



THE ROAD TO CHARLOTTESVILLE

THE 1989 EDUCATION SUMMIT

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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THE 1989 EDUCATION SUMMIT

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SEPTEMBER 1999



A PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

Paper prepared for the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP). I am grateful to a number of individuals who have provided assistance. I want to thank Emily Wurtz of NEGP and EEI Communications in Alexandria, Virginia, for their editorial assistance. Naturally, the interpretations and views expressed here are strictly my own and do not represent those of any other individuals or organizations.

*Photos courtesy of George Bush Presidential Library.*

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NE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN RECENT EFFORTS TO REFORM AMERICAN SCHOOLS WAS THE HISTORIC MEETING OF PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH AND THE NATION'S GOVERNORS AT THE CHARLOTTESVILLE EDUCATION SUMMIT FROM SEPTEMBER 27 TO 28, 1989. Based upon the deliberations there, six national education goals were developed. They were first announced by President Bush in his State of the Union speech on January 31, 1990; six months later, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) was established to monitor progress towards the goals.<sup>1</sup> The six national education goals became one of the centerpieces of educational reform in the 1990s and were incorporated in the Goals 2000 legislation in 1994 (which also added two more goals).<sup>2</sup> Given the importance of the Charlottesville Education Summit and the creation of the national education goals, it is rather surprising that there have been almost no scholarly, in-depth investigations of their origins—especially within the historical context of the broader educational reforms of the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>



*President George Bush and U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos (right of Bush) with Governors (left to right) Booth Gardner (D-WA), Terry Branstad (R-IA), and Bill Clinton (D-AR).*

This essay will provide a brief analysis of educational changes in the late 1970s and early 1980s and then analyze the highly controversial report *A Nation at Risk*, which argued that American education was declining and threatening the economic well-being of the nation. After considering the reactions of the Bush administration, the National Governors' Association (NGA), and other policymakers to the mid-1980s educational crisis, the study will discuss the origins and deliberations at the Charlottesville Education Summit. While this particular analysis can provide only a brief discussion of the complex road to the Charlottesville Education Summit, hopefully it will stimulate additional investigations and in the next chapter provide a broader, historical framework for analyzing the creation of the six national education goals.<sup>4</sup>



## EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LATE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S

The decade of the 1970s was tumultuous. Although the Vietnam War finally ended, the bitter domestic divisions it spawned were not healed quickly. Public confidence in the effectiveness of the Great Society programs of the 1960s waned, and there was a growing disillusionment with the social scientists who had failed to deliver their unrealistically optimistic promises to solve the growing urban and economic problems.<sup>5</sup> The OPEC oil embargo in 1973 contributed to runaway inflation, and most Americans experienced a painful and unexpected decline in their real incomes during these years.<sup>6</sup> While there was some progress in some areas of civil rights, the nation was deeply divided over the practice of forced busing to achieve school integration—especially as growing numbers of whites fled the inner cities.<sup>7</sup>

Despite a landslide victory in 1972, President Richard Nixon was forced to resign ignominiously as a result of the Watergate scandal.<sup>8</sup> President Gerald Ford tried to restore public confidence in the federal government, but his pardon of Nixon outraged many Americans and contributed to his reelection defeat in 1976.<sup>9</sup> President Jimmy Carter returned the Democrats to the White House, but continued economic stagflation as well as the failure of the United States to obtain the release of the hostages in Iran plagued his administration.<sup>10</sup> As a result, public confidence in the federal government continued to drop in the 1970s and led many Americans to worry about the future of their country.<sup>11</sup>

The 1970s were also a trying time for educators. The high expectations for federal compensatory education programs such as Head Start and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) were not achieved.<sup>12</sup> The controversial but influential Westinghouse Learning Corporation's evaluation of Head Start in 1969 suggested that the much-touted IQ gains of the participating students faded quickly.<sup>13</sup> Analyses of the Follow Through programs, which were designed to help Head Start children make the transition into regular classrooms, raised serious questions about their efficacy.<sup>14</sup> And while evaluations of Title I like the Sustaining Effects Study in the late 1970s did find some modest academic gains for those students, it was not enough to close the large gap with the non-Title I students or help those who were the most disadvantaged.<sup>15</sup>

Much of the public's concern about education focused upon the renewed attempts to desegregate schools through the judicial system—particularly in many of the large northern cities that were rapidly losing their white populations to the suburbs. Court-ordered busing across city lines to rectify these demographic shifts upset many parents and led to a political backlash in communities such as Boston and Detroit. After the Supreme Court ruling against mandatory cross-district busing in *Milliken v. Bradley* in 1974, cities such as Atlanta increasingly turned to theme-oriented magnet schools to attract a more diverse student population.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the growing involvement of the National Education Association (NEA) in American national politics was rewarded with the creation of the U.S. Department of Education by the Carter administration. Although there were serious reservations about the wisdom of creating a cabinet-level education office, President Carter and the 96<sup>th</sup> Congress went ahead and narrowly passed (by a vote of 210–206 in the House) legislation creating the U.S. Department of Education in 1979. Shirley Hufstедler, a federal judge from California, was designated the first Secretary of Education.

## *A NATION AT RISK* AND THE “CRISIS” IN EDUCATION IN THE MID-1980S

By the mid-1980s, most of the American public and policymakers accepted the idea that the United States was threatened by an unprecedented, escalating educational crisis. Yet at the same time in the late 1970s and early 1980s, much of the public continued to rate their own local schools highly, and the trends in student achievement presented a mixed but more favorable picture than depicted by the growing jeremiads against American schools. The serious economic dislocations and downturns following the oil embargo in the mid-1970s, reinforced by the sharp recession of the early 1980s, hurt most American families and worried policymakers. Increasingly there was a belief that the deterioration of the American economy was caused by our lack of competitiveness internationally as a result of the inadequately trained labor force—especially in the South, which trailed the nation in school expenditures as well as student achievement. These fears were reflected and magnified in the highly publicized report *A Nation at Risk*, which mobilized the public and policymakers in a state and national crusade to reform American education.

Despite the growing public concerns about issues such as busing and the relative lack of effectiveness of federal compensatory education programs in the early 1980s, many Americans continued to give their own local public schools high marks for quality. The percentage of people who rated their local schools with an A or B had declined from 48 percent in 1974 to 37 percent in 1977 and remained at that level for the next five years. Only about one out of five Americans thought their schools were either failing or should be rated as D. Yet enthusiasm for the nation’s public schools as a whole lagged even further behind as public doubts about the quality of education outside their own communities remained—especially about the condition of inner-city schools.<sup>17</sup>

Even as there were concerns about the quality of education in the late 1970s and 1980s, students generally performed as well as before. According to the trend data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other tests, the performance of elementary and secondary pupils dropped slightly on some of those examinations between the early 1970s and early 1980s; but their performance improved modestly on some of the other examinations. Average NAEP science scores remained about the same for 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds between 1977 and 1982, but decreased for 17-year-olds. But for mathematics, the NAEP scores for 13-year-olds rose from 1978 to 1982, while they remained the same for 9-year-olds and 17-year-olds. On reading, the NAEP scores between 1975 and 1980 stayed the same for 17-year-olds and increased for 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds.<sup>18</sup>

But it was concerns about the relationship between the deteriorating American economy and our educational system that led the way for school reforms in the late 1970s and early

*“As business executives and educators, we are keenly aware of education’s role in producing informed and productive citizens.”*

*–Committee for Economic Development, 1985*

1980s. Increasingly, policymakers and the public linked the mounting economic problems with the inadequacy of our public schools. While the exact connection between education and economic productivity was complex and elusive, many analysts and policymakers believed that improved education was essential for the nation’s future economic well-being.<sup>19</sup> For example, the Committee for Economic Development, an independent research and educational organization of 200 business executives and educators, issued a report in 1985 that warned that our international competitive situation was being undermined by our inadequate system of schooling:

As business executives and educators, we are keenly aware of education’s role in producing informed and productive citizens. We also see increasing evidence that education has a direct impact on employment, productivity, and growth, and on the nation’s ability to compete in the world economy. Therefore, we cannot fail to respond to the following warning signs:

- Employers in both large and small businesses decry the lack of preparation for work among the nation’s high school graduates.
- Well over one-quarter of the nation’s youth never finish high school. Many who graduate and go on to higher education need remedial reading and writing courses, which about two-thirds of U.S. colleges now provide.
- Nearly 13 percent of all seventeen-year-olds still enrolled in school are functionally illiterate and 44 percent are marginally literate. Among students who drop out, an estimated 60 percent are functionally illiterate.

In contrast, Japan, America’s most important competitor, has the highest rate of high school completion and literacy in the world, close to 100 percent. Japanese students study more and learn more. They spend more time in class than their American counterparts do; and by the time they graduate from high school, they have completed the equivalent of the second year at a good American college. In science and mathematics, Japanese test scores lead the world.<sup>20</sup>

The South was perceived as particularly disadvantaged because of the overall low academic achievement of its students and its relatively backward state educational systems. Manufacturers were hesitant to move their operations to the South, as they feared they might have trouble attracting the necessary skilled labor force.<sup>21</sup> Southern governors, anxious to spur

economic growth in their states, became the champions of improving state and local education as a necessary first step in the revitalization of their economies. As a result, much of the educational leadership in the early 1980s came from southern governors and legislators who called for tougher school standards, better pay for teachers, and more state funds for K–12 education. To overcome the reluctance of state legislators to increase taxes to pay for these improvements, governors frequently had to mobilize the public on behalf of public school reforms.<sup>22</sup>

The role of the governors in fostering educational reform in the early 1980s was crucial because they mobilized the public and legislators in their states to support educational reforms. Many of these governors—such as Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Bill Clinton (D-AR), Bob Graham (D-FL), James Hunt (D-NC), Thomas Kean (R-NJ), Richard Riley (D-SC), and William Winter (D-MS)—also became the leaders of the national movement to improve American schools, based in large part on their experiences with educational reforms at the state level.<sup>23</sup>

Given the strong belief within both the Reagan and Bush administrations that education historically has been and should be primarily a local and state responsibility, it made sense for the federal government to work closely with the National Governors’ Association (NGA) to reform American schooling. Yet President Reagan, unlike President Nixon, was not always willing to expand or administratively improve state governments—even if this was accompanied by decreasing federal involvement in that area. President Reagan was committed to the proposition that government at all levels should be reduced whenever feasible—although in the area of education he came to appreciate the political value of working closely with the governors and state departments of education.<sup>24</sup>

