



***Every Child a Graduate: A Framework for an Excellent Education for all
Middle and High School Students***

*Transcript by:
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SUSAN FROST: Good morning. My name is Susan Frost and I'm the Executive Director of the Alliance for Excellent Education and I'd like to welcome you all here this morning.

Today, there are six million students in our middle schools and high schools at risk of failure. Although approximately half of these students are poor, three million come from middle and upper income families. And although 1.5 million are African American and 1 million are Hispanic, roughly half of all older students at risk of failure are white. Slightly more than a third come from schools in our cities, but two-thirds attend schools in our suburbs and in our rural areas.

These children are in every community in America and my bet is that you each know at least one of them, a friend or a neighbor's child, a niece or a nephew or perhaps even your own, because any older student who falls off the academic track and is unable to get his or her bearings will get little or no help in most of our high schools to get back onto the road to success and prepared for college.

One of our national advisory board members, Rosa Smith, who is the president of the Schott Foundation in Boston, put it even more starkly in a recent speech. "On December 7th," she states, "1941 an attack on Pearl Harbor took the lives of 3,043 Americans. On September 11th terrorist attacks in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania claimed about the same number of lives. But every single day of the year on average we lose 3,022 young people and nobody notices. These students are the ones who drop out of our high schools. It's America's great silent crisis.

"By the end of a typical year 544,000 young people have fallen through the cracks. Their productive capacities are diminished. In many cases their lives are lost, broken in dead-end jobs, wasted in prison or poured away in the violence of the urban streets.

"If we were to respond appropriately, every fiber of the nation's energy and treasure would be brought to bear, a Marshall Plan would be put in place, the nation's airwaves and headlines would be consumed with the challenge. But in the face of the massive problem before us, what we find for the most part is posturing, hand wringing and a collective national shrug;" quite powerful words from Rosa.

The Alliance for Excellent Education was founded to make it possible for six million at-risk students, those in the lowest quartile of academic achievement, to achieve high standards and to graduate prepared for college and success in life. Gerry and Lilo Leeds, who have spent their lives committed to making an excellent education the right of every child, are the founders of the Alliance. They're here with us today and I'd like to recognize them and their son Dan Leeds who are in the front row— if you could just turn around. (Applause.)

As an advocacy, policy and research organization, the Alliance's audience includes the policy communities at all levels of government, other organizations, many of whom are represented here today who are working to improve education and the lives of these young people, the media, parents, teachers, students, elected officials and most of all a concerned public.

In 2001 the Alliance released *Investing in Excellence: Making Title I Work for All Students*, which examined the federal role in helping to educate secondary school students and found, lo and behold, that there was little federal effort or resources going to students at these age levels. Title I, which is currently authorized to add about \$3,000 per eligible child to the national per pupil average, is funded today at a third of that authorized level.

Because of lack of funding, school districts have been forced to put scarce resources towards helping their younger students, but the price has been to ignore the needs of older students who continue to need academic support to achieve to high standards.

The report we are releasing today, *Every Child a Graduate*, documents the growing academic, and I say growing academic crisis of six million of these at-risk secondary school students.

At the heart of the report is four recommendations that outline a framework for an excellent education for all middle school and high school students: an adolescent literacy initiative, a teacher and principal quality initiative, a college preparation initiative and to help make it possible to put those strategies in place a small learning communities initiative.

In a moment the author of the paper, Scott Joftus, will walk us through those four initiatives.

Responding to the paper will be Richard Riley, former U.S. Secretary of Education and currently a senior partner in the law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, Dr.

Gerry House, President of the Institute of Student Achievement in New York and a former superintendent of schools in Memphis, Tennessee, and Jane Hannaway, Director of the Education Policy Center at the Urban Institute here in Washington.

So what do we hope to happen after today? After the release of the report, the article in *USA Today* that I hope all of you had the chance to see, the piece that we understand was on NPR yesterday and last evening, where do we go from here? In the coming months and in the next Congress the Alliance will urge our elected leaders to build on the success of last year's landmark No Child Left Behind Act, which focused mainly on our younger students. We will make the case that it is time for the country to go the next step and to commit the resources necessary to ensure that every child is a graduate prepared for college and success. It is an investment that will be recouped many times over in economic growth, enhanced tax revenues and reduced spending on unemployment, criminal justice and social welfare programs.

And now I'd like to introduce Dr. Scott Joftus, who will be taking us through the recommendations, but let me tell you a little bit about Scott first.

Dr. Joftus is the Director of Public Policy for the Alliance. He joined us 60 days ago. He is a graduate of Duke University, the California Berkeley School of Public Policy and has his doctorate from George Washington University. He's done policy analysis and research on education issues the McKenzie Group, the Council for Basic Education and the Public Policy Institute of California. And just as important, he spent two years as a public school teacher of 4th and 5th graders as a member of the first class of Teach for America from 1990 to 1992. And today he is the author of our report, *Every Child a Graduate*. Thank you. (Applause.)

