through the cracks. And, similar to President-elect Obama, he is known for having a leadership style that has been effective in dealing with a wide variety of interest groups that will be ever-present on the national level.

Finally, Arne's deep practical experience at the top of the Nation's third largest school district—particularly as it relates to education issues of great importance to the Nation, such as accountability, teacher quality and high-quality charter schools—will be of great benefit to the Department as he moves forward to enforce Federal education policy.

Without reservation, I encourage you to confirm Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

ELI BROAD.

CITY OF CHICAGO,
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN,
January 5, 2009.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY (MA),
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI (WY),
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate, Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: As Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Chicago City Council I have had a close opportunity to study and observe the leadership abilities and personal character of Arne Duncan, who has been nominated as Secretary of Education by President-elect Barack Obama. During his 8 years of leadership, I have seen Arne bring about an educational miracle here in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Chicago can truthfully boast of this educational turn-around that has become the hallmark of urban education in our Nation. I believe this outstanding accomplishment has been a very natural outgrowth of Arne's character and professional abilities. He is a man of honor and one who is genuinely engaged in both the theory and praxis of urban education. He has always demonstrated a powerful understanding of his responsibility to the students within the CPS system. His efforts have always been centered on those whose futures are defined in Chicago's urban classrooms. Of course, he is bright and intelligent—Harvard educated and possessed of a refined educational inheritance set by his talented parents. He has all the educational and practical experience to lead the Nation educationally, as he has done across the urban landscape of our city. But he also brings something just as necessary to the task—the personal, emotional and spiritual commitment to educational excellence for students and teachers alike.

During his years of leadership with the CPS, Arne has demonstrated a very savvy understanding of the mechanics of the educational system. He saw the CPS in planes of thought in multi-dimensions—something that was revolutionary here in

Chicago. He understood what was wearing away at educational effectiveness and saw, at the same time, the complex geography of what was so desperately in need of repair.

Arne had the ability to perceive fresh approaches to everyday life in our schools, and he came to discover what was so necessary for real change to occur. This was an enormously complex undertaking of, not only an educational issue, but of a political, social and cultural one as well. He engaged all of these components with strength, a sense of fearlessness and an intense human understanding. He pushed for aggressive reforms that shaped new paths for the CPS, often with the reticence of Chicago's educational establishment. Today, the correctness of his foresight is both acknowledged and applauded. Without him we would never have known the extraordinary advantages of integrated family and community involvement in our schools.

Arne always has had the big picture before him. He had the wisdom to invite outstanding educational leaders to share in his dream and vision for the CPS. He built a team of such integrity and energy that it was possible to make huge leaps in the manner in which our schools were administered. He gained the confidence of Chicago political leaders; the trust of union leaders; the support of Illinois legislative leaders; and the loyalties of Chicago teachers. This was, in itself, a profound and renewing miracle.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of my colleagues in the Chicago City Council who certainly join me in supporting Arne's nomination for Secretary of Education. I am confident that he will carry with him, to this responsibility, the same values and virtues that he displayed so generously here in Chicago. He will bring honor and accomplishment with him to Washington. While we are saddened to see him leave Chicago at this time, we recognize our larger responsibility of sharing his educational leadership with the rest of the Nation. If I can be of any further assistance to your committee, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

EDWARD M. BURKE.

CITY COUNCIL,
CHICAGO, IL 60620,
January 14, 2009.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Congratulatory for Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education.

DEAR SENATORS: I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with and follow the distinguished career of the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. During my years of collaboration with Secretary Duncan on educational issues facing Chicago's young people, I found him to be one of the most involved and invested administrators to ever service the residents of our great city. He not only brought a love of education and a concern for the welfare of people whom a lack of education was negatively affecting.

His Ivy League experience at Harvard University provided him with some of the country's finest educational perspectives. His role as co-captain of Harvard's basketball team and designation as a First Team All-American was testament to his commitment to being the best—a testament to overcoming the many challenges he accepted as a student-athlete. Even as he played professional basketball in Australia after college, he took the time to work with children who were wards of the State. Arne has never confused his "profession" and his "passion"; he has never forgotten his sociological perspective and calling to the service of people.

Once he joined the Ariel Education Initiative in 1992, inner-city children on Chicago's South Side would realize greater access to educational opportunity through his work. Seeking to have an even greater positive impact on young people across the city, he joined the Chicago Public Schools in 1998. Three years later, Mayor Richard M. Daley named Duncan Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools.

Mr. Duncan's dream of building better schools, better teachers and better students had reached new heights, but there would still be greater work to perform in the service of young people and families. When President-elect Barack Obama stood before the throngs amassed in Chicago's Grant Park on Tuesday evening in November

2008 after becoming America's first African-American Commander in Chief, Arne Duncan had to know that he may soon be facing the greatest challenge of his professional career.

He has served on many prestigious boards, received numerous honorary degrees and been recognized in every sector of Chicago's business, educational, political and philanthropic communities. One of the things that I admire most about him, however, is his unadulterated humility and grounded spirit. He is a man with clear purpose, and his willingness to sacrifice for the good of the least fortunate of us has resulted in consistent advances in the educational performances of our city's schools . . . and our future leaders.

I stand proud and unyielding in my support of our U.S. Secretary of Education-Designate, Arne Duncan, and wish him his greatest success yet. I pray for his success because his triumph in this position, and the policies he will promote during these troubled times—times that have seen mega-corporations filing for bankruptcy and national dependence on foreign oil fueling worldwide terrorism, while millions starve at home and abroad—will serve to educate our Nation's children, and may prove to be as vital to our country's future as *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

On behalf of the entire city of Chicago, I congratulate U.S. Secretary of Education-Designate Duncan and wish him Godspeed as he receives the keys to steer our country's children bravely into the 21st century. May he keep his vision to help build a generation of young scholars that will be the envy of this rapidly changing world.

Sincerely,

LATASHA R. THOMAS,
*Chairperson, Committee on Education,
 Chicago City Council.*

THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST,
 CHICAGO, IL 60601,
January 6, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
 Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
*U.S. Senate,
 Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: I write this letter to you in support of Mr. Arne Duncan's nomination for Secretary of Education. I have had the privilege to work with Mr. Duncan for 8 years. He was appointed as CEO for the Chicago Public Schools just months after I began work at The Chicago Community Trust to craft our Education Initiative which provided a \$100 million commitment to support Mr. Duncan's agenda to improve student achievement. This partnership between metropolitan Chicago's community foundation and the school district is, in itself, a testament to the character and quality of Mr. Duncan's leadership.

Under Mr. Duncan's leadership, the Chicago Public Schools district has achieved a record of continuous progress spanning 7 years which is unmatched by other urban districts. Key to this success is his understanding that educational improvement requires the collaborative efforts of many stakeholders—and his commitment to building collaborative partnerships focused on students and their needs. From the beginning of Mr. Duncan's tenure he focused on the goal of preparing students for postsecondary education and work by achieving excellent instruction. The bottom line is that Mr. Duncan is pragmatic and driven by results, not ideology.

Mr. Duncan fundamentally transformed the culture of this large urban school bureaucracy. He opened up the system and invited parents, business leaders, community leaders, nonprofit leaders, and foundation leaders to join with him. Almost overnight he tapped a wellspring of goodwill and expertise eager to tackle the seemingly intractable challenge of improving the educational outcomes for poor and minority students. Hundreds of civic leaders now feel a direct stake in the success of Chicago's students and schools.

His successful strategies are tightly focused on transforming the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, introducing 21st century standards (including expansion of world language programs), closing failing schools, and creating new and innovative schools.

The core strategy for improving student achievement is to strengthening teachers' knowledge and school leaders' abilities to tackle and raise the collective performance of entire schools and to recruit talented new teachers. This strategy is supported by the creation of exemplary curriculum offices and the mobilization of university supports inside schools and classrooms, and an active partnership with the Consor-

tium on Chicago School Research that provides real-time and longitudinal research studies to guide decisionmaking. As a result, Chicago has experienced a remarkable turnaround of classrooms, school climates, and an invigorated workforce, not only in the new schools but also in existing neighborhood schools. This work has led to major innovations in how universities and schools work together; work that translates into higher achievement by all children.

Above all, under Mr. Duncan's leadership, the Chicago Public Schools system is courageous and steadfast in its commitment to close failing schools each year through a fair and objective process. This process has invited and increased parent engagement and community involvement in the process of school closing decisions and the selection of new school operators and leaders.

In concert with school closings, Mr. Duncan set an ambitious agenda to open new schools and built a process to incubate, evaluate and launch an impressive number of innovative new schools that meet the diverse learning needs of students and increase the opportunities for public school choice. As a result of this work, the district developed a "turnaround" strategy that enables students to remain in place while new leadership and teachers are brought in with a plan to dramatically improve the school.

What sets Mr. Duncan apart from other superintendents is his reinvention of the role of the superintendent to that of a manager of a portfolio of schools—with the work designed to continually improve the mix of schools to benefit the maximum number of students. In this regard, his agenda is to provide the best schools for the district's students, whether the school is a charter school, contract school, or traditional neighborhood school. His decisions to award new schools are based on evidence and performance—not ideology.

Critical to the success of these strategies is his insistence on the development and use of data and evidence to guide decisionmaking.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (312) 616-8000.

Sincerely yours,

TERRY MAZANY,
President and CEO.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY,
NEW YORK, NY 10027,
January 8, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Nomination of Arne Duncan

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am writing to convey my enthusiastic support for the nomination of Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education. I think that Mr. Duncan is exceptionally well suited to undertake the challenging responsibilities of this position at this particular time. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a unique ability to bring people together and to solve difficult problems in a bipartisan way.

Mr. Duncan's remarkable success in bringing innovations and substantial educational success to the Chicago schools is a matter of record, and others who are closer to that scene can speak about the specifics of these accomplishments better than I. What stands out for me in this record is the fact that he was able to accomplish striking reforms, like implementing a performance pay plan and closing down 19 schools for academic failure and dismissing the entire staff, while maintaining good relations with the teachers union and avoiding any labor strife during his entire long tenure in office.

My personal involvement with Arne Duncan has centered around three critical issues: fiscal equity reform, community schools and revisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. I will briefly discuss my interactions with him regarding each of these important subjects and explain why I think he is uniquely qualified to lead the Federal Government's policy initiatives in each of these areas.

Before assuming my present position at Teachers College, I was lead counsel for the plaintiffs in a major litigation, *CFE v. State*, that successfully challenged New York State's system for financing public education. I also head the National Access

Network, a grouping of most of the attorneys and advocates around the country who are involved in fiscal equity and education adequacy reform movements. Last year, Mr. Duncan asked me to come to Chicago to discuss with him and the members of the Chicago Board of Education our experience with fiscal equity reform in New York and the relevance that experience might have for promoting similar reforms in Chicago.

I was impressed with two aspects of his reaction to my presentation. First, he quickly comprehended the complex legal story I laid out and honed in on some strategic factors that might be relevant to the difficult legal landscape regarding this issue in Illinois. Second was his passion for the well-being of Chicago's public school children and his genuine distress at the fact that they were receiving significantly fewer resources than their peers in New York City. He has kept in touch with me since that time to prod me for ideas and assistance on how to rectify the fiscal inequities in Illinois. I am convinced that, as Secretary, he will also be a committed champion for fiscal equity reform on a national level and that he will find pragmatic ways to make progress on this issue by "leveling up" the resources available to children who are presently underserved without diminishing the educational opportunities of those who presently are being well served.

Increasingly, policymakers at both the national and the State levels are understanding that in order to make serious inroads on eliminating the current achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children, we need to confront the socioeconomic barriers to school success that impede educational opportunity for students from backgrounds of concentrated poverty. Arne Duncan has been *the* national leader on taking concrete policy steps to provide the health, nutrition, family support and preschool opportunities these children need to succeed. He has done so by initiating the establishment of community schools in Chicago—not merely as pilots or demonstrations, but on the large scale needed to make a significant impact on urban education.

In Chicago, fully 25 percent of all the public schools are now "community schools" that are open every day well into the night and provide a range of important services to students and their families. Mr. Duncan has been generous with his time in providing guidance for efforts that my colleagues and I are now undertaking to promote a similar community school reform effort in New York City. He accomplished this impressive innovation in Chicago with very limited resources by husbanding and carefully prioritizing the public funds available to him and by motivating many individuals and foundations in the private sector to support this effort. Mr. Duncan's ability to find the means to implement a major innovation in the face of serious resource scarcity will obviously serve him well in helping the President-elect implement his ambitious education agenda during the current economic downturn.

One of the first major tasks that the new Secretary of Education will face is dealing with the long-delayed reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. Arne Duncan has mined and utilized the many positive possibilities for reform provided by that statute and, for the past 7 years (as long as the law has been in effect), has also wrestled with the implementation difficulties the law presents in a number of areas. Mr. Duncan also has a deep understanding of the complex interplay of the legal and policy perspectives and the political compromises that went into the law's enactment and will be well-situated to consider and work out agreements on necessary revisions. I recently coedited a book that examines the theoretical underpinnings of the law and presents a variety of perspectives on how NCLB should be revised in order to accomplish the goal of truly overcoming the achievement gaps. Mr. Duncan agreed to review this work and gave us some very insightful comments on its themes. He clearly has the right mix of practical experience and theoretical understanding of NCLB to lead the Department's efforts to build on the law's accomplishments and strengthen those aspects of the law that have proved problematic.

In sum, I think Arne Duncan, by temperament, intellect and experience, is superbly qualified to carry out the responsibilities of the U.S. Secretary of Education. I appreciate your considering my views on this important matter. Please let me know if I can provide any further information or be of any further assistance to the committee in the confirmation process.

Sincerely yours,

MICHAEL A. REBELL,
*Executive Director, Campaign for Educational Equity
and Professor of Law and Education Practice.*

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS,
 WASHINGTON, DC 20004,
 January 8, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND SENATOR ENZI: I am writing on behalf of the Council of the Great City Schools, the Nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems, to enthusiastically endorse the appointment of Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education.

Arne Duncan is one of the finest educational leaders in the country and is eminently qualified to lead the Nation's schools and colleges as Secretary of Education. Mr. Duncan has led the third largest school system in the Nation since 2002, a tenure well beyond the average in urban education today. His leadership has been marked by innovation, collaboration, determination, and skill. He has been at the forefront of important high school reforms and has championed improvement and accountability for results at every turn. The results of his efforts can be seen in better schools and significantly enhanced student achievement and opportunity.

In the process of leading the Chicago Public Schools, Arne Duncan exhibited all of the skills that a Secretary of Education will need in order to be successful: honesty, integrity, transparency, thoughtfulness, and political acumen. He is well known as a leader who will listen to all sides of a debate and make up his mind based on the best available data and research. He widely consults parents and unions, teachers and principals, municipal leaders and the broader community. And he is bipartisan and relentless in the pursuit of better education and greater opportunity for the Nation's children.