In light of the subsequent growing public concerns about the crisis in public schools, one might have expected education to have become a major, divisive issue between the Republicans and Democrats in the 1980 presidential election. It did not. The 1980 presidential election was unusual in that an incumbent president faced serious primary challenges within his own party. Yet with the help of a large NEA contingent of delegates to the Democratic convention, Carter defeated California Gov. Jerry Brown and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA). During the fall campaign, Carter stressed the federal role in education and defended the newly created U.S. Department of Education. Former California Gov. Ronald Reagan, who won the Republican nomination, protested against the growing federal intrusion into state and local education and pledged to abolish the U.S. Department of Education. Overall, however, education issues were not particularly salient to voters in the 1980 election, as the American public was more

concerned about the deteriorating economy, setbacks in foreign policy, and divisions over highly symbolic social issues, such as abortion.<sup>25</sup>

The Republicans had pledged to abolish the Department of Education, but quickly found that they did not have sufficient votes in either the House or Senate to achieve that objective. Moreover, Terrel Bell, the new Secretary of Education, had been an early proponent of the establishment of the Department of Education and was regarded by many educators and policymakers as a reluctant and lukewarm participant in the effort to abolish the new cabinet office in the early 1980s.<sup>26</sup>

The Reagan administration focused its early attention on downsizing the federal government and reducing taxes. The massive Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 made substantial budget cuts, and plans were under way for further reductions.<sup>27</sup> A large number of categorical programs in the U.S. Department of Education were either eliminated or combined into several larger block grants. The federal educational budget was severely cut in the early 1980s, and the Washington staff in the Department of Education was reduced considerably. Some of the conservative political appointees to the Department of Education not only tried to eliminate many of the existing programs, but challenged Secretary Bell's leadership and policies.<sup>28</sup>

Considered too moderate by many Reagan supporters and facing an increasingly skeptical public about the federal role in education, Secretary Bell proposed the creation of a presidential commission to investigate the state of American education. He hoped that an independent and respected panel would present a more balanced, positive picture of American education than had been portrayed by the increasingly hostile comments about public schooling in the popular media.<sup>29</sup>

The Reagan White House, doubtful about the value of presidential commissions in general and suspicious of an independent commission on education in particular, rejected Bell's suggestion. As result, Bell created the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) as a cabinet-level operation in August 1981 and persuaded David P. Gardner, president of the University of Utah, to chair it; Milton Goldberg, a senior staff member of the National Institute of Education, agreed to serve as the Executive Director.<sup>30</sup>

The 18-member NCEE panel, including liberals, conservatives, Republicans, and Democrats, worked effectively together and managed to produce a unanimous and very influential report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*. The commission, in an open letter addressed to the American people as well as to President Reagan in April

1983, warned of the deplorable state of American education and argued that this was undercutting our economic competitiveness abroad:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility....

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems that helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.<sup>31</sup>

The overall report painted a very dismal picture of American schooling by frequently citing examples of recent declines in student achievements. At one point, *A Nation at Risk* did acknowledge that average citizens at the time were better educated and more knowledgeable than their counterparts a generation earlier, but the report quickly reverted to its more pessimistic message by stating that “*the average graduate* of our schools and colleges today is not as well-educated as the average graduate of 25 or 35 years ago, when a much smaller proportion of our population completed high school and college. The negative impact of this fact likewise cannot be overstated.”<sup>32</sup>

Despite its alarmist message, *A Nation at Risk* contended that the declines in education could be reversed, and recommended that state and local high school graduation course requirements be strengthened, higher academic standards be established, more time be spent in school, the preparation of teachers be improved, and that elected officials across the nation be held accountable for making the necessary improvements. The report ended with an acknowledgment that reversing the declines in education would be difficult and time-consuming, but that this was essential if our society was to prosper in the future:

*“Our nation is at risk....If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”*

*—A Nation at Risk,  
1983*

Our final word, perhaps better characterized as a plea, is that all segments of our population give attention to the implementation of our recommendations. Our present plight did not appear overnight, and the responsibility for our current situation is widespread. Reform of our educational system will take time and unwavering commitment. It will require equally widespread, energetic and dedicated action....

It is their America, and the America of all of us, that is at risk; it is to each of us that this imperative is addressed. It is by our willingness to take up the challenge, and our resolve to see it through, that America's place in the world will be either secured or forfeited. Americans have succeeded before and so we shall again.<sup>33</sup>

When *A Nation at Risk* first appeared, some educational analysts argued that it was much too pessimistic and had misrepresented the data on student achievement in order to portray a decline in the quality of American schools. In the fall of 1983, for example, Lawrence Stedman and Marshall "Mike" Smith agreed with some of the recommendations in the report, but strongly objected to how the NCEE had analyzed its data and constructed its arguments in order to demonstrate a serious decline in student achievements, document the weakening of academic standards, and depict the wholesale technological transformation of the economy.<sup>34</sup>

Scholars reassessing *A Nation at Risk* today often criticize the NCEE's misuse of data. They also point out that the rhetorical style employed by NCEE created a false and menacing sense of impending doom rather than providing a balanced and objective assessment of American education in the early 1980s:

*A Nation at Risk* was conclusionary in nature. Rarely did the Commission identify the sources upon which recommendations were based. Early in the document, the authors noted: "The Commission was impressed during the course of its activities by the diversity of opinion it received regarding the condition of American education...."

The diversity of opinion was not reflected in the Commission's document. Within its report, the Commission did not elaborate on all of its views. Excluded were references to those who suggested that schools were performing well or who indicated problems with the procedures of the study.<sup>35</sup>

But if there were educational and academic detractors of *A Nation at Risk* in the mid-1980s, most Americans and policymakers applauded the report and embraced many of its recommendations. More than a half-million copies of the report were distributed, and *The New York Times* stated that *A Nation at Risk* "brought the issue [of education] to the forefront of political debate with an urgency not felt since the Soviet satellite shook American



confidence in its public schools in 1957.<sup>36</sup> Within the first four months of its publication, more than 700 articles in 45 newspapers mentioned the report, and it quickly became the cornerstone of educational reform in the 1980s.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, despite the rhetorical overkill, *A Nation at Risk* did identify some very serious problems in American education. As David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel note in a recent study, such factors as minimal graduation requirements and a “cafeteria-style” curriculum, both of which the report decried, had contributed substantially to high school programs that failed to prepare adequately a large percentage of high school students for either college or work.<sup>38</sup>

*A Nation at Risk* hit a very responsive chord and was accompanied by the release of several other reports on education that reinforced the growing impression that American education was in decline.<sup>39</sup> Many of the conservatives in the Reagan White House had opposed the NCEE and still favored the abolishment of the Department of Education; but the unexpected public success of *A Nation at Risk* enhanced Secretary Bell’s credibility and helped to stave off further attacks on the Department. Although education did not become a major issue in the presidential campaign in 1984, President Reagan attended several of the scheduled regional meetings about *A Nation at Risk* as part of his reelection strategy.<sup>40</sup>

*A Nation at Risk* and the other education reports of the early 1980s helped launch the first wave of educational reforms that focused on expanding high school graduation requirements, establishing minimum competency tests, and issuing merit pay for teachers. While many states and local school districts responded positively to the various recommendations by increasing graduation requirements and bolstering the academic course offerings in schools, many policymakers were disappointed by the lack of improvement in student achievement scores.

While acknowledging the necessary steps taken in the first wave of school reforms, educators and policymakers after the mid-1980s began to call for a second wave of reforms that would restructure the schools and place more emphasis on improvements in the classroom.<sup>41</sup> Looking back on the 1980s, Richard Elmore, an analyst then at Michigan State University, observed that:

The idea of restructured schools has become increasingly important in recent debates on educational reform. In the current political language, the “first wave” of recent educational reforms, extending from the late 1970s to the present, was designed to focus public attention on academic content and to introduce higher standards for students and teachers. The “second wave,” extending from the present

onward, focuses on fundamental changes in expectations for student learning, in the practice of teaching, and in the organization and management of public schools. Behind the idea of restructured schools is a fragile consensus that public schools, as they are presently constituted, are not capable of meeting society's expectations for the education of young people.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, *A Nation at Risk* may have been flawed as an accurate, balanced assessment of American schooling in the early 1980s, but it was a key factor in mobilizing public opinion on behalf of educational reforms. And while the reforms that it helped to stimulate were not enough by themselves to increase sufficiently student achievement in the 1980s, the report was followed by other initiatives focused more on the restructuring of the schools.

## EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AT THE STATE LEVEL IN THE 1980S

At the same time that the states were improving their educational systems, governors and other policymakers came to appreciate the necessity of being able to demonstrate to the public that the increased investment in schooling led to improved student academic outcomes. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which measured student achievement, had been in place since 1969, but strong opposition from state officials and certain education associations had prevented the reporting of those results at a state level.<sup>43</sup>

Secretary Bell, following up on the success of *A Nation at Risk*, instituted the popular but controversial “wall chart” in 1984, which allowed for the ranking of states by their educational attainments. Given the paucity of reliable state-level student achievement data, the wall chart used ACT and SAT scores—even though they measured only the progress of college-bound students and varied considerably among the states in the percentage of students who took those examinations. While many educators and state officials protested the limitations and misuses of the wall chart, Secretary Bell’s staff defended its value for stimulating educational improvements:

The wall chart has become the focus of considerable attention and controversy. Some analysts see state-by-state comparisons as filling a void in our statistical knowledge, enabling states and their residents to gauge for the first time the quality of their education. Others see this information as statistically flawed and providing little guidance to improve the system; worse yet, they say, the measures may mislead, sending reform efforts off in the wrong direction.

We believe that the publication of the wall chart, with its acknowledged flaws, has helped validate state-by-state comparisons as a means of holding state and local school systems accountable for education. In fact, of all of the lessons learned from the wall chart, the most important has been establishing this validity.<sup>44</sup>

Annual updates of the wall chart by Secretary Bell and his successors for the next six years proved to be popular with the media and those who favored the ranking of the states by their educational achievements.<sup>45</sup>

Gradually during the 1980s, the governors became aware of the need for gathering more reliable state-level student assessment data than those provided by the ACTs or the SATs. Often, the governors had to overcome the reluctance of local and state educators to make any

*“The wall chart has become the focus of considerable attention and controversy.”*  
—U.S. Department of Education, 1988

educational comparisons among the states. One of the major institutional leaders in this effort was the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), where several governors like Alexander and Clinton in 1984 called for more state comparisons of student achievement.<sup>46</sup> Eight southern states in 1986 began a three-year test of a sample of their students, using the NAEP reading and/or writing achievement tests.<sup>47</sup> And the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) narrowly approved plans for cross-state comparisons in 1984.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the opposition to collecting and releasing state-level student achievement data diminished in the 1980s and helped pave the way for developing the national goals in 1989 and 1990 and monitoring their implementation at the state level thereafter.

