# ENSURING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MINORITY CHILDREN

# HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, MAY 1, 2001

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# HEARING ON ENSURING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MINORITY CHILDREN

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**Tuesday, May 1, 2001**

House of Representatives

Subcommittee on Education Reform

Committee on Education and the Workforce

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., at the Booker T. Washington Elementary School, 798 Georgetown Street, Lexington, Kentucky, Hon. Michael N. Castle, Chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Representatives Michael N. Castle, Ernest L. Fletcher, and Johnny Isakson.

Staff Present: Robert W. Sweet, Jr., Professional Staff Member.

**Chairman Castle**. Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. If you want to break up in the back, we have a responsibility to move forward with our hearing. And obviously we are in a place where the sound is going to be a little bit difficult, so please give as much attention as you possibly can. Officially, our subcommittee is present, so the Subcommittee on Education Reform will come to order. We are meeting today to hear testimony on how to ensure educational opportunities for minority children. Obviously, we would like to first thank Booker T. Washington Elementary School for hosting this hearing today. I appreciate your hospitality, and I'm sure all of you do as well, and I am pleased to be here. I'm here to listen to our witnesses; but before I begin, I'd like to get unanimous consent fourteen days to allow member statements and other exchange material referenced during the period to be submitted to the individual hearing record; without objection. So ordered. Before we go forward with opening statements, I would refer to the most important person up here and that's the host, Congressman Fletcher.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you, Chairman Castle. We are very honored to have you and Congressman Isakson here, two members that have tremendous depth and experience in education. Our chairman of the Education Reform Subcommittee is chairing this hearing, and Mike Castle's history; he's been on the Education Committee for a number of years as well as former governor of Maryland who worked there. Excuse me. Delaware. I don't want to be misleading here. Delaware. Anyway, Congressman Johnny Isakson from Georgia who is chairman of the State Board of Education, there for several years, and also brings a wealth of experience. We want to welcome you. I want to thank Crystal Lampiers, the Fayette County Schools Student Faculty staff at Booker T. Washington for allowing us to be here and for their hospitality. Let me turn it back to the chairman.

## *OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE*

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you. We appreciate the opportunity to be here. My name is Mike Castle and I am the Chairman of the Subcommittee, and I want to welcome all of you today and thank you for the welcome. We're here on a hearing for ensuring educational opportunity for minority children. I'm especially pleased to be here in Lexington at Dr. Fletcher's request, and the active role that he plays and Mr. Isakson plays in the state committee. It is a tremendous importance.

When we return to Washington, D.C. This week, the education of our children will be the number one priority of the American people, the Bush Administration and our Committee. As we all know too well, too many children are not getting an education that will prepare them to function in the new system. Many children are not obtaining basic proficiency or academic subject areas, and the learning gaps in our best and our poorest performing children are growing wider not smaller. Worse, this learning gap breaks down by major racial groups with a disproportionate number of African Americans and Hispanic students performing low proficiency in reading and math. I believe, and President Bush agrees, that if we are to continue to advance in the country, this disparity will not stand. For this reason, President Bush has instituted a comprehensive plan to ensure that those problems are kept in mind and is introduced to the House of Representatives as H.R. 1. As a matter of fact, the Committee is starting tomorrow; among other things, to consolidate school programs. It focuses federal resources in ways we believe will truly improve educational opportunities for all children. Specifically, it focuses federal dollars on programs designed to support the learning of children from low-income families, children who are not proficient in English and other national priorities such as technology in state schools. H.R. 1 also directs more decision-making authority to those states and local levels; teachers, principals, parents, and other interested parties who know best how resources are to be used including schools in Kentucky and across the nation. More importantly, H.R. 1 finds other support for improving academic achievement for all children and especially those who are apparently being underserved; someday following provide additional resources and additional accountability to support

state, local levels in education. Those dollars will no longer fund the programs that impair our children.

Finally, among other things, H.R. 1 makes a clean start. It does it to ensure that all children are able to read by the end of second grade by tripling the amount of funding currently divided for this purposes. These are just some of the many provisions that are contained in H.R. 1, and your testimony will be helpful to us when we seek to further refine this bill. For this reason, I think we are particularly fortunate to be joined by such a distinguished panel of witnesses. Dr. Fletcher will proceed with his statement and introduction of witnesses, but I would like to note that we have a broad cross section of experts who are actively involved in education and reform. I think we have a lot to learn from your experiences in classrooms in following education.