SCOTT JOFTUS: Thank you. Today we're going to take you through our logic in coming up with the framework for an excellent education that we've developed over actually several months. I can't take even major responsibility for it; it's been a work in progress for close to a year I think now. But what I'm going to take you through is the definition of the problem as we see it, the implications of that problem, the causes of that problem and then how our framework for an excellent education addresses those causes of the problem.

We believe that the dropout rate in this country has been drastically underreported for years now. The U.S. Department of Education typically reports a graduation rate of about 86, 87 percent. That's based on surveys of households of 18 to 24-year olds.

Some work by Jay Green and others have found that if you divide the number of graduates in a given year by the number of 8th graders who entered five years earlier, the graduation rate is actually much, much lower. And you can see overall what they found is approximately 70 percent of students who enter 8th grade are graduating within five years. And you can see in some of our urban areas, and this is true across the country, we just select a few to highlight here, the numbers are much, much worse. Cleveland, in particular, has the lowest and is frankly appalling.

What happens to the kids that don't graduate in five years from 8th grade? This is a very rough analysis we've done on the data and this is sketchy. The American Youth Policy Forum will be looking more closely at this, but based on the preliminary analysis what we found was about a quarter of the students who aren't graduating on time will ultimately graduate. They may be held back a year and ultimately graduate or they may graduate from an alternative high school type program. Another quarter or so will earn a GED, which we believe in this era of high stakes assessments just doesn't count for as much as it used to. But another 50 percent of the 30 percent who aren't graduating on time will never receive a diploma of any kind and that's troubling.

The implications are such that this trend could get worse before it gets better, and certainly for students who have the greatest needs. Some work by Keith, who is in our audience today, has found that high stakes assessments are picking up speed across the country. There is still some debate among analysts as to whether high stakes assessments will increase the dropout rate. Those people think as you raise the bar on high stakes assessments it's logical to think that more students will drop out. Others say no, this will serve as a motivator for students to work harder, for teachers to align their curriculum and instructional practices with those assessments and ultimately the graduation rate will ultimately rise. So we're not entering that debate, but one thing we know almost for certain is that these assessments will have a disproportionate and adverse effect on minority and poor students.

The implications of a bad education are, as we're saying, it's a million dollar mistake. And if you look at the bold area on the screen, high school dropouts, if you project their annual earnings across a lifetime of earnings and compare it to college graduates that it works out to be almost a million dollars exactly.

What are the causes of these problems? Well, we think that there are four, in four areas at least: First, low literacy among adolescents; second, a poor quality of teachers and educators, especially for those students who need the best quality teachers; third, there's poor planning and support structures in place for the students who need those supports and planning; and finally we believe that the environment of the high school or the structure of the high school itself is not conducive to high standards.

I'm going to take you through each one of these points quickly.

Low literacy rates: If you look at the 1998 NAEP data, which is the last time that 8th and 12th graders took the tests and for which we have data available, 12th graders and 8th graders, approximately a quarter of both of those populations of students are scoring below basic levels. If you take that 25 percent and extrapolate it across all 6th through 12 graders, that's where we get the six million students at risk. That's obviously a huge number. And if you look at that lowest quartile of performance, those are the students that disproportionately make up the dropout population. So it seems like it should make a lot of sense to focus our attention and our resources on that population of students.

For teacher quality and education quality there's been a lot of work done on this recently and a very recent report by the Education Trust has found that overall there is large numbers of teachers at the secondary level who are not prepared in the subject that they teach; if they're a math teacher they don't have a math degree from college. But the problem is much worse in schools that are either high poverty or high minority. Obviously in situations where you have both high poverty and high minority the problem is exacerbated. So we think that this is a problem and can even be considered a civil rights issue in that teachers and principals aren't being allocated to the schools where there is the greatest need for high quality teachers.

Inadequate planning and support: The data on this is not great right now, and again this is an area that we'll look at more closely, but there has been some research done by Lawrence Steinberg and others looking at the disengagement of students at the middle and high school level. And as you can see, it's a large percentage. Approximately half the students at the middle and high school level feel disengaged from school. And the problem is that the support structures, which are often there in elementary schools for students, whether it be counseling or tutoring and other types of services, tend to disappear at this time, just as students are feeling more and more disengaged from the education process.

For the learning environments we focused on small schools, and the trend has been over the last 50 years that schools, as with things in our economy tend toward consolidation. And the reason for that was fairly silent. I think that folks felt that by bringing more students into the same building you could provide a larger range of courses, you could get an economy of scale in terms of cost per pupil. But what we find is that first of all that if you look at it by cost per graduate as opposed to cost per student small schools are actually less expensive than larger schools.

Another finding in looking at some education trust data, again from their Web site on high quality, high performing, high poverty schools, if you look at the state of Texas and look at the top quarter of schools, 53 of those schools are high poverty in the state of Texas and of those 48 are schools with fewer than 600 students. If you did a similar analysis across other states, you find similar proportions. You don't have the large numbers that you have in Texas but you have proportions of one out of one, six out of eight, three out of five, things like that if you look at other states.