Given the increased attention to using NAEP to monitor educational progress, Education Secretary William J. Bennett, who had replaced Bell, formed a distinguished 22-member NAEP study group in May 1986 headed by Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander (who was also chair of the National Governors' Association) and H. Thomas James (former president of the Spencer Foundation). This prestigious group, commonly referred to as the Alexander-James study group, issued in January 1987 a detailed and influential report that praised the value of NAEP, but criticized the lack of state-level information:

But NAEP has a serious weakness, and this must be identified here at the outset, for correcting it is our Study Group's most important recommendation. The weakness is that while providing excellent information on what our children know and can do, it provides it only for the nation *as a whole*, and for a few large regions of the country. Whole-nation information is of course useful when we wish to gauge the performance of our children against that of children in other countries, whether rivals or allies. But in the United States education is a *state* responsibility, and it is against the performance of children closer to home that we want and need to compare the performance of our youngsters.<sup>49</sup>

The Alexander-James report generally was well-received and became a key document in the legislative reorganization of NAEP as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-10). The House and Senate were split on the advisability of having NAEP overseen by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) and the need for state-level NAEP data. The final legislation, the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297), assigned the policy oversight of NAEP to NAGB, but limited state-level tests to trial assessments in mathematics and reading for those states choosing to participate on a voluntary basis.<sup>50</sup> The April 1988 legislation did introduce an important change in the long

run by calling for “identifying appropriate achievement goals for each age and grade in each subject area to be tested.”<sup>51</sup>

The legislative mandate for creating trial state-level NAEP tests, as well as for setting appropriate achievement goals, seemed promising to those national and state policymakers who had called for such information. It also appeared to overcome some of the objections from those who opposed the wall chart because it had relied on inadequate student achievement data. Yet Congress was still suspicious and cautious about how the new state-level NAEP results should be reported; it inserted advisory language in the final conference report that prohibited such information from being used to rank state educational systems:

The conferees wish to emphasize that the purpose of the expansion of NAEP is to provide policy makers with more and better state level information about the educational performance of their school children. The goal is not to provide a scorecard by which to rank state educational systems. Data from this assessment is not to be used to compare, rank or evaluate local schools or school districts.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, while some state-level NAEP data would soon be available to those who were interested in monitoring the progress of student achievement in the forthcoming national education goals, some policymakers still had reservations about the wisdom of using such information to make comparisons among states.



## THE NATION'S GOVERNORS AND EDUCATION GOALS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1980S

Periodically, there have been calls for national education goals, but most of them did not leave much of a lasting legacy. During the Eisenhower administration, the President's Commission on National Goals published a report that included national educational goals.<sup>53</sup> In the early 1980s, several groups also called for national education goals—especially covering areas in which they were particularly interested.<sup>54</sup> And President Reagan in September 1984 outlined four national goals in education to be reached by 1990.<sup>55</sup> These goals had been developed by Secretary Bell in Indianapolis a year earlier at the final conference on *A Nation at Risk*.<sup>56</sup> Yet none of these various recommended sets of national education goals had much of an impact until their cause was taken up by the nation's governors in the second half of the 1980s.

As discussed earlier, the nation's governors became among the most active and effective leaders of the school reform efforts in the early 1980s. One of the governors' most influential organizations, the NGA, played a key role in developing interest and support for education goals and standards in the mid-1980s. At their Idaho meeting in August 1985, the NGA set up seven task forces to make recommendations on how to improve education in the states. The results of their efforts were released the following year in their widely publicized report, *Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*. (The report was released in 1986 but intended to show what the states should do for the next five years.)<sup>57</sup>

Gov. Lamar Alexander, chair of the NGA, candidly acknowledged that concern about jobs and economic well-being were behind the governors' efforts to improve schooling. "Better schools mean better jobs. Unless states face these questions [about education], Americans won't keep our high standard of living. To meet stiff competition from workers in the rest of the world, we must educate ourselves and our children as we never have before."<sup>58</sup>

At that August 1985 meeting, the NGA listed seven major tasks that would have to be undertaken by the governors: (1) creating a more highly professional teaching force; (2) strengthening school leadership and management; (3) promoting greater parent involvement and choice in their youngsters' education; (4) helping at-risk children and youth meet higher education standards; (5) making better and more effective use of new technologies in education; (6) making better use of the resources invested in school facilities; and (7) strengthening the mission and effectiveness of colleges and universities.<sup>59</sup>

**“Governor  
[Lamar] Alexander  
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We’ll regulate less,  
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—NGA, *Time for  
Results*, 1987**

To achieve these reforms, Governor Alexander called for “some old-fashioned horse-trading. We’ll regulate less, if schools and school districts will produce better results.”<sup>60</sup> Governor Lamar Alexander’s elaboration of the proposed deal called for the establishment of clear state-level goals and better reporting of what students know and can do:

The kind of horse-trading we’re talking about will change dramatically the way most American schools work. First, the Governors want to help establish clear goals and better report cards, ways to measure what students know and can do. Then, we’re ready to give up a lot of state regulatory control—even to fight for changes in the law to make that happen—if schools and school districts will be accountable for the results. We invite educators to show us where less regulation makes the most sense. These changes will require more rewards for success and consequences for failure for teachers, school leaders, schools, and school districts. It will mean giving parents more choice of the public schools their children attend as one way of assuring higher quality without heavy-handed state control.<sup>61</sup>

The governors acknowledged that the process of reforming schools would take at least five years and more money. They also recognized that they would have to form partnerships with educators and other reform groups. In order to monitor the improvements in education, NGA joined forces with the Education Commission of the States and the CCSSO “to devise a system to keep with the results of this report on a yearly basis.”<sup>62</sup> Yet the governors opposed having the states directly compared with each other as was being done in the Department of Education’s controversial annual wall chart:

Will you have a report card every year comparing one state to another? No. We won’t be giving grades. But we *will* report what is happening in each of the seven areas in each state. That should help set the nation’s agenda for what is important and successful—and unsuccessful—in making schools better. It is up to each state what each state does.<sup>63</sup>

To monitor the progress of the states, the NGA decided to issue annual reports for the next five years (through 1991) on the advances the states were making in meeting the seven tasks outlined in *Time for Results*. Rather than stressing just the comparative quan-



titative educational statistics, the annual reports also would list the achievements each state made in the educational reforms based upon the reports of the governors. NGA was interested in using quantitative indices, but felt that the use of SAT and ACT scores in the wall chart was misleading and inaccurate. NGA endorsed the expansion of NAEP to test and report student outcomes at the state level—thereby significantly contributing to the movement to collect and disseminate state-level comparative student achievement data in the 1990s.<sup>64</sup>

The NGA continued to emphasize the primacy of the state role in education, but also called for close collaboration with the federal government as well as with other education groups. Moreover, the NGA urged governors to assist in the setting of national indicators of educational progress:

Governors should lead the way in defining targets the nation as a whole should aim for. The data we now have on education results is not good enough. We know about the inputs but not enough about the outputs. We know about basic skills but little about the more complex skills required for productive adult life. Support current efforts to expand the National Assessment of Educational Progress to measure these skills. Support comparisons among states. Support related efforts among the Chief State School Officers to sharpen our measures of school performance. But we should also think about the results we are getting as a nation. What are the really important indicators? What do we actually know about how well we are doing? Let's invite the American people to think with us about the results we *should* be getting.<sup>65</sup>

Another group that played a key role in pushing for national education standards in the late 1980s was the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)—an influential regional organization of southern governors, legislators, and education officials that had been created in 1948. SREB had helped to spur educational reform in the early 1980s with the publication of its widely publicized report, *The Need for Quality*.<sup>66</sup>

In 1988, the SREB Commission for Educational Quality called for the establishment of state and regional education goals. Richard Riley, chair of the commission, endorsed the importance of education goals in June 1988:

***“Governors should lead the way in defining targets the nation as a whole should aim for....Let’s invite the American people to think with us about the results we should be getting.”***

***—NGA, Results in Education, 1987***

*“Why are educational goals important? Simply put, the citizens of any state are not likely to achieve more in education than they and their leaders expect and aim for.... Significant educational improvements do not just happen. They are planned and pursued.”*

*—Richard Riley  
(Governor of South Carolina and SREB  
commission chair),  
1988*

Why are educational goals important? Simply put, the citizens of any state are not likely to achieve more in education than they and their leaders expect and aim for....

Significant educational improvements do not just happen. They are planned and pursued. If the number of students graduating from high school increases appreciably or the percentage of entering college students ready for college level work rises, it will be because these matters are priorities.<sup>67</sup>

In October 1988, the SREB Commission for Educational Quality released its *Goals for Education: Challenge 2000* and invited its members not only to establish their own state education standards but to meet or exceed national or international standards:

Today, there is wide agreement that SREB states should strive for national standards. And some, particularly governors, assert that international standards are more appropriate now that the marketplace is increasingly global.

If SREB states are indeed determined to meet or exceed national standards in education by the year 2000, what kinds of goals must they set and reach? And what actions or conditions—what “indicators” of progress—will signal to citizens, educators, and government leaders movement toward meeting long-range educational goals?<sup>68</sup>

The SREB Commission issued 12 goals, which stated that by the year 2000:

1. All children will be ready for the first grade.
2. Student achievement for elementary and secondary students will be at national levels or higher.
3. The school dropout rate will be reduced by one-half.
4. 90 percent of adults will have a high school diploma or equivalency.
5. 4 out of every 5 students entering college will be ready to begin college-level work.