With that, I want to thank all of you for your interest and your willingness to testify here today. I would also like to thank Dr. Fletcher and his staff for organizing this important hearing so we can work together to ensure that we improve educational opportunities for all children and especially minorities. And with that, I'll turn it to Congressman Fletcher.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE – SEE APPENDIX A

## *OPENING STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ERNEST L. FLETCHER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE*

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, again, I appreciate all of you for attending this hearing. There are members of several schools, superintendents, and several teachers. We also have some council members here, so I want to welcome all of you. Thank you again for coming. I believe that education is one of the most vital issues facing the future of America. I believe it's one of our greatest responsibilities. In April, the National Center for Education Statistics released the fourth grade reading assessment results for 2000, which revealed that the education gap between white, non-white students, has not reduced but has, in fact, increased. And it's shown that it is the closest gap of non-succeeding, and a gap that's even growing wider. These disturbing results underscore the fact that the United States in our education policy of the past four (4) years has really failed the significant portion of America's students. In fact, we failed those students that need the help the most, the disadvantaged students. The failure to up students who are most vulnerable, society of poor education, poverty, poor health care and low paying jobs cannot be tolerated.

Literacy, I believe, is the hinge upon which all of our education turns; and without it, success is impossible. That's why President Bush's plan describes literacy as a new civil right, and I wholeheartedly agree. We are working to pass these bold new Reading

First and Early Reading First initiatives. Reading First and Early Reading First are only a head start. These programs will help close the achievement gap that separates our disadvantaged students from the rest of the public school system. Reading First will begin the journey to our national goal of achieving literacy for all students in the third grade and will authorize an extra six or seven billion dollars a year for reading programs, tripling the funding for literacy in the year 2002. It would also invest five million dollars over the next five years in reading programs aimed at the children in kindergarten to the third grade. You know, it takes more than money. Our education plan improves local schools, empowers parents and teachers to get the flexibility needed to address the local needs, not a one size fits all fix, and is planning to ensure accountability, raising expectations to ensure that no child is left behind. Plato stated that one of the purposes of education is to teach a child to fall in love with virtue, and H.R. 1 includes twenty-five million dollars of character education, tripling the current funding. It's a common sense approach to the problems that are facing our youth today. It gives our schools the resources they need to instill virtues of honesty, personal responsibility and justice. Our schools cannot and should not hold, hold sole responsibility for shaping a child's character, but they do play a very important role.

This legislation is about giving every child hope for the future and the opportunity to fulfill their individual dreams. H.R. 1 also recognizes the importance of mentoring. Every child needs a responsible adult to lead them, to provide an example of success through courage and nurturing every child. We also know as we look here locally that the achievement gap that we see nationally, and is true for Kentucky as well, that reading, math and science gaps affects Kentucky's non-white students just as they do America's large urban areas. The achievement gap we hear so much about does not only affect huge American cities like New York and Los Angeles, but is right here in Central Kentucky. We must work together to do all we can to fight this growing problem and ensure that every child in our school is given the tools he or she needs to succeed later in life. Former Kentucky Secretary of Education, Bob Bates, said our system of education, and all elementary education, has failed to do the job for far too many of our children. It threatens the future of our nation, and it's something that the American people will no longer tolerate. The polls show that the American people agree at sixty-seven percent. You have heard or read about H.R. 1 leaving no child behind, and this is where crosses parting lines that the majority of Americans believe that no child left behind will help improve education in America. But our goal, however, is not how partisan and political it is.

Our goal is to make the necessary changes in the education of all America's children, children so that they may have the opportunity to succeed in whatever endeavors they pursue later in life. H.R. 1 will help ensure literacy, English proficiency, teaching quality, ensuring math and science education, safe schools, and education technology improvements. Our goals are the same, if we, all racial and ethnic backgrounds, all Americans, work together, there is nothing we cannot achieve. I look forward to hearing the testimony of the panel assembled here, and the witnesses represent several different aspects and view points of what needs to be done to bridge the achievement gap which troubled disadvantaged students in America for so many years. Their personal experiences and views on education is the reason for this hearing today. Mr. Chairman, would you like me to go ahead and introduce the witnesses?