The Council of the Great City Schools is pleased and proud to give its wholehearted support behind Arne Duncan and urge the U.S. Senate to confirm his appointment at the earliest moment. Thank you.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL CASSERLY,
Executive Director.

THE CHICAGO PRINCIPALS & ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION,
 CHICAGO, IL 60601,
 January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: The Chicago Principals & Administrators Association (CPAA) is honored to send this letter of support for the confirmation of Mr. Arne Duncan for the position of Secretary, U.S. Department of Education. Our Association has enjoyed a productive relationship with Mr. Duncan during his tenure as CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. Mr. Duncan has extended an open-door policy to us at his downtown office, additionally, providing his home telephone number for discussions at anytime necessary.

We have monthly meetings with Mr. Duncan and his senior staff to bring issues of concern for resolution. The meetings also afford opportunities to explore innovative ideas for collaboration around improving management and instruction at the local school level.

We are very grateful that Mr. Duncan has supported and continued a long standing (53 years) joint professional development initiative between CPAA and CPS. Each year local school administrators are given permission to attend a 2-day conference that features top senior staff from Chicago Public Schools, national speakers and educational experts.

The Chicago Principals & Administrators Association has worked under the guidance of CPS to provide other professional development to Chicago administrators with funding by the Chicago Public Schools. We believe the articulation and collegial planning between our organizations has created an atmosphere that encourages in-

novative change and thinking “outside the box.” We are proud to recommend our CEO, Arne Duncan, to the rest of the Nation as their new education leader.

Sincerely,

CLARICE BERRY,
President.

THE CHICAGO PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND,
CHICAGO, IL 60606,
January 9, 2009.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI, *Ranking Member,*
U.S. Senate,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: It is my great honor to offer this letter of support for my friend and colleague, Arne Duncan, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, on his nomination by President-elect Obama for U.S. Secretary of Education. As the Nation’s longest-serving urban school system superintendent, Arne’s unique talents have translated into real results for children. I know from working with Arne over many years that he will set aggressive goals and will engender a spirit of collaboration that will simply get things done.

I always think of Arne as an athlete, as he brings the consummate athlete’s style to his work. He is a team-builder, a first among equals, someone who shares the credit, the type that does what he says he is going to do. He is a humble man, but with a deeply held competitive spirit that gives him tenacious focus and drive to tackle the toughest challenges. And after a win, he wants to know what’s next. There is no finish line.

Thanks to Arne, Chicago has been on a tremendous winning streak. Arne was one of the first big-city schools’ chiefs to identify principal and teacher talent as the greatest lever we can pull to improve schools. In partnership with The Chicago Public Education Fund—made up of Chicago’s eminent business leaders who have had the confidence in Arne to commit nearly \$50 million of their personal money to improve the city’s schools—Arne has dramatically increased the quality of human capital in this, the Nation’s third largest school system.

Arne’s success lies in his fair and disciplined leadership, embrace of innovation, and solutions-oriented management. I want to give you three brief examples of these qualities, which will serve the Nation well.

On leadership, Arne was pivotal in creating in Chicago some of the toughest eligibility requirements for principals in the Nation. He was a key member of the Leading to Great Principals Task Force, chaired by Fund Director and Chicago-based businesswoman Penny Pritzker and including prominent corporate, foundation and school district leaders. Arne not only attended every meeting as promised, he steadfastly implemented the Principals Task Force recommendations, which ultimately boosted eligibility requirements to the point that the pool of principal candidates reduced by nearly two-thirds. Despite losing principal candidate supply, Arne’s determined leadership focused relentlessly on quality.

On innovation, in collaboration with The Fund, Arne brought to Chicago and developed leading-edge principal preparation programs. These programs have become a model of innovation in school leadership preparation, by blending management and instructional leadership training, providing a strong, year-long internship experience, and attracting non-traditional leadership talent to education.

On management, Arne is collaborative yet decisive. In partnership with The Fund, Arne has made National Board Certification a signature human capital initiative for Chicago. Indeed, under his leadership, and with financial and strategic assistance from The Fund, Chicago has become the fastest growing big-city school district for National Board Certified Teachers. When Arne recently learned that recruitment for teachers to pursue the certification process had slumped, jeopardizing Chicago’s momentum in boosting teacher quality, he quickly assembled the program management team and The Fund and developed an immediate action plan. He was thoughtful and deliberative, but ultimately resolute.

In a system of more than 400,000 students, 24,000 teachers, and 650 schools, the challenges of achieving high performance are as immense as they are intricate. Yet, Arne’s results, driven in large measure by his leadership, innovation and management, speak for themselves. He has demonstrated the right mix of traits to succeed

as head of a large, complex organization. And he has done so with great humility and affability.

Working side-by-side with Arne has been one of the great pleasures of my career. I have the utmost confidence that he will serve his country with as much distinction as he has his city. I ask that your committee and the full Senate vote to confirm Arne as our next Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

JANET M. KNUPP,
Founding President and CEO.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CPS),
CHICAGO, IL 60603,
January 7, 2008.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: It is an honor and privilege to have the opportunity to collectively write in support of the nomination of Mr. Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education.

Transformation is an overused word. However, it is, if anything, an understatement to describe how Mr. Duncan has affected the Chicago Public Schools. Since his appointment in 2001 as Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Duncan has changed, for the better, the lives of hundreds of thousands of our most deserving children. Over the last 7 years, student achievement in the Chicago Public Schools has improved to historic levels. As you may imagine this has been a difficult path, as he has often had to take the necessary risks as a leader to create change in an enormous, school district. Since 2001, standardized test scores have risen dramatically and consistently. Prior to Mr. Duncan's leadership, roughly 40 percent of Chicago Public School elementary students met or exceeded Illinois State Learning Standards. Today, 70 percent have reached that same standard. High School students have made similarly spectacular gains, moving from an ACT average of 16.1 to our current average of 17.3.

Mr. Duncan has guided us to look substantially further, and to set goals that were simply unimaginable even 5 years ago. He has helped us to look beyond our school or our grade level. Our long-range goals of reducing the poverty rate in Chicago, and preparing every student for success, has forced us to understand that our vocation plays a singular role in the success of our neighborhoods and our city. By strategically looking at data, and openly seeking information that will objectively guide our work, we have tossed aside assumptions that were built over generations. Because of his leadership, we now clearly see a path to success.

Mr. Duncan's accomplishments are substantial and deep. Under his leadership, we have developed a theory of change that provides us focused guidance. The theories are simple: provide excellent instruction, attract and develop talented people, and expand opportunities and options for all students. We have seen teacher quality rise exponentially, along with teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. Recognizing that great teachers make great schools, Mr. Duncan has made National Board Certification a priority, and worked with the private sector to ensure that these great teachers are rewarded for their efforts. He has recognized that great leaders are essential to every school, and has developed Principal Competencies, ensuring that principals are prepared for the enormity of their task. He created autonomy options for great leaders, and closed schools that were not properly serving the needs of our children. He has also developed an array of choices for parents, ensuring that the need of every child is met.

However in Chicago, our focus has been so much more than just improving test scores. Mr. Duncan has repeatedly shown the courage to argue for increased funding for our schools, with the understanding that all must be held accountable. He has worked closely with our unions to ensure continued labor peace so the focus remains on children. Furthermore, Mr. Duncan has worked tirelessly with local and State agencies, community and faith-based organizations to combat the tide of violence affecting the lives of our students and their families. Mr. Duncan has repeatedly challenged us with these words, "If in the end we have just improved test scores and have not moved more children from poverty through education—we have failed!"

We serve as Area Instruction Officers, supervising the 600-plus Chicago Public Schools. Prior to Mr. Duncan's organizational leadership, our function was to supervise the operational activities of schools, with little influence over instruction. One of Arne's first acts was to reorganize our roles so that the majority of our time would be spent working toward improved instruction. He clearly recognized that, if

true change was to occur, it would happen at the classroom and school level. His focus on instruction has been maintained throughout his tenure as CEO.

It is, of course, impossible to list all accomplishments of Mr. Arne Duncan. It's easy, however, to state that the education of the children of Chicago has been immeasurably improved by his courageous leadership. It's equally easy to say that he is, in the minds of many, irreplaceable. However, it is with immeasurable pride that we write in support of Arne's appointment. We are certain that what he has done at the local level can be replicated nationally. We're certain that No Child Left Behind will become much more than an empty phrase. We're certain that lives will change because of this appointment. He will be deeply missed.

Sincerely,

Thomas Avery, Cynthia Barron, Analila Chico, James Cosme, Rebecca de los Reyes, Carolyn Epps, Deborah Esparza, Stephen Flisk, Annette Gurley, Jerryelyn Jones, Joe Kallas, Olga Laluz, Delena Little, Denise Little, Isabel Mesa-Collins, Rick Mills, Leonard Moore, Pamela Randall, Norma Rodriguez, Karen Saffold, Katherine Volk, Adrian Willis, Paul Zeitler,

The 23 Area Instruction Officers, Chicago Public Schools.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
CHICAGO, IL 60622,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: As principal of Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy, with the Chicago Public Schools, I appreciate the opportunity to recommend Mr. Arne Duncan for the appointment of Secretary of Education. Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy's profound growth is consistent with the significant improvement many Chicago schools have experienced under Mr. Duncan's exemplary leadership. His city wide initiatives as the Chief Executive Officer for the Chicago Public Schools created the context and foundation for Talcott Academy's dramatic improvement.

Arne Duncan supports and validates the belief that our greatest resources to children are the very adults who commit to serve them as educators. This human capital has been nurtured and developed by creating and sustaining multilevel partnerships, holding high expectations for teachers' higher education, and being an embedded, inspirational leader who understand the underpinnings and implications of educational reform.

Mr. Duncan has shown commitment to build collaborative and long-term partnerships among organizations such as National Boards, Chicago Community Trust, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago Public Education Fund and the Chicago Teachers Union in order to substantially support deep and reflective student learning.

Mr. Duncan is steadfastly dedicated to developing highly skilled and qualified teachers. He has nurtured and developed the National Board Certification within the city, and as a result the Chicago Public Schools are at the forefront nationally for teachers achieving National Board Certification. At Talcott Academy 30 percent of our staff (nine teachers) have achieved National Board Certification within the past 4 years. These teachers have demonstrated a profound impact schoolwide in creating a culture of instructional excellence and professional accountability.

Arne Duncan has also supported several graduate degree programs to continue teachers' professional development and growth. Mr. Duncan understands and acts on the belief that in order for our children to learn and achieve at increasingly higher levels, they must have highly qualified, motivated and dedicated teachers throughout their entire school career. Over the course of his tenure as Chicago Public Schools CEO, Mr. Duncan has envisioned, created, developed and sustained an environment where the bar for Chicago's teachers can be set at a high level.

Mr. Duncan is an inspirational leader who respects and appreciates the spirit of our children. He completely understands that the very strength and soul of Chicago and the rest of the United States of America is our families' cultural diversity. He takes a personal interest in the achievement of all students as he understands that collective success is measured by every group of students, including children of poverty and children who are often overlooked by the rest of society. He has challenged schools to set the bar high for students because he truly believes in their capability to become truly amazing citizens.

Mr. Duncan expects high-level instructional programs to be offered to every child. This is evident in Talcott Academy's ability to implement programs such as high school algebra for 8th grade students. His leadership conveys the very message that a high level of success is necessary for every child.

Finally, Arne Duncan actively leads innovative educational reform for children. While supporting the need to have students achieve in core subjects such as reading, writing, math and science in order that they may be prepared for college and the 21st century global workforce, he also understands the importance of the fine arts and physical education. In addition to rigorous academics, all Talcott students routinely have theater, music and visual arts to inspire their creativity and strengthen personal discipline. As a result of Chicago School reform, the amount of students who have achieved Illinois State norms in core subject areas such as reading, math and science has dramatically increased at Talcott Academy. For example, 40 percent of the students met State standards in Science 4 years ago, while 83 percent do now, a rate that exceeds the Illinois State average.

Keeping with his impressive knowledge of educational reform, Arne Duncan is well known as being a relentless advocate for the community school model. Talcott developed an after-school program with the Union League Boys and Girls Club that serves hundreds of students and provides extended opportunities for athletics, academics, theater, dance, music, band, recreation and meals. Additionally, Mr. Duncan has supported innovative educational partnerships for Talcott students with some of Chicago's world class museums. Students view the Art Institute of Chicago, Field Museum of Natural History and National Museum of Mexican Art routinely as extensions of their classrooms.

In conclusion, Mr. Duncan is a strong leader who is dedicated to serving children. Mr. Duncan's leadership has helped our teachers to grow and our students to achieve at high academic levels. As a principal of an urban school that has made dramatic gains, I respect and am inspired by his commitment to educational reform. I am confident that our children and schools will benefit from his leadership as Secretary of Education. Thank you for your dedication to our country's educational system and your consideration for Mr. Arne Duncan.

Sincerely,

CRAIG BENES,
Principal, Talcott Fine Arts and
Museum Academy, M.S., M.A., C.A.S.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CPS),
CHICAGO, IL 60620,
January 7, 2009.

DEAR MR. EDWARD KENNEDY (MA) AND MR. MICHAEL B. ENZI (WY): Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Mr. Arne Duncan, CEO Chicago Public Schools who has been nominated to serve as the Secretary of Education for President-elect Barack Obama.

I have worked under Arne's leadership for the past 7 years. During this time, he has been relentless in his quest to improve Chicago Public Schools. His vision has become a way of life for our system. He has been supportive of citywide initiatives to improve instruction as well as increase student attendance.

Under his leadership, the district won a grant for the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). This initiative has brought a sense of community, collaboration, and support to our school. While we have a long way to go, the structures that are evident within the TAP program will prove to bear great results. With 10 schools being selected initially, there is now room to add 30 more schools over the next year.

Arne Duncan is an excellent choice for the office of the Secretary of Education. His commitment, dedication and hands-on approach is definitely needed to ensure that all children in the United States of America have access to an equal and quality education regardless of their economic status.

Educationally committed,

MONIQUE N. DOCKERY.

(CPS) JOHN J. PERSHING WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL,
 CHICAGO, IL 60616,
January 8, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY (MA),
 317 Russell Senate Office Building,
 Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI (WY),
 379A Senate Russell Office Building,
 Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am honored to submit this letter in support of Mr. Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education for the United States of America. What a privilege it is to be asked to share information about Arne (as he likes to be called by all) in order to help create a complete composite of an individual who has impacted education within the city of Chicago in such a profound way.

As an instructional leader in an urban district, I am often faced with dismal information about the academic success of our students. The media fills the airwaves and print media with negative, albeit factual, statistics and prognoses about children whose faces and situations categorize them as minority. When Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed Arne as Chief Executive Officer, a positive outlook emerged. Within a short period of time, he applied a uniquely innovative approach to leadership, proving that he was more than able to handle the tough task of making our district one that would stir a sense of pride across the Nation. No longer are we seen as a district with no future. In fact, the Chicago Public School system is now referenced as a district of promise.

