

E d u c a t i o n

America Goes Back To School

BY RICHARD W. RILEY, U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

The beginning of another school year is a time for all Americans to focus anew on our schools and colleges and what we as parents, grandparents, and community members can do to make them safe and challenging places to learn for the 65 million students who pass through their doors every day.

In traveling the country over the past two and a half years, I have heard most often from teachers that family participation is the single most crucial factor in whether their students succeed in the classroom. Thirty years of educational research confirms this belief. When family and community members are directly involved in what their children are learning in school, children achieve better grades and higher test scores, have higher graduation rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education.

To reinforce this vital message, we are kicking off "America Goes Back to School: A Place for Families and the Community." Through this effort we are inviting parents and all caring Americans to go back to school and participate in activities that show how simple yet important it is to be involved in improving our schools.

"America Goes Back to School" is sponsored by the Family Involvement Partnership for Learning, a year-old coalition of more than 140 family, education, community, religious and business organizations. The Family Involvement Partnership for Learning is dedicated to improving children's learning through the development of family-school-community partnerships. "America Goes Back to School" will help to build and sustain those partnerships.

This back-to-school initiative will underscore that Americans share some basic priorities when it comes to educating their children: They want

their students to learn the basic--core academics--and common American values such as honesty and responsibility. They want to know that the school their children attend are safe and drug-free. They want their children to have access to new technology in the classroom. They want schools to raise standards of achievement and discipline. They want schools to teach young people real life skills that prepare them for work and adulthood. And they want to make college accessible to deserving students.

The problem is that too many adults are unsure of what to do to make access to a quality education a reality for their young people. That's why I'm encouraging all American to make a commitment to reach out and get involved in their schools this year. Schools can't do it alone. They need partners.

College Debt Cut By Oregon Donors

More Oregon students will see a silver lining in the cloud of college debt this year due to a 23% increase in scholarship funding.

The Oregon State Scholarship Commission (OSSC), announced this week 1228 students claimed a total of \$2,243,300.00 in scholarships funded by federal programs, businesses and individual donors. This tops last year's total by more than \$400,000.00.

This is good news for people facing increased tuition costs and the prospects of long term college debt. The average award this year is \$1,800.00 per person. "Any dollar in gift aid directly impacts individual students by reducing their college debt," said Sherrill Kirshhoff, Private Award Coordinator for the OSSC. "An annual \$1000 scholarship can cut a student's loan repay-

ment schedule by three years," she said.

OSSC scholarships flow from many sources. The Oregon Community Foundation and the Ford Family Foundation fund several programs. Awards also come from individuals who establish specific trust funds managed by banks, such as US Bank and Bank of America.

Employee groups, unions and businesses are also stepping up to the challenge of funding scholarships, adding more than 35 new programs since 1993.

Individuals or organizations interested in learning more about sponsoring scholarships can contact Kirshhoff at 1-800-452-8807, extension 7386.

The OSSC is the state agency established to assist Oregon students in gaining post-high school educa-

tion. Programs administered by the Commission help students attend public or private four-year colleges and universities, community colleges and many types of vocational institutions.

There are award programs for the construction field funded by the Oregon State Homebuilders Association and grants from the State Board of Barbers and Hairdressers.

Applications will be available for the 1996-97 school year at high school guidance and college financial aid offices after December 1. In addition, applications may be requested from the Oregon State Scholarship Commission; Attn: Grant Department; 1500 Valley River Drive, Suite 100; Eugene, OR 97401. Request must include a self-addressed business envelope with 55-cent postage to endure delivery.

PAX: Safety For Students And Neighbors

The Project: PAX

The Location: NE Portland's Monroe High School Site

The Problem: Neighbors Concerned About PAX Students Unsupervised To And From School.

The Solution: School Bus Transportation To And From The Program.

The Cost: \$8700 (Money Originally Designated For Other Activities.)

Carol Matarazzo, Director of Alternative Education responsible for the PAX program, decided to adjust the student transportation plan for the program called PAX, (pax is Latin for peace). Students will attend the special program because they have been involved in violent activity (i.e., fighting) or have been found to be in possession of a weapon on school district property. These students would normally be in line for expulsion from Portland Public Schools. PAX is the alternative to keeping them in school and continuing their

education as well as learning to practice socially acceptable ways of handling conflict and anger. They must spend a minimum of forty five days working with counselor and other staff in the PAX program.