So what's the approach? I think too often we analysts say look at all of these problems and what do we do about it. We've actually tried to come up with some recommendations that can be focused on the federal level. We're calling it a framework for an excellent education for all middle and high school students.

This framework includes four initiatives, as Susan mentioned, and each of these four initiatives are aligned we think well with the causes of the problem, of the dropout problem. You have a literacy problem so we feel like we need an adolescent literacy initiative. We have a problem bringing high quality teachers and principles into poor schools. We have an initiative that provides incentives for that. There's a problem with

college preparation, planning and support services, so we've developed an initiative, and similarly with the small schools.

So the adolescent literacy initiative generally, and there's a lot more detail in your report, but generally what the adolescent literacy initiative seeks to do is to provide a literacy specialist in every middle and high school who can take responsibility for making sure that teachers across the curriculum, first of all, are able to incorporate literacy into their instructional practices and who also can coordinate the implementation of research-based instructional material and also help teachers identify students who can't be helped just in a normal English or history class, who can identify students who need special attention and either prepare special studio courses as districts such as Denver are doing right now where students are receiving double doses of reading and receiving instructional strategies that will help them become more effective readers, and then make sure that those students are progressing in a timely way.

For the teacher and principal quality initiative the focus is on providing incentives for teachers and principals to teach in the schools that need those teachers and principals the most. We know from research that teachers and principals both, all things being held equal, will choose not to work in schools that have higher percentages of poor and minority students. And why that is is debatable, but we certainly know, for example, that those schools are serving higher numbers of kids who are having harder times and it's more work to bring them up to high standards, and also that those schools tend to have worse working conditions, whether the building is in poor shape, whether the materials aren't available, et cetera.

So we believe that by providing tax credits, scholarships and loan forgiveness it won't solve the problem completely but it will serve as another incentive for teachers and principals to teach in the schools that have large numbers of poor and minority students.

In return, we call for schools and districts to provide mentoring programs for new teachers so that they're just not thrown into situations where they're going to sink or swim and ultimately fail, and to also provide ongoing content based professional development for all teachers and principals, focused on literacy, focused on the needs of high risk students but also that address the needs of each school, whether it be a school identifies a need of improving their science instruction, that would be the focus of the professional development.

For the college preparation initiative we're calling for a six-year plan for all entering 9th graders. And what this plan would do is it would lay out the course work for all students, whether they're aspiring to go to Harvard, whether they're aspiring to go to the state college, whether they're aspiring to community college or whether they're aspiring to go into a technical field and trade. We believe that they need a plan that lays out the courses that they need as well as the support services when necessary, whether it be extra tutoring, whether it be after-school programs, whether it be social services for these students who need that extra support.

The counselors who will work with the students, the parent and the teachers to develop this plan will then become student advocates and these advocates will make sure that those students receive the services that they need, that it's not just a piece of paper that you file in a cabinet, but that the services are received, that they're available in the school and our initiative calls for funding for those types of programs, whether it's after school, GEAR UP or TRIO type programs, counseling programs, et cetera.

Now to the small learning communities initiative: This is an initiative that's based on the program of similar name within the U.S. Department of Education. We believe that by providing grants to current schools that are large, whether they be a thousand or 3,000 students, that they receive grants that allow them to develop schools within a school, whether they be career academies or focus on a particular math/science theme, but also that allows for new schools that are being built, that they think about developing schools that aren't these 3,000 student type monstrosities and have the supports in place.

These schools we don't believe that just by providing smaller schools that that's a silver bullet, that that solves the problem by themselves, but what we believe is that by breaking schools into manageable pieces, manageable sizes, that the other initiatives that we called for and that the other reforms that are taking place in this accountability movement will be easier to implement. When you have a school with 600 or a school within a school with 600 it's a lot easier to talk about bringing in a literacy initiative, for example, a literacy specialist who can train teachers and who can identify students who have literacy problems than it is to do that in a school that has 1,200, 1,500, 2,000 students. So again it's not a silver bullet, it's not a solution that by itself will solve any problem, but we feel like it will facilitate the implementation of other reforms.

Now, people ask us, aren't these initiatives expensive, and the answer is depending on how you look at it, yes, but the alternative is worse we think. And we believe that an investment in this framework will ultimately pay for itself and do so fairly quickly.

If the United States lowered the illiteracy rates to the rates that are in Sweden, which is approximately two-thirds of the United States, you can see what the economic impact would be. This is research conducted by Anthony Carnevale with Educational Testing Service. We're going to look further into this issue, but we thought that this was very striking and that very, very quickly this framework would pay for itself.

So in conclusion we believe that the *Framework for an Excellent Education* is a strong approach in calling for a partnership between the federal government, the states, districts, business leaders, community leaders, schools to focus on the needs of these six million kids, who we believe have been neglected for too long.

And I think with that, I'm going to turn it to Susan. Thanks.

(Applause.)

SUSAN FROST: Thank you, Scott.