6. Significant gains will be achieved in the mathematics, sciences, and communications competencies of vocational education students.
7. The percentage of adults who have attended college or earned two-year, four-year, and graduate degrees will be at the national averages or higher.
8. The quality and effectiveness of all colleges and universities will be regularly assessed, with particular emphasis on the performance of undergraduate students.
9. All institutions that prepare teachers will have effective teacher education programs that place primary emphasis on the knowledge and performance of graduates.
10. All states and localities will have schools with improved performance and productivity demonstrated by results.
11. Salaries for teachers and faculty will be competitive in the marketplace, will reach important benchmarks, and will be linked to performance measures and standards.
12. States will maintain or increase the proportion of state tax dollars for schools and colleges while emphasizing funding aimed at raising quality and productivity.<sup>69</sup>

SREB's 12 education goals were well-received by the media and the education community. Georgia School Superintendent Werner Rogers expressed support for the SREB's approach.<sup>70</sup> And the *Charlotte (N.C.) Observer* supported the SREB's efforts on its editorial page:

The citizens of this community—this state, this nation—must compare our educational accomplishments to what we know they must be, if our citizens are to intelligently exercise the duties of citizenship and successfully compete in a world economy. Once we have set standards, we must be willing to strive until we achieve them. If it takes money, we must raise it. If it takes a radical restructuring of our educational system, we must restructure it. If it takes a community-wide attack on conditions that render many children all but ineducable, we must make that attack.<sup>71</sup>

SREB, like the NGA, continued to remind its members of the 12 education goals and issued annual updates on progress in the region.<sup>72</sup> As we shall see in the next section, both the NGA and SREB would play an important role in the conceptualization and development of the six national education goals.<sup>73</sup>



## THE ORIGINS OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE EDUCATION SUMMIT OF SEPTEMBER 1989

During the 1988 election campaign, both George Bush, the Republican candidate, and Michael Dukakis, the Democratic nominee, stressed their commitments to reforming American education but differed on how to achieve that objective. Interestingly, neither candidate nor party stressed the importance of national education goals during that campaign, even though a year later the goals would emerge as the centerpiece of national educational reform at the Charlottesville Summit.

Although most observers assumed that Bush would become the Republican nominee to succeed President Reagan, there was serious opposition to his candidacy among some of the Republican faithful. Despite President Reagan's strong and consistent endorsement of Bush, some conservatives continued to view him as too moderate and would have preferred someone like Sen. Robert Dole, Jack Kemp, or Pat Robertson. Moreover, in recent times it has been very difficult for any vice president to win the next presidential election; and scandals such as Iran-Contra had seriously eroded public support for the Reagan administration during its second term. Yet despite initially trailing in the public opinion polls in early 1988, Bush convincingly defeated his Republican rivals in the primaries and received his party's nomination in New Orleans.<sup>74</sup>

Bush had not always been identified as a leader in the field of education. But from the very beginning of the primary campaign, Bush emphasized his commitment to improving education. He told a group of high school students in New Hampshire in January 1988, "I want to be the Education President. I want to lead a renaissance of quality in our schools."<sup>75</sup> The detailed and lengthy Republican platform called for more spending on Head Start, endorsed choice in education, supported the pledge of allegiance in the schools, and reaffirmed the primacy of the family and local schools in education; but the platform did not call for the development of any national education goals.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, Bush's statement on education in *Phi Delta Kappan* reaffirmed his desire to be the "Education President" but did not call for national education goals. Bush did mention the need for accountability in schools and the value of setting goals, and he also endorsed funding for a state-level NAEP that would measure educational progress and permit state comparisons.<sup>77</sup>

As governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, the Democratic presidential nominee, had been dedicated to improving education and received considerable support from the American Federation of Teachers and NEA at the Democratic convention in Atlanta.<sup>78</sup> The Democratic platform was much shorter and more general than the Republican platform. It called for additional federal support for at-risk students, Head Start, higher education, bilingual education, and schoolteachers but made no mention of the need for any national



*President and Mrs. Bush with Governor and Mrs. Tommy Thompson. Governor Thompson (R-WI) is a current NEGP member.*

education goals.<sup>79</sup> When Dukakis presented his views on education in *Phi Delta Kappan*, he stressed three issues:

The next President will inherit a fiscal mess in Washington. There simply aren't the resources to do everything we would like to do right away. That means some hard choices—and a focus on critically important educational priorities.

For me, there are three educational challenges facing America that must receive immediate, top-priority attention: the challenge of finding and retaining the best teachers for our students, the challenge of eliminating adult illiteracy, and the challenge of making sure that every student admitted to college has the financial support he or she needs to take advantage of that opportunity.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, like his Republican counterpart, Dukakis did not call for the development of national education goals.

The fall presidential campaign mainly focused on highly emotional and symbolic issues such as granting Willie Horton, a man convicted of first-degree murder, a weekend furlough; whether Dan Quayle tried to avoid the draft by joining the National Guard; or the wisdom of Dukakis's veto of state legislation mandating the pledge of allegiance to the flag in the public schools. More substantive issues such as trade policy or environmental concerns received far less attention. Differences between the candidates on education, for example, neither received much media attention nor ultimately had much of an impact on voters.<sup>81</sup>

Despite Bush's initial weak showing in the polls, he won a major victory over Dukakis by receiving 53.4 percent of the popular vote and winning in 40 states.<sup>82</sup> His triumph, however, was marred by the fact that Republicans lost seats in both houses of Congress. Democrats predominated in the 101<sup>st</sup> Congress with a 55 to 45 margin in the Senate and a 259 to 174 majority in the House. And although President Bush had a high public approval rating during his first year, he received less congressional support than any other first-year president in the postwar era.<sup>83</sup>

The NGA moved quickly to follow up on the Bush campaign's pledge to meet with the governors to discuss education. NGA staffer Mike Cohen outlined two alternative approaches for the upcoming December meeting between President-elect Bush and the governors. One option was to raise three or four themes that Bush might highlight in his own education initiatives in 1989 (such as boosting the performance of major federal categorical programs, more effectively serving the needs of at-risk students, developing and using knowledge for improved educational productivity, providing leadership to strengthen math and science education, or improving youth services).<sup>84</sup>

The other, more preferable alternative offered by Cohen and the NGA staff was to have the governors work together with the incoming Bush administration to establish long-range goals and targets for reforming education:

This approach involves the Governors and the President agreeing to engage in a process through which they will establish long-range goals and targets for educational improvement. Examples of targets would be:

- To reduce the high school dropout rate to 3% by the year 2000;
- To assure that every elementary school provides every student with at least 4 years of instruction in science, which emphasizes the development of scientific reasoning and problem solving skills;
- To assure that the percentage of 17-year-olds who have acquired higher order skills, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), increases from the current 15% level to 80%, by the year 2000.
- To assure that every youth between the ages of 15 and 20 provides 6 months of voluntary service to their community, by the year 2000.
- To assure that every elementary and secondary student has opportunities to study a foreign language.

*“...education is the key to our competitiveness in the future as a nation and to our soul as a people.”*

*—President George Bush, 1989*

The intent here is that the Governors and the President establish a vision of the nature of the education system and the results it must produce by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The goals should be viewed as national rather than federal, and should encourage local governments and the private sector, in addition to the federal government and state governments, to find ways of supporting their attainment. In addition, the Governors and the President also should commit to examining existing federal and state programs and policies to ensure that they are most effectively aimed at reaching those goals; and they should enlist local governments to do the same.<sup>85</sup>

The NGA recognized that their preferred option of setting goals and targets would involve much more work and commitment, but they also saw it as an important way of continuing the educational leadership and improvements initiated by the governors:

This is clearly a high stakes proposal. It will require a serious commitment by the Governors, and a substantial NGA staff commitment as well. It is probably at least a year-long activity. If agreed to by the President, we'd have to assume that the Department of Education would be an active partner in this, and would be able to provide financial support to NGA.

The proposal also has the potential for enormous payoff. For education, it can build and focus public attention and support, and help ensure that existing resources are most effectively utilized. It can help ensure that federal and state policies are appropriately altered along the lines already established by the Governors. And, it ensures that the Governors will remain a dominant force in education policy for the foreseeable future, at both the state and federal levels.<sup>86</sup>

During the December 1988 meeting, James Pinkerton, Bush's director of policy development, confirmed that President-elect Bush planned to “convene an education summit of governors, college officials and business aides.” Pinkerton said that Bush had asked Lamar Alexander to coordinate the participation of higher education officials at that meeting.<sup>87</sup>

From the very beginning of his term, President Bush signaled his support for education. At his first official inaugural event, President Bush pledged to a group of nearly 250 teachers, “Education will be on my desk and on my mind from the start, every day.” He went on to say that “education is the key to our competitiveness in the future as a nation and to our soul as a people. Teaching should be afforded as much respect as any profession in America.”<sup>88</sup>



Yet the Bush administration's leadership in education was limited by the generally agreed-upon ineffectiveness of its first Secretary of Education, Lauro Cavazos, the former president of Texas Tech University. Following the resignation of the forceful and controversial Secretary Bennett, President Reagan in September 1988 had nominated Cavazos to succeed him—in large part, according to Washington insiders, to help Bush with the Hispanic vote.<sup>89</sup> Many educators welcomed Cavazos's appointment, since he was less confrontational than his predecessor and because he believed that the federal government should have a larger and more constructive role in education. President Bush announced in November 1988 that he planned to retain Cavazos as secretary of education.<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, Cavazos's inexperience in politics as well as his inability or unwillingness to be an effective educational spokesperson limited his impact and led to his eventual firing in December 1990.<sup>91</sup>

When President Bush did speak out on behalf of education in the first half of 1989, he did not stress the need for national educational goals. For example, when President Bush addressed a joint session of Congress on February 9, 1989, to offer his FY90 budget proposals, he made education a top priority:

But the most important competitiveness program of all is one which improves education in America. When some of our students actually have trouble locating America on a map of the world, it is time for us to map a new approach to education.

We must reward excellence, and cut through bureaucracy.

We must help those schools that need help most. We must give choice to parents, students, teachers and principals. And we must hold all concerned accountable. In education, we cannot tolerate mediocrity.

I want to cut the drop-out rate, and make America a more literate nation. Because what it really comes down to is this: The longer our graduation lines are today, the shorter our unemployment lines will be tomorrow.<sup>92</sup>

Although President Bush asked the legislators to join him as “the Education President” by becoming “the Education Congress,” his first-year legislative requests were quite modest and he did not make a major effort to see them enacted. As a result, President Bush's educational legislative achievements during his initial year as president were viewed as neither ambitious nor successful—but similar to his perceived passivity on behalf of other domestic policy issues as well.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, there was no indication that national standards or goals were about to become an integral part of the administration's subsequent initiatives.<sup>94</sup>

*“There is a growing recognition that an essential next step for education reform is establishing consensus around a set of national goals for education improvement, stated in terms of the results and outcomes we as a nation need for the education system.”*

*—NGA executive director, Ray Scheppach, 1989.*

As discussed earlier, during the presidential campaign Bush had promised to meet with the governors to discuss educational reforms. At the December 1988 meeting of the president-elect and the governors, the idea of setting long-range education goals and targets was broached, and both sides agreed to pursue it further.

