

A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot about programs that fail, and I have seen a lot of them, financed by Federal taxpayers. I would like to talk a little bit tonight about a program that appears to be successful.

During my career in teaching and counseling, I saw a lot of National Defense Education Act money poured down the drain, millions of dollars, billions of dollars, primarily because there was no plan. The money was there; we were told to spend it. I watched then as a principal a lot of well-meaning programs that were instituted during the sixties that failed also, because, again, no planning.

I can remember both as a principal and as a superintendent receiving title I money, chapter 1 money. Normally we were told that this money was available in about October. School had already started in September. No planning. Money wasted.

I finally said, as a superintendent, to my early child education expert, "There must be something we can do with this Federal money to break the cycle of dependency, the cycle of illiteracy, the cycle of dropouts," because we pretty well knew which children were going to have trouble when they came to school because we had seen older brothers and sisters, we had seen parents all having trouble in school.

We decided that we have to look at the entire family, and I do not know why it took us 30 years since then to understand that nationally, that if you do not deal with the entire family, there is no way we can ever break the cycle of dependency on government, no way we can break the cycle of illiteracy.

And so she suggested that we work with the three and four-year-olds and their parents. So we began a program starting in the homes because we wanted to be in a position to help the parents learn the kind of parenting skills that are necessary so that the parent can become the child's first and most important teacher; so that the parent understands what it is you and I would normally do with our preschool children to help them become reading ready.

When I came to Congress, we introduced this as Even Start. Now, I am not here to tell my colleagues that all Even Start programs are successful in the country, just like so many other programs, but I am here to say that the most recent study would indicate that if the program is implemented the way it was supposed to be, if all four elements are part of that program, it appears to be quite successful.

What are those key elements? First of all, working with the parents, improving their literacy skills.

I remember an advertisement that was on television a year ago that drove the point home over and over again. The father was sitting on a chair and had his small child on his lap. What the father did not want the child to know was that he was, if not illiterate, functionally illiterate. So he was attempting to read to his child, which is what we hope every parent can do. The child, however, realized that the father was faking it and the child, even as small as he was, was correcting the father.

It was obvious that the father wanted to do what the father knew was right, and that was to read to his child and read with his child. But he could not. So the parenting skills and the literacy skills of the parent are very important.

The preschool program also deals with reading readiness, and it is part of this entire program. Many children will come to first grade. If there are 30 in a class, there may be 30 different reading levels. Some will not be ready to read until January or February. They are now a half year behind. If, unfortunately, they receive a social promotion at the end of the year, it is not long until they have dropped out, not physically because they are not allowed to, but have pretty well dropped out of any academic participation.

So those parenting skills, the early childhood reading readiness skills, the adult literacy skills are all part of the program, and then a period for parent and child interaction so that the parent can put to use what they have learned in the program.

We have recently had, as I indicated, an evaluation. They took 30 programs from about six or seven different States, 30 programs where they knew all four components were very effectively put into being as part of the program.

I have said many, many times that after 30 years we should know where every chapter 1 child is and what they are doing as adults. We should know where every Head Start child is, what they are doing. Has it made a difference in their life? This program has only been in effect since actually 1989 and we do have some important results, and I would like to point out some of those.

As I indicated, the study covered programs of excellence in Arizona, California, Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The charts that I will show will demonstrate how effective these programs have been.

I do want my colleagues to keep in mind that in 1993 a single parent with two children receiving average benefits from AFDC, food stamps, Medicaid, housing assistance, WIC, and school meals received about \$17,209 in direct payments or benefits. If the parent had four children, that amount was \$25,000. More than half of the adults described in this Even Start research study reported public assistance as the primary income of their family, a total of \$5.2 million each year for 260 families based on 1993 rates.

Now, the important thing is the rate of reduction. The rate of reduction in dependence on welfare seen in these studies that I will show to other Even Start programs, approximately 45 percent of those adults would be off public assistance or would have significantly reduced assistance within 4 years, a reduction each year of \$2.6 million for every 500 families enrolled. The program apparently does work.