I have two stories to share regarding Arne's personal commitment to Pershing West, where I have had the honor of serving as principal since 2005. In the summer of 2005, we realized that our existing playground met neither the needs of the community nor of the school population. Arne, along with a bus load of volunteers that he garnered, sweated alongside parents, students, family members, and faculty to erect a new playground. He never complained about the work, or the heat, and labored from morning to evening with a smile on his face. The second scenario occurred 2 years later when he attended a principals' meeting hosted by our school. Teachers were excited at the thought that he would walk into classrooms, as he is prone to do. The day stretched on, and it soon looked like the classroom visits would be impossible due to his full schedule. Nevertheless, I appealed to him to accompany me briefly into classrooms. He did without pause or hesitation. I share these stories to add a stroke to the portrait being painted of Arne. While building the playground, he remained focused on the task, but also engaged in dialogue with everyone. It was clear that each individual present mattered equally to him. After the principals' meeting, he could very easily have exited the building without considering my request, but he didn't. He willingly honored my request. These anecdotes speak volumes about Arne's character. He is a personable, attentive, driven visionary. Of paramount importance is the fact that he is guided by a vision that has children and the support of teaching and learning at its foundation.

Finally, as the principal of a performance model school under Chicago Public Schools' Renaissance 2010 initiative, I can tell you that Arne is a risk taker for education. Critics may attempt to vilify him for making bold decisions to close under-performing schools. However, for taking a stance on creating schools with varying opportunities for students, for daring to hold principals and teachers accountable, and for creating an avenue for new schools to be developed, I contend that he has done as he promised 7 years ago: he has kept children's needs at the top of his "to-do" list. His efforts prove that "Children First" is not just rhetoric or a meandering slogan, but a motto by which all educators should work. I am confident that Arne will be committed to placing the educational needs of *all* children across the country first.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share a little about Mr. Arne Duncan. I know that the Nation will be positively impacted by President Obama's decision and I believe with all of my heart that this appointment will yield productive fruit for the country's most valuable asset—our children.

Respectfully submitted,

CHERYL D. WATKINS,
Principal.

(CPS) WILLIAMS MULTIPLEX SCHOOLS,
CHICAGO, IL 60616,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
*317 Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: It is with great pleasure that we write a letter of support for Mr. Arne Duncan, for the position of U.S. Secretary of Education. Mr. Duncan has demonstrated integrity, trustworthiness, commitment and dedication to the students, staff and parents of the Chicago Public Schools and communities.

Under his leadership Chicago Public Schools have experienced a high level of expectations. You will have a leader who is personable without being familiar, cheerful in the face of diversities and unflustered under stress. Mr. Duncan has been intuitive in formulating goals that prepare Chicago students for success in the global community,

Mr. Duncan realized that not all students in the city of Chicago were receiving a quality education. He felt that it was time to make a change. After carefully analyzing the data, the vision and birth of Renaissance 2010 evolved. Renaissance 2010 is an initiative designed to create 100 high performing schools in targeted, underserved communities. Williams School was one of the first schools to close under this new initiative. This was indeed a difficult, bold and courageous step toward improving the quality of education in the Dearborn Homes Public Housing Complex. There was a great level of opposition from elected officials, community and faith-based leaders, parents, students and the Chicago Teachers Union. Mr. Duncan stood firm on his commitment and held community forums to listen to concerns of all stakeholders. He engaged the community throughout the process to create the type of school that would ensure that students obtain a quality education.

Williams Multiplex reopened in 2003. The Multiplex consisted of four small schools within a school, serving children from pre-kindergarten through high school. Under new leadership, the multiplex hosted a culture that embraced education. There was collaboration among all stakeholders, small class sizes and an environment conducive for learning. We partnered with Erikson Institute, world renown for early childhood education to offer onsite professional development for all staff. Funding was provided for an extended school day that afforded more time on task in the academics and daily professional development. Mr. Duncan embraced a culture that would concentrate on the entire child. The Responsive Classroom curriculum was utilized to address both social and emotional needs of our students. Various business and community partnerships were established to offer expertise and to serve as resources for our school.

As instructional leaders, we can testify that Mr. Duncan is extremely committed in educating all children and seeking creative opportunities for them to be engaged in the process of learning through innovative programs during the day, after school programs and Saturday school. Mr. Duncan has given us the autonomy to think "outside of the box," and we are now exploring the opportunity for Williams to become a school with the focus on engineering. Williams has risen from a school considered a failure, where little hope was seen for the future of the students to a place that is now considered a "diamond in the rough." When Williams closed in 2002 data indicated that 17 percent of the students were meeting or exceeding State standards. Today, because of the support offered by Mr. Duncan and his team, 72 percent of the students are meeting or exceeding State standards. Parents from across the city are seeking to enroll their children in our school.

Former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, once referred to Chicago Public Schools as "the worse in the Nation." Under the leadership of Mr. Arne Duncan, the Chicago Public Schools is now considered as one of the models for the Nation when it comes to school reform. We feel that Mr. Duncan will be able to change the direction of education for all students.

Sincerely yours,

KOTHYN ALEXANDER,
Principal, Big Picture High School.

THERESA V. RHEA,
Principal, Williams Middle School.

MARLENE POLLARD HEATH,
Principal, Williams Elementary School.

FRANCES M. ODEN,
Williams Multiplex Senior Advisor.

LESTER CROWN,
CHICAGO, IL 60601,
January 7, 2009.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Recommendation of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS: It is a privilege to have the opportunity to recommend Arne Duncan to the all-important position of Secretary of Education in President Obama's administration.

Nothing is more essential for the long-term position of the United States in the complex world of today than a highly educated population. Colleges and universities throughout our country provide superb college and advanced education, but we must vastly improve education for all U.S. citizens at the K-12 level. There are few people better equipped to provide the leadership for this daunting task than Arne Duncan.

After graduating *magna cum laude* at Harvard in 1987, where he was also captain of their basketball team and named to the Academic All-American first team all 4 years of his college career, he then played professional ball in Australia.

Arne comes from an academic environment—his father was a professor at the University of Chicago and his mother ran tutoring programs for inner-city children. After spending 3 years in the non-profit educational world, Arne joined the Chicago Public School system as chief of staff and 3 years later was appointed chief executive officer succeeding Paul Vallas.

During his 7-year tenure, he has instituted dramatic and effective improvements in the Chicago Public School system bucking entrenched bureaucratic obstacles, an intransigent teachers union and a non-cooperative inner-city environment. He has accomplished a great deal with ingenuity, thoughtful understanding of the complex problems, personal persuasion, perseverance and a tremendous number of hours of hard work.

The inner-city problems of Chicago mirror those of most large cities in the country making the delivery of quality education difficult. Over the past 7 years, Arne has presided over an improvement in standard test scores at the elementary and high school level, the percentage of high school graduates who go on to college, the institution of a performance-based pay program for teachers and has backed the establishment of charter schools to create competition in the school system. He has opened a record number of new schools and closed underperforming schools while negotiating a long-term contract with the teachers union after many years of labor unrest and numerous strikes. In addition, he has provided prudent fiscal management.

All told, I am convinced that Arne Duncan would make an excellent Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

LESTER CROWN.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
CITY OF CHICAGO,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman*,
Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI, *Ranking Member*,
Committee of Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen Senate Office Building SD-428,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND SENATOR ENZI: As Mayor and on behalf of the city of Chicago, I write in support of the nomination of Arne Duncan to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools for the past 8 years, Arne Duncan has done a remarkable job improving the quality of education offered to all of our students. He has shown an openness to trying new, innovative approaches including closing underachieving schools, expanding charter schools, and rewarding teachers and principals for outstanding performance.

The results of his efforts are clear. Elementary test scores are at an all-time high, our high school students' ACT scores have increased at a rate that is triple the na-

tional average, and this year our graduating seniors received a record \$157 million in competitive college scholarships.

Arne Duncan has brought a spirit of cooperation, achievement and hope for the future to all of our residents. I know he will bring the same spirit to the Department of Education and all Americans. I am pleased to support his nomination for this critical position.

Sincerely,

RICHARD M. DALEY,
Mayor.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RECOVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT,
NEW ORLEANS, LA,
January 7, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: Arne Duncan is an outstanding choice to become the next Secretary of Education. Not only is he one of the Nation's premiere education reformers, he is a man of great intelligence, compassion and common sense. He has initiated comprehensive, aggressive reforms while not becoming a polarizing figure—which is no easy feat. In Chicago, Arne closed failing schools, dramatically expanded charter schools, and promoted school choice and alternative certification programs that infused classrooms with the best and the brightest young teachers. Other school superintendents who have attempted these things have not done them nearly as well, while at the same time antagonizing the traditional education establishment.

Arne is an education leader who supports No Child Left Behind and understands its strengths and the areas that need improvement. He is an individual who respects the traditional education establishment, but is not afraid to rock the boat (without throwing people off).

I had the pleasure of working with Arne Duncan for 5 years in Chicago and believe that his honesty, integrity, respectfulness, work ethic and demeanor are ideally suited for the challenge ahead. While there were superb choices for the job, you could not do better than Arne Duncan.

Sincerely,

PAUL G. VALLAS,
Superintendent, Recovery School District.

DODGE RENAISSANCE ACADEMY,
CHICAGO, IL 60612.

Senator EDWARD KENNEDY,
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI.

DEAR SENATORS: Arne Duncan has been a champion for children in Chicago. He has placed great emphasis on turning around failing schools so that all children in Chicago can have a quality education, regardless of their zip code. Without Arne Duncan's leadership Dodge Renaissance Academy could not be the high performing school that it is today. In addition Arne Duncan was instrumental in helping AUSL develop the Urban Teacher Residency Model where Dodge Academy is now training men and women in a year-long residency program to become the school district's next generation of highly effective urban teachers. We are proud that his work has been recognized at the national level and look forward to his continued leadership. We think that Arne Duncan will be a great innovative Secretary of Education and that he will ensure the work towards bringing equity for children in education will continue in our Nation.

Sincerely,

EDWARD MORRIS JR.,
Principal.
DEBRA MORIARTY,
Principal.

THE FIELD MUSEUM,
CHICAGO, IL 60605,
January 8, 2009.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
315 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI,
379A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am honored to write you today to endorse Mr. Arne Duncan as our new U.S. Secretary of Education. We need a Secretary of Education who has first-hand *experience* dealing with the challenges facing our schools. We need a leader who has a track record of accomplishment in education *reform*. We need a *visionary* who has an unwavering commitment to providing all of our citizens an *equal opportunity* to participate in high-quality learning experiences. Mr. Duncan has these qualities and qualifications. As Secretary of Education, he will work tirelessly to ensure that the United States regains its standing as the world's leader in providing exceptional educational opportunities for students of all ages and circumstances.

As the CEO of one of the Nation's largest urban school systems, Mr. Duncan has demonstrated exceptional leadership. During his tenure, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has opened *76 new schools*, including charter and performance schools. These schools have provided Chicago families with valuable alternatives and choices. Mr. Duncan has initiated *systemwide reforms*, such as the Chicago Math and Science Initiative, that have provided consistency and focus in curricular choice and coordination across the system. His emphasis on teacher quality and *professional development* has resulted in increases in the number of highly qualified teachers and improvement in the quality of instruction in CPS classrooms. Mr. Duncan has also demonstrated a willingness to engage with and make tough decisions around hotly contested issues, such as closing poorly performing schools and implementing merit pay for teachers.

Under normal circumstances, the qualifications I've outlined above would be sufficient to justify my endorsement of Mr. Duncan. However, given the state of our economy and the systemic nature of our education challenges, the next U.S. Secretary of Education must be committed to *innovation* and non-traditional solutions. Arne Duncan is such a person. During his tenure at CPS, he has consistently sought out advice from leaders in other sectors, secured funding from non-traditional sources, and established *partnerships* with a wide variety of organizations. Chicago's philanthropic, business and non-profit communities have rallied behind Mr. Duncan in a way that speaks volumes about his ability to engender interest and commitment to education reform.

As a board member of the Chicago Public Education Fund, I can testify to his effectiveness in building alliances between local corporations and Chicago Public Schools. With his support, the Fund has secured new investments totaling \$20 million in venture capital to build school leadership. Through Renaissance 2010, Mr. Duncan has introduced competition and innovation in school design to CPS. This initiative is supported by an alliance of grassroots organizations, education reformers, academic institutions and corporate leaders. Arne's commitment to diversity and quality in school choice has been unwavering.

Mr. Duncan has also consistently encouraged Chicago's museum community to work with him on education reform. *The Field Museum's partnership* with CPS is extensive; we serve over 650,000 students, teachers, and families each year through education programs. We collaborate with Mr. Duncan on the High School Transformation Project by training high school science teachers on *museum-based science* curricular. We will launch an initiative next fall with the CPS Office of Math and Science to train 750 K-3rd grade teachers in scientific content and pedagogy using museum resources. Our partnership with the CPS Office of Early Childhood Education trains community pre-K teachers on early scientific skills. Mr. Duncan's success in securing diverse community resources, including museums, will serve him well as he develops an education strategy in these tough economic times.

President-elect Obama has outlined an aggressive education agenda focused on learning outcomes, investment in teacher preparation and performance, early childhood education and second choice. Mr. Duncan has advocated successfully for similar reforms in Chicago, and has a solid record of success. Together, President-elect Obama and Arne Duncan will succeed in making dramatic improvements in edu-

cational opportunities for all. The Field Museum is ready and willing to assist in this work.

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of Mr. Duncan's appointment. If you should have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. MCCARTER, JR.,
President and CEO.

FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS CORPORATION (FIC),
January 7, 2009.

DEAR SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY AND SENATOR MICHAEL ENZI: It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Arne Duncan's nomination to become Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Having known Mr. Duncan for some 20 years, I can attest to his keen intellect, his unshakeable integrity and his unswerving dedication to advancing the best interests of children.

I first met Mr. Duncan when he was heading the I Have A Dream program for the Ariel Foundation, a job that involved shepherding a group of children through school and into college. My family and I had "adopted" a group of students through the I Have A Dream program in Chicago as well, and had the opportunity to collaborate with Arne on a number of substantive projects, including starting a charter high school on the city's west side. In tackling these efforts, as well as in working with his Dreamers, Arne displayed quiet determination and a willingness to find creative ways around entrenched problems.

After successfully supporting his Dreamers, Arne went on to serve in various capacities at the Chicago Public Schools, including as Chief Executive Officer of a system responsible for educating over 400,000 students. As a member of Chicago's business community and as the chairman of a family foundation actively engaged in improving educational outcomes for students on the west side of Chicago, I am deeply invested in and committed to our public schools. Under Arne's leadership, the business and philanthropic community has never been more deeply and seriously engaged in working together with educators to find new ways to strengthen teaching and learning. Arne's open and honest willingness to listen to good ideas, to collaborate with people across political and ideological lines, and his genuine focus on students have earned him not only the respect and partnership of people across the city, but have allowed him to lead the Nation's third largest school system in a number of pivotal new directions.