**Chairman Castle**. Why don't we let Johnny comment. Johnny Isakson, as you've heard, is instrumental in education, and what you did not hear is what a wonderful member of the Committee he has been in terms of smoothing over a lot of problems and elevating education for the children in America. He has been a tremendous help on the Committee and we're very pleased to have Mr. Isakson.

**Mr. Isakson**. Well, thank you, Chairman Castle, and I'm going to be very brief so as not to take the time of the distinguished panel, except to say this, it's a delight to be in Lexington. It's a delight to be in Dr. Fletcher's own district. Ernie and I came to the United States Congress at approximately the same time. He has been an absolute delight to work with and is evidenced by some of the comments I received; they've obviously been very effective, as this lady was telling me, in helping with the programs. We are all, Congressman Castle, myself and Congressman Fletcher, are absolutely committed to the federal government being a catalyst for improvement on education at a global level, but not a dictator at the local level, and how to run your school. President Bush's program is the first major increased investment with accountability in education since the advent of 501 in the 1960s. I have told everybody in public education that I run into, find their little differences at the present over this overall program, to stop and think that in America about once every generation an opportunity comes for education where a leader comes along who adopts it as his number one priority and is working to improve it. So as we talk about the many aspects of the President's proposal and H.R. 1 that we're talking about here today, let's not forget, as educators and as parents and children who are the recipients of public education, this is our shot in the barrel really for a generation to make a substantial improvement in the direction and the assistance that comes from Washington and local public schools. Your input will be very valuable to us today. And I am very honored to be in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, John. We will announce these witnesses.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate each of the witnesses today. As I said, they bring a variety of experience, and thank you. I'll go ahead and introduce each one of you here starting with our right. Mr. Richard Greene. He's served on the committee that I've established, the Minority Committee, that has addressed a lot of the problems and reviewed H.R. 1, for me, has given us some input to take back to the Committee in Congress. Mr. Greene has a Bachelor's Degree from Langston University, Oklahoma in 1968, a Master's Degree from the University of Kentucky, a Teaching Certificate in Mathematics, Secondary, grades 7 through 12. He has officially worked in Fayette County Public Schools, 1968 till 1999. He's been a math teacher, a football coach, Adult Education teacher, assistant principal, ACT/SAT math tutor, and currently serves as a math tutor with the Teaching Opportunity Program, the TOPS program, U.K., from 1994 till today. And thank you for joining us, Mr. Greene.

I'd like to also introduce Abdon Ibarra. He currently serves as the Hispanic Services Director. He has a history of serving in the U.S. Army and Vietnam War in the 44th Medical Brigade. His history and education life, has a Bachelor of Arts from Antioch University, has a law degree in 1982 from the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, Texas, and he served, designed the Mobile Migrant Farm worker Health Record System. He designed the Migrant Home base Headstart Services Model to provide a continuum of services to migrant farm worker children both in their home base

state and in the migrant trek. Again, he's currently the Hispanic Services Director of Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government here in Lexington.

I would like to introduce also Mr. Erran Persley. He's a Lexington, Kentucky native, and is educated at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He is now a resident of Washington, D.C. He works for Mayor Anthony Williams in the Department of Employment Services as the Deputy Director of the Youth Opportunity Grant Program. Glad to have you here today, coming down to join us.

I'd like to introduce Principal Robert Murray. He's the principal of Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy for Excellence. He's been an educator of children for twenty years. He's worked on the Education Minority Advisory Committee for the last several months and has provided very good input to this bill. Mr. Murray, we're glad to have you here today.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much, Congressman Fletcher. And I would also point out that Ms. Elaine Farris was to join us here today; because of scheduling problems she was unable to do so. Let me try to tell you what we, let me try to tell you what the ground rules are. First of all, it's a very large audience. We appreciate that. You may have a chance to participate before this is all over. You may or may not appreciate that. But we'll have each witness testify. Basically, the testimony is supposed to be for five minutes. I am the one running the clock up here. I'm not very mechanical oriented, so this thing could backfire badly; but it works practically, I think the green light is on for four minutes, the yellow for one minute and then the red. We're not going to hold you to the exact time. When you see the red, you need to start sort of thinking about winding up. That will be helpful. And then the three of us may choose to ask you all, the panel, some questions. We can be here until noon. At noon we have to get in the car and head for Cincinnati so we can get back in time to vote in Washington, D.C. But when the panel is done, and we're through with questions there, if there's time left over and we think there will be, we're going to go to the audience for whatever questions you may have. We'll talk about that a little more when the time comes. So you may want to be thinking about that a little bit. And I think we'll go in the same exact order that you were introduced. So, let's start with Mr. Greene. We'll hit the magic clock here and see how that works, and we look forward to hearing from you.