I'd like to introduce in more detail our three respondents and then tell you that you will have plenty of opportunity for questions. Let me also say that I think we struck a chord with the issue and perhaps also with our panelists and so I apologize for all of you standing out there, but I'm glad to see it.

Secretary Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education in the past administration, launched historic initiatives to raise students' academic standards, improve instruction for poor and disadvantaged children, expand grant and loan programs and improve teaching. And I could continue on in the eight years of his leadership. Prior to that position, Mr. Riley was governor of South Carolina, where the South Carolina constitution was amended so that he could run for a second term. He was also a state representative and a state senator and an officer in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Riley graduated from Furman University and holds a law degree from the University of South Carolina. The *Christian Science Monitor* said that many Americans regard Dick Riley as, I quote, "one of the great statesmen of education in this century," end quote, and I'm sure many of you in the audience share that opinion.

Dr. Gerry House is president and CEO of the Institute for Student Achievement, a New York based nonprofit organization founded by Gerry and Lilo Leeds. It works in partnership with high schools and school districts to ensure that students considered least likely to complete their education graduate from high school prepared for college. Prior to her tenure at ISA, Dr. House spent eight years as a school superintendent in Memphis, Tennessee and led a district-wide comprehensive reform effort that resulted in all schools in the district adopting a coherent approach for restructuring the schools so that all children received an excellent education. Dr. House served as superintendent in Chapel Hill, North Carolina for seven years and she served as a teacher, a junior and senior high school guidance counselor, principal and assistant superintendent.

Jane Hannaway is an organizational sociologist with her work focusing on the study of educational organizations. She's currently the director of the Education Policy Center at the Urban Institute here in Washington. She has also been a senior researcher with the Consortium for Policy Research and Education, better known as CPRE. Her recent research focuses on structural reforms in education, particular reforms promoting accountability, competition and choice. Dr. Hannaway previously served on the faculty of Colombia, Princeton and Stanford University. She has authored or coauthored four books and numerous papers in education and management journals.

I'm going to first turn to former secretary Richard Riley. (Applause.)

RICHARD RILEY: Thank you so much, Susan, and I'm very proud of your work and the work of your alliance.

Scott, I was so pleased with this report and I thank you and all of the staff, Gerry and Lilo Leeds, Dan and the rest of the family, thank you all for your support and commitment to equity, to excellence for all of America's children, and I thank you for that.

I think this report really deserves some careful attention. I think it's a very interesting framework. You know, the No Child Left Behind legislation certainly is promising. It's an extension of all of the work that we've done for years in terms of the standards movement, but I tell you it's promising but it's incomplete. It creates a new framework and a long-term foundation for raising standards; it does that. It moves the standards movement forward. And I supported this bipartisan agreement and hope that Congress will fully fund it. But it doesn't go far enough. It doesn't go deep enough, especially when you look at the nation's high schools and middle schools.

The number of dropouts, all of that information has been shared with you and it's very significant.

The report points out that school districts are kind of forced, given the limited funds they have, to make these very hard choices about where their federal dollars will be placed. Most of them, of course, focus their dollars on early years and I don't quarrel with that. I'm a strong supporter of early childhood and certainly high quality in those elementary school years.

But these young people who are now in high school and middle school are kind of caught in this transition. They were not there in kindergarten and coming on through a high standards system that was in place, that was working well, that was properly assessing their progress, and they have caught themselves now in this situation of high demanding standards and they are somewhat struggling, as we all know, to make it.

And they've identified some six million of these young people. We know that a lot of students learn basic reading but the next step as they get on up they don't follow through with that, they get then in high school and read at 5th or 6th grade level and their future certainly is in serious danger.

Now, this report in a thoughtful and comprehensive way looks at these issues and then comes in with this adolescent reading initiative that Scott described, the national teacher and principal quality initiative, we've got to do something to attract quality teachers and principals into poor challenging neighborhoods, where we need high quality teachers in the worst way and all of the incentives now move in the other direction. There are some very bold proposals here that would literally do that.

This idea of access to college, preparing children for college, having an individualized plan, I've always been a strong supporter of individualizing education. I think we're moving more in that direction, I hope, but this plan for every 9th grader to have a plan, much like we do in IDEA for disabled children, has a plan for some six years to be thinking with a counselor, a qualified counselor on a one-to-one basis about their future.

And finally the smaller learning communities initiative, some great work has been done by Gates and Ford, Knowledge Works and others really looking at personalized, engaged education at the middle and high school level. Safety is another important feature.

The economics of it I think are clear and Susan and Scott pointed that out. It is a long-term investment but it will absolutely pay for itself, so I'm very pleased to associate myself with this very fine report.

Thank you. (Applause.)

GERRY HOUSE: Good morning. I want you to imagine with me for a moment what America's high schools would look and feel like if indeed no child is left behind, what would high schools be like if we created for all students the type of high schools that your adolescents attend or high schools that you would like some significant adolescent in your life to attend, what would schools look like.

I would argue first that good high schools are student centered. They are places where students learn in small, caring, personalized communities, where they are accepted in their classrooms, they feel safe and where their teachers and their peers care about them.

