

E d u c a t i o n

National Urban League Grades President's Initiative on Race

By Lawrence J. Dark, President & CEO, Urban League of Portland

On the eve of the first anniversary of President Bill Clinton's Initiative on race, the National Urban League has issued its own report card on the effort. According to League President Hugh B. Price, the Initiative deserves a grade of "B+" for Good Intentions, but thus far, only "C" for impact.

The National Urban League salutes Mr. Clinton and his Administration for their Leadership on many related fronts that have improved the well-being of African Americans. The President deserves an "A" for the performance of the economy. The sustained recovery has begun reaching into cities and urban neighborhoods, and has reduced unemployment among our people. Welfare reform has helped propel poor people into the world of work, although the jury is still out on the fate of former recipients who do not make this transition successfully.

Mr. Clinton has been steadfast and highly vocal in his support of affirmative action. He has appointed an unprecedented number of minorities and women to positions of genuine authority in his Administration. And his historic trip to several African nations has helped race relations at home by demonstrating to all Americans the economic, strategic and symbolic importance of this long neglected continent.

The President's Initiative on Race builds on this base of accomplishments. Now to our assessment of its progress:

Good Intentions: B+



President Clinton's motives clearly are noble and his heart on race issues is unquestionably in the right place. We salute him for launching this Initiative, which has nudged the nation to face up to the unfinished business of race relations that Americans would prefer to ignore. Surveys show that Mr. Clinton has placed this issue much more prominently on the nation's radar screen than would have been the case without the Initiative.

We give the effort a grade of B+ instead of A, however, because Mr. Clinton and the White House have not gone flat out in pressing this Initiative forward at the pace required. Given delays in launching it and the distractions facing the White House much of this year, implementation has sputtered badly at times. Were the Initiative on Race an even higher priority for President Clinton and the White House, we doubt this would have happened.

Impact: C

Regrettably the President's noble intentions have yet to translate into

the kinds of impacts that were reasonably expected by this point in time. Hence our grade of C. We hope this mark will climb dramatically in the second year, assuming the Initiative is extended. Given the paramount importance of improving race relations, as well as the promising foundation that has been laid, we urge the President to press forward for another year. We give the impact thus far a grade of C for the following reasons:

*The Initiative on Race has flown solo more than it should have and could have. Many organizations, such as the National Urban League and our collaborators in the National Voices Coalition have been involved only peripherally despite frequent offers of assistance. This has severely stunted the reach, staying power and impact of the Initiative in communities. We've been consulted on occasion, but seldom called upon to help in any meaningful or sustained way.

*President Clinton's two televised town meetings have helped raise the

public consciousness, but the topics chosen and formats used have severe limitations when it comes to addressing the serious issues before the nation. The exchanges on air seldom illuminate or promote the fuller understanding that's required to move the ball forward. President Clinton should use his bully pulpit and convening power with greater frequency and focus.

*To the President's considerable credit, he has engaged federal agencies in figuring out how to ratchet up their efforts. The Initiative deserved good marks for stepping up overall civil rights enforcement, targeting housing discrimination for particular attention and increasing aid to minority businesses.

The final shortcoming that drags the Initiative's grade down in our judgment is its failure to address some of the toughest problems of race that still face our society. Although the televised advisory board held a meeting where they discussed race, crime and the administration of justice, the escalating problem of police misconduct was not adequately addressed. This violation-physical abuse, harassment or racial profiling-is widespread in minority communities. Yet the President and the Initiative have paid scant attention to the problem, much less proposed solutions.

Having launched the Initiative in Race, President Clinton should stay the course. In the year ahead, we urge him to devote more personal attention to the Initiative, sharpen its focus, tackle the really tough issues and consume more political capital on behalf of this cause. If he does so, both higher grades and a lasting legacy are well within reach.



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Family Cooperative School: My Little, Red One-Room Schoolhouse

By Darcie Nixon

Why did I choose the Family Cooperative School at Sunnyside for my daughter to go to Kindergarten? What I was looking for was school that welcomed my interest in my child's education, and my involvement in her everyday life, what I found was so much more.