## *STATEMENT OF RICHARD GREENE, UPWARD BOUND MENTOR, CRAWFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL & LEXINGTON TRADITONAL MAGNET SCHOOL, LEXINGTON, KY*

**Mr. Greene**. Congressman Fletcher and members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity. I will begin my testimony with a description of a school situation involving a student named Johnny. Johnny lived in the Government Housing Projects with his mother, younger brother and sister. His mother worked two jobs, one full and one part-time, to assure her family a decent standard of living. In August of 1990, Johnny entered the sixth grade with a record of better than average grades and behavior. He was polite, well mannered, neatly dressed and eager to start school. His first two weeks of school

went by without a major incident. Other than getting lost a couple of times and failing to open his combination locker on one other occasion, he had done well.

But, by the start of the fourth week, Johnny began having academic difficulties in Language, Arts, Social Studies and Science. His required weekly writing journal for Language Arts and questions at the end of chapters, assigned as homework, for Social Studies and Science were incomplete or not done at all. His mother was contacted and a parent/teacher conference was scheduled. During the conference, teachers agreed to monitor and sign Johnny's assignment book each day. His mother agreed to read his assignment book each evening, sign it, and have Johnny show it to each of his teachers the following day. The Language Arts teacher ended the conference by suggesting to the mother that she consider testing Johnny's reading ability as the next viable option. When monitoring and several additional parent/teacher conferences, and a subsequent placement in the school's afternoon school tutorial program did not produce the desired academic results by the end of the nine-week grading period, Johnny's mother decided to have him tested.

The results of the testing were spirit shattering. Johnny's reading comprehension was listed at 3.6 (3rd grade-6th month) and vocabulary was listed as 3.9 (3rd grade-9th month). Not one reading category was listed as greater than or equal to 4th grade. Recovering from her initial shock at hearing these scores, the mother asked, "How did my child get this far, reading this badly?"

Conversations with three of Johnny's former elementary school teachers revealed that Johnny's passing grades in reading were never based on reading books at grade level, but on reading books that matched his ability. It was quite possible, that in 5th grade, he was reading from 3rd grade books. Additionally, an intensive review of this cumulative folder revealed that Johnny, judging from his performance on the kindergarten assessment tool, started kindergarten well behind his peers. Seven years later, in 6th grade, he was still behind, with very few options for catching up.

If the situation just described were an isolated incident involving a single student, then the law of averages could be adequate justification. But, it is not. This situation occurs with disturbing frequency each and every school year. Johnny is not a single student. He is a composite representation of the 300 disadvantaged students that I have personally guided through very similar situations. While each situation differs slightly, they all have two glaring characteristics in common. One, the students entered kindergarten with a knowledge base so lacking in the most basic skills that he/she was easily considered to be grade level behind in his/her first formal year of public schooling. And, two, their reading level entering 6th grade was below fifth grade level.

A lack of knowledge of the most basic skills; color and picture recognition, letters of the alphabet, rote counting, and numeral comprehension; and poor reading skills are the factors most responsible for the low literacy rate of disadvantaged students and the existing achievement gap. If increasing the literacy rate of disadvantaged students and closing the achievement gap are to be accomplished, early identification and effective intervention are critical. Ensuring that children of poverty have mastered the basic skills necessary to become effective readers by third grade will eventually narrow the achievement gap. The research shows that, if children leave third grade not reading, they

are candidates for failure in English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, etc., and most importantly, life itself. The nation can ill-afford to allow this destructiveness to continue. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RICHARD GREENE, UPWARD BOUND MENTOR, CRAWFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL & LEXINGTON TRADITONAL MAGNET SCHOOL, LEXINGTON, KY – SEE APPENDIX B

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much, Mr. Greene. We appreciate that. You've already raised important points that we'll get back with you later. Mr. Ibarra.