But small is not enough. High schools also must be havens of intellectual rigor where all students are being prepared to attend post secondary education.

In a high school where not child is indeed left behind students are taught by well-prepared teachers who not only know their content well but they know how to engage students and make a meaning out of content, knowledge and facts.

And finally, high schools are good places where students who enter school with deficiencies in academics or with a lot of social, emotional issues that interfere with their abilities to learn have these needs addressed through counseling, through family supports, through other safety nets.

Now, the question is, is it possible for our vision to become a reality, and I would argue that it certainly is. The goal of transformed high schools is reachable and it really is a must. To do otherwise means that six million children do indeed get left behind.

An excellent education is no longer considered the birthright of a privileged few, but has emerged as the expectation for all students. And if we are to make it the expectation for all students, then there are some things that must be done. It's not easy. In my years of education I know that high schools are complicated, they are complex, they can be chaotic places but changing them is indeed doable with the right change strategies and financing for those strategies.

So the Alliance's *Framework for an Excellent Education for all Middle and High school Students* could not be more timely. The vision of a high school that leaves no child behind really embodies the same components of the Alliance's framework.

And I would just like to mention the organization that I'm with presently, and Susan mentioned that in the introduction, the Institute for Student Achievement. At the Institute

we are working with schools and school districts to turn high schools into places where no child is left behind. Our goal is to work with these schools so that students graduate and they pursue post secondary education. And we do that through helping schools create small, effective learning communities.

And what we've learned is that when schools focus both on the academics and teacher preparation for those academics and the social, emotional support system for students, the very strategies that you heard Scott mention as part of the Alliance's framework, we've found that student engagement and performance will increase.

The pilot schools in which we worked last year made tremendous improvement, for example, in attendance. One of the principals stated that in September of 2001 when he began a small learning community of 9th graders the weekly attendance was below 70 percent. He said by January it was close to 90 percent and that rate was sustained throughout most of the second semester. So we know our first challenge is actually getting these students to school and once they are there then we're able to actually teach them.

It was Ron Edmonds who said we know what to do; the issue is having the will to do it. The Alliance's framework is the right thing to do. Now we must muster the will and the resources to do it.

Thank you. (Applause.)

SUSAN FROST: Thank you, Gerry.

Jane.

JANE HANNAWAY: I'm delighted to be here to discuss the Alliance for Excellent Education report, *Every Child a Graduate*, that Scott Joftus has written and thank you, Susan, for inviting me. I'm particularly pleased to be on the same panel with Secretary Riley and Gerry House, who's out there in the field actually doing it.

Like Secretary Riley and Gerry House, I agree that the report points out a big gap in the current federal effort in education, regardless of the other virtues of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

I want to, however, take a slightly different tack in my comments from the earlier commentators. I want to recommend this report to you for other reasons than the bottom line, that we should pay more attention to middle and high school students in our reforms. That makes sense. It makes sense in terms of policy and practice and I agree.

But this report is a good report. Indeed, it is a very good report. And I should point out in the interest of full disclosure that I have no financial or personal stake in this report or in the Alliance. (Laughter.)

But let me tell you why I think it's so good. First, it sets up the problem and it sets it up with hard facts and figures. You can't read this report and not conclude that we don't have a big problem in high schools. Twenty-five percent of the secondary students score below basic on the NAPE scores, as Scott pointed out. That's a lot. But the situation is even worse, because the poorer students, the weakest students have already left. Dropout rates in our urban schools exceeds 50 percent, so that 25 percent scoring below basis is an underestimate of the extent to which high school aged students are performing academically in this country.

Now, you could say, well, it's really not all that important, these students will make their way through, they'll grow up, they'll get jobs; wrong. The structure of the job market has changed dramatically in the last quarter century, as Scott again points out very clearly in this report. The likelihood that these kids, without skills and without a high school diploma, are going to make it in this society in upcoming years is very small.

So the first reason I like the report is that it sets up the problem, sets it up well, sets it up with facts and figures.

Second, the report identifies very reasonable, well-founded, well-argued, research based solution. Quality teachers, smaller learning communities; we know they make a difference.

There are over 90 footnotes in this report. Now, the report is not a tome. For those of you who have taken a look at it, it is crisply written, it's well organized, it's easy to read. But for those of us who are skeptics and who always say, well where's the evidence, where's the beef whenever someone makes a statement, it's there, it's in the 90 footnotes at the back. For example, smaller schools have real benefits for students and most importantly they make the biggest difference for the most disadvantaged students. The research cites are in the report.

Third, another reason I appreciate this report, there's a discussion of costs. I think all too often we hear idealistic, wishful thinking notions of policies and programs, especially in Washington and especially before elections. But this report does not jerk away from a discussion of costs. For example, right up front it says the cost per student in smaller schools is somewhat higher than in larger schools simply because of economies of scale. However, the cost per graduate is lower and Scott made this point and I'm simply emphasizing it. And that is the right focus. There's not much value in attending high school if you don't graduate. Graduation is the right measure.