The first chart, these are Even Start youngsters in the lightly shaded area in kindergarten, and in the dark shaded area are youngsters in kindergarten who did not have the Even Start experience. And we can see the whole way across the obvious benefits of those children who were in an Even Start program.

The first is academic performance. Considerably higher. The second was motivation to learn. Again, considerably higher. The third was family support. Very, very important, because when we started our program, when I was superintendent, these families did not participate. They were embarrassed to come to PTA meetings, they were embarrassed to come to parent-child conferences. Here they are, family support, way above those who did not have that experience.

Relationship with other students. Again, way above. Attendance. Above all other students. Behavior. Considerably above all other students. Self-concept. Way above. And the last, probable success.

□ 2200

These were the ratings given by their current kindergarten teachers, those in good Even Start programs, and I keep emphasizing that, and those without that benefit.

On the second chart, my colleagues will see something that is extremely important. In so many programs, we discover that there is not a lasting effect, that it all wears off in a short amount of time. This is third grade. These are students now who went through the Even Start Program but now are in third grade.

These are the percent of the children who are rated by their current third grade teacher as average or above. The first, academic performance; second, motivation to learn; third, family support; fourth, relationship with student; fifth, attendance; sixth, self-concept; and seventh, over here, probable success. That is third grade. As I indicated, so many times we discover that what we thought was a good concept and a good program really did not pay off in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, the next chart deals with findings from Even Start family literacy research, and it deals with the percent of children receiving grades of satisfactory or above. Again the lightly shaded area are those children who had Even Start experiences, and the dark-colored are those without.

The first is reading, way above. Second is language, even higher. And the

third is math. Again these are the percent of children receiving grades of satisfactory or above. And the Even Start youngsters, in good programs, the 30 that were chosen for this study, are doing exceptionally well.

Mr. Speaker, the next chart deals with percent of children having test scores at the level of average or above. Again, reading, language is almost off the chart, and math is way up.

Now some statistics about the children and their successes in their classes and the parents that are engaged in the schooling of their children. The percentage of the Even Start children rated average or above in their class by their current grade school teacher: 65 percent on overall academic performance, 77 percent on motivation to learn, 82 percent on support from parents, 87 percent on relations with other children, 88 percent on attendance, 82 percent on classroom behavior, 71 percent on self-confidence, 74 percent on probable success in school.

After participating in high quality Even Start family literacy programs, we have some good statistics about the adults, the parents who are participating: 62 percent of those parents that received their GED or some other high school equivalency certificate; 50 percent obtained a job or a better job; 40 percent are enrolled in some form of higher education or training; 45 percent reduced the amount of public assistance they received because of their improved employment; 3 percent no longer receive any public assistance.

What else have we found out about the adults that have participated in the program? Keep in mind, I mentioned these were parents and adults who were very reluctant to participate in anything in the community or participate at all in any school programs. What they have found among their accomplishments frequently identified through the interviews are, membership on school advisory committees, leadership roles in PTA or other school parent organization. They obtained their citizenship, they volunteer in schools. They volunteer in community libraries. They are teaching church classes. They register to vote and are voting. They are using community resources more effectively. They have established neighborhood development organizations and work actively in neighborhood improvement projects. They are tutoring other adults in programs or others who are seeking citizenship. They are helping the Even Start programs with recruitment. And they are practicing family planning. Those are the positive events or the positive results that we are finding in the Even Start programs that work.

So many times, we are quick to judge particularly public education and quick to badmouth public education.

Mr. Speaker, I want everyone to understand that the teachers did not ask for a prohibition to deal with unruly students. As a principal, I would last 30 seconds today, because everyone knew

in the school that I was the authority figure. It was not the teachers who broke down the discipline that we once had in all schools. It was the parents. It was not the teachers who reduced or dumbed down academic achievement. Again, it was the parents.