On January 24, 1989, Ray Scheppach, executive director of NGA, followed up by writing to David Demarest, the president’s communications director, to arrange “a meeting between President Bush and the Governors to discuss elementary and secondary education”:

There is a growing recognition that an essential next step for education reform is establishing consensus around a set of national goals for education improvement, stated in terms of the results and outcomes we as a nation need for the education system. We propose that the President and the Governors use their meeting to initiate a highly visible 9–12 month effort to establish long-range goals and targets for educational improvement. The intent is that together they establish a vision of the nature of the education system and the results it must produce by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>95</sup>

Scheppach then outlined six areas in which goals and targets might be set. While there was considerable overlap between the goals proposed in the December 12 memo and this one, there were also some interesting differences. Specific references to higher-order thinking skills and voluntary service were omitted. Instead, readiness to begin kindergarten and improving the teaching force were added:

This project will be launched at the initial meeting between the President and the Governors, ideally on Saturday, February 25. This session will provide the occasion for the public announcement of the project and its purposes. And, the President and Governors will announce the priority areas in which they intend to establish goals and targets. This should be limited to approximately half a dozen areas which generally reflect the performance or outcomes of the system, rather than the level of resources or the nature of educational programs or practice. We may want to consider an exception to this, to the extent that it is important to focus on the overall quality and composition of the teaching force. Examples of areas in which we might set goals and targets include:



*President and Mrs. Bush with the Governors and their wives at the 1989 Education Summit at Charlottesville.*

- High school dropout and completion rates;
- Reading, language and literacy skills;
- Mathematical, scientific and technological competence;
- International education and foreign languages;
- Readiness to begin kindergarten;
- Quality and composition of the teaching force.

In order for the President and Governors to agree on a set of priority areas at the February meeting, the advance work on this will need to begin immediately.<sup>96</sup>

The President and NGA did not meet on February 25. Instead, a private meeting between President Bush and 13 governors took place on May 16, during which the possibility of holding an Education Summit was discussed. Dick Vohs, press secretary to Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, looked forward to a summit and stated that “we hope the focus of the meeting would be on tailoring our education system for the work force of the future.”<sup>97</sup> NGA announced that plans for an Education Summit at the White House in September had been tentatively agreed upon.<sup>98</sup>

John Sununu, the former New Hampshire governor and new White House Chief of Staff, agreed that the President should meet with the governors. It would be only the third time that a president had met with the nation’s governors and was seen as a way of enhancing Bush as an educational leader. Sununu also favored the meeting because it would bypass Congress and focus attention on the states, where most of the educational reforms already

were occurring. Roger Porter, the Assistant to the President for Economic and Domestic Policy, was designated to oversee the proposed Charlottesville Summit.<sup>99</sup>

Within the Department of Education, the task of exploring preliminary plans for the proposed summit was assigned simultaneously to two agencies in mid-1989: (1) the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and (2) the Planning and Evaluation Service (PES) within the Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation (OPBE). While OERI and PES worked cooperatively during the pre-summit period, they also competed with each other to develop more useful option papers and provide better background briefing materials for the White House.

The OERI team was led by Milt Goldberg, director of the Office of Research and former executive director of the panel that had issued *A Nation at Risk*.<sup>100</sup> In order to explore the feasibility and possible consequences of national education goals, in early June the OERI group drafted a set of national goals. That memo, “2002: A Nation of Learners,” was then slightly revised and transmitted to the White House a month later.<sup>101</sup>

The July OERI draft stated that “we need to cultivate a nation of learners, who become educated Americans.” Following the approach laid out in *A Nation at Risk*, the memo focused on content goals covering the basic K–12 curriculum.<sup>102</sup> It suggested that President Bush call for seven goals to be met by the year 2002 (many of which also included intermediate objectives):

GOAL [1]: ALL 6-YEAR-OLDS READY FOR FIRST GRADE.... I call on each State Governor to adopt this goal. We need to be sure that by the age of 6 all the nation’s children are ready for the first grade.

GOAL [2]: WIPE OUT ILLITERACY.... Most of this year’s first graders will be entering high school in 8 years—in 1997. As an intermediate goal, by 1997, I want every elementary school child to be reading at grade level when they enter high school.... As an intermediate goal, by 1997, I want all young adults to be able to read and understand the newspaper.

GOAL [3]: LOVE OF LEARNING IN SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS. By 2002, America will finish first among industrial nations on international Science and Mathematics achievement tests.... As an intermediate goal, in four years, by the time this year’s high school freshmen graduate—1993—I want the nation to be among the top five in science and mathematics and by 2002, the nation will be Number 1.... Four years from today, I want every college diploma to be stamped with science and mathematics competence.

GOAL [4]: LOVE OF LEARNING LITERATURE AND HISTORY. By 2002, the average scores on national Literature and History tests will rise to 90%.... As an intermediate goal, by 1997 I want the average scores on national literature and history tests to rise to 70% and by 2002 to 90%.

GOAL [5]: LOVE FOR LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE. All of our students should have the opportunity to become conversant in a second language.

GOAL [6]: EVERY STUDENT LEAVES SCHOOL PREPARED FOR MEMBERSHIP IN SOCIETY.... Every child who leaves our schools should have the knowledge, should have mastered the skills, and should have developed the attitudes and habits necessary for full participation in our society.

GOAL [7]: RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP. Every high school student should engage in some meaningful voluntary service to his community.<sup>103</sup>

The OERI memo concluded with a call for governors to develop their own local plans and guidelines, the federal government to provide states with assistance, states and school systems to let parents choose the best school, principals and teachers to be given the authority to determine how students can learn best, states to allow for the alternative certification of teachers, governors to hold schools accountable for progress, and governors to coordinate local resources to achieve the national goals. President Bush was to close the Charlottesville Summit with a promise to “return next fall to hear your success stories and to report our progress.”<sup>104</sup>

The PES within OPBE also developed somewhat similar recommendations in its memo “National Educational Goals: A Strategy for Achieving Educational Excellence.” In that memo, PES approvingly cited the previous work of the SREB on educational goals. Drawing upon the challenges issued by Secretary Cavazos in his release of the 1989 State Education Performance Chart in May, PES suggested four student outcome goals:

*Student attendance.* Reduce by half the rate of student absenteeism....

*Early childhood education.* All children will be prepared for the first grade or receive extra support to achieve readiness....

*Student achievement.* We must increase by half the number of students who perform at proficient levels on each subject test of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). We must also increase by half those scoring at the highest (adept) level. Further, we must raise America’s test score rankings on international tests to the top half among the industrialized nations of the world....

*Graduation rates.* We must increase our graduation rate to 90 percent the level of that currently attained by the State that leads the nation, Minnesota.<sup>105</sup>

Unlike the OERI goals, however, those of the PES were much less specific about subject matter content but did insist on improvements in student outcomes on each of the NAEP subject assessments. PES also paid considerable attention to a set of “enabling goals.” These enabling standards represented “intermediate improvement targets” and were somewhat similar in approach to the later controversial “opportunity to learn standards.”<sup>106</sup> The proposed eight enabling goals were:

*Access of every child to a rigorous curriculum* that makes available courses they would need for entrance to any postsecondary institution in the State. These requirements should cover access to comprehensive courses in the sciences, mathematics, language arts, foreign languages and vocational technical subjects.

*The availability of teachers with the appropriate subject area mastery* to provide instruction in the prerequisite courses described above. Subject area mastery should be demonstrated through appropriate tests of teacher proficiency.

*Adequate resource levels provided to all districts within each State and to all schools within each district.* Resources should be sufficient to ensure that all students have access to an appropriate free public education beginning at age three.

*Annual report cards* for every State, district and building that, at a minimum, describe progress toward achieving the national outcome goals specified by the President.... While report cards may make appropriate adjustments for differences across districts and schools in student starting points, these differences should not be used to justify lower expectations for at-risk populations. Although the time lines may need to be different for achieving success with certain groups of students, the goals should be the same.

*A system of choice* that permits parents to send their children to any other school district or school within the State....

*A system of statewide achievement tests* to ensure that students who pass through the system attain the subject area mastery necessary to progress to meaningful employment or on to postsecondary education. The goal here is to restore a sense of value to the high school diploma. All students would be expected to pass achievement tests that measure basic and higher level skills in reading, math, history, and science. College-bound students would be required to take additional statewide exams to attest to their mastery of higher level work....

*A system of school improvement plans that requires failing schools to alter their educational program....*

*A system of employer rewards through availability of jobs and salaries that compensate students for good academic records.*<sup>107</sup>

President Bush addressed the July 1989 NGA meeting in Chicago on the economic and social problems besetting America and called for educational improvements. President Bush also used the occasion to invite the governors to “a summit to share ideas and to explore options for educational progress.” No site had been announced, but the summit was slated for September 27 and 28. No mention was made either during that speech or in the brief question and answer period afterward about the issue of national education goals.<sup>108</sup>

Based upon the OERI and PES memos on national education goals, as well as recent interactions with NGA, Roger Porter and Stephen Studdert, White House aides, prepared a memo for Sununu in mid-August outlining their plans for the proposed summit. They cited three objectives for the summit:

1. To demonstrate the President’s interest in and commitment to education as a central national priority.
2. To engage the nation’s governors in a substantive discussion of the nature of the challenge we face, of alternative ways of improving our educational performance, and of those ideas for reform that seem to have the greatest promise.
3. To set the stage for a series of education proposals and national goals to be unveiled in early 1990 possibly as part of the State of the Union Address.<sup>109</sup>

While Porter and Studdert listed the national goals as a future objective, the plans for the activities at the conference did not mention them. Instead, the memo specified four aims in structuring the summit:

1. Provide adequate time for informal discussion between the President and individual governors.
2. Provide a format that permits and encourages candid, private discussions—some with all the governors and the President; some with the President and governors in smaller groups.
3. Provide an opportunity to have the governors spend time with and get to know better the President’s cabinet.
4. Cover a broad range of subjects to show that education is an important element in meeting the challenges of a global economy, and in the economic, intellectual, and cultural life of the nation.<sup>110</sup>

Following the invitation to the summit, the NGA moved quickly to formulate its own agenda for that meeting. On September 13, the NGA held a summit outreach meeting with representatives from 40 education, business, advocacy, and general government organizations. Governors Carroll Campbell (R-SC) and Bill Clinton (D-AR) co-chaired a one-day meeting in Washington, D.C., and identified four common themes that emerged from the outreach testimony and discussions:

There is a need to set national education goals, and to develop a nationwide strategy for meeting them. There was clear agreement that these are national, not federal goals; that the goals should be performance- or outcome-oriented; and that the education community and other stakeholders should be involved in the process of developing the goals and the implementation strategy. This theme was addressed in almost every panel, and there was no opposition to this as an outcome of the summit.