The report also details the financial returns to individuals for more education and how it has changed over time and in short they have increased markedly in recent years.

The report also very importantly details the returns to society, to the country and the national economy, to investment in education, and these too have increased.

And I use the word "investment" consciously. It was a word that was used constantly in the Clinton administration in discussing education policies, and I think we would all agree that education is not consumption; education is, in fact, investment. The payoffs come later and this report helps identify what those payoffs will be and their magnitude, which is large.

In sum, I like this report a lot, as I think has been evident. I should also point out that I've been editor of a major national research journal and I can be a tough critic, but this is one of the better reports that I have seen produced. It is timely. It is research based. It identifies realistic policies that can be undertaken in short order and it scopes out the costs and the benefits of those policies. (Applause.)

SUSAN FROST: Thank you very much.

What we'd like to do now is open up for questions of any of our respondents or of Scott and myself. We had planned to, and because this is being taped for later use, to ask you to come to the microphone, but Cindy points out to me that's pretty impossible in some cases, so I will try to sum up your question for the purpose of the tape after you ask it and go from there.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Two of the panel members talked or mentioned at least in passing counseling as a part of the learning environment. The report does not exclude that, but it also does not emphasize it at the level that it could be emphasized, I think; the theory being, in plain English, if you can't reach the child you can't teach them. And you have no idea what that child has gone through on the way to the schoolhouse in that morning and when they present themselves at your classroom door. That's where the counselors come in and can help that child deal with some of those issues that are not necessarily educational related but can help. And I wonder if there are plans to extend or if the possibility of extending to be more inclusive of a counseling component in the plan or how you would respond to that please.

SUSAN FROST: Let me respond in general first and then I think Scott may also want to.

The four initiatives that we outline in the report are really the beginning we feel to making the case for what needs to be done. We've outlined areas that we think have to be addressed and not addressed only one of just adolescent literacy or just small schools but addressed in concert across the board, if you're going to make this work. Most of the models that are out there that are successful have these basic components and without one of them being in place you're probably going to lessen the impact on the results.

But as far as being a complete look at any one of them we expect to do further work in each of these areas. We will be co-publishing with the American Association of School

Administrators, for instance, hopefully coming out in November a paper on teacher incentives and looking at that much more closely. We will be doing work in adolescent literacy and in the college preparation initiative and small schools in the coming months.

Scott?

SCOTT JOFTUS: Just real quick, the college preparation initiative calls for 24,000 more school counselors, in addition a fivefold increase in the GEAR UP and TRIO programs, which as you know have a pretty heavy counseling component to them. So I feel like it's in there and we do need better research I think on the impact that school counselors have on outcomes of students. I think that's still a little sketchy and it's something that we hope to look into further.

QUESTION: I thought this was a press conference; I'm sorry.

First of all, I'm with Hispanic Link News Service and I would like to know generally what Hispanic educational organizations did you involve in the project and what Hispanic educational leaders and organizations there are in the hierarchy of your alliance?

And secondly for Dr. Riley, do you feel that a special look at Hispanic students needs to be taken to find answers to the dropout dilemma, particularly since Hispanics are about triple the size of other dropouts?

SUSAN FROST: First of all, I think we all look to the National Association of Bilingual Education, among others, in terms of outlining what the needs are for students across all areas and the work that they do. We have no organizational members, per se. We have outreach to all the educational organizations I think that we know of on this report to make sure that they know that it exists and also to ask them for comments and endorsements, et cetera, and we certainly have done that across the Hispanic community as well.

But to address the substantive question, Mr. Secretary?

RICHARD RILEY: Well, as you know I've worked closely with Hispanic organizations and Hispanic teachers and leaders on the very serious dropout issue and many other issues. And this whole report is kind of built around the significant dropout issue. Needless to say, graduation is what it's kind of geared to.

So I think when you look at the major problem in education for Hispanics, as we've always pondered, as you point out, the high level of dropouts. That's a crisis in this country. It's a crisis in the Hispanic community. We need to do something about it. And this report I think would go further than anything I've seen yet and I'm very proud of that.

We had a young high school teacher in to meet with the advisory board yesterday and he's out at a high school in Maryland and his statement was dealing with 9th graders who were at risk, who would be part of this six million children, that the majority of them

were Hispanic students there in his high school and that he was working with them on an individual basis, with counselors, all of the planning, the needs, especially reading, which is a very important part of this.

So, yes, I think the report really deals heavily with Hispanic children and students.

JANE HANNAWAY: Can I do a follow-up to that? I think you are right. I think there is a terribly serious problem here and I think it's particularly serious for immigrant students, because a large fraction of immigrant students are coming into high schools so they're walking into a difficult peer culture, they're walking in without language skills and that's where we see terribly high dropout rates. And if you're interested, I have a report on this from the Institute that I could give you.

SUSAN FROST: Thank you.

Do we have any other press questions right now that need to be asked first? Yes?

QUESTION: Hi. Ellie Ashford, School Board News at NSBA.

I'd like to ask how much it would cost to implement these recommendations. I didn't see it in the report.