The intense program will work with both the youngsters and their families so that the new behavior will have the very best chance to become a way of life. Both parents and students will be screened and only those most ready to benefit from the program will be accepted. A school police officer is already assigned full-time to the program.

Neighbors were concerned about whether students enrolled in this anti-violence program would be unsupervised as they arrived and left school. Both arrival and departure will be supervised by the school police officer and other staff. The cost, \$8,700, will mean cuts in other budgets within the violence intervention program.

But two things are clear:

1. PAX is an important step to help kids and their families reverse a trend towards violence. (It is part of \$1.2 Million effort by the school district, Multnomah County, the City of Portland, neighborhood groups, and public and private agencies to create a web of resources to prevent violence in our schools and in our community.)

2. The priority is for the safety of everyone: staff, students and community. The teachers and staff of the program will concentrate on the solutions to basic problems of violence and will work to change the behavior and thinking of the students. Our entire community will be safer when these changes occur and the students are able to solve problems without resorting to violence. Working together we can solve these problems.

With the classes for the 1995-96 school year just one week away this is one part of the effort to make our students smart, safe and successful.

The YWCA of Portland's Transitional School for Children of Homeless Families moved to its new location on NE Marine Dr. according to Janice Hall, President of the YWCA Board of Directors. Its former site was the second floor of the Downtown YWCA building at 1111 SW 10th. The new site is at the former location of the Columbia Elementary School.

The new site will provide the Transitional School with additional space, a single floor layout and play-

ground facilities that the former Downtown location could not provide. "For the past year with daily attendance levels of over 70 students the move became a necessity," comments Cheryl Bickle Transitional School Director. "The new location can provide our students and teachers with a much more traditional educational environment."

The YWCA School provides stability and consistency in the lives of the children it serves. "Stability is most important when you consider

that a full 20% of our student move three or more times during the course of their enrollment" says Bickle.

Volunteers from Hanna Andersson and Sequent Computer Systems helped relocate the school from the former site at the YWCA Downtown Center. The YWCA is most appreciative of the many public and private donors and volunteers who have helped the school make outstanding contributions to the learning skills of the children of homeless families during its first five years.

White And Black Teens Say Racial Attitudes Have Changed In Alabama

Attitudes among young people in Montgomery, Alabama, have changed considerably since 1955 when Rosa Parks was arrested there for refusing to move to the back of the bus, according to a group of black and white teenagers, who participated in an interview for this Sunday's Parade magazine.

"Me and Kanika have been in school together since elementary school," 18-year-old Jennifer Griffin, who is white, said of her friend Kanika Walcott, also 18, who is black. "We cheered together through junior high. And if school was just being integrated, and I saw Kanika get beaten or something because of her color, I would die. I could not stand to see it. I would try to help her."

William Blair, who is also 18 and white, agreed. "Yeah, we'd stick up for our black friends. But back then it was ingrained in the white people's heads that black people were inferior. You wouldn't help them.

No matter how much you liked them, you just didn't do that."

The teens, who were all students at Robert E. Lee High School when the interview took place, said although things are better, they still are not perfect. "I'm a cheerleader," Kanika said, "and there are only two black cheerleaders. And some people--mostly black friends--tell me that I'm a sellout because I'm going to cheer with the white people, and I 'talk white' and I 'dress white.'" Somebody had the nerve to tell me I wear silver jewelry because I want to be white."

Shauntice Allen, who is black and had a similar experience, asked, "What does that mean? And what is 'acting black'?"

"There was this boy who used to go to our school," commented Griffin. "He was just known to hate black people. He'd wear rebel flag shirts that said, 'You wear your X (Malcolm), I'll wear my cross.' And one

time this white girl came in, and she was dressed in the 'gangsta' look, with the big football team jacket and the baseball hat. And he goes, 'Look at her, there's a nigger.' And I turned around, 'What is that?' and he said, 'oh, that girl is just trying to be a nigger.' I've heard it many times since. It's supposed to be a white person acting like a black person."

Griffin said she thinks the phrase 'acting like a black person' evolved out of the fact that "hip-hop and the whole rap scene was brought on by black people. They have their own kind of dress, their own kind of slang. So if a white person does this, they're 'acting like a black person'--they 'want to be black.'"

Robert D. Nesbitt, Sr., who is 86-years-old and worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, moderated the discussion. "Change will depend on people like you," he told the teenagers. "But we don't have enough of you."

