

Note: The President spoke at 1:04 p.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Capitol Hill Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to John Sloan, president and chief executive officer of the National Federation of Independent Business; Patricia F. Saiki, Adminis-

trator of the Small Business Administration; humorist and film director Woody Allen; and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Remarks to the National Education Goals Panel

June 3, 1991

Well, thank you very much, Governor Romer. And what I really wanted to do is to come over and join my colleagues from the Department of Education—particularly our Secretary—in thanking this busy and distinguished group of Governors who are taking the lead on our educational reform.

Roy, at the outset, thank you, sir, as chairman. And let me say, we are enthused over your concept of this interim council—very much so—and delighted that you and Carroll are willing to undertake that commitment.

I'm pleased to be here with the National Education Goals Panel as you tackle tough work on behalf of the entire country. And all of us feel that you're doing a great job. And I want especially to thank the Governors who spent so much of the past year traveling—as Roy said—around the country and traveling to Washington to deal with this challenging assignment. We all owe a great debt to Governor Romer and to his colleagues for their important work on this panel. And so, thank you all very, very much.

You know, there are only a few moments in our lives when we are called upon to join a crusade, and I honestly believe this is one of them. We have a crisis in American education, and we've simply got to do something about it.

I just came from a meeting with the National Federation of Independent Businesses, NFIB. And I talked to them about economic growth—something we can't achieve without an educated, motivated work force. Education is vital to everything we are and everything we can become. But look at the facts. Eight years ago, the Na-

tional Commission on Excellence in Education published its powerful indictment of our schools. And yet today, ours is still, remember, a "nation at risk."

And at the same time, we remain devoted to education. If you talk to parents, you'll hear that nothing is more important. No nation on Earth believes as deeply as we do in the value and the importance of education. People from coast to coast have begun the hard work of educational reform.

I had an inspiring day with Lamar out in Minnesota the other day. You could just feel their commitment to revolutionary new methods in this one little corner of our great country.

The nonpartisan Federal-State—and let me emphasize that word again, nonpartisan—Federal-State partnership brought this issue to the forefront of the national agenda a couple of years ago. And we brought the Nation's Governors together, or they came together with us for an unprecedented education summit at the home of Thomas Jefferson, a true education President. The Governors weren't worried about their place in history. They came to work. And as they did, a compact emerged, one that rests not on flowery promises but on a challenge to raise our expectations and achieve concrete results.

We resolved then to become an America of tougher standards, higher goals, and bigger dreams. And 5 months later, after reaching out to educators and parents and civic leaders, the Governors and I adopted six national education goals for the year 2000. This audience is familiar with them, but let me click them off: readiness for school; school completion; student achieve-

ment and citizenship; science and math supremacy; adult literacy and lifetime learning; and safe, drug-free schools.

And these goals were in our minds as we developed one of the administration's most exciting initiatives, a comprehensive educational reform challenge known as America 2000. America 2000 calls for a revolution in American education. It challenges all Americans to raise expectations, to pledge genuine accountability, and above all, to create a new generation of American schools. It sets out to transform a nation at risk into a nation of students. And it urges everyone to make our communities places where learning will happen.

And now we're here with a team that figures prominently in the America 2000 game plan, the National Education Goals Panel. The panel's charge is to hold us accountable. It will report on the Nation's and the States' progress toward meeting our education goals. In meetings with educational experts and in regional forums across the country, this, again, nonpartisan panel has already launched a national dialog about how to measure our own educational progress.

I know that the members were hard at work earlier today, defining the first education report card to the Nation. And they'll issue that report in September, on the second anniversary of the education summit. This and subsequent reports will do more than simply monitor our progress. They will use our new national standards. They will supply clear direction to our efforts. And they will help promote accountability and promote excellence.

This panel's work will hold a mirror up to the Nation and force us to take an honest look at ourselves and at our schools. And when we look in that mirror, we'll see that our actions can and will make a difference.

So, that's where we are right now, poised to rise to the challenge. But there's something else. National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as NAEP, is about to release a report. It will tell us what we already know, that we have work to do. It will show that the level of student performance varies widely across the country and that we're not measuring up.