And also I'd like to ask Secretary Riley, you said you think the report doesn't go far enough and I'd like to find out what else you think is needed.

RICHARD RILEY: Let me clarify that first. What I was talking about is No Child Left Behind, not this report; that report.

SUSAN FROST: Scott, do you want to address the cost question?

SCOTT JOFTUS: Sure. The cost question we did purposely not include in the report because we wanted this to be a policy document and the costing is difficult. I mean, it's hard to come up with the specifics quickly on such wide-ranging initiatives. But based on the preliminary analysis that we've done we've calculated that the cost would be approximately \$2,400 per year per each of the 6 million students and that's for all four initiatives and this also includes money to help with research evaluation and diagnostics that we feel like will help support the No Child Left Behind legislation, build up its accountability in the sense of providing information about students that can actually be used in instruction as opposed to what we believe is a lot of the accountability, which is more used either against the student or against the school.

QUESTION: Hi. I'm Dan Burke at the C&A Corporation.

I wondered if you had considered as part of the framework some community centers or outreach. The reason I ask that is that while students are being supported to catch up the world is going on and their education is going on, so time is not fungible in this case.

You have the high school day or the middle school day; you're doing more. I wonder if you considered using after-school as a support?

SUSAN FROST: Yes. We think that extended learning time for these students is critical, that after-school programs and summer school opportunities, et cetera are also critical. We've addressed those, again we touched on it and we'll get into more detail as we continue.

But obviously community-based organizations, other organizations that work with students outside the school parameter are also very critical to this process.

What we would like to talk about when we talk about extended learning time however is extended learning time for what, to make sure that we are not doing drill and kill, doing the same kinds of instruction that has turned these kids off, though at the same time that we're teaching them how to read and that we're teaching them how to read well enough to take the challenging courses in the school setting and that we're giving them the experiences so that the written word on a page becomes alive to them so that they then engage in reading and engage in those experiences and we think that those opportunities after school can certainly make a difference.

Gerry?

GERRY HOUSE: I'd like to make the comment that it's not an either/or and so often in school reform we think of a single initiative as the cure all, but what the report is advocating is the combination of many different strategies. After-school alone won't make up for deficits that kids experience 180 days in their regular classrooms, so in addition to raising the level of what's happening in the regular classroom, yes, these students do need extended learning but the extended learning needs to be connected to what they need to know and be able to do in the regular program that can't be done in the hours that students are in the confines of the school day. But the important point is it takes a lot of the strategies working in combination and coherence in order to have these students reach the highest standards.

SUSAN FROST: Other questions? Yes, Tom?

QUESTION: In regard to the small learning communities, a great deal of the research is based upon small school versus large school, whereas some of the approaches deal with breaking larger schools into smaller units, which isn't exactly the same thing.

Would you care to comment on that, maybe Scott and maybe Jane?

SUSAN FROST: And, Tom, could you tell us where you are now?

QUESTION: Sorry. I am Tom Fagan. I am private consultant.

SCOTT JOFTUS: You bring up a point that I think is one of the reasons that, for example, the current administration does not support extending the smaller learning communities program. The research is extensive on small schools, but as you suggest there's also some holes. And part of it is, for example, that the emphasis on scientifically based research, it's not there for small schools. It tends to be qualitative. It tends to have been repeated for 30 years and similar findings for 30 years tends to suggest that you might be onto something. But we don't have the control group of looking at comparable students in small schools or schools within a school versus large schools.

So there is somewhat of a leap of faith I think with the research, but we feel that, and, Jane, maybe you can speak to this as well, that while it's true that it doesn't speak to all situations that we might like it to, the smaller schools, the fact that the findings are so consistent and have gone on for such a long time we feel like that it's worth paying attention to.

JANE HANNAWAY: I think you bring up a good point, because we have a huge capital investment in buildings, especially in cities, so we can't go out there and build new small schools and so the response of people who on the basis of research evidence firmly believe that smaller units make a difference are trying these schools within a school model. The research is just now coming out on that. I think we're going to be involved in a big study in Chicago looking at it.

Some of the early findings that are out say well it depends, as most research does, it depends and it depends on -- and this is early research again -- it depends on things like the degree or autonomy of the schools within the school, it depends on whether or not the extracurricular activities are done independently within those sub-units or they're done across those sub-units, that you lose something. You may get a better baseball team but you lose some of the identity and social control that goes on in the smaller schools when you do that.

So I think it's going to be a more complicated engineering problem to get the successes that have been shown in small schools to also show up in schools within a school, but I think some early indicators are starting to come out on how to do it.

GERRY HOUSE: I just want to mention a large high school that is actually being transformed into small schools in New York. Morris High School in the Bronx is a very large high school and is considered probably one of the most dysfunctional high schools in New York and that building itself is there but it's being transformed into small schools within the same building, starting this year with 9th grade so all 9th graders who would have gone to Morris really are now in a small school in Morris in the high school. And each year another 9th grade will go into one of those small schools.

