

that is focused on basic education, but it's a school also that understands the importance of the arts. It's a school that broadens the horizons of the students.

We're here to tout excellence and to thank—to thank the good folks in this institution, inside this building, who love our children and are willing to put their love into practice in a system that works.

So, Dr. Shannon, thank you very much for having us. We're so honored to be here. Again, I want to thank the Members of the congressional delegation that came up, as well. It's a real treat to be able to walk

around the halls of a successful school and, most importantly, be able to look children in the eye and wish them all the best, encourage them to go to college. But thanks for having us. It's our honor to be here. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the multipurpose room. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy R. Shannon, principal, Merritt Extended Elementary School; and Paul L. Vance, superintendent, District of Columbia Public Schools.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

January 25, 2001

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's an honor to be here with the chairman and ranking member of the committee, members of the Education Committee in the House of Representatives.

We're going to spend a lot of time talking about education until a bill works its way through the House and the Senate. It's a priority of mine, but the good news is, it's also a priority of the Members here around the table. And I am actually confident that we can forge an education bill that will achieve a lot of objectives: high standards, local control of schools, but the most important objective of all is that every child in America gets educated. It is a national priority, and it's a goal that I'm actually confident that this great Nation can achieve.

So it's an honor to welcome Members of the Congress here to have a frank discussion. I'll be glad to answer a few questions.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman

Q. Is there a comment at all on Mr. Greenspan's comment this morning on the

need for tax cuts and the effect it might have on the economy?

The President. I was pleased to hear Mr. Greenspan's words. I felt they were measured and just right. He recognizes that we need good monetary policy and sound fiscal policy to make sure that the economy grows. So I was pleased.

Q. He also seemed to indicate that having the tax cut in place was one of the issues—or one of the main criteria in having a tax cut that would benefit the economy. Do you read that as support for a retroactive tax cut or an accelerated measure?

The President. I don't think Alan Greenspan was supporting any particular plan. I know he wasn't going to the Hill to say, "Well, President Bush has got the right plan." I felt like he was speaking about policy in general. His job is to report to the Congress in an objective way, and that's exactly how I read it.

I've got my view of how to enact tax relief. I suspect others in the Congress will have their view. But what Alan Greenspan was saying to the Nation is that in order

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to make sure our economy grows, we've got to have good monetary policy and sound fiscal policy, a component of which is wise spending, as well as tax relief.

Efforts at Bipartisanship

Representative John A. Boehner. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues—if I could just say something.

On behalf of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I want to thank you for inviting us here. All week you've spent a great deal of time talking about your proposal but, more importantly, meeting with Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, trying to build consensus for this very serious proposal.

And on behalf of all of us, I just want to say, thank you.

The President. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Dinner With Catholic Leaders

Q. Mr. President, you're meeting tonight with the Archbishop; what do you hope to accomplish?

The President. I hope to have a good meal. [Laughter] I will tell you something about the cardinal-to-be and the other leaders I'll be meeting with. These are men of great faith, huge compassion for the poor and the oppressed. I can't wait to talk to them about education reform, because education to the cardinal-to-be is a paramount concern. He knows what we know: An educated child is one much more likely to realize the greatness of America. And I'm going to discuss that, and I'm there to listen, as well. It's a huge honor to go there, and I'm looking forward to it.

Faith-Based Initiatives

Q. Mr. President, how do you expect to address concerns about separation of church and state in dealing with faith-based initiatives, both for education and other services?

The President. I'll have a lot to say about that next week. But I will just tell you this, that a compassionate society is one which recognizes the great power of faith, not a particular religion, for the great power faith can play in the lives of everyday citizens and that we in Government must not fear faith-based programs. We must welcome faith-based programs.

This issue was debated, hotly debated in the Congress in previous sessions, all based upon what's called charitable choice, which is a constitutional provision which recognizes Government will never fund religion. But Government should not fear funding programs that can change people's lives, nor should Government fear funding—providing funding for an individual and allow that individual to choose a faith-based program, so long as there is a secular alternative available.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:07 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick of the Archdiocese of Washington, who was elevated to cardinal on February 21 in a ceremony at the Vatican. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Colin L. Powell as Secretary of State

January 26, 2001

The President. Thank you all for coming. It is a great privilege for all of us to be here for the swearing in of our new Sec-

retary of State. It's also a great privilege to be here with Alma, the true strength of the Powell family.