Now my colleagues say: You have a lot of courage to make those kinds of statements. I also have a lot of experience. I saw my most talented teachers become very disillusioned. Why? Because parent after parent of a capable child would come to me, come to the teacher and say: Do you not realize my child is in football, basketball, a drum majorette, chorus, band and everything under the sun; and, therefore, they do not have time to do what you expect as a teacher.

A very demanding teacher, a teacher who believes that we must secure excellence from our students becomes very disillusioned when that happens.

It was not the teacher that brought that about. It was not the teacher or the administrator who brought about the decline in discipline in the schools. We should all recognize that, and we should all see whether there is not some way that we can join together and bring about a return to demanding quality, to demanding excellence and demanding behavior that is fitting for a public setting such as a school.

Even Start is a program, as I indicated, that apparently is working. The research is showing that to be true, if the program is run properly, if they demand excellence, and if they expect participation of parents and students.

I take my hat off during this week, which I am not allowed to wear on the floor of the House, incidentally, to those who are out there in the field doing their very best under very trying conditions to make sure that our children are ready for the 21st century so we can be a very competitive Nation; because what was will not be good enough in the 21st century. Those teachers and those administrators cannot do it alone. They need all parents, they need the community support, they need everybody pulling together.

NAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, a lot of attention has been focused on our relationship with Mexico, especially these last couple of days as the President prepared for his trip to visit Mexico and during his trip yesterday and today and his trip with Latin leaders in Central America, I believe tomorrow. He is in Mexico, the President, as we speak, meeting with President Zedillo on a number of important issues. They will be discussing drugs, they will be discussing immigration, and those are both very serious problems facing both

of our countries. I wish them the best in trying to move a step or two closer to resolving those very difficult issues.

The drug issue, of course, is particularly disturbing, and it is a two-way street. We are both to blame for the problem with drugs affecting both of our people. Mexico is shipping it here. Seventy percent of the cocaine and 25 percent of the heroin coming into the United States comes through Mexico. We have created this insatiable unfortunate demand for it in this country. We need to work on both sides of the border to get this under control.

One of the problems with controlling it coming over here, of course, is the open border policy that we have with Mexico that was put into place during the North American Free Trade Agreement. And, of course, this open border policy allows trucks to pass over the border almost unimpeded, without inspection. In Texas there are about 11,000 trucks that will cross the border each and every single day from Mexico. One out of 200 get looked at, inspected, and one can read stories daily in the press of police finding trucks coming over the border once they are here, there was one story the other day in New York City where they opened up a truck that was carrying bananas and as they got into the cargo, they found cocaine, and it happens almost on a daily basis here in the United States. So this drug issue is a very serious one and we wish them all the best.

We had a serious debate as some of my colleagues may recall in this Chamber not too very long ago about drugs. There will be a serious discussion, as I say, in Mexico City. But one issue that is being just glossed over, just mentioned in passing, is the performance of the North American Free Trade Agreement, better known as NAFTA. We had, as my colleagues all remember, a very vigorous and a healthy and a strong and a deliberative debate on this issue 4 years ago. We are now into the 40th month of NAFTA. It was this same agreement that in effect economically married our two nations. We became almost one, because we broke down the barriers of trade. That is what free trade is all about, breaking down the barriers completely. I believe that this agreement deserves more than just a passing reference by our colleagues, by the national media, and by our two leaders.

I want to discuss on this floor tonight the issue of NAFTA and the prospects of expanding NAFTA, which by the way includes not only Mexico but Canada, expanding it to other Latin American countries, or the Caribbean Basin or most immediate and most discussed is expanding it to Chile.

I want to discuss in just a minute or two some of the things that NAFTA has done, some of the devastating things that NAFTA has done to the workers in this Nation. But before I do that, let me mention a few things that it has not done, because my colleagues will hear none of this in the talks they