There is a need for much greater coordination between the education system and other social and human service agencies, and among various levels and components of the education system....

There is a need to invest in early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-old children at risk, for parent education programs for families at risk, and for increased parental involvement in their children's education....

The education system requires the capacity for self-renewal, so that schools and educators can adapt to changing clientele, changing conditions, and growing knowledge. This requires a system that provides support and incentives for innovation, investments in continuing professional development, and in research, development, and assessment.<sup>111</sup>

Two sessions were devoted to early childhood, elementary education, and secondary education. The conferees agreed that there was a nationwide crisis in education and that minority and poor students were especially disadvantaged. The group concluded that "this crisis requires national goals and a national strategy for meeting them." The participants provided additional suggestions about the nature of the national goals and the process by which they might be developed:

Goals should reflect desired educational outcomes, such as: universal opportunity for pre-kindergarten, 100% high school graduation, and the knowledge and skills to equip students to participate effectively in society. Goals must go beyond student completion of secondary school, to include student achievement and to redefine it in more rigorous terms. Otherwise, we may succeed in retaining more students in school longer, but not in educating to higher levels of performance.



Educators must be involved in setting goals; the President and the Governors can't do it alone and expect the goals to be accepted or implemented.

Reaching the education goals will require a comprehensive strategy, which involves coordination at the following levels:

- *Interagency coordination.* Cooperation between health, welfare and education programs for at-risk students and their families.
- *Intergovernmental coordination.* Federal, state and local strategies must be consistent and coordinated. All levels must recognize that the direction to move education involves emphasizing accountability for meeting outcome goals, and providing flexibility for accomplishing them.<sup>112</sup>

Two days prior to the Charlottesville Summit, Governor Clinton, chair of the Democratic Governors' Association, sent a memo to his Democratic colleagues with information and comments on the preparations and expectations for that event. He lamented the White House's refusal to allow the NGA or governors' staffs to participate in the small breakout sessions or to permit the media to attend all of the sessions. Yet the White House had compromised on a series of other issues, and Governor Clinton felt that this was sufficient "to change the expectations and the reality of the Summit from 'show' to 'substance.'" President Bush's representatives had committed the administration to some definite follow-up activities—including the development of national education goals:

The White House has agreed to work with the governors to develop a set of national performance goals, for the first time in history, to guarantee that Americans will have an education system second to none. John Sununu told Governor Campbell and me that he expects the governors to assume a leading post-Summit role in formulating the details of the goals in consultation with educators, business and labor, Congress, parents and other interested citizens no later than our midwinter meeting in February.<sup>113</sup>

*“The White House has agreed to work with the governors to develop a set of national performance goals, for the first time in history, to guarantee that Americans will have an education system second to none.”*

*—Governor Bill Clinton (D-AR)*

Based on his consultations with the Democratic governors and other interested parties, Governor Clinton listed seven candidates for the national education goals for the year 2000:

1. All children will be ready for the first grade.
2. Student achievement will rise to internationally competitive levels, especially in math and science.
3. Disparities in achievement levels of students of different races and economic backgrounds will be dramatically reduced.
4. The dropout rate will be reduced dramatically.
5. The percentage of high school graduates going on to some form of post-secondary education will be increased to a point sufficient to give them opportunities to get good jobs with growing wages and to reverse the alarming earnings decline among younger workers.
6. Illiteracy among adult Americans will be virtually eliminated.
7. Schools will have the well-trained teachers and the modern technology they need to be competitive.<sup>114</sup>

Governor Clinton's memo ended with a series of suggestions for an enhanced federal role in reforming American education—including increased federal education funding.

## THE CHARLOTTESVILLE EDUCATION SUMMIT

Prior to the Charlottesville Education Summit, there was considerable disagreement about its potential usefulness. Columnist William Safire feared that the summit might “witness a voluntary power shift from the states to the national government.”<sup>115</sup> *The Washington Post*’s chief political correspondent, David Broder, on the other hand, thought that “the cynics may be wrong. There’s a chance President Bush’s ‘Education Summit’ with the nation’s governors may mark a significant step in the struggle to overhaul and improve America’s schools.”<sup>116</sup> Many educators and policymakers feared that President Bush would simply use the Charlottesville Summit for political purposes without making any real commitments to improve American education.<sup>117</sup>

Some members of Congress were particularly upset that the Bush administration had ignored them altogether in this process. Congressional Democrats, led by Senate majority leader George Mitchell (D-ME) and House majority leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO), offered their own national education goals just before the summit. The six national education goals they proposed were:

1. Annually increasing the number of children served by preschool programs with the goal of serving all “at-risk” 4-year-olds by 1995.
2. Raising the basic-skills achievement of all students to at least their grade level, and reducing the gap between the test scores of minority and white children by 1993.
3. Improving the high school graduation rate every year and reducing the number of illiterate Americans.
4. Improving the performance of American students in mathematics, science, and foreign languages until it exceeds that of students from “other industrialized nations.”
5. Increasing college participation, particularly by minorities, and specifically by reducing the current “imbalance” between grants and loans.
6. Recruiting more new teachers, particularly minority teachers, to ease “the impending teacher shortage,” and taking other steps to upgrade the status of the profession.<sup>118</sup>

Despite some questions about the wisdom and the direction of the upcoming summit, the administration and the governors had reached an amicable agreement on the format for the conference. While there would be several public occasions, the six working groups would be limited to the President, governors, Cabinet members, and a few high-level administration officials. Each governor would be assigned to two of these breakout sessions, but the gubernatorial staff and the press could not attend. Each working group would be co-chaired by two governors (a Democrat and a Republican) and each of those

*“The President and the nation’s Governors agree that a better educated citizenry is the key to the continued growth and prosperity of the United States.”*

*–The joint communiqué of President Bush and the nation’s governors, Sept. 28, 1989*

sessions would be moderated by a Cabinet member. The six working groups were: (1) Teaching: Revitalizing a Profession; (2) The Learning Environment; (3) Governance: Who’s in Charge? (4) Choice and Restructuring; (5) A Competitive Workforce and Life-Long Learning; and (6) Post-Secondary Education: Strengthening Access and Excellence.<sup>119</sup>

The key players at the summit were President Bush; his White House advisor, Porter; and the co-chairs of NGA’s education task force, Governor Clinton and Governor Campbell. Secretary Cavazos was present but chose not to attend the late-night session at the Boar’s Head Inn, where the final joint communiqué was crafted. Other particularly significant individuals for the administration were John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, and Richard Darman, director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Among the governors, NGA chair Terry Branstad (R-IA) and Booth Gardner (D-WA) also made major contributions, as well as NGA’s education chief staff analyst, Mike Cohen.<sup>120</sup>

Despite some last minute differences that had to be ironed out at the Boar’s Head Inn the previous evening, the President and the governors were able to issue a joint communiqué on September 28. The statement started by reiterating the centrality of education for improving the economic well-being of the nation:

The President and the nation’s Governors agree that a better educated citizenry is the key to the continued growth and prosperity of the United States. Education has historically been, and should remain, a state responsibility and a local function, which works best when there is also strong parental involvement in the schools. And as a Nation we must have an educated workforce, second to none, in order to succeed in an increasingly competitive world economy.

Education has always been important, but never this important because the stakes have changed: Our competitors for opportunity are also working to educate their people. As they continue to improve, they make the future a moving target. We believe that the time has come, for the first time in U.S. history, to establish clear, national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive.<sup>121</sup>



*President Bush and the nation's Governors on the steps of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, September 28, 1989.*

The joint communiqué then listed the four areas of agreement reached at the summit:

The President and the nation's Governors have agreed at this summit to:

- Establish a process for setting national education goals;
- Seek greater flexibility and enhanced accountability in the use of Federal resources to meet the goals, through both regulatory and legislative changes;
- Undertake a major state-by-state effort to restructure our education system; and
- Report annually on progress in achieving our goals.

This agreement represents the first step in a long-term commitment to reorient the education system and to marshal widespread support for the needed reforms.<sup>122</sup>

The joint statement then described in some detail the agreements in regard to the national education goals:

The first step in restructuring our education system is to build a broad-based consensus around a defined set of national education goals. The National Governors' Association Task Force on Education will work with the President's designees to recommend goals to the President and the nation's Governors. The process to develop the goals will involve teachers, parents, local administrators, school board members, elected officials, business and labor communities, and the public at large. The overriding objective is to develop an ambitious, realistic set of performance goals that reflect the views of those with a stake in the performance of our education system. To succeed we need a common understanding and a common mission. National goals will allow us to plan effectively, to set priorities, and to establish clear lines of accountability and authority. These goals will lead to the development of detailed strategies that will allow us to meet these objectives.

The process for establishing these goals should be completed and the goals announced in early 1990.

By performance we mean goals that will, if achieved, guarantee that we are internationally competitive, such as goals related to:

- The readiness of children to start school;
- The performance of students on international achievement tests, especially in math and science;
- The reduction of the dropout rate and the improvement of academic performance, especially among at-risk students;
- The functional literacy of adult Americans;
- The level of training necessary to guarantee a competitive workforce;
- The supply of qualified teachers and up-to-date technology; and
- The establishment of safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools.<sup>123</sup>

The President and the governors concluded their communiqué by stating that “as elected chief executives, we expect to be held accountable for progress in meeting the new national goals, and we expect to hold others accountable as well.” They also noted that “the time for rhetoric is past; the time for performance is now.”<sup>124</sup>

## CONCLUSION

One unusual feature of the educational reforms of the 1980s and 1990s is that these initiatives attracted public attention and support for almost two decades at both the national and local levels. Nineteenth-century educational reforms focused on a particular state or region rather than the nation as a whole. And while some 20<sup>th</sup>-century educational reforms did attract national attention, public interest in them usually was short-lived or the reforms were not widely implemented at the state or local levels. But the confluence of recurrent economic crises in the mid-1970s and 1980s, public concerns about perceived student achievements, and the willingness of many state and federal policymakers to champion school improvements helped to sustain the recent educational reforms.