Under Arne's steady hand the Chicago Public Schools have focused more strategically on recruiting, supporting and retaining effective teachers, working with the teachers' union, local foundations and outside providers to implement programs as diverse as performance pay initiatives, National Board Certification training, and the placement of literacy coaches in schools across the district. Among other encouraging results, a recent study demonstrated a marked improvement in the caliber of teachers working in Chicago classrooms, and the city now leads the Nation in master teachers.

Unwilling to allow chronically failing schools to remain in business, Arne launched Renaissance 2010, an initiative that brought civic leaders together with the public schools to close or "turnaround" chronically failing schools and replace them with more effective programs and options. The net result is that Chicago families now have more quality school choices than ever before, graduation rates and dropout rates are moving in the right directions, and elementary scores have been steadily rising. While no one, least of all Arne, believes the work is complete, his legacy of focus and commitment is clear and has redounded to the benefit of the city's students.

As a member of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, as the head of a local foundation that has spent over a dozen years and \$20 million to help revitalize an isolated and impoverished community in the city, I am sorry to see Arne leave his position as head of the Chicago Public Schools. His quiet determination and child-centered and bold leadership will be missed, as will his ability to work collaboratively and respectfully with a wide array of community and civic partners.

As a longtime friend and someone who cares about the future of our economy and our citizenry, I applaud his nomination and think that President-elect Obama could not have nominated someone with a stronger skill set, a deeper commitment, or a more compelling vision to fill this position.

I wholeheartedly support this nomination and am happy to provide whatever further information or insight might be desired.

Sincerely,

HARRISON I. STEANS,
Chairman of the Executive Committee.

OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER,
January 9, 2008.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate, Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20501.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: It is my esteemed honor to formally and enthusiastically support Arne Duncan's nomination to serve as the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Since being appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools in 2001, Mr. Duncan has utilized his experience in developing exemplary educational opportunities for the inner-city children of Chicago's south side with the Ariel Education Initiative to take on the arduous task of ensuring that every child in the City of Chicago has equal access to a quality education. In a city like Chicago, with its religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity, this is not a simple responsibility to assume. Nonetheless, in the past 7 years, Mr. Duncan has successfully initiated structural improvement to dilapidated schools, reduced the amount of overcrowded classrooms, recruited and retained quality educators, increased community involvement in the education system, and increased the amount of students who graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

While I have no doubt that Mr. Duncan's experience and accomplishments will make him an exceptional Secretary of Education, I also believe his *leadership* abilities and passion for improving the lives of children will make him one of the most outstanding public servants to ever serve this country. I have had the privilege to know Mr. Duncan personally and professionally and cannot think of another public servant with the same conviction to ensure that every child has access to a quality education. The dedication Mr. Duncan has to fulfill the mission of Chicago Public Schools has transcended throughout the entire agency, making it an example to all government agencies throughout Chicago and the State of Illinois. *Mr. Duncan is one of the most committed, most intelligent, most passionate, and most effective individuals I have ever met.*

I recommend that Mr. Duncan be appointed the U.S. Secretary of Education without reservation. I am certain that he will have an extraordinary impact on the Department of Education and will redefine the role of future administrations.

Sincerely,

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS,
Illinois State Treasurer.

GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL,
CHICAGO, IL 60624.

EDWARD KENNEDY,
U.S. Senator for Massachusetts,
317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

MICHAEL ENZI,
U.S. Senator for Wyoming,
379A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS: I submit this letter to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions to express my full support for the confirmation of Mr. Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education for the United States of America. Currently, I am principal of George Westinghouse High School in Chicago, IL. I have 10 years experience in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) as a teacher and administrator.

My support for Mr. Duncan is based on the leadership that he has exhibited during his tenure as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CPS. I have participated in the transformation of CPS from what former Secretary of Education William Bennett called "the worst in the Nation," to one of the leading large urban school districts in the country.

Educational reform is not merely a buzz word in Mr. Duncan's administration; instead it is a theory of action. This is evidenced by the many change-oriented initiatives that we have witnessed in CPS, the strengthening of principal preparation requirements, teacher quality, selection of high quality curriculum, and human resource development which has resulted in a dramatic increase in National Board Certified teachers in CPS. All of these initiatives led to improvements in literacy and math instruction that resulted in increased student achievement from approximately 40 percent of Chicago Public School students meeting or exceeding State standards to 68 percent in 2008. These improvements have also led to higher attendance rates, an increase in the number of freshmen on-track to graduate, higher student retention rates, and a decrease in the high school drop-out rate.

The most notable of Mr. Duncan's leadership was the unprecedented and courageous step to close underperforming schools. During his tenure he has closed many underperforming schools that have failed students, families, and society for years and replaced them with viable education options. For the first time in Chicago Public School history there is a system of choice for poor and minority students. These choices include CPS partnered chartered schools, contract schools, and small schools as well as new neighborhood schools.

Mr. Duncan has been successful because of his unique ability to engage all of the stakeholders involved in the educative process of children. He successfully collaborates with parents, students, teachers, administrators, politicians, and policymakers to ensure that the Chicago Public School system continues to make substantive improvements in teacher quality, human resource development, and educational funding support and reform in Illinois.

I wholeheartedly recommend Mr. Duncan for the cabinet position of Secretary of Education. I know that this will allow the entire country to benefit from decisive policy improvements, post-modern strategic thinking, and courageous leadership in the area of education.

Sincerely,

JANICE K. JACKSON,
Principal.

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL,
January 7, 2009.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the nomination of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education.

The Chicago Public School System (CPS) was an original participant in the 7-year old Public Education Leadership Project (PELP), a partnership among the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Harvard Business School and nine urban districts. As co-chair of this project, I have worked closely with Mr. Duncan since its inception. The purpose of the project was to build leadership and managerial capabilities in urban districts that would focus all of their resources on improving student performance. We adopted the best ideas from business and the nonprofit sectors and then adapted them to the unique environment of complex public education systems. The approach was based on the hypothesis that this knowledge was essential for any organization to attain high performance and that it did not exist in any coherent form for the public education sector.

Mr. Duncan was highly engaged and a major contributor to every aspect of the project from its design, to participating with his leadership team in four on-campus executive education programs, to planning how the ideas might be spread to other urban districts. Most importantly, under Duncan's leadership, Chicago embraced and implemented a number of organizational reforms that contributed to material gains in student achievement. I have attached a November 2006 *Harvard Business Review* article that describes some of the significant changes that the district implemented. (See pages 62-63.)*

I also had the opportunity to co-author two cases about the CPS. In doing so, I interviewed dozens of people including teachers, principals, regional managers and district personnel. A few themes were common across all of my conversations.

- The activities and projects that were being implemented throughout the district evolved from a strategy of continuous improvement with student learning at its core.
- Despite continuing budget constraints and the difficulty of implementing and sustaining improvement, the strategy in place would not be compromised.

*The article referred to may be found at <http://hbr.org/2006/11/how-to-manage-urban-school-districts/ar/1>.

- There was a sense of optimism and high expectations of performance that permeated the district.
- CPS, which had been considered by many as hopeless in the past, was making major improvements and was capable of effectively educating all of its 434,000 students.
- There was no ideology behind decisions made by the leadership of the district other than to improve teaching and learning. This meant embracing any innovation that helped drive their strategy, regardless of its origin, and included charters and a national nonprofit organization that trained principals.
- Arne Duncan was a strong and effective leader who could make the needed tough decisions in a way that did not polarize the factions that were usually at odds over change.

As our project evolved, we observed that, of the limited number of urban districts in the country that had measurably turned the tide in recent years and whose student performance was on an upward trajectory, most of them had embraced concepts similar to those advocated by the PELP project. In March 2006, Mr. Duncan hosted a dinner in Chicago for some of the key leaders of the project to discuss ways to spread these ideas to other districts around the country. We have undertaken initiatives to impact other districts but have come to realize that in order to have a more rapid and broad-based impact, a national platform has to be in place.

Mr. Duncan understands what it takes to effect sustained change in the classroom, the only place in the end that it really matters. Unlike some in the field who advocate that we need to start from scratch and redesign our public school systems, Mr. Duncan has proved that he can effectively reframe both the dialogue and the reality of a school district. I am confident that he has the capabilities, determination and the care for the young people of this country to accomplish the needed changes on a national level.

Please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Yours truly,

ALLEN GROSSMAN.

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138.

Senator EDWARD KENNEDY,
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: I write to endorse Arne Duncan's appointment as U.S. Secretary of Education. I have known Arne for the past 5 years, primarily through his involvement with the Public Education Leadership Program (PELP), a joint initiative between the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Harvard Business School. I co-direct this program and, for the past 5 years, have participated in a week-long summer seminar with teams from urban school districts across the country, including the Chicago Public Schools. The program is intense and requires considerable preparation and participation by all members of the districts' teams, especially the superintendents.

Arne Duncan has been a central contributor to the program and served as a model for other school superintendents. He is deeply committed to the education of all children, particularly low-income, minority, and second-language learners, who are enrolled in the Nation's large, urban school districts. Through participating in the program, Arne has advanced the knowledge and understanding, not only of himself and his team from Chicago, but also of superintendents and team members from districts across the country.

Although I am not directly involved in the Chicago Public Schools, I know that Arne has made important progress there in improving the learning of students. I appreciate his readiness to draw upon a variety of programs and approaches (charter schools, community schools, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Teach for America) and to find ways of working constructively with leaders of the Chicago teachers union on progressive reforms such as Peer Assistance and Review.

From a national perspective, Arne Duncan has the capacity to bridge differences between the two education interest groups that were prominent throughout the election. He clearly believes that improving student performance through improved teaching and accountability remains the school district's primary responsibility. However, he is not so single-minded in this regard as to discount the need for stu-

dents, families, and educators to have additional supports if children are to truly learn.

I strongly support Arne Duncan's candidacy and would be happy to respond to any questions.

Sincerely yours,

SUSAN MOORE JOHNSON,
Pforzheimer Professor of Teaching and Learning;
Co-director of the Public Education Leadership Program.

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138.

DEAR COMMITTEE: I am writing this letter in strong support of Arne Duncan's nomination to the position of U.S. Secretary of Education. I am an Associate Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and focus on the areas of leadership and organizational change. Prior to joining Harvard's School of Education, I was on the faculty of Harvard Business School (HBS) for 11 years. In both contexts, I have worked with Arne and his senior leadership team when he participated in the Public Education Leadership Program (PELP), a joint initiative between Harvard Business School and Harvard Graduate School of Education.

By way of background, the PELP program is one in which urban districts bring senior leadership teams to Harvard for a week to work on problems of strategic importance to their districts. In this context, we engage in case discussions and group work in which the district teams meet with a facilitator to work on their strategic issues. Over the past 3 years, I have been the Harvard facilitator for the Chicago team's work and in this context have seen Arne in action with his team, in the larger collective context of the classroom, and beyond—for example, at Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in their annual leadership conferences (in which I was also a facilitator). I offer the following observations based upon my interactions with Arne in these contexts and also as a professor of leadership and organizational behavior.

Several key leadership characteristics stand out that I believe make Arne Duncan an excellent choice for Secretary of Education. First, unlike many superintendents, Arne truly believes and practices leadership that is based upon collective, rather than individual authority. He is clearly "the man" and in charge at CPS, but at the same time, he constantly pushes those around him to forward their best thinking. He not only seeks out others' opinions, he expects and invites challenge as well. I can hear the echo of Arne's voice in the team meetings—"tell me, what do YOU [guys] think?" This kind of leadership, a style that balances top down with bottom up decisionmaking, will serve him well as he tackles the large-scale issues in education that this country faces.

Related to this, Arne is a leader who is passionate about pursuing smart solutions that will help "all kids." Period. I recall his own presentation at the end of one week-long session where there was barely a dry eye in the room; he moved all of us to want to help solve the pressing problems of leadership and education in this country. Not just for CPS, but for all districts. For all kids. If there is another answer, a better answer, Arne is open to it. He understands the merits of keeping what works in a system, which has been important in a strong cultural context such as CPS. At the same time, Arne remains open to new ideas and options. I saw this respect for history married with respect for innovation alive and well in our discussions at Harvard. For example, while discussing one of the Chicago cases that was developed for PELP, Arne openly shared what his district had done and learned—but not as a fait accompli; rather, he presented these ideas as an ongoing learning process. That key insight—that having the right answer is a moving target and can never be totally "planned for in advance"—remained with the group for the duration of our discussions. Arne is persistent.

Finally, Arne is a leader who will lead by creating capacity in his department so that others can do their best work. While charismatic, he leads from a humble, honest stance. This engenders a tremendous amount of respect for him. He draws others into his cause, rather than takes a command and control stance from above. This leadership approach inspires others to lead as well. It also resonates quite well with the approach taken so far by President-elect Barack Obama as he seeks to rebuild this country's infrastructure. And, given the extent and severity of the problems facing our education sector today, this approach to leadership is not only useful, it's appropriate. Arne Duncan will not simply look for right answers; he will find ways to make those answers right by focusing on implementation, too.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I strongly support Arne Duncan for the position of U.S. Secretary of Education, and if I can provide additional information that would be helpful, I would be happy to do so.

Sincerely yours,

MONICA HIGGINS.

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
January 12, 2009.

SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY: It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I write this letter of recommendation for Arne Duncan to support his appointment and confirmation as the Secretary of Education for the U.S. Department of Education. I have known Arne for 5 years through his participation in the Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University (PELP). I serve as a faculty member for the PELP initiative.

I have been impressed with Arne's deep commitment to the delivery of high quality education to *all* of America's children. He is passionate about creating a U.S. education system where the color of one's skin and/or their economic circumstance does not dictate the level or quality of education they obtain. Arne has demonstrated, through his words and deeds, his commitment to social justice, equity and fairness.

I am most excited about his appointment because, in this secretary, we will have someone who has *done* the hard work of improving schools in one of the toughest environments in the country. Through his integrity, his quiet but focused leadership, and his ability to reach across the aisle and build partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups, Arne has championed solid improvement in the Chicago Public Schools.

I can think of no better candidate for the position of Secretary of Education in the Obama administration. I strongly endorse Arne Duncan's confirmation.

Sincerely,

KAREN L. MAPP, ED.D.,
*Lecturer on Education, Program Director,
Educational Policy and Management Master's Program.*

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
January 8, 2009.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
*U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.*

Attention: Joe Kolinski

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I am delighted to write this letter supporting the confirmation of Mr. Arne Duncan for the position of Secretary of Education. I have known Mr. Duncan since he began his work as Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools. At that time I was the Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools and welcomed Mr. Duncan as a colleague engaged in the Council of Great City Schools and the Aspen Urban Superintendents Network. Since retirement from the superintendency in 2006, I have been at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as a Professor of Practice. Mr. Duncan has invited me to do some executive coaching with two of his Area Instructional Officers and his Chief for the Office of High Schools. I also have participated in a retreat for his senior leadership team and selected principals and teacher leaders. This has provided me with the opportunity to observe the amazing work he has done to reform and improve the Chicago Public Schools.