Paulus Releases Annual Report Card

Norma Paulus, state superintendent of public instruction, today released the Oregon Report Card, an annual report on trends in Oregon schools.

This year's report is a portrait of the 1994-95 school year. It captures finance and enrollment trends, progress in implementing the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century and other details of Oregon's public school system.

In the 1994-95 school year, schools received good news in terms of funding and improvement efforts. The 1995 legislature for the first time made education its first funding priority and renewed its commitment to the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, the four-year-old school improvement law.

Here are highlights of this year's report:

After a \$58 million cut in 1993-94, schools in the 1994-95 school year operated with \$109 million more than in 1993-94.

School districts drafted their first plan, describing how they will implement the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century.

In the coming year, the Department will award \$4.6 million in grants to train teachers and improve local educational programs, as part of the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century.

More than 4,000 businesses in Oregon are helping students learn how technology and academic subject are applied in the world of work.

Teachers face increasingly crowded classrooms as Oregon's population continues to grow. The number of Oregon students has risen

by 7.7 percent since 1990-91, while the number of teachers has risen by only 0.1 percent. Student enrollment is expected to continue to climb through the rest of the decade, in other areas:

The state legislature this year approved a bill giving school districts greater authority in disciplining violent, disruptive students.

The Oregon Department of Education and school districts in Albany, Central Point, North Clackamas, West-Linn Wilsonville and elsewhere promoted character education.

Ashland, Clatskanie, Hillsboro Union High School, Salem-Keizer, North Clackamas, Rainier and St. Helens school districts saved a total of \$1.3 million over two years and received a top national award as part of a state energy conservation program.

segregation and busing plans that have existed for years with minimal public support in failing school districts. Proponents of existing desegregation plans see it as a tragic retreat from the nation's goal of equal opportunity that could have grim consequences for race relations.

But both agree that, much like the debate over affirmative action, issues of busing plans and school desegregation, largely defined in the 1970s and modified in incremental ways since then, are being reopened with a vengeance in the 1990s.

The federal government, as an advocate for school desegregation, is a plaintiff, intervenor or has filed a brief in 513 court orders. It is estimated that there are at least as many others in which it is not involved.

The issue is often framed now

much as it was in the past, with calls for neighborhood schools even if they are essentially segregated as opposed to busing for the purpose of desegregation. But unlike affirmative action, the debate is complicated by the degree to which minorities are deeply split on the wisdom and efficacy of busing to achieve racial balance.

"Busing has not enjoyed any significant grass-roots support for decades," said Clint Bolick, litigation director of the conservative Institute for Justice.

"The only people who support it are the ideologues who continue to occupy leadership positions in the civil rights establishment. I would be willing to flatly predict that busing for racial balance will disappear from large urban school districts in 10 years or less."

Science And Technology Diversity Addressed

More than 2,000 scientists, students, science educators and other leaders in science education are gathering this week in Washington, D.C. for the National Science Foundation's, 4th annual "Diversity in the Scientific and Technological Workforce Conference."

This is one of the largest gatherings of the nation's science and technology leaders to highlight national efforts toward diversity in the science, mathematics, engineering and technology fields.

The conference will showcase outstanding research achievements by more than 350 African American, Native American and Hispanic students participating in foundation-funded research projects.

There will be discussion of the current status of education programs to assure diversity in scientific enterprises and the progress made in diversity programs,

Challenge Renewed To End Racial Busing

More than two decades after the high tide of court-ordered school desegregation, critics of school busing around the country are mounting renewed campaigns to end federal desegregation mandates and the busing plans that come with them.

Encouraged by conservative electoral successes and a string of Supreme Court decisions limiting the responsibilities of schools to foster desegregation, Denver, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Wilmington, Del., and Indianapolis are among cities revisiting the emotional debate over school busing. Norfolk, Va., and Oklahoma City have already eliminated mandatory busing for the purposes of desegregation.

Critics of busing see the movement as an assault on outmoded de-

The Seventh Annual Saward Lecture

"Interpersonal Violence: Framing Community Solutions"



Chukwudi Onwuachi-Saunders

by Chukwudi Onwuachi-Saunders, M.D., M.P.H.

Deputy Health Commissioner, City of Philadelphia and head of its innovative violence reduction initiative, "Operation Peace in Philadelphia"

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