Concerns about the decline in American economic well-being in the mid-1970s and 1980s persuaded many analysts and policymakers to believe that the United States needed a much better educated labor force in order to remain competitive in the growing global marketplace. Much of the educational leadership came from the nation's governors—especially those from the South who saw educational improvements as essential for the revitalization of their states' relative economic backwardness. While the public initially was usually either indifferent or, at best, only somewhat sympathetic to calls for school improvements, the governors frequently mobilized the populace in order to overcome opposition from many of the state legislators who were reluctant to raise taxes for any cause—including education.

The federal government was not one of the major leaders of educational reform in the early 1980s. President Reagan tried to abolish the newly established Department of Education and to reduce the federal role in public schooling. But the unanticipated popular and politically powerful message in *A Nation at Risk* aided school reformers who were trying to improve education in their own states and local communities.

The federal stimulus for school reforms was reinforced by the decision of Secretary Bell and his successors to develop and use the highly controversial wall chart, which publicized comparative state education information. Many educators and officials objected to the inadequate or misleading data used in the wall chart as well as its implicit emphasis on states competing against each other. Yet political leaders also recognized the wall chart's popularity in the media and the public's desire to hold educators and elected representatives accountable for making educational progress.

While *A Nation at Risk* helped to stimulate or reinforce educational reforms (such as mandating taking more academic courses or passing a high school graduation examination), by the second half of the 1980s it was becoming evident to many observers that overall

student achievement scores were not improving significantly. Reformers now searched for additional ways to supplement the more basic curriculum reforms that had been instituted in the mid-1980s; but there was little agreement on what should or could be done. Yet the intellectual and political climate was prepared for exploring new approaches—including developing state or national education goals. The NGA already had indicated general interest in this direction in the mid-1980s; and the SREB actually issued a set of 12 national education goals in 1988.

As the nation's governors called for setting and measuring national education goals, President Bush joined that endeavor. Having successfully run as the "Education President" in 1988, President Bush and his staff now were looking for ways to stimulate public support for state and local schooling without greatly expanding federal education spending or control. Building upon his campaign pledge to hold an education meeting and pressured by the NGA, President Bush invited the governors to join him at an Education Summit.

The historic meeting of the nation's governors and the president at Charlottesville on September 27 and 28, 1989, proved to be a media success and set the stage for the announcement of the national education goals four months later. While there was considerable disagreement between some of the governors and the White House over issues such as increased federal education spending, both sides were willing to compromise at the summit and issued a joint statement endorsing the idea of national education goals as well as the creation of a panel to oversee them. But the underlying tensions between setting the goals and providing the necessary resources to fulfill them remained unresolved and would reappear in subsequent negotiations throughout the 1990s.

Moreover, the deliberate exclusion of members of Congress from the Charlottesville Summit not only angered the legislators but set the stage for further confrontations later. This contributed to the increased tensions with Congress when the Bush administration and the governors announced the six national education goals and created the National Education Goals Panel to oversee them. At the same time, one might speculate about what might have happened at Charlottesville if certain key members of Congress had been allowed to play a prominent role there. Would a somewhat different but politically more viable plan for improving American education have been crafted? Or would the House Democrats and the White House been at such loggerheads over the issue of increased federal funding and regulation that no mutually acceptable joint statement or plans for the future could have been reached?



The quick and often secret deliberations that led to Charlottesville, as well as the closed sessions at the summit itself, may have been necessary to bring the governors and the White House together. But they also limited the ability of each side to explore carefully or to explain fully their strategy not only to the general public but also to their own members and to other interested parties. As a result, while public support for the idea of the summit and the proposed national education goals was widespread, many people did not fully realize what all of this might mean in practice. Although almost everyone agreed that setting national education goals was a good idea, the tensions between focusing on student outcomes and supporting opportunity-to-learn goals had not been examined fully. Nor were all of the political leaders and the public agreed as to whether state progress toward the goals should be measured comparatively and competitively. And did the sudden, new focus on the goals inadvertently shift attention from the recent efforts to find the new educational strategies needed to make significant improvements in student learning and achievement?

Despite these and other reservations about the events at that meeting, most observers recognized the symbolic and potential substantive importance of the Charlottesville Education Summit. Unlike President Reagan, President Bush now committed himself to a larger and more active federal role in improving education—though the exact magnitude or details of that pledge were not specified at that time. Similarly, the governors were reenergized on behalf of improving schooling at both the state and national levels. Partisan congressional critics of the Bush administration were angry at being excluded; yet the tenuous but genuine spirit of bipartisanship between the President and the nation's governors at Charlottesville set the stage for further cooperation in the 1990s. And perhaps just as the limited impact of the first wave of school reform in the 1980s on student outcomes might have started to erode support for education, the Charlottesville Summit rekindled public attention and commitment to continue trying to reform American education.

## ENDNOTES

1. President Bush first announced the six goals in his State of the Union speech. They differed slightly in wording and content from the ones finally released by the National Governors' Association (NGA) in February 1989 and accepted by the Bush administration. The six goals originally put forth by President Bush were:
  - By the year 2000, every child must start school ready to learn.
  - The United States must increase the high school graduation rate to no less than 90 percent.”
  - And we are going to make sure our schools' diplomas mean something. In critical subjects—at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades—we must assess our students' performance.
  - By the year 2000, U.S. students must be first in the world in math and science achievement.
  - Every American adult must be a skilled, literate worker and citizen.
  - Every school must offer the kind of disciplined environment that makes it possible for our kids to learn. And every school in America must be drug-free.

George Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 31, 1990,” *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Record Administration, February 5, 1990), pp. 147–48.
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4. This chapter is the first of four chapters that will analyze the creation of the six national education goals and the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP), which was created in 1990 to oversee them.

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6. On the impact of economic changes on Americans in the 1970s, see Frank Levy, *The New Dollars and Dreams: American Incomes and Economic Change* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998).
7. Tamar Jacoby, *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration* (New York: Free Press, 1998); Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Lamar P. Miller, eds., *Brown v. Board of Education: The Challenge for Today's Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996); Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907–81* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New Press, 1996).
8. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962–1972* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); A. James Reichley, *Conservatives in an Age of Change: The Nixon and Ford Administrations* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1981); Theodore H. White, *Breach of Faith* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1975); Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1991).
9. John Robert Greene, *The Presidency of Gerald R. Ford* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Robert L. Hartmann, *Palace Politics: An Insider Account of the Ford Years* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1980).
10. Edwin C. Hargrove, *Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993); Lawrence H. Shoup, *The Carter Presidency and Beyond: Power and Politics in the 1980s* (Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1980).
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12. Maris A. Vinovskis, "Do Federal Compensatory Education Programs Really Work? A Brief Historical Analysis of Title I and Head Start," *American Journal of Education*, 107, no. 3 (May 1999), 187–209.
13. Victor G. Cicirelli, John W. Evans, and Jeffrey S. Schiller, "The Impact of Head Start: A Reply to the Report Analysis," *Harvard Educational Review* 40 (1970), 105–29; Maris A. Vinovskis, "Early Childhood Education: Then and Now," *Daedalus* 122 (1993), 151–76; Westinghouse Learning Corporation, *The Impact of Head Start: An Evaluation of the Effects of Head Start on Children's Cognition and Affective Development*, Ohio University Report to the Office of Economic Opportunity, Contract No. B89-4536 (Washington DC: Clearinghouse for Federal Scientific and Technical Information, ED036321, 1969).
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16. Tamar Jacoby, *Someone Else's House*; Jeffrey E. Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*; Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation*.
17. Stanley Elam, *The Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Polls of Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 1969–88: A 20-Year Compilation and Educational History* (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1989), pp. 214–15. The parents gave even higher scores to the schools their own children were attending.

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19. “Thus school reform—as a means to a more highly skilled work force—was seen by many as crucial to the nation’s quest for renewed economic competitiveness.... And it was the principal reason that the nation supported the push for excellence in education so strongly; more than anything else, it was the competitiveness theme that defined the education crisis in the nation’s eyes.” Thomas Toch, *In the Name of Excellence: The Struggle to Reform the Nation’s Schools, Why It’s Failing, and What Should Be Done* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 17.
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29. Bell, *The Thirteenth Man*, pp. 114–43.
30. Bell, *The Thirteenth Man*, pp. 114–43.
31. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Educational Reform* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 5.
32. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, p. 11.
33. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, p. 36.
34. Lawrence C. Stedman and Marshall S. Smith, "Recent Reform Proposals," *Contemporary Education Review*, 2, no. 2 (Fall 1983), pp. 85–104.
35. Jean Laura Dehart, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Perpetuation of an Educational Crisis: 1980–1989," unpub. Ph.D. (University of Georgia, 1992), p. 38.
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37. On the response to *A Nation at Risk*, see U.S. Department of Education, *The Nation Responds: Recent Efforts to Improve Education* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984).
38. David L. Angus and Jeffrey E. Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890–1995* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990).

39. On the varied impact of such education commission reports, see Rick Ginsberg and David N. Plank, eds., *Commissions, Reports, Reforms, and Educational Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995).
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43. Maris A. Vinovskis, *Overseeing the Nation’s Report Card: The Creation and Evolution of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998).
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50. Vinovskis, *Overseeing the Nation's Report Card*.
51. Public Law 100–297.
52. U.S. House of Representatives, *Elementary and Secondary Education: Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 5*, Report 100-567, 100<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), p. 387.
53. Commission on National Goals, *Goals for Americans: Comprising the Report of the President's Commission on National Goals and Chapters Submitted for the Consideration of the Commission* (Washington, DC: Judd and Detweiler, 1960). President Eisenhower had requested that Columbia University's American Assembly, a nonpartisan educational organization, administer the project using private funding sources.
54. For example, the National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology in 1983 issued a 124-page report that called upon President Reagan to appoint a National Education Commission "to identify national educational goals, to recommend and monitor the plan of action, to ensure that participation and progress are measured, and to report regularly to the American people on the standards and achievements of their schools." "Educating Americans for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Education Week* (September 14, 1983), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>. Similarly, Bill Honig, superintendent of public instruction in California, at a meeting of the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1984, urged the development of state-level assessments. He stated that "everyone is looking at [state-by-state comparisons] as a competition, but we can use it to set national goals—in such things as enrollment in particular subjects and dropout rates—and that is a very powerful, legitimate function." Thomas Toch, "School Chiefs Endorse State-By-State Comparisons," *Education Week* (November 21, 1984), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>. National goals also had been established in the area of health, and this effort later provided some participants in the field of education with additional ideas and reinforcement.