Mr. Duncan will be an outstanding Secretary of Education. He has an unwavering commitment to educating all children, to ensure that they will graduate from high school ready without remediation for some type of postsecondary education which is essential to access opportunity. He is a leader who is a continuous learner and models the behavior he expects those he leads to follow. He understands leaders must hold accountable those they lead and provide them with the support necessary to be effective in their work. He listens, observes, and asks probing questions. He is not afraid to give others the permission to tell him what he may not want to hear. He embraces data and understands the importance of using data to make good decisions. He is not afraid to make difficult decisions and he is willing to take calculated

steps to try new approaches to improve teaching and learning in schools and classrooms.

Mr. Duncan has excellent political skills. His experience in working at the State and local levels with the executive and legislative branches of government have prepared him for his work with the executive and legislative branches at the Federal level. As a practitioner he will bring great insight to the impact of policy on practice and will be able to make the connections for policymakers and practitioners in school districts and schools.

I know that Mr. Duncan will select a talented group of people to join his team of leaders in the Department of Education, will work with the many constituent groups to build support for education in America, and will be a champion for equity to ensure that those who need the most support receive it.

Sincerely,

THOMAS W. PAYZANT,
Professor of Practice.

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC DEAN,
January 7, 2009.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am writing in support of President-elect Obama's nomination of Arne Duncan as the next Secretary of Education. I have known Arne in two capacities: first, in my role as co-chair of The Aspen Institute Program on Education and Society; and second, as a faculty member and administrator at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

At Aspen I co-facilitate a small network of about a dozen urban superintendents that has been meeting in semi-annual professional development retreats for the last 8 years. Arne joined this network shortly after his appointment as CEO of the Chicago schools and has over the years become one of its leaders. He impressed me from the outset by his eagerness to learn from others who had been at this work for much longer, his openness to new ideas, and his thoughtfulness about his own work.

In 2004 Arne and his senior leadership team joined a new executive leadership program jointly sponsored by Harvard's Business and Education Schools, and for the last five summers I have had the opportunity to observe Arne in action with his own leadership team and similar teams from several other large urban districts. Additionally, over these last several years, I have periodically visited schools in Chicago, met with his leadership team, and consulted with knowledgeable foundation officials, university researchers, and other community leaders in Chicago. As a consequence of these interactions, I have developed an enormous respect for Arne's steady, thoughtful, committed leadership style. He has somehow managed to initiate very bold, potentially controversial initiatives while maintaining strong political support in an education community that was intensely polarized prior to his administration. I think the keys to his success have been his unquestioned integrity, his relentless focus on data and evidence, his willingness to listen to competing views, and—above all—his insistence that the interests of the kids in his care must take precedence over the interests of the adults in the system.

While there are no guarantees that people who have been effective leaders at the district level will be equally successful in Washington, I think Arne Duncan has the potential to be a great Education Secretary. In addition to the personal qualities I just cited, he is a fast learner, picks good people and gives them lots of running room, is quick to take personal responsibility for mistakes, and could not have survived and flourished in Chicago without very good political instincts. While the press has in my view exaggerated the tensions in the reform community among the different camps competing for the President-elect's ear on education policy, a very significant benefit of this appointment is that Duncan commands respect across the entire reform spectrum, including the leadership of at least one of the national teacher organizations. I might also note that Duncan's personal relationship with the President-elect cannot help but enhance the status of education in this administration. For all these reasons, I strongly encourage you to confirm his appointment as the next Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

ROBERT SCHWARTZ,
*Academic Dean and
William Henry Bloomberg Professor of Practice.*

ILLINOIS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION—NEA,
 SPRINGFIELD, IL 62704-1999,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
379A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Arne Duncan as the next U.S. Secretary of Education. As the executive director of the Illinois Education Association—NEA, I have worked with Mr. Duncan on a number of occasions in efforts to improve the public schools in Illinois.

Arne is particularly committed to high-quality education for *all* students. He believes this is the civil rights issue of our generation. He is extremely effective in bringing together people with various expertise and points of view and forging strong working relationships to try new ways to reach students we have not been effectively educating. He is also committed to learning from these efforts and understands the importance of research and evaluation as critical tools in redesigning the entire public education system.

I believe that Arne Duncan's vision and passion, and his skill at bringing people together around this vision of success for all students, will make him an exceptional Secretary of Education.

I strongly endorse his nomination.

Sincerely,

JO ANDERSON JR.,
Executive Director.

ILLINOIS NETWORK OF CHARTER SCHOOLS (INCS),
 CHICAGO, IL 60604,
January 12, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
2400 JFK Building,
Boston, MA 02203.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of over 20,000 public school students, 3,000 public school teachers, 500 civic and community leaders innovating and creating new models of public education, I write to strongly recommend Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education. As the Executive Director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), I have had the honor of working with Mr. Duncan for the past 4 years. I had the pleasure of going to elementary and high school with Arne, so my knowledge of his character, judgment and values date back more than 30 years.

Mr. Duncan is rightly recognized as a courageous leader of fundamental transformation of urban education in the Chicago Public Schools. Widely recognized as the lowest performing urban school system a decade and a half ago, Mr. Duncan has presided over an aggressive and visionary transformation of the public schools. Mr. Duncan embraced a vision of a system of schools that work for students rather than the tired old model of a school system. In transforming Chicago's schools, Mr. Duncan has made tough decisions, down to the ultimate decision of refusing to tolerate low expectations and closing schools that are failing. That decision is too often avoided, to the detriment of students and teachers.

Nevertheless, Mr. Duncan is especially skilled at recognizing the viewpoints and needs of all public education stakeholders and has built meaningful avenues of input for everyone. First and foremost, Mr. Duncan is honest and rigorous about data. He is unfailing in expecting and using objective and rigorous data to make decisions. His work forging a strong, on-going and symbiotic relationship with the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research is an excellent example of this intellectual rigor and honesty. Similarly, Mr. Duncan has forged direct policy conversations with rank and file teachers, students and parents so that he can make decisions with maximum reliable information. He has a unique ability to synthesize disparate viewpoints and move the policy agenda.

On a personal note, I have been especially moved by Mr. Duncan's grace in addressing the terrible toll violence, in our society, is taking on Chicago's students.

Mr. Duncan goes above and beyond public leadership and takes a personal interest in the loss of every single child who was enrolled in a public school. His compassion to parents and guardians is unparalleled and beyond any professional obligations. At the same time, he has worked hard, and successfully, at significantly reducing violence in Chicago's schools.

I am honored to have the opportunity to endorse Mr. Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education. I know he has all of the resources, talent, experience and vision to be an exemplary Secretary of Education. His leadership will undoubtedly bring exponential positive changes to the students, teacher and American education system.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH A. EVANS,
Executive Director.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION,
CHICAGO, IL 60606-1698,
January 9, 2008.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
279A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: As Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education, it has been my privilege and honor to work with Arne Duncan for over 4 years, and I gladly write to you in support of his nomination by President-elect Barack Obama to be the next U.S. Secretary of Education.

Mr. Duncan has served as Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools since 2001. During this time he has worked diligently to increase the level of student achievement in the Nation's third-largest school district. Indeed, the standardized test scores of Chicago Public School students have increased steadily during his tenure.

He has achieved these impressive results by taking bold steps, such as closing failing schools, replacing ineffective teachers, and launching a performance-based compensation plan for teachers. Mr. Duncan understands the critical role teachers play in student learning and development, and is a strong proponent of teacher training and mentoring efforts, and supports programs designed to bring individuals with strong academic records from non-traditional backgrounds into the teaching profession. He has worked with colleges and universities to help them better prepare the teachers our students need. Mr. Duncan also understands when it comes to education, one-size-does-not-fit-all, and has championed the creation of new charter schools and affinity schools in Chicago, so that each and every child may find the appropriate learning environment to help them all succeed.

Mr. Duncan supports accountability for our Nation's schools, but also understands the effects that Federal laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, have on schools, students and teachers. His experience as the chief executive officer of a large urban school district has given him unique insights that will serve him well as he leads the U.S. Department of Education, and help our Nation's schools better serve all our students.

Mr. Duncan knows that a child's learning begins at birth, and has been very supportive of the Illinois State Board of Education's efforts to expand our nationally-recognized Preschool for All program. He has worked to expand early childhood education opportunities in the Chicago Public Schools, by increasing the enrollment of preschool students by over 1,000 students each year.

Mr. Duncan also understands all too well how socio-economic factors impact student learning. He has attended the funerals of a number of Chicago Public School students who were victims of violence, and has personally visited the homes of countless students to implore them to return to school. He has looked to ensure that his students who might otherwise go hungry have three nutritious meals at school, and meals to take home over the weekend. He has worked hard to find mentors for his students, and patrons for his schools. He has also partnered with nonprofits and foundations to provide additional after school programs and resources for his students, teachers, and schools.

Arne has always been driven by his sincere desire to help children and students achieve their full potential, and this motivation has served the Chicago Public Schools extremely well. He understands that providing all students in America with access to high quality educational opportunities, from preschool to graduate school, is a national imperative. For these reasons, his impeccable credentials and qualifications, and the many other fine qualities that Arne possesses, I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support the nomination of Arne Duncan to become our next U.S. Secretary of Education.

Very truly yours,

JESSE H. RUIZ,
Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education.

JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES,
January 8, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510-2101.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
379A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510-2101.

Attn: Roberto Rodriguez; Beth Buehlman.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of our entire Board of Directors and our Chairman, Governor John Baldacci, it is my pleasure to write this letter of enthusiastic support for the confirmation of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education.

We have worked closely with Arne both in the highly successful implementation of JAG in many of the Chicago high school and middle schools, as well as at the national level on critical educational issues.

In our view Arne has shown truly remarkable insights into both the practical aspects of the effective delivery of education and, at the same time, the design of the critical policies that support the practical execution on the ground that result in real gains in academic achievement. Those are very rare skills in our experience.

As important to us is his deep dedication to young people and, in our case, those most at-risk. That is what attracted us to him to partner in the implementation of JAG in the Chicago schools.

Finally, our experience demonstrates that Arne is a man of the highest integrity and personal character. He is someone we believe our country will be especially proud and grateful to have as Secretary of Education in one of the most challenging times in our history.

We therefore urge your full support and that of your committee for his confirmation.

Please don't hesitate to let us know of any questions.

Sincerely,

KENNETH M. SMITH,
President.

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION,
January 9, 2009.

MR. JOE KOLINSKI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate, Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR MR. KOLINSKI: Providing a high-quality education for all children is by far the pre-eminent, civil rights issue of our era. Every year, more than 1 million students in this country drop out of high school without a diploma and are subsequently ill-prepared for work or postsecondary education. As I reflect on the great work of Arne Duncan in the realm of education, I am reminded of a powerful quote from my mentor, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically . . . Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."

Mr. Arne Duncan is best described through these four components: an intensive thinker, a critical thinker, a man of intelligence, and a man of character. Therefore, as President and Founder of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, it is with great honor that I write to support Mr. Arne Duncan's nomination as U.S. Secretary of Education. During Mr. Duncan's tenure as Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools, he has been a social engineer for much-needed reform. His passion for providing a high-quality education for all children has propelled him to take risks and challenges and to think "outside of the box" to close the achievement gap by improving teacher quality, closing failing schools, increasing advance placement courses, and so much more.

He has demonstrated through his efforts of reform that he believes that children have the inherent right to reach their full potential as citizens. He has demonstrated through his mobilization efforts to equalize funding for all students that it is morally wrong to have a two-tiered education system. He has a record of putting students first above politics. Arne has seen the impact and effect of education reform firsthand and, under his leadership, he has demonstrated a keen ability to do what is right and fair versus what is political and not. Additionally, he has proven, as a leader of the third largest school district in the United States, that he has the right temperament to make effective change by building bridges with unions, community organizations, foundations, corporations, and parents.

During these times of uncertainty on every front, I am convinced that the next Secretary of Education calls for a person of heroic imagination and determination. I believe that Mr. Duncan is uniquely qualified for this position because he has been on the ground level fighting for equality and bringing change to its fruition. I am confident that Mr. Duncan will continue to build bridges but, more importantly, make significant change in education reform so that all students' dreams can be actualized.

Keep Hope Alive!

REVEREND JESSE L. JACKSON, SR.,
Founder and President.

THE JOYCE FOUNDATION,
January 9, 2009.

U.S. Senator MIKE ENZI,
*379A Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

U.S. Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
*317 Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATORS ENZI AND KENNEDY: I am writing to support the nomination of Arne Duncan as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

As president of a large nonpartisan foundation focused on public policy, I have worked closely with many elected and appointed officials. Arne is among the very finest public officials I have encountered. I believe he will be an excellent Secretary for several reasons:

- He has a bedrock commitment to kids, and a relentless focus on results. He believes in using data to track student and school performance, and is not shy about reporting results to parents, to educators, and to the community at-large.
- Student performance in Chicago is up. Students have shown improvements in both reading and math—elementary test scores have risen to 67 percent of students meeting State standards up from only 38 percent 7 years ago. High school graduation is up from 47 to 55 percent, and more students are going to college.
- He can change tough bureaucracies. For example, he established systems to improve teacher and principal quality. He increased teacher recruiting efforts so that there are now 10 applicants for every spot up from two a few years ago; he raised the eligibility bar for principals; he expanded support for new teachers; he increased the number of Nationally Board Certified Teachers from a handful in 2001 to 1,160 in 2008; he introduced a new performance pay system (made possible through the Federal Teacher Incentive Fund); he overhauled teacher evaluation; and he worked for a teachers union contract that preserves a principal's ability to hire the best instructional team for that particular school.
- He is an innovator:
 - Launched Renaissance 2010, an initiative to open 100 new, innovative schools in a 6-year period to replace low performing schools.

- Established a rigorous system for granting and overseeing charter schools in the country. For example, a 2008 RAND study found that Chicago's charters have high school graduation rates that are 7 percentage points higher than regular public schools, and college-going rates that are 11 percentage points higher.
- Pioneered what is perhaps the most ambitious approach in the country to turning around failing schools with teams of skilled principals and teachers.

In addition to these achievements, Arne's respectful, inclusive style has made it possible to make changes without making enemies in a highly politicized environment. He has the strong support of the business and philanthropic community, and he has remarkable coalition-building skills. Speaking for the Joyce Foundation, I believe he will continue to attract support for his innovations and reform ideas in a new position.

I urge you to support Arne's nomination, and would be pleased to provide further information if it would be helpful.

Sincerely,

ELLEN S. ALBERDING,
President.

ROBERTO CLEMENTE HIGH SCHOOL,
CHICAGO, IL 60622,
January 9, 2009.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman*,
Senator MICHAEL B. ENZI, *Ranking Member*,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: My name is Leonard Kenebrew, Principal of Roberto Clemente Community Academy (RCCA) in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). I am writing this letter of support for Mr. Arne Duncan with whom I have had the honor of working with as his assistant.