I want to talk directly to every parent,

student, teacher, and administrator, and elected official in this country. When you see the NAEP—N-A-E-P—when you see the NAEP report, view it as evidence that we need high national standards to serve as an incentive for every student. View it as a personal call to accountability and to action. This panel will. It will use this assessment as its benchmark, a reminder of what we must achieve.

It will take a long time. For instance, this panel's charge is for a decade. And it will take a lot of tough work. It will take energy and determination and imagination. But those are the building blocks of the American spirit.

But we're armed for this battle. Fortunately, our kids give us a great secret weapon. They are the best natural resource of any nation on Earth. We've seen our young people perform in the Persian Gulf, and we've seen what they can do. And they inspire us to reinvent our educational system. We must forge a system worthy of them. We've got to create a system that will help them compete in the world of the 21st century and one that will let them be the very best in that world. They can be the best, and they will be the best.

Teachers—bless them—also provide an incredible resource, like teacher Danford Sakai of Waiakea High School. He summed up what we need in this battle when he called for "commitment, caring, common sense, communication, and courage."

I really, Governor Romer, want to thank this panel on behalf of the country. Your meeting certainly makes this an important day, a concrete beginning and pledge of commitment. You are our navigator, guiding us toward this new world of standards of excellence in education.

And as we prepare to confront what may be the most pressing crisis of our society, a favorite quote comes to mind: "Whatever you can do—or dream you can do—begin it. For boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

We can respond to that call together. We can dream bold dreams and unleash the power and magic that are, indeed, the genius of the American spirit. And that's how we can reinvent American education.

Thank you all very much for giving your time to your country in this manner. We are very, very grateful to you. And may God bless our country. Thank you so much.

Note: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in the Independence "A" Ballroom of the Grand

Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, chairman of the panel; Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander; and Gov. Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., of South Carolina, a member of the panel.

Remarks to Education Leaders

June 3, 1991

This is what we call in the White House a cameo appearance—in, out. [Laughter] But we have our new Deputy Secretary, number two in the Department, David Kearns here. I want to tell you something about him. He was the former chief executive of Xerox, and he comes to this big job, but with a total dedication and commitment to education. And I think it says a wonderful thing to our country that a man with his extraordinary business achievements—all the time, incidentally, when he was in that job he was constructively engaged in helping our schools and helping education. But here he is now working hand-in-hand with our very able Secretary, who all of you know and to whom I just once again express my real appreciation for the job he and this fantastic team we've got over there at the Department is doing.

I'm not here, though, to talk about what the center can do for the people. That's not the way we're going to reform education in this country. What I want to do is talk about or just thank you for what you are doing and what we're counting on you to do as we reach out to achieve our national education goals, goals that were established in a totally nonpartisan way by the Governors, unanimously adopted by the Governors.

Governor Romer was going to come on over here today, Governor Campbell with him on our education panels of the Governors' Association. But they've actively involved in another meeting which the three of us attended not so many minutes ago. And I say that because they wanted to be here, too. But we're grateful to Governor Romer of Colorado, Governor Carroll

Campbell and the others that are participating on the Governors panel.

Lamar and I were talking. He said, well, look, remind these people that they're the ones that stand at the center of this crusade to reform the American schools and to reach the six national goals that you all are familiar with, and reach them by the year 2000. It's a strong agenda, a tough agenda in some ways. But all of us are determined that, with your help, we can do it.

So, what we talk about in the America 2000 strategy, you put into action. And the ideas for implementing a lot of our strategy has got to come from you all and thousands like you across this country. It can't succeed—we cannot dictate from Washington. I am not anti-Washington. I am not antibureaucracy. We've got some wonderful people who have given their lives in these Departments, but this program, America 2000, cannot succeed if we try to do it from Washington itself.

And so, we've got to spread the message. And along those lines I'm going over to Delaware next week—I think with Lamar, I hope—to attend a graduation for graduates of an adult education program. One of our goals, as you know, is you're never too old to stop learning. And by going there we hope that this will put some focus on the program—many of you are already involved in that kind of education—give a boost to what you're doing and maybe in the process get some good ideas as to how we can do it better.

Then the following week, I go by to Colorado and see Governor Romer, who's our chairman really of the Governors on this, in