55. Congress in 1984 also had allocated \$500,000 for holding a national meeting of educators to set national educational goals, but the conference was never held. David Baumann, "Democrats Want National Goals Set on Literacy, Basic Skills at Summit," *Education Daily*, 22, no. 183 (September 21, 1989), p. 2.
56. Lynn Olson, "Lessons Learned? Old Goal-Setting Stirs New Doubts," *Education Week* (February 14, 1990), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
57. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education* (Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, 1986).
58. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results*, p. 2.
59. National Governors' Association, *Results in Education: 1987* (Washington DC: National Governors' Association, 1987), p. 1.
60. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results*, p. 3.
61. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results*, p. 4.
62. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results*, p. 6.
63. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results*, p. 7.
64. The first annual report in 1987 noted approvingly that "a study group chaired by former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander recently recommended sweeping improvements in the National Assessment of Educational Progress. If these recommendations are implemented, we will soon have state-by-state data on student performance in a broad range of curricular areas. The Center for Education Statistics in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement is undertaking a substantial revision of its data collection activities. These efforts are aimed at substantially improving the information available to assess the performance of state education systems. NGA strongly supports federal efforts in these areas to strengthen the national system of education statistics." National Governors' Association, *Results in Education: 1987*, pp. 4–5.
65. National Governors' Association, *Results in Education: 1987*, p. v.
66. Southern Regional Education Board, *The Need for Quality* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board, 1981).

67. Speech of Richard W. Riley in Southern Regional Education Board *Proceedings 1988 Joint Meeting: Annual Meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board and Annual SREB Legislative Work Conference in Observance of SREB's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Nashville, Tennessee, June 19–21, 1988* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board, 1988), p. 63.
68. Southern Regional Education Board, *Goals for Education: Challenge 2000* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board, 1988), p. 5.
69. Southern Regional Education Board, *Goals for Education: Challenge 2000*.
70. Betsy White, "Board Sets 12 Goals for Southern Schools to Reach by 2000," *The Atlanta Constitution* (October 13, 1988), pp. 1A, 8A.
71. "Set Goals For Education: Southern Regional Education Board Has The Right Idea," *The Charlotte Observer* (May 4, 1989).
72. Southern Regional Education Board, *Educational Goals in SREB States* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board, 1990); Southern Regional Education Board, *Educational Benchmarks, 1990* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board, 1990).
73. While some of the key participants, particularly at the staff level, were not aware of SREB's efforts directly, they were likely to have been influenced by them indirectly, since the southern governors who were active in the national education reforms were quite familiar with the work of SREB.
74. There has been considerable work on the 1988 presidential election. For example, see Elizabeth Drew, *Election Journal: Political Events of 1987–1988* (New York: William Morrow, 1989); Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover, *Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars? The Trivial Pursuit of the Presidency, 1988* (New York: Warner, 1989); Marvin Kalb and Hendrik Hertzberg, *Candidates '88* (Dover, MA: Auburn House, 1988); Donald Morrison, ed., *The Winning of the White House, 1988* (New York: Time, 1988); Matt Ridley, *Warts and All: The Men Who Would Be Bush* (New York: Viking, 1989); David R. Runkel, ed., *Campaign for President: The Managers Look at '88* (Dover, MA: Auburn House, 1989).
75. Reagan Walker, "Bush: Capturing the 'Education' Moment?" *Education Week* (October 19, 1988), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>; Lynn Olson and Julie A. Miller, "The 'Education President' at Midterm: Mismatch Between Rhetoric, Results," *Education Week* (January 9, 1991), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.

76. Kirsten Goldberg, "Drafting Planks: Parties Begin 'Battle of Ideas,'" *Education Week* (June 8, 1988), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>; "The G.O.P. Platform on Education and Related Issues," *Education Week* (September 7, 1988) <http://www.edweek.org>.
77. George Bush, "The Bush Strategy for Excellence in Education," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70, no. 2 (October 1988), 112–26.
78. On the role of the teachers' unions in the nomination of the Democratic presidential candidate, see Julie A. Miller, "Atlanta: Hot Time for the E Word," *Education Week* (August 3, 1988), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>; Julie A. Miller, "For Teacher Delegates, Education and Politics Are the Same," *Education Week* (August 3, 1988), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
79. "The Party's Platform on Education and Related Issues," *Education Week* (August 3, 1988), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
80. Michael Dukakis, "The Dukakis Strategy for Excellence in Education," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70, no. 2 (October 1988), p. 115.
81. Drew, *Election Journal: Political Events of 1987–1988*; Germond and Witcover, *Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars?*; Morrison, ed., *The Winning of the White House, 1988*; Ridley, *Warts and All*; Runkel, ed., *Campaign for President*.
82. Drew, *Election Journal, 1987–1988*; Germond and Witcover, *Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars?*; Morrison, ed., *The Winning of the White House, 1988*.
83. Congressional Quarterly, *Almanac, 101<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session....1989*, vol. 45 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1990), pp. 3–4.
84. Mike Cohen, "Governors' Education Meeting with President-elect Bush," NGA memo to Raymond Scheppach and Barry Van Lare, December 12, 1988.
85. Cohen, "Governors' Education Meeting with President-elect Bush," December 12, 1988.
86. Cohen, "Governors' Education Meeting with President-elect Bush," December 12, 1988.
87. David Bauman, "Bush Will Convene Education Summit, Aide Says," *Education Daily*; 21, no. 245 (December 22, 1988), p. 4.

88. Julie A. Miller, "Educators Shine in Inaugural Week's Spotlight," *Education Week* (January 25, 1989) retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>; Olson and Miller, "The 'Education President' at Midterm."
89. Julie A. Miller, "Reagan Picks Hispanic College Chief to Succeed Bennett," *Education Week* (September 7, 1988), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
90. Julie A. Miller, "Bush to Keep Cavazos as Education Secretary," *Education Week* (November 30, 1988) retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
91. Olson and Miller, "The 'Education President' at Midterm"; Charles Kolb, *White House Daze: The Unmaking of Domestic Policy in the Bush Years* (New York: Free Press, 1994), pp. 165–83.
92. Congressional Quarterly, *Almanac 1989*, pp. 10C–11C.
93. On the relative inaction of the Bush administration on domestic issues, see Ryan J. Barilleaux and Mary E. Stuckey, eds. *Leadership and the Bush Presidency: Prudence or Drift in an Era of Change?* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992); Michael Duffy and Dan Goodgame, *Marching in Place: The Status Quo Presidency of George Bush* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992); Herbert S. Parmet, *George Bush, The Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (New York: Scribner, 1997), pp. 357–91; Shirley Anne Warshaw, *The Domestic Presidency: Policy Making in the White House* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), pp. 145–78.
94. Congressional Quarterly, *Almanac 1989*, pp. 182–202, 11C; Kolb, *White House Daze*, pp. 125–64; Olson and Miller, "The 'Education President' at Midterm."
95. Ray Scheppach, "President's education meeting with Governors," NGA memo to David Demarest, January 24, 1989.
96. Scheppach, "President's education meeting with Governors," January 24, 1989.
97. David Baumann, "White House Education Summit Expected to be Held in Fall," *Education Daily*, 22, no. 96 (May 18, 1989), p.1.
98. Reagan Walker, "Education 'Summit' Scheduled for September, Governors Say," *Education Week* (May 24, 1989), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
99. Kolb, *White House Daze*, pp. 125–64.

100. The other members of the OERI team were Joseph Conaty, Ivor Pritchard, and David Stevenson—all of whom played key roles in the drafting of the pre- and post-summit national goals materials.
101. The first draft of that memo is undated, but the second has a date of June 7, 1989. The third draft simply states that it was faxed July 18, 1989—one day after the comparable OPBE/PES document was drafted. These drafts were provided to me by OERI and copies are now in my possession.
102. As the OERI team was drafting a possible set of goals, they were aware of the suggestions made by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in their goals publication in 1988.
103. OERI, “2002: A Nation of Learners,” draft, July 18, 1989.
104. OERI, “2002: A Nation of Learners,” draft, July 18, 1989.
105. Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation (OPBE)/Planning and Evaluation Service (PES), “National Educational Goals: A Strategy for Achieving Educational Excellence,” draft, July 17, 1989.
106. For a discussion of the later political controversy over the “opportunity to learn” standards, see Jennings, *Why National Standards and Tests?*; Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education*; Rothman, *Measuring Up*.
107. OPBE/PES, “National Educational Goals,” draft, July 17, 1989.
108. Office of the White House Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President to the National Governors’ Association,” July 31, 1989.
109. Roger B. Porter and Stephen M. Studdert, “President’s Education Summit Conference for Governors,” memo to John H. Sununu, August 14, 1989.
110. Porter and Studdert, “President’s Education Summit Conference for Governors,” August 14, 1989.
111. National Governors’ Association (NGA), “Synthesis of Pre-Summit Outreach Hearings,” National Governor’s Association, September 1989.
112. NGA, “Synthesis of Pre-Summit Outreach Hearings,” September 1989.

113. Bill Clinton, "Education Summit: Preparations and Expectations," memo to Democratic Governors' Association, September 25, 1989.
114. Clinton, "Education Summit," September 25, 1989.
115. William Safire, "Be Careful, Education Summiteers," [Minneapolis] *Star-Tribune* (September 19, 1989).
116. David S. Broder, "Education Summit Actually Might Boost Nation's Schools," *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch* (September 20, 1989).
117. Kenneth H. Bacon, "Education Summit Gets a Good Report Card Well in Advance of Next Week's Opening Bell," *Wall Street Journal* (September 20, 1989); Phil Kuntz, "Bush Puts Focus on Schools With Words, Not Money," *Congressional Quarterly* (September 23, 1989); Burt Solomon, "At School Summit, Will Governors....," *National Journal* (September 23, 1989).
118. Julie A. Miller, "Democrats Stress Party's Historic Role With Set of Six Key Goals for Schools," *Education Week* (September 27, 1989), retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.
119. White House, "The President's Education Summit for the Governors," briefing book, September 1989.
120. For an in-depth discussion of the participants at the summit and their roles, see Julie A. Miller, "Small Group's Inside Role in Goals-Setting Provides Clues to Education Policymaking," *Education Week* (March 14, 1990).
121. "A Jeffersonian Compact," *The New York Times* (October 1, 1989), p. 22.
122. "A Jeffersonian Compact," *The New York Times* (October 1, 1989), p. 22.
123. "A Jeffersonian Compact," *The New York Times* (October 1, 1989), p. 22.
124. "A Jeffersonian Compact," *The New York Times* (October 1, 1989), p. 22.