I was appointed by Mr. Duncan as Principal of a Small Learning Community school (South Shore Community Academy, Simeon Career Academy and currently contracted at RCCA). His leadership and collaboration creates opportunity for growth and shared leadership within the organization. He is a forward thinker about improving academic achievement for all students while connecting meaningful engaging activities for all constituents. I believe the changes that have taken place within the CPS system, are due to his proactive thinking and evolving partnerships within the neighborhoods, the research community and corporate America. I would define his leadership as transformational, his character with full of integrity and insightfulness, and his overall effectiveness with subtle dynamics and humanitarianism.

I have become a better leader for being part of a variety of initiatives during his tenure as CEO that have challenged and improved the system. His appointment is appropriate and will transform the state of education across the country.

Cordially,

LEONARD KENEBREW.

MARTIN J. KOLDYKE,
CHICAGO, IL 60603-4131,
January 8, 2009.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
379A Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am writing in support of the President-elect's nomination of Arne Duncan for Secretary of Education. I have known Arne for more than a decade, working closely with him and Mayor Daley on K-12 school reform in Chicago where I have been active for more than 25 years.

Arne Duncan is an extraordinary school leader. As CEO of Chicago Public Schools he created a remarkable assemblage of talented individuals and organizations in a working unit, thus enabling Chicago's 500 public schools to move forward in a positive way. For example, for school principal selection and training, he involved New

Leaders for New Schools, an organization founded in New York by Jonathan Schnur, and the Doctoral Program for School Leadership at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Perhaps the most important undertaking of Arne's stewardship has been to develop the brilliant, two-pronged pincer movement in Chicago comprised of the charter schools movement and AUSL (the Academy for Urban School Leadership). The charter schools and the AUSL movement, made up of resident teacher training for staffing turnaround schools, have together had a major effect on radical school reform in Chicago's most demanding neighborhoods. This two-pronged effort is transforming Chicago's worst performing schools. It's only a matter of time. And, Arne Duncan is responsible for making this possible.

One can only hope that he will find a way to replicate this dual movement of charter schools coming from the outside and AUSL-like models working within the system to turn American public schools into models for improving student outcomes. Arne Duncan is a treasure. I urge you to confirm his nomination with deliberate speed.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

MARTIN J. KOLDYKE,
*Founder and Chairman Emeritus,
Academy for Urban School Leadership.*

ILLINOIS STATE SENATE,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
*317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 29510.*

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
*379A Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I take genuine pleasure in providing a letter of recommendation for Arne Duncan as he seeks your confirmation of his appointment as the next Secretary of Education. I have known Arne for over 30 years personally and professionally. I have watched him demonstrate his remarkable leadership skills as a classmate, teammate, civic leader and friend.

As a classmate and teammate of Arne's at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, I observed his unselfish leadership, as he always strove to uplift the performance of other students or athletes in lieu of simply displaying his superior skills and talent. As an advisory board member and mentor at the Ariel Education Initiative (formerly the Ariel Foundation), I witnessed Arne reveal his passion and desire to educate disadvantaged students who faced complex challenges, as he served as executive director. As a legislator, I was impressed at how Arne, as Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools, was able to utilize his unique communication and motivation skills to bring traditional adversaries to common ground and convince many resistant parties to accept the innovative changes he has employed to dramatically improve the quality of an otherwise troubled school system.

Arne is an individual of irreproachable moral fiber and integrity. Even those who might disagree with Arne's policy decisions would never challenge his honesty or character. I know of nobody whom I would have more confidence recommending to a position of such significant responsibility than Arne Duncan.

If you should have any further questions regarding my knowledge of Arne's reputation or qualifications, please feel free to contact me at 773-363-1996.

Very truly yours,

KWAME RAOUL.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL RIGHTS,
 WASHINGTON, DC 20006,
January 13, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI, *Ranking Member,*
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY AND RANKING MEMBER ENZI: On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the Nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition, with nearly 200 member organizations, we are writing to express our strong support for President-elect Obama's designee Arne Duncan for U.S. Secretary of Education. As the long-tenured and widely respected Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Nation's third largest school district, Mr. Duncan is uniquely qualified to lead the Department of Education.

During Mr. Duncan's 7 years leading CPS, the system made steady and sustainable improvements by most academic measures, including both test scores and graduation rates, while also laying the foundation for continuing growth. It is clear from a review of his record and the wide variety of programs implemented in Chicago, Mr. Duncan's approach to improving schools was not driven by ideology, but rather by results. With the magnitude of the task awaiting the new Secretary of Education, no other approach is likely to succeed.

Among his achievements in Chicago, Mr. Duncan instituted significant reforms for the Chicago teachers' corps, including pay-for-performance salary incentives and increasing the number of master teachers from 11 to over 1,100. Most notably, he implemented these reforms in cooperation with the teachers union, rather than in combat with it. Mr. Duncan and the Chicago Teachers Union have proven that an inclusive approach to school reform works best to create well-designed programs that will work when taken from the drawing board to the black board. Mr. Duncan's track record at bridging the divide between so-called "reformers" and "traditionalists" will serve the Department well, especially during the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

As much of the Nation's attention is turned to the immediate economic crisis, Congress cannot lose sight of the fact that there can be no long-term solution to our economic problems without systemic education reform. America's public education system has fallen far behind our industrial competitors and without systemic reform and significant increases in funding, our children will not be prepared to compete in the 21st Century economy.

We urge you to support Arne Duncan for Secretary of Education and to ensure that education reform and funding remain a priority issue in Congress going forward. We thank you for considering our views. If you have any questions, please contact David Goldberg, Senior Counsel, at (202) 466-0087 or Goldberg@civilrights.org, regarding this or any issue.

Sincerely,

WADE HENDERSON,
President & CEO.

NANCY ZIRKIN,
Executive Vice President.

THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE MACARTHUR FOUNDATION,
January 8, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
317 Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I write in connection with your consideration of the confirmation of Arne Duncan as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. While I make these comments in my personal capacity, my experience with Mr. Duncan has been through my role as president of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Foundation's support of his efforts in Chicago as well as com-

plementary investments in community revitalization that support and increase the likelihood of successful schools.

In my view, Arne Duncan is the right man at the right time for what is certainly the most important issue for the long-term strength of American society. The tasks before him are formidable: making significant progress on closing the achievement gap; attracting and retaining high-quality teachers; assuring the promise and addressing the challenges in No Child Left Behind, and equipping graduates with the 21st Century skills required for success in a global economy.

He is up to the task, and his successful—and long—tenure as superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools is tangible evidence. He is innovative, as the opening of close to 100 new schools offering a wide range of choice and curriculum proves. He is bold and not afraid to take on tough issues and critics. He closed underperforming schools and reopened them in refreshed buildings with entirely new leadership and faculty. He is experimental and has piloted pay-for-performance to reward the best teachers and keep them in the schools that need them the most. He has done all of this and more while working hard to keep the teachers union a constructive partner and the business community an avid and involved supporter.

Despite his success as a leader and the school district's progress, he is humble about that progress and acknowledges how much further he and others in education have to go to achieve the goal of truly every child educated, productive and prepared for whatever the future brings.

If confirmed, President Obama will be able to put Arne Duncan's considerable expertise, creativity, drive and integrity to work on behalf of America's children.

Sincerely,

JONATHAN F. FANTON,
President.

MIKVA CHALLENGE,
CHICAGO, IL 60602,
January 9, 2009.

DEAR SENATORS EDWARD KENNEDY AND MICHAEL ENZI: On behalf of Arne Duncan's Student Advisory Council alumni, we are writing this letter to support the nomination of Arne Duncan for Secretary of Education.

Where does one begin in attempting to list the contributions Arne Duncan has made to the educational system in Chicago? Mr. Duncan is truly a leader and is both known and respected for his original and unparalleled approach to improving the Chicago Public Schools and challenging the status quo.

Arne Duncan's appointment is truly exciting news for students like us who embody the potential of all Chicago Public School students. As Chicago Public School graduates and college students at various universities across the Nation, we can attest to the difficulties facing urban school districts, especially the Chicago Public School system. However, we have also witnessed the courageous decisions that Mr. Duncan made that not only improved our former high schools, but schools all across Chicago. Mr. Duncan's common sense approach to revamping the Chicago Public School system has fundamentally changed the way administrators, principals, teachers and students approach education.

The Chicago Public School's Educational Plan, "Children First," could not have been better illustrated than through how Mr. Duncan sought the collective counsel from teachers, parents and, most importantly students. We were a part of a group of 20 students who had the privilege to serve on Mr. Duncan's Student Advisory Council. With the help and vision of the Mikva Challenge organization, Mr. Duncan became the first superintendent of the Chicago Public School system to establish a student advisory council. This council has been effective in providing the "inside the classroom" perspective that Duncan was unable to experience, but which we lived on a daily basis. Mr. Duncan supported the highly controversial request from his Student Advisory Council to allow students to train the 1,200 Chicago Public School Security Officers. The student trainings proved to be highly successful, so Duncan and the Chief of Security took the unprecedented step of making the trainings annual. Mr. Duncan has also sought the students' perspective on the best way the school district should tackle other critical hurdles such as school funding reform, violence, improving test scores and attendance rates, lowering dropout rates and increasing graduation rates.

Mr. Duncan understands that there is no survey or any other indicator of progress more valuable than the opinions of students, and in our humble opinion, such commitment to student voice and engagement is one of the many factors responsible for the school district's steady progress in each of the aforementioned areas. Mr. Dun-

can even invited students to address every high school principal in the district at a conference during the past school year. This is but a taste of the many core strategies and innovative approaches that Mr. Duncan utilized for causes greater than himself.

Mr. Duncan understands that the challenges facing the educational system in America are complex. Appointing Arne Duncan as the Secretary of Education is an investment in our collective future, and we are absolutely convinced that there is no one more competent to serve as the Nation's Secretary of Education than Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Duncan's noteworthy commitment to education and service reveals a tireless and exceptional energy, and for that Mr. Duncan has our unqualified endorsement and the personal respect from Chicagoans and educators across the country.

Best Regards,

ARNE DUNCAN'S
STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL ALUMNI.
DE'RELL BONNER,
Howard University.
PAUL KRYSIK,
Oberlin College.
JENNIFER OSAGIE,
Cleveland State University.
SAMUEL RYAN,
DePaul University.

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY,
January 12, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: It is my great honor to support Arne Duncan's nomination for the U.S. Secretary of Education. As the President and CEO of the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Arne on a variety of Museum initiatives to inspire our Chicago Public School students and improve the skills of our city's science teachers. In each and every case, Arne has been an exceptional leader and innovator who is passionate about our students' learning opportunities and our public school teachers.

Arne is singularly focused on the best interests of students and has worked tirelessly to maximize their opportunities for achievement in school as well as their daily lives outside of school. His hands-on approach to management and his continuous push to improve the Chicago Public School system, the country's third largest, makes him an outstanding candidate to be our Secretary of Education. His collaborative approach has proven how he can work with both teachers and school administrators to drive improvements in learning outcomes, finding creative solutions that all can support and that get results.

He is also one of the smartest, most thoughtful and most decent public administrators you will ever meet. I urge the Senate to confirm his nomination as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

DAVID R. MOSENA,
President and CEO.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS (NAESP),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314,
January 9, 2009.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), representing more than 28,000 elementary and middle-level principals, I would like to extend our support for the confirmation of Mr. Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education. Mr. Duncan's commitment to education is to be applauded and NAESP looks forward to working with him on issues of importance to principals and children.

Mr. Duncan's recent hands-on experience dealing with issues facing Pre-K-12 educators makes him an ideal candidate for Secretary of Education. He's dealt with the implications of current Federal education laws at the local level and has a broad understanding of their successes and limitations. In testimony before the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee regarding the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as NCLB), Mr. Duncan asserted his support for accountability but called on Congress to provide local districts with greater flexibility in order to meet the individual needs of the schools and students. NAESP was particularly grateful for Mr. Duncan's call to double ESEA funding within 5 years and to shift the law's focus to individual student achievement over time.

NAESP looks forward to working collaboratively with Congress and the Secretary of Education in reauthorizing the ESEA and ensuring that the voices of elementary and middle-level principals are represented. We urge Congress to abandon the current law's overreliance on standardized testing and instead focus on student growth over time with the proper use of multiple measures. Additionally, NAESP calls on Congress to prioritize its focus on serving the whole child, including meeting the nutritional, academic, social, and emotional needs of students. Principals understand that no child can be expected to learn if their basic needs are not being met, and we will continue to work with Congress to make this a priority in the reauthorization.

Should you have any questions or concerns about NAESP's position on education-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact me or members of our advocacy staff: Dr. Michael Schooley, Dr. Sally McConnell and Abbie Evans. Educating all children to be highly adaptive learners in a rapidly changing and highly complex world demands our very best efforts as educators and legislators working together for the greater good of our country.

Sincerely,

GAIL CONNELLY,
Executive Director.

For Immediate Release—December 17, 2008.*

OBAMA NAMES DUNCAN AS NEW EDUCATION SECRETARY

(WASHINGTON, DC).—Educators across the country are praising President-elect Barack Obama's choice of Chicago public schools chief Arne Duncan as his nominee for the Cabinet post of Secretary of Education.

"We're very excited about working with Mr. Duncan and continuing our longstanding relationship with the Department of Education," said John B. Forkenbrock, executive director of the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS). "Mr. Duncan has demonstrated his ability to raise the standards of a large school district like Chicago, and we're more than willing to help him reach out to rural schools as well as he recognizes the needs of federally connected school districts throughout this country."

The 44-year-old Harvard graduate has been called a "champion" by principals. Charter school leaders touted him as a "national leader" in innovation. And Rep. George Miller, D-CA, chairman of the committee that will oversee reauthorization of No Child Left Behind next year, called his track record "bold"—the same word teachers and even a former Bush administration education official used to praise his work in Chicago.

"I am also eager to apply some of the lessons we have learned here in Chicago to help school districts all across our country," Duncan told reporters gathered at Dodge Renaissance Academy on December 16 in Chicago for Obama's announcement. "We have worked with a tremendous sense of urgency because we can't wait."

"Duncan has headed the Nation's third-largest school system for 7 years and, during his tenure, he has raised elementary school scores, reduced dropouts and improved college-entry rates," Obama said.

According to Obama, "He's worked tirelessly to improve teacher quality, increasing the number of master teachers who've completed a rigorous national certification process from just 11 to just shy of 1,200, rewarding school leaders and teachers for gains in student achievement."

"He's championed good charter schools, even when it was controversial. He's shut down failing schools and replaced their entire staffs, even when it was unpopular."

Last July, Duncan testified to the Education and Labor Committee that he had raised scores in Chicago using several strategies including prohibiting the promotion

* (For more information contact Bryan Jernigan, (202) 624-5455)

of students who fail courses; making summer school mandatory for those kids; aggressively closing failing schools; investing more money in preschool, after-school and summer school programs; raising standards for school principals; and assigning a mentor to every new teacher.