I found a Portland Public School that was created on the premise of parents helping in the classroom. Not only was I welcomed in my daughter's classroom, but every family at the school had come there to actively participate in their child's school. Every family that is admitted agrees to 100 hours of service to the school each year (50 hours for single parent families). My child benefits from having me in the classroom, but also benefits from what every other family will bring to the school. The combined skills and talents of these families provide a richness to my daughter's

education that cannot be found anywhere else.

One parent does poetry workshops with the students, and they may then publish their work in the school newsletter. Another parent helped the students create a ceramic tile mural in the entryway to our school. Each day I go into the building, I experience the same wonderful feelings about the beautiful place where my child goes to school. Another parent brought music classes back to Sunnyside School after the district cut our music program. This is just a small sampling of what parents have added to our school, each of them enriching my daughter's education in a different way.

I found true mixed-age level classrooms at the Family Cooperative School. I don't mean grade levels that have been blended to stuff the maximum number of students into a teaching position. I am referring to a teaching style that facilitates a 2nd

grader sharing a magical educational experience with a Kindergartner, where both students are left with a sense of accomplishment and greater self-esteem.

The most significant thing I found at the school is a strong, supportive community. I imagine it is similar to the little, red one-room schoolhouse of long ago. It's small, safe, and I know everyone there. If my child is accidentally forgotten by the carpool, I know that she will be safe and well cared for by another parent that I trust until I can get to her. We have helped supply meals to a family whose single parent was very sick. We have offered childcare to working families on a teacher in service day. I feel my child and my family are well supported and well cared for by our community. I feel it truly does "take a village," and I feel very lucky to have found one.

The Family cooperative School at Sunnyside is a Portland Public School located in the Belmont/Hawthorne

area at 3421 SE Salmon St. We are still accepting Kindergarten applications for Fall 1998. Applications may be obtained in the school office until June 30th, or when it reopens on August 17.



Contest Offers Opportunity For Young Writers To Be Published

deadline for submissions is September 1, 1998. Winners will receive cash prizes, with the grand prize winner receiving \$100.00. There is no entry fee.

All finalists, including those receiving honorable mention, will have their work published by Bridgewater-Collins and receive two free copies of the publication.

"The contest is being held," states

spokesperson Joanne Paul, "to encourage more children to enjoy the pleasures of reading, exploring and putting their thoughts on paper."

For additional information call 206-633-0441. Complete contest details can be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Bridgewater-Collins, Dept. WC, P.O. Box 75615, Seattle, WA 98125-0615.

Oregon students score high on international math, science tests

Oregon eighth graders scored above the international and national averages on science and math tests conducted by the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

In fact, of the 41 international participants, only Singapore scored significantly

higher in math. "Oregon's school improvement act calls for us to have the best educated citizens in the nation and the world," said State Schools Supt. Norma Paulus. "These results show that we're well along the road to reaching that goal."

About 2,200 Oregon students in 58 schools last year took the same tests as the international participants took 1995. TIMSS is the largest, most comprehensive and most rigorous international study of student achievement ever undertaken.

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JULY EVENTS

Event	Expected Attendance	Est. Economic Benefit
July 2 Diamond Convention G. Duncan Family Reunion	3,600	\$2,242,800
July 9 Diamond Convention Puryear Family Reunion	8,000	\$4,984,000
July 10 Unraveling The New World Order Prophecy Conference (Local-Open To The Public)	500	\$12,000
July 14 NW Trade Show Management Career Fair (Local-Open To The Public)	1,000	\$24,000
July 16 National Association of Counties	5,000	\$3,115,000
July 26 Pacific Northwest Wedding Showcase (Local-Open To The Public)	2,000	\$48,000
July 30 Diamond Convention B. Duncan Family Reunion	6,800	\$4,236,000
July 31 American Numismatic Association	12,000	\$6,240,000
July 31 Promociones Tropical-Dance (Local-Open To The Public)	3,000	\$72,000

Estimated Total Economic Benefit For The Region For July \$20,974,200