

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation to Promote Excellence in Education May 22, 1991

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit today for your immediate consideration and enactment the “AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act,” a bill to help America attain the National Education Goals by the year 2000. I believe that a bold and comprehensive effort, involving all sectors of our society, is needed if we are to implement real educational reforms and reach the National Education Goals by the year 2000. The “AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act” would authorize specific legislative initiatives designed to support such an effort.

Eight years ago, the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported to the Nation that our schools were failing. Since that time, States and localities have enacted a number of school reforms, but these actions have been too slow and too timid. The strategy that I announced on April 18 responds to our need for bold action. It would bring together elected officials, business people, educators, parents, social service providers, civic and religious groups, and, to the greatest extent possible, every American in every community in a crusade to transform our educational system.

AMERICA 2000 is more than just a Federal effort; it is truly a national strategy. Only through a national effort, in which all sectors of society join, will we be able to attain our goals. Further, AMERICA 2000 is not just a program or a set of programs; rather, it is a national crusade. The legislative proposals included in this bill are just components, albeit very important components of a strategy most of which would take place outside the Federal Government.

The “AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act” includes the following specific legislative initiatives aimed at fulfilling the principles described below:

- The *New American Schools* program would provide seed money for the start-up of “break-the-mold” schools. These schools would: (1) employ the best that is known about teaching and learning;

(2) make use, as appropriate, of the latest technologies; and (3) be tailored to meet the needs and characteristics of individual communities. At least one school would be established in each U.S. Congressional District in communities designated as “AMERICA 2000 Communities.”

- The *Merit Schools* program would reward schools that make notable progress toward achievement of the National Education Goals, particularly the goal of ensuring that all students leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competence in the core academic subjects. At least 20 percent of each State’s funding would be used for awards to schools that have made outstanding progress in mathematics and science education. This program would provide a powerful incentive for all schools to improve their educational performance.
- Attainment of the National Education Goals will depend heavily on the preparation and performance of teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Therefore, three initiatives focus on providing seed money for the training of teachers and school leaders and for the development of alternative teacher and principal certification programs in the States.

—*Governors’ Academies for Teachers* would be established in each State. These academies would provide experienced teachers with opportunities for renewal and enhancement of their knowledge and teaching skills in the core academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, history, and geography. Separate funding would be used by the academies to reward and recognize outstanding teachers of the core subjects.

—*Governors’ Academies for School Leaders* would operate in each State to provide current and prospective

principals and other school leaders with training in instructional leadership, school-based management, school reform strategies, and other skills necessary for effective educational administration.

- The *Alternative Certification of Teachers and Principals* program would assist States interested in broadening the pool of talent from which to recruit teachers and principals. Funds would assist States to develop and implement, or expand and improve, flexible certification systems. Through these alternative certification systems, talented professionals, and others who have demonstrated subject matter competence or leadership in fields outside of education could become teachers or principals.
 - The *Educational Reform through Flexibility and Accountability* part of the legislation would authorize projects that would improve student outcomes through increased flexibility in using Federal, State, and local categorical funds and services to achieve specific goals.
 - The bill would also improve the *Chapter 2* State grant program by requiring that more funds be reserved at the State level, where more significant educational reform activities can be implemented. The bill would also authorize the use of those funds to support enhancement of parental choice.
 - Educational choice is one of the most important tools that communities can embrace in their pursuit of educational improvement. Three components of the “AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act” address the need for encouraging and testing different methods for enhancing educational choice.
 - The bill would amend the *Chapter 1* Compensatory Education program to support decisions by parents making educational choices for their children. As amended, the statute would provide that Chapter 1 services follow the child participating in Chapter 1 to the public or private school that the child chooses to attend. The child’s local school system would arrange for Chapter 1 services to “follow the child” or, if the school system decides that approach is not feasible or efficient, it would provide the child’s parents with a cash grant that would enable them to purchase compensatory education services for their children.
 - The *Assistance for Parental Choice* initiative would provide payments to local educational agencies that have implemented programs in which parents are permitted, and given sufficient financial incentives, to select among a variety of public and private educational programs.
 - Educational Choice Programs of National Significance* would make grants to demonstrate and evaluate approaches that show potential for expanding educational choice.
 - To assist in measuring progress toward the National Education Goals, the bill would make important changes to the authority for the *National Assessment of Educational Progress*. The bill would authorize the collection of State-representative data on English, mathematics, science, history, and geography in grades four, eight, and twelve beginning in 1994. The legislation would also permit the use of National Assessment tests at district and school levels by States that wish to do so.
 - Because Americans need to know how much time their children should spend learning and how that time should be used, the bill would authorize creation of a *National Commission on Time, Study, Learning, and Teaching*.
 - In support of the National Education Goal that every adult American be literate by the year 2000, the bill would authorize establishment of *Regional Literacy Resource Centers*. These centers would provide technical assistance to, and enhance coordination among, State and local providers of literacy services.
- I urge the Congress to take prompt and

May 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

favorable action on this legislation. Taken together, these initiatives, coupled with the rest of the AMERICA 2000 strategy, would spur the actions that are necessary for this country to attain the National Education

Goals by the year 2000.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
May 22, 1991.

Remarks Announcing the Reappointment of General Colin L. Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a News Conference

May 23, 1991

The President. Well, today I announce with great pleasure my decision to reappoint General Colin Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for a second 2-year term when his term expires.

Look, he has done a fantastic job, and I'm taking this step now to demonstrate my great confidence in his ability and the tremendous respect that I have for him. And it's personal, and it's professional. And the military advice that he provided me under pressure for our operations in Panama and Liberia, Somalia and, of course, most important, in the Gulf was absolutely remarkable. And the confidence I have in him is reflected in the confidence the men and women of our Armed Forces have in General Powell. And I've seen it firsthand, and it has not diminished in any way.

In the years ahead, we're going to be making important changes in the military, in its size, in its structure, and in its orientation. And General Powell and I and Secretary Cheney have been talking about this over the months. These decisions are not easy, but he's been at the forefront of planning for this critical restructuring, and I can think of no one more qualified to lead our Armed Forces as we prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century.

And so, Colin, I am delighted that you are willing to re-up and to take on another term in this very onerous, taxing job. I think of Alma and your family. I think of the alternatives and the options, but your sense of service to country is just unquestioned. And I am delighted that you are willing to undertake this.

General Powell. Thank you, Mr. Presi-

dent.

The President. We have a rebuttal here. [Laughter]

General Powell. Thank you, Mr. President. I am very honored and privileged that you would offer me a second term as Chairman. I, of course, accept it gladly because it gives me the opportunity to stay in uniform and to continue serving a nation, serving you, but most importantly, serving the great young men and women who volunteer to serve in their Nation's Armed Forces.

The next 2 years will be full of many challenges, but I'm sure with the great national security team that you have working for you, we will meet these challenges and come out the other end with a strengthened Armed Force, ready to discharge any responsibilities and any problems that may come its way and to ensure that the Nation continues to be well-defended and that we are a solid arm of your policy team, and that, when called upon, the Armed Forces will acquit themselves as well as they have over the past 20 months.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. General?

The President. Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News] wants to ask you a question.

Q. General, would you care to comment on the recent account of the Gulf War suggesting that you had, at a minimum, serious misgivings about the use of force option, at least at one point, and give us your sense of how that happened?

General Powell. No, I really am not going to start commenting on any accounts or