However, teachers across the country have historically opposed an approach touted by Duncan and Obama: pay-for-performance, sometimes known as merit pay.

But Duncan told the congressional committee last summer that he had created the bonus system in Chicago by working successfully with the teachers union. And teachers apparently agree.

“Mr. Duncan has tremendous experience working with large public school districts,” said Dr. John Deegan, NAFIS President and Superintendent of Bellevue Public Schools in Bellevue, Nebraska. “I am impressed that his first order of business is to travel the country to meet with various stakeholders. It is important for him to listen to various interests that provide educational services to our Nation’s children. I am more than willing to participate in any National Advisory Boards or task forces on education that will be established by the President-elect’s administration.”

The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools looks forward to working with the new Secretary of Education and his staff to ensure federally impacted school districts nationwide continue to receive adequate funding they need to operate their schools.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION (NASBE),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI, *Ranking Member,*
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), representing the Nation’s State and territorial boards of education, I want to commend the nomination of Arne Duncan for Secretary of Education and to urge his swift and unanimous confirmation for this critically important cabinet position in the Obama administration.

Arne Duncan is a proven education reformer who has committed himself to improving public schools and increasing the achievement of all students. As Chicago superintendent for the past 7 years, Duncan has seen firsthand the challenges facing public schools, particularly those in urban settings, and understands the mix of policies, resources, and effort necessary to overcome these problems.

Arne Duncan will bring a broad vision and practical experience to the position of Education Secretary. His understanding of the No Child Left Behind Act, which he was charged with implementing in Chicago, will be invaluable in improving Federal education policies to align with and complement State and local reforms while maintaining his long-standing and absolute focus on doing what is in the best interests of children.

As an organization in the vanguard of education reform, NASBE is pleased that President-elect Obama has selected someone of Arne Duncan’s expertise and vision to help improve our schools at the Federal level. And as the entities ultimately responsible for establishing high academic standards and rigorous accountability measures in the States, State board members applaud the high expectations and impressive gains Arne Duncan created in Chicago and look forward to a dynamic Federal-State-local partnership to make U.S. schools the best in the world.

We commend President-elect Obama for his thoughtful choice as America’s “top teacher.” The future success of our Nation lies in our ability to educate our children. In Arne Duncan, America’s students, teachers, and parents have a leader worthy of that responsibility.

Again, we strongly encourage the committee's unanimous endorsement of Arne Duncan's nomination and his expeditious confirmation as the next U.S. Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

BRENDA LILIENTHAL WELBURN,
Executive Director.

NEW LIFE COVENANT (NLC),
CHICAGO, IL 60647,
January 7, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI.

DEAR SENATOR: It is my privilege to compose this correspondence in support of Arne Duncan, President-elect Barack Obama's nominee for Secretary of Education of the United States of America, for the Cabinet position.

I commend the selection of the Chicago Public Schools' CEO for the national position. I met Arne 10 years ago when we worked together at the Board of Education. At the time, I served as Executive Assistant to the former CPS-CEO and Arne as the Deputy to the CEO. We have maintained our relationship since; working together on several city-wide initiatives in Chicago.

Arne has supported New Life Covenant Ministries' efforts in addressing educational concerns throughout the city's communities. He has marched in anti-violence events to encourage safer environments for our youth. Arne has demonstrated ongoing concern for the educational welfare of the children of Chicago. His participation in various incentive activities that reward our school children's efforts as they pursue academic success is evident of Arne's heart. In addition, he has donated school supplies and book bags showing children and families that he truly cares about being equipped for educational achievement.

Arne Duncan has done a great job in working with communities of faith in the city of Chicago. He demonstrates his support for unified efforts in addressing concerns by meeting with religious community leaders in response to public needs. I am certain that Arne will be more than capable of imparting his vision regarding the education of our children at the national level. I look forward to the impact Mr. Arne Duncan will have on the educational system nationwide.

I sincerely appreciate the importance of the U.S. Senate's decision and pray that it is one that will successfully address the needs expressed across the country.

Sincerely,

WILFREDO DE JESÚS,
Pastor.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (NSBA),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314,
January 7, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Senate Confirmation Hearing on Mr. Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education, January 13, 2009

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY: The National School Boards Association (NSBA), representing 95,000 school board members through our State school boards associations across the Nation, is pleased to support the nomination of Mr. Arne Duncan as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. In our view, Mr. Duncan has demonstrated exemplary performance in addressing the many challenges facing local school districts across the Nation.

As we have outlined in our paper "A New Era in Education: Redefining the Federal Role for the 21st Century," in selecting his Education Secretary, President-elect Obama has chosen a leader who has demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in managing and leading one of the Nation's largest school districts; in addressing the challenges facing America's public schools; and successfully leading initiatives with demonstrated and significant increases in student achievement. We believe that Mr. Duncan represents a realistic view about what is possible in our schools and what will lead them into the future.

We expect that Mr. Duncan will depart from the Federal “top-down approach” that has been the norm for most of the past decade, and instead sustain a culture of partnership and support for States, as well as local school districts. Further, we believe Mr. Duncan’s approach to improving public education is very much consistent with our view that the Federal Government should “facilitate, not dictate.” This is particularly needed as we continue to improve the academic achievement of all students, narrow the achievement gap among student populations, increase our focus on improved professional development for our educators, and increase our use of research in order to identify “best practices” to strategically move our educational systems forward. Clearly, Mr. Duncan and the Chicago Board of Education have demonstrated that innovation can flourish when the school district puts student achievement first.

We also recognize Mr. Duncan’s outstanding leadership and consistency in ensuring that Chicago Public Schools are held to a high level of accountability for the academic performance of all students regardless of socio-economic conditions, race, ethnicity, or disability. Such demonstrated support has fostered renewed energy and innovation among the Nation’s public school systems in delivering quality education to all students.

The National School Boards Association is familiar with Mr. Duncan’s accomplishments in leading the Chicago Public Schools, a member of our own Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE). With a solid background in public education and a commitment to improving teacher quality, Mr. Duncan is a natural choice to support President-elect Obama’s goals of increasing school funding, creating assessments that accurately measure student achievement, and recruiting, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers.

We strongly urge Senate confirmation of Mr. Duncan’s nomination and enthusiastically look forward to working with him as he assumes his new post in Washington.

Sincerely,

ANNE L. BRYANT,
Executive Director.
BARBARA L. BOLAS,
President.

NEW TEACHER CENTER,
January 8, 2009.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY AND RANKING MEMBER ENZI: I am pleased to submit this letter of enthusiastic support for Arne Duncan’s nomination as U.S. Secretary of Education.

The next Secretary of Education will confront a host of complex policy issues facing public education, including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and a focus on developing our students with 21st-century skills. We need adroit leadership to confront these challenges, and I believe Mr. Duncan is exactly the right person to direct this effort.

The New Teacher Center has worked closely and collaboratively with Mr. Duncan in a partnership that provides robust induction support for beginning educators in some of the most challenging public schools in Chicago. Our work at the Chicago New Teacher Center would not be possible without his support and his very specific vision that focuses the district on teacher quality as the key to improving teaching and learning. As Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools, we find Mr. Duncan to hold a clear, student-focused reform vision and to be a seeker of consensus-based solutions to vexing problems.

As the Washington Post recently noted, Chicago—the Nation’s third largest school district—has become “a laboratory of reform during Duncan’s tenure.” Importantly, however, as a reform-minded educational leader, Mr. Duncan has not lost sight of the fact that quality teachers must be at the heart of any successful reform effort. In addition, he understands that the role of policy is not simply to identify the best teachers but to provide opportunities for every single educator to reach his or her fullest potential. That commitment and focus on human-capital development explains a large part of the success of Chicago Public Schools under Mr. Duncan’s leadership.

I believe that Mr. Duncan has the expertise, the perspective, and the temperament to be an outstanding Secretary of Education. As part of his work in Chicago, he assembled a remarkable leadership team to support his efforts. He also embraced collaboration with universities, cultural institutions, foundations, entrepreneurial organizations, and the business community, rallying a city around its responsibility

to improve schools. His eye for attracting and retaining innovative, dedicated and talented educators and managers and his years of on-the-ground experience will serve the President and the Nation well.

I am delighted that President-elect Barack Obama has nominated Mr. Duncan to fill this important position, and I strongly encourage the members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to approve his nomination. Thank you.

Sincerely,

ELLEN MOIR.

THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
January 6, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: I am pleased to write in support of Arne Duncan's nomination to be Secretary of Education. I currently serve as Chancellor of the New York City public schools and have been in that position for the past 6½ years, since Mayor Michael Bloomberg was granted control over the public school system and appointed me to that post. During that time, I have worked with Arne on numerous occasions, discussing policy, strategy and the challenges faced in seeking to bring major reform to troubled urban schools. I have come to know him well as a colleague and a friend and to admire his service in Chicago. Based on my personal knowledge as well as Arne's record of performance in Chicago, I have no doubt that he will make an excellent Secretary of Education. While I will elaborate on my reasons below, at its core my conclusion is based on the fact that, for Arne, it's all about helping children to succeed. In particular, he is a champion of the underprivileged and the underserved and, I have no doubt, he is an outstanding choice to lead the fight for educational excellence and equity in America.

As an initial matter, I think it was wise for the President-elect to have selected a hands-on school superintendent, who has had lengthy experience dealing with the real-world challenges of educating students who come from every socio-economic background, many of whom are recent immigrants to our country. This experience will not only provide a future Secretary with the granular knowledge necessary to understand the complexity of the issues, but it should also enable him to deal with colleagues at the State and school district levels with the kind of sophistication needed to make sure that Federal-State-school district partnerships are positive and constructive. In my experience, different levels of government too often end up in "compliance-driven" or "personality-driven" relationships that dissipate energy and resources. It doesn't have to be that way, and someone with Arne's background—and keen sensitivity—is most likely to ensure that it isn't that way.

I am also familiar with Arne's accomplishments in Chicago, which should inspire anyone who cares deeply about urban school reform. Transforming large, complex, often bureaucratic organizations is no easy assignment. It requires leadership skills, management skills, the ability to work cooperatively with other stakeholders, patience and a willingness to accept the fact that, even as you make progress, there is so much more that needs to be done, and that there will always be those who are prepared to criticize virtually any bold decision, even though we all know that, given the state of public education in America, bold decisions are precisely what we need. Arne was able to navigate these roiling waters with great skill and to great effect for the students of Chicago's public schools. He made bold decisions, such as closing under-performing schools and supporting charter schools, even though these policies often provoked controversy. And he demanded that everyone in the system be held accountable for student outcomes. That sent a powerful and positive message to the entire school district.

Most significantly, student performance in Chicago has improved under Arne's leadership. And, while I am sure Arne would be the first to say there is a lot more that needs to be done in Chicago, it's important to recognize that, in many places throughout our country, student achievement has stagnated. In fact, the sad story of school reform in America has too often been one of more money invested but no results to show for the investment. So, when one can honestly say that the glass is half full—as one can in Chicago—that's a big deal.

Finally, let me say a word about the man and his values, the consideration that I believe to be perhaps the most important in evaluating this nominee. I have been

privileged to serve in government at the Federal and city levels for 15 years and have met many talented, dedicated public servants. Few are as selfless as Arne Duncan or as passionate as he is about helping those who are less fortunate. Arne believes deeply that education changes lives, including—indeed, especially—for those who grow up in disadvantaged circumstances. And he is committed to making sure that the racial and ethnic achievement gaps that have plagued our country are tackled and, finally, eliminated. He knows how tough the challenges are but is not afraid of calling them out or doing the hard, sometimes controversial, things necessary to change a status quo that has disserved too many children. To me, the greatest heroes in public education are those who are the voice for the voiceless: those who will champion children who have no other champion. Arne Duncan is one of those and our Nation would be fortunate to have him as its Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

JOEL I. KLEIN.

CITY OF CHICAGO,
CITY COUNCIL,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
U.S. Senator (D-MA),
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee,
317 Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI, *Ranking Member,*
U.S. Senator (R-WY),
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee,
379A Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: I am honored to have been asked to write a letter to you regarding the nomination of Arne Duncan, who is being considered for the position of Secretary of Education by your esteemed committee.

I have had the privilege of serving in the Chicago City Council for the past 26 years and as Chairman of the Committee on Education and Youth Services for 23 of those 26 years. I am keenly aware of the challenges faced by urban, public educational systems at present and can think of very few people as qualified as Arne Duncan to serve as Secretary of Education for the United States of America.

There was a time in the history of the Chicago Public School system where one would not believe the administration of that system if they were reciting the Lord's Prayer. Through the efforts of Mayor Daley and the administrations of Paul Vallas and then Arne Duncan, the system has truly improved, existing for the benefit of the thousands of children it serves and educates, rather than supporting the bureaucracy which made up a large part of the system.

Arne's tenure as Chief Executive Officer of the public schools in Chicago has been, in many ways, more difficult than his predecessor's in that the "low hanging fruit" had all been picked and the tightening economy threatened to bring our renovations and new school programs to a halt. Arne's efforts focused on providing proper educational environments and innovate school programs which, in my opinion, has kept Chicago on the forefront of public education reform in our Nation.

Arne has the unique qualification of having run one of the Nation's largest school systems in the country, giving him a true appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Federal Government's educational efforts as they affect students. He also has an appreciation of what smaller, non-urban systems contend with as a result of his groundbreaking efforts in Illinois to bring school administrators together to petition our State to accept its responsibility to our student population with regard to equitable funding, teacher pension issues and student achievement gaps.

I do not believe that President-elect Obama could have made a better choice for this all-important position than Arne Duncan.

Sincerely,

PATRICK J. O'CONNOR,
Alderman (40th)—City of Chicago.

WALTER PAYTON COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL,
CHICAGO, IL 60610,
January 8, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
317 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510-2101.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: It is my honor to recommend Arne Duncan to serve as the Secretary of Education for the United States of America under the leadership of President Barack Obama.

I have worked with Mr. Duncan for 6 years as an administrator in Chicago Public Schools. Presently, I am the principal of Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, the No. 2 ranked school in the State of Illinois and noted as one of the 100 top high schools in the country by *US News and World Report*. During this time, Mr. Duncan has been at the helm of countless innovations in education for the city of Chicago.

One such initiative that positively impacted Payton High School was the creation and development of the Post-Secondary Education department. This program has appreciably increased the numbers of students graduating from our city high schools by providing resources and personnel to guide students into college and careers. By focusing on increasing financial aid information to families, Payton students in the Class of 2008 alone were able to garner over \$17 million in scholarships with the assistance of our postsecondary education coach.

Chicago saw an unprecedented era of labor peace under Mr. Duncan's leadership. Due to his negotiating skills with the numerous unions representing Chicago Public Schools employees, he worked as collaborator, team player and modeled these skills to others. At the same time, his bold moves to guarantee that all Chicago students attend an effective school have led to courageous decisions from which he did not retreat.