So it's a way for principals and superintendents, who tend to think that the impediment to small schools is that we don't have the physical facility to do that, is to think about how do you use your same physical facility but create different structures and different

patterns with arrangements of students and teachers to create what a small freestanding school could actually accomplish.

RICHARD RILEY: Let me make one comment, too. Regardless of the research that is and isn't and how detailed it has been, the six million students that we're talking about I could almost assure you that a method to engage them in learning, to connect them up with learning individually would be the most desirable thing that we could possibly do. And I do think the size of the school is a very important factor, also this individualized plan, the idea of special attention from a counselor, I think it's very, very significant to engage young people, connect them up with their learning.

SUSAN FROST: Thank you. I think we have time for many one or two more questions. Yes, ma'am?

QUESTION: I should say at the outset that I'm a very strong supporter of smaller learning communities and have done some work in that area. I'm also a parent involved in the smaller learning communities grant in Montgomery County, where we have the largest high school in the state in Blair.

One of the concerns we have is as we develop our smaller learning communities in the four downtown high schools what safeguards need to be put in place to make sure that smaller learning communities in a school of 3,200 or more don't serve to re-segregate children by race, ethnicity and income? And I'd be very interested in any comments you have.

SUSAN FROST: Scott?

SCOTT JOFTUS: Fran, I think we should probably ask you that question. (Laughter.) It's something we haven't looked into a lot. I think again, as Jane mentioned in her comments, we know that research that has looked at the issue shows that such small schools tend to help poor and minority students even more than white middle and upper middle class students. It helps to close the achievement gap.

In terms of how do you ensure that if you have four academies within a school that you don't get all of one group of students going to one academy, we haven't looked closely at that yet and I think that's something we'll have to do more of.

SUSAN FROST: But I do think that superintendents and principals have looked at this issue much more closely recently because of the problems that have arisen and are working to figure that out on a district-by-district basis.

Can I ask for one more? Yes, sir.

QUESTION: I have a question about the focus on adolescent literacy. It's clear that the current administration in No Child Left Behind is starting to shift more to the word

"reading" and away from the word literacy in some of the discussions about basic skills and the like.

One could argue at the other end of the spectrum that literacy could incorporate scientific literacy, numeric literacy, technical literacy, computer literacy, et cetera.

I'd like to know kind of where you see your recommendation under the first initiative following along that spectrum of pure reading versus this other interpretation of literacy in a broader sense?

SUSAN FROST: I think we deliberately named the initiative the Adolescent Literacy Initiative because we are looking at literacy as the foundation for everything else that goes on with the framework of learning.

I think people have asked us, well, what happened to math and science in all of this and we have responded, you cannot take a challenging math course if you can't read the math problem. You cannot deal with science concepts and advanced scientific inquiry if you don't have reading and writing skills that are up to that challenge.

We also want to make sure that we're not talking about it's enough to just teach a child how to read and write in high school; it isn't. That's the foundation and I think many of the 9th grade academy models are looking at how do boot-camp almost the kids in 9th grade to do the kinds of intense work that is required if they're not up to speed, if they're reading and writing at a 5th grade level, to be able to get them ready to go on to more challenging coursework in high school and then into college where they're not in remedial courses in our community colleges.

The last thing that we want to do is essentially say to kids we want you to take rigorous academic curriculum and challenging courses but we're not going to help you get the foundation to get there. And unfortunately that seems to be what we're saying at the moment and what this report attempts to zero in on.

Scott, anything else?

RICHARD RILEY: She had had one more question.

SUSAN FROST: One more question. Yes, ma'am?

QUESTION: Do any of the initiatives take into account the special needs and challenges faced by the Latino community? For example, your teacher and principal initiative, does that include anything for recruiting bilingual teachers or the needs of migrant children?

This is Arlene Martinez, Hispanic Link News Service.

SUSAN FROST: Your colleague was here earlier and asked us that same question, but let me just address it in general.

This is one of the areas obviously. Our six million kids that we have looked at, a lot of them need help in the area of dual language, in the area of looking at how we can address the special issues that they have, both the kids that arrive who are literate in their own language and the kids who are not, as well as the kids who have grown up here.

We expect to look at that population and other parts of who are these six million children and what are their special needs as the work of the Alliance goes further.

If I can, I'd like to introduce the lady who's been playing the role of the microphone, because she's also a very important part of the Alliance when she's not doing this. Cindy Sadler is our director of development and external relations. She's been with us for all of 30 days, but she's a terrific member of our senior team.

And we will be available to answer questions on an individual basis. Let me direct you to our Web site, www.all4ed.org. It's in the back of your materials.

And let me also say that in addition to the materials that you have here in hard copy we will have other materials available on the Web site. We have a fairly extensive state-by-state piece to the Web sites that will give you facts and figures on high school and high school students. We also have about 30 or 40 examples across the country of where these initiatives in part or in whole are at work already. And those will be up on the Web site by the end of the week so that you can see where these kinds of efforts are going on in places across the country and hopefully some day in the near future in every high school in America.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

[END OF EVENT]