

**The original documents are located in Box C50, folder “Presidential Handwriting, 10/19/1976” of the Presidential Handwriting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 19, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JIM CANNON

FROM:

JIM CONNOR JEC

SUBJECT:

Initiatives in Education Proposed  
by Secretary Mathews

The President reviewed your memorandum of October 18 on the above subject and made the following notation:

"The speech shop is working on an Education speech.

Give copy of this to Bob Hartmann, Bob Orben and Doug Smith."

With a copy of this memorandum we are sending copies of this material to the individuals mentioned by the President.

cc: Dick Cheney  
Bob Hartmann  
Bob Orben  
Doug Smith

Gene Cannon

---

The speech shop  
is working on an  
Education speech.

Give copy of this  
to Bob H, Bob O. &  
Doug S.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Senai*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

October 18, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JIM CANNON *JC*

SUBJECT: Initiatives in Education  
Proposed by Secretary Mathews

Following your Ann Arbor speech Secretary Mathews forwarded a memorandum suggesting four themes "you might want to consider in giving form to the initiative you have taken." A summary of the proposed four themes follows:

I. A New Emphasis on Quality, With Focus on Basic Skills

This recommendation envisions a comprehensive effort to improve basic skills like reading as opposed to targeted efforts we now pursue, and increasing the ability of teachers to teach such skills. OMB notes that this new direction might reduce present emphasis on disadvantaged and handicapped children.

II. Programs to Join Education and Work

This concept recognizes the need to develop mutually beneficial relations between the worlds of work and education, possibly through alternate periods of work and education.

III. The Re-Unification of Family-Community and School

This comment recognizes students learn better where there is parental involvement, and such involvement could be encouraged in such ways as using parents to assist with instruction.



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20201

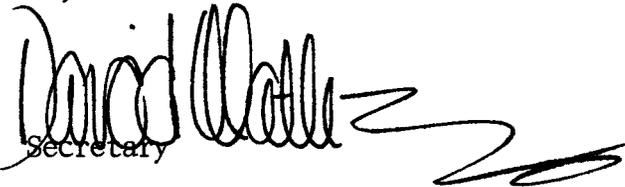
SEP 14 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

RW  
encl  
I am pleased by your announced intention to emphasize education as you plan for 1977 and beyond. It will be a pleasure to work with you in that effort.

1 Attached are some themes you might want to consider in giving form to the initiative you have taken. With each one I have included illustrations of specific programs that might be developed to make the principles practical, but as illustrations they are by no means inclusive of all possibilities. (Not so incidentally, none are programs which assume that all educational programs can be solved with massive federal spending.)

All four themes strike a new cord, but they rest on fundamentals as solid as the old Blue-Backed Speller. They add to what this Nation has accomplished in expanding educational opportunity, but they go forward to address the next questions, not to turn the clock back.

  
Secretary

Attachments

## INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION

### 1. A NEW EMPHASIS ON QUALITY, WITH A FOCUS ON BASIC SKILLS

Without engaging in a blanket criticism of the failures of the educational system and without abandoning the commitment to increasing access, particularly for the disadvantaged,

there are good reasons to give new emphasis to improving the quality of instruction for all and to providing challenges to the best of the students;

if public education comes to mean mediocre education, it will lose its claim to public support . . . people, all people, want the best for their children.

Program emphases to carry out this initiative would include a comprehensive effort to improve reading skills (as contrasted to the good but categorical efforts we now have), support of projects to train and retrain teachers to teach the basic skills, an attack on the problem of functional illiteracy (not being able to use skills to understand issues or solve problems), and, supporting all of these projects, an effort to improve our national capacity to diagnose, earlier and more accurately, reading and other learning difficulties.

There is also a sense in which teaching social responsibility qualifies as a "basic skill," or a fourth R, which properly deserves emphasis in this initiative.

### 2. PROGRAMS TO JOIN EDUCATION AND WORK

Without assuming that all education is directly related to work or results only in job skills,

there is an obvious need to develop mutually beneficial relations between the worlds of work and education;

we would do well to make modern use of our colonial heritage of so joining the learning of basic skills and the learning of a craft that the need to know a technique was motivation for learning the three Rs.

We should remember, however, in this initiative that employable skills in our half of the 20th century are increasingly the skills of producing or transmitting knowledge; that is, work skills are often intellectual skills.

But for whatever kind of work, we could do more to bring education into a closer orbit by emphasizing alternate work-education projects and programs to use skill requirements of industry in designing educational programs.

This initiative has particular significance for handicapped Americans who not only need the opportunities for education but who must translate educational training into a job to be self-reliant.

### 3. THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILY-COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL

These historical allies have become modern strangers, to the detriment of everyone.

Students learn better where there is parental involvement.

It is not the use of more police but the involvement of the family and the community that offers our best hope of meeting the growing problem of disorder in the schools.

The community itself is a potentially great educational agent (in its recreation programs, in its museums, etc.) that can be put to better use in league with the schools.

A sound and imaginative educational strategy would be one that looked at all the agencies that educate, whether they are schools or not, and tried to make use of their combined efforts.

Certainly we have found in the difficult experiences with desegregation that the schools can profit from broader citizen support. We ought to make greater and better use of those coalitions.

This initiative would convert into specific projects, such as a Parents Involvement Program (using parents to assist with instruction) or a program to involve everyone from law enforcement agencies to city museums in cooperative ventures with the schools.

### 4. MORE EDUCATION, LESS BUREAUCRACY

We are turning our educators into bureaucrats and diverting valuable resources that should go into instruction into clerical exercises. We need to reverse that trend.

Colleges and universities testify across the country that they are muscle-bound in a Lilliputian nightmare of forms and formulas. Secondary and elementary schools are no better off.

IV. More Education, Less Bureaucracy

This initiative recognizes our educators are being turned into bureaucrats and, thus, diverted from their mission.

Secretary Mathews suggests the Federal education effort could benefit from shifting from one of coercion to one of encouragement -- with that encouragement focused on local initiatives which give attention to general or basic purposes, such as reading.

Of course, there are legitimate uses of regulations to prevent fraud and abuse in student loan programs and to protect the rights of minorities. But what is sound in a particular case is not necessarily sound as a general prescription.

Specific steps we are taking or could take to address this problem range from the block grant program to the regulatory reform efforts.

#### THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION INITIATIVES: A STRATEGY OF ENCOURAGEMENT NOT COERCION

The federal role in education has been one of limited or special objective but with massive intrusion. Perhaps that should be reversed, at least in this case, with attention to general or basic purposes (such as basic skills) but with limited intrusion.

Leaving to state and local governments their historic responsibility, the Federal Government would act to accelerate sound local initiatives, to encourage "bottoms up" progress, and to bring into more productive relationship efforts that are now categorically separated.

Variations from our experiences with the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and the National Institute of Education can give us good models for all four initiatives using this definition of the federal role.

We could also strike a new note by making grants directly, or through schools, to agencies outside the traditional educational system that would bring their interest to bear on the problems of the schools; those could range from industries (for teaching basic skills in connection with job training) to parents groups (to assist in instruction).

THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20201

---

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

9-15-76

TO: Jim Connor

For Your Information: \_\_\_\_\_

For Appropriate Handling:

Pres FYI file.

  
Robert D. Linder

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 15, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JIM CANNON

FROM:

JIM CONNOR *JEB*

SUBJECT:

Initiatives in Education

The attached letter has been received from Secretary Mathews.

Would appreciate your comments before it is sent forward to the President.

Attachment:

Letter dated 9/14/76 from Secretary Mathews