Offering options and opportunities to communities and families is a focus of his plan, providing the most meaningful educational experience possible to each individual Chicago student. Payton College Prep continues to grow as one of these options for high achieving students from across the city, drawing in over 7,000 applications per year for our 200-seat freshman class. The level of economic, ethnic and cultural diversity has been cited as one of the main reasons for our academic success. Our students thrive in a learning environment of all honors and advanced placement classes. Our math team placed first in the State competitions for 4 consecutive years. Upon leaving Payton, our students attend the top tier colleges and universities in the country. This year alone four of our students were admitted to Yale.

As the CEO of the third largest public school system in the country, a native Chicagoan and a globally-aware Harvard graduate, Mr. Duncan combines a unique set of skills in his work with diverse groups of constituents. While aware of the sweeping complexities of a large urban district, he understands and responds at the local level. I am impressed by Mr. Duncan's personal accessibility to parents and students. Mr. Duncan not only listens; he builds effective teams to respond to the practical needs of principals and teachers, students and community members. He created the Office of Autonomous Schools, which reduced bureaucratic red tape for the district's high performing schools, such as Payton, and consequently freed up important resources and personnel to focus on struggling schools. With local school control, we are best able to meet the needs of our students and families. Payton created a unique schedule and school calendar to afford flexibility in our curriculum offerings.

Mr. Duncan has demonstrated his support and knowledge of the need for students to be global citizens. Payton High School is proud to be part of what has become, under Mr. Duncan's leadership, the largest Chinese language program in the country. Walter Payton College Prep won the prestigious Goldman-Sachs Foundation Prize for International Education due to his support for innovative approaches to education at our school and the use of advanced technology with our sister schools around the world. The world is truly our classroom now!

In conclusion, we are poised at an original juncture in history; 2008 confirmed that America has come of age and the enduring hopes and dreams of people for decades are being realized. These hopes and dreams must now extend into our classrooms and far beyond as we prepare all students to thrive in the 21st century. We currently have the practical capability for students to teach and learn from each other around the world. Technology and meaningful educational practices are evol-

ing past man-made boundaries and facilitating world-wide interaction in daily instruction in American schools. *This is the roadmap for success.*

Mr. Duncan is prepared and able to guide our country in this new role. I wholeheartedly urge Congress to move swiftly on his appointment as Secretary of Education of the United States of America.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN C. ESTRADA,
Principal, Walter Payton College Prep.

To: Senator EDWARD KENNEDY (MA) and Senator MICHAEL ENZI (WY)

I am writing this letter in support of Arne Duncan to be Secretary of Education. I have known Arne Duncan for about 10 years and have worked closely with him in his role as CEO of Chicago Public Schools. I have continued to be impressed with his vision, integrity, and passion in providing excellence in education to all children in the city of Chicago. He has demonstrated a unique ability to set goals and standards for teachers, parents and students and been able to work with people in both the private and public school system.

Mr. Duncan has demonstrated an ability to think “outside of the box” looking at new ways, ideas and possibilities to strengthen and develop stronger education systems that resulted in increased test scores and productivity. Mr. Duncan has shown a willingness to take on the tough issues of closing schools and turning around schools, and he has shown a commitment to dramatically improve education options for all Chicago families by aggressively seeking quality, innovative proposals for new schools, including charter and contract schools. Mr. Duncan has also been an outspoken and passionate voice to fight for the safety of children, not only in school but in coming to and returning from school to their homes.

I believe Mr. Duncan’s track record here in Chicago makes him an excellent choice to tackle one of the most important issues in our country and President Barack Obama’s administration—education!

In the Pursuit of Justice,

REV. MICHAEL L. PFLEGER,
Pastor.

POLK BROS. FOUNDATION,
CHICAGO, IL 60654,
January 7, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
*317 Russell Senate Building,
Washington DC 20510.*

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
*379A Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND ENZI: It is with enthusiasm and conviction that I write in support of the nomination of Arne Duncan to the post of Secretary of Education—enthusiasm for his passionate commitment to what is best for children and conviction that he has the leadership skills to implement the best plans and programs to achieve that goal.

The grant-making foundation that I lead as CEO is one of the three largest private funders of public education in Chicago. In that role, I have worked with Arne Duncan for 10 years, first when he was chief of staff to then Chicago schools CEO Paul Vallas and for the more than 7 years he has led the Chicago public school system. Chicago has an education funding community that is very collaborative, especially when the leadership of the school system is open and transparent and willing to work with external partners and listen to “critical friends.” Arne Duncan has done all that and more. We have worked collaboratively on reconstituting failing high schools, planning how to improve the leadership skills of principals, improving teacher quality and increasing the number of good school choices for Chicago parents and children.

Mr. Duncan is not only passionate about improving education but has the skills to implement what needs to be done to effect that improvement. None of the projects mentioned above are small experiments. They may have started small but, based on early success, Arne Duncan has had the courage to take these successes to scale quickly. He is ever mindful that we lose a generation of high school students every

4 years. In Chicago's complex world of education, he has been able to work with the school bureaucracy, the teachers' union, the funding community, the business community and parents. His success comes about because everyone in Chicago understands that he has no hidden agenda, that in fact his only agenda is to make dramatic improvement in the quality of education for the children of Chicago.

I am sure he will be no less passionate, courageous and strategic on behalf of students across our country.

Yours truly,

SANDRA P. GUTHMAN,
Chair and CEO.

PENNY PRITZKER,
CHICAGO, IL 60606,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
*317 Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
*379A Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY AND SENATOR ENZI: It is with pleasure that I write this letter in support of Arne Duncan's nomination as Secretary of Education in President-elect Obama's new administration.

I have known Arne before and during his tenure as CEO of Chicago Public Schools. As a Co-Chair of the Chicago Public Education Fund as well as Chair of their Blue Ribbon Task Force, I have worked closely with Arne to improve the quality of leadership in the Chicago Public Schools. I was also a fellow member of the Board of Overseers for Harvard University with Arne, and our families are good friends. I have witnessed first hand his dedication to and success in improving the education system of Chicago, always focused on bettering the opportunities for the children of this city. With his education, demonstrated leadership capabilities and his experience as an inner city superintendent of a large, complex system, I can think of no one better suited to fill this Cabinet position at this time in our Nation's history.

I strongly urge you and the Senate committee to confirm Arne Duncan's appointment as Secretary of Education.

Very truly yours,

PENNY PRITZKER.

ARIEL INVESTMENTS,
CHICAGO, IL,
January 12, 2009.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE HELP COMMITTEE: I am the founder, chairman and CEO of Ariel Investments, a Chicago-based money management firm and mutual fund company. Additionally, I serve as the board president of the Ariel Education Initiative, an education foundation which serves inner-city children. I am also a lifelong friend of Arne Duncan.

Two qualities define Arne Duncan: commitment to children and dedication to teamwork. While still in grade school, Arne began working with poor, neighborhood children at his mother's after-school tutoring program. He took a year off from college to work with her and wrote his Harvard senior thesis on the underclass. As a professional basketball player in Australia after college, Arne spent his off-court time working with underprivileged children and young people.

When he returned to Chicago from abroad, Arne became the driving force behind the creation of Ariel Education Initiative which reflected our firm's social mission to help low-income, children of color become financially literate, build wealth and escape poverty. Initially, Arne spearheaded our adoption of a 6th grade class through the "I Have A Dream" program with the promise to make college affordable for those who graduated from high school. In an effort to make a broader impact, Arne next helped start an elementary school in Chicago, Ariel Community Academy, which offers a unique financial literacy curriculum that enables the children to manage real money—with each first grade class receiving a \$20,000 portfolio. Today, Ariel Community Academy ranks among the top elementary schools in the city. As

CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, Arne has embraced and expanded programs like ours and the system as a whole has improved dramatically under his leadership, earning Chicago a national reputation as a center of educational innovation.

More than anyone I have ever known—whether in business or in basketball—Arne Duncan is a team player. Like all great athletes and leaders, he brings out the best in others. He gives credit generously to teammates and never seeks credit for himself. He believes deep down every challenge can be more easily overcome by working together instead of alone. He has the integrity, the discipline, the mental toughness and the insight to be a national leader and a partner with President-elect Obama and Congress in reforming public education in America. He also has the experience and wherewithal to develop the right policies that will offer real and meaningful opportunities to children of every race and background.

I offer my unqualified endorsement for my lifelong friend and teammate, Arne Duncan. No one will work harder and no one will work smarter.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. ROGERS, JR.,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION (SEIU) CTW, CLC,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 12, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
*Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
644 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
*Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
835 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY AND RANKING MEMBER ENZI: The Service Employees International Union (SEIU), on behalf of our 2 million members, is writing to express our strong support for the nomination of Arne Duncan to the position of U.S. Secretary of Education, and to urge you to swiftly vote for his confirmation.

In SEIU's representation of thousands of school district employees in the city of Chicago, we have found Superintendent Duncan and his team to be both fair negotiators and strong partners for the delivery of quality public services in the city's schools. Duncan has shown himself to be a hands-on practitioner who will shape his strategy for change from lessons learned during his years of improving schools at the local level in one of the largest and most dynamic school systems in the United States. In his tenure as Superintendent, Duncan has been willing to take unpopular steps to identify and transform weak schools and improve teaching quality. While SEIU hasn't always agreed with every step taken in this process, we have never once doubted that Duncan was motivated by his drive to improve the city's schools.

Duncan has clearly demonstrated his commitment to developing children's potential. This is crucial to SEIU because, in addition to representing many school employees, we represent hundreds of thousands of working people who are parents and grandparents of children in public schools. The children of our members frequently fall into the groups of children that our public schools are failing. In poll after poll, SEIU members rank the desire for a quality education for their children as one of their highest concerns. They know how important it is for their children to succeed in school. And they know that too many of them don't. The education and income level of a child's parents should not determine their success in school. Right now, it too frequently does. For that to change, we need visionary leadership rooted in day-to-day experience. We believe that Arne Duncan is a person who can lead that change.

The Service Employees International Union urges you to vote for Secretary-Designate Duncan's swift confirmation as our country's Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

ANDREW L. STERN,
International President.

SONNENSCHNEIN,
Chicago, IL 60606-6404,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate, Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

GENTLEMEN: I am pleased to endorse the nomination of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education.

Five years ago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Arne Duncan announced the Renaissance 2010 Program—an initiative to open 100 new charter, contract and performance schools in Chicago's underserved communities by the year 2010. The Mayor and Mr. Duncan turned to the Civic Committee, an organization of the CEOs of Chicago's leading business enterprises, to help raise the funds to finance the start up of these new schools. Thus was born the Renaissance Schools Fund, of which I am privileged to serve as Chairman and on whose board Arne has served since its inception.

In this capacity and as a founder of a charter school, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Arne and observe his outstanding abilities and work ethic, as well as his devotion and dedication to the school children of Chicago. Largely through his leadership, a school system which not too long ago was considered one of the worst in the Nation, has begun a significant turnaround and is showing marked improvement.

The Renaissance 2010 effort has already resulted in the creation of 80 new schools and is well on its way to its goal of 100 new schools by 2010. On the theory that "one-size-does-not-fit-all," Arne has encouraged the development of schools of all types to meet the needs and interests of students, from science and math academies to a music and arts school, as well as single sex schools and schools with a vocational focus. New schools are being operated by national educational organizations, local charter operators and leading private institutions, creating a portfolio of schools which the district oversees. Arne's efforts have fostered a substantial number of collaborative relationships between the business community, foundations and universities on one hand and the school district and individual schools on the other. With Arne's active participation, more than \$70 million of private funding has been generated for our school district and our new schools.

Arne was the first superintendent in Chicago to have the courage to face up to the problem of persistent seriously underperforming schools, and despite strong community and political opposition, close them and give their students the opportunity to attend better performing schools. He has also undertaken the difficult process of reconstituting a failing school by replacing its administration and faculty. He constantly pushes for new ideas and encourages innovative approaches both within and outside the system.

The accomplishments of the Chicago Public School System have been many during his tenure:

- Elementary test scores hit an all time high with more than 65 percent of students meeting or exceeding State standards—Chicago's seventh consecutive gain.
- Over the past 5 years, Chicago high school students gained twice as much as the State and three times as much as the Nation on the ACT test.
- Over the past 5 years, the number of CPS high school students taking advanced placement classes more than doubled.
- The graduating class of 2008 received a record \$157 million in competitive college scholarships.
- The number of teacher vacancies at the start of the school year hit an all-time low of 3 percent.

Arne is smart, thoughtful, effective and dedicated to our students and to the improvement of our education system. His loss to Chicago will be a gain to the Nation.

Sincerely,

DONALD G. LUBIN.

UNO,
CHICAGO, IL 60607,
January 7, 2009.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
U.S. Senate,
Dirksen 428,
Washington, DC 20510.

Attention: Joe Kolinski

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: As Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools for the past 7 years, Arne Duncan and his vision have been instrumental in this city's ongoing process of school reform. Under Mr. Duncan's direction, Chicago's education system has undergone a significant transformation which promotes accountability, transparency, and data-driven decisionmaking in our schools.

His innovative decisions to support community and charter schools, such as the UNO Charter School Network, have resulted in the creation of higher-quality educational options while alleviating overcrowding in neighborhood schools for tens of thousands of students across Chicago.

I am honored to extend my support of Arne Duncan's appointment to Secretary of Education based on his demonstration of leadership and an innovative revitalization of our schools. I know he will only continue to succeed in education reform at the national level.

Sincerely,

JUAN RANGEL,
Board President, UNO Charter School Network.

WILLIAMS MULTIPLEX LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL,
CHICAGO, IL 60616,
January 9, 2009.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
379A Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: The parents of Williams Multiplex had the opportunity to work closely with Mr. Arne Duncan when it was announced that Williams would close under the Renaissance Initiative. Initially we were very upset and felt that our school was selected to close because we were in a socially, economically deprived community adjacent to a public housing complex. We began to rally and even made a human chain around the school to protest its closing. There were public hearings, marches and rallies at Chicago Public Schools board meetings.

Mr. Duncan assured us that when Williams reopened we would have a new school that would provide a quality education for our students while promoting community and business partnerships. Mr. Duncan kept his word and worked diligently with parents and community to create our model school. When Williams reopened our children had new books, computers, a brighter building, a longer school day, a parent center, dedicated teachers and an atmosphere that embraced parental involvement. Workshops provided opportunities to bridge the gap between home and school. Mr. Duncan has been accessible to parents and community members on a consistent basis.

We are happy, yet saddened to see Mr. Duncan leave Chicago Public Schools, but we will remember what he has taught us, to always strive for excellence and in order for our children to compete globally we must continue to take it to the next level.

Sincerely yours,

VALORIE WRIGHT, CHAIR,
Williams Elementary School LSC.
DIANNA SMITH PHILLIPS, CHAIR,
Williams Middle School LSC.
KIM DAVIS-AMBROSE,
Parent Coordinator.
ALEXANDER HALL,
Parent.

[Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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