## *STATEMENT OF ABDON IBARRA, DIRECTOR, HISPANIC SERVICES, LEXINGTON, KY*

**Mr. Ibarra**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Fletcher. Excuse me. Lexington kind of attacks the allergies. I thought Austin was bad, but this is bad. Nonetheless, historically the dropout rate for Latino/Hispanic students has been the highest in the nation. Latino parents have felt powerless to do anything about their children's journey through an educational system that has often ignored their plight. Latino students and their parents have to overcome perceptions of it because many are not permitted in the Southeastern United States; the Latino student did not or should not have a quality education. This population, in terms of potential problems, needs to be provided public services, especially educational services. At this time the fastest growing minority group in this country is the Latino/Hispanic population, and it is important that any legislation aimed at improving the lives of disadvantaged student offer these parents a choice. In addition, that same legislation must make an offer to make the educational system accountable to all students. The results of this answer can be seen in the widening and increasing educational gap between African-American students and white students in this area. The same educational system must learn not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Parents must have notice on the educational plan for their children. They must know that schools must perform at a certain level; and that based on the success or lack thereof, that they have a choice to shop for a better school. They must have confidence in the integrity of the legislation to ensure that these funds are being committed to the goals and objectives of that legislation.

But the most important provision of any legislation aimed at the improvement of the educational system must provide the means and education, teachers of these institutions. Teachers, held in the highest esteem by Latino/Hispanic parents, must learn how to teach these children. Labeling and separating these children is not a legitimate purpose of any educational plan. H.R. 1 speaks to all of these concerns and can have a beneficial effect on the educational opportunities of all disadvantaged students. The overachievers of this legislation must protect these benefits with consistent application of

the safeguards, and swift sanctions for the non-performing schools and programs. For many years, funds have been set aside to enhance the opportunities of disadvantaged students whether it be Latinos, Hispanics, African-American, Appalachian or migrant farm workers, only to be gutted by funds for raising in that legislation. H.R. 1 contains such a provision. This provision sounds like, sounds like a proverbial loophole. Care should be taken of school programs; and request transfers under this provision must adhere to a standard of relevance. Schools making requests to transfer funds to other programs must be scrutinized. This scrutiny should ensure the program's advantage, the object of the transfer, be relevant and consistent with the mission and goals of H.R. 1. This cabinet is advanced because although the population of disadvantaged continues to grow, and the census shows that Latino students are growing by leaps and bounds, other programs may be of higher priority. This has happened before. Let the integrity of vigilance secure that legislation is successful in a social environment marked with increasing diversity for agility and flexibility of change.

Bruce Cant, Director of the Center of American and Metropolitan Policy of the Group Institute said that because of the shifting of ethnic and racial balance of every population, cities must rethink public structure and deliver health care. Public Education General Municipal Services is to pick up the younger and larger minority plans. H.R. 1 is a good foundation to begin building for the future. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ABDON IBARRA, DIRECTOR, HISPANIC SERVICES, LEXINGTON, KY – SEE APPENDIX C

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mr. Ibarra. Some of the things you mentioned there will be looked at as we go through the Committee, great timing points. Mr. Erran Persley.

## *STATEMENT OF ERRAN F. PERSLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, YOUTH OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, WASHINGTON, DC*

**Mr. Persley**. Thank you very much. Good morning. I want to thank Congressman Fletcher and the Subcommittee on Education Reform for this opportunity to talk on this important topic. I had the great honor of talking to Ernie Fletcher at length about education and youth development in our country and I am encouraged by his commitment to create an educational system that truly leaves no child behind. My experiences as Acting Director of the D.C. Youth Opportunity Grant Program, and as a youth advocate have convinced me that youth development and education are a crisis in this country today. However, I must state that my views are my own and should not attributed to an organization with which I am affiliated. Although I currently live in Washington, D.C., my commitment to education and to this state are deeply rooted. I was raised in Lexington, Kentucky. I went to the Lexington School and I graduated from Lafayette High School. My assistant principal sits to my right. During that time my

mother worked for the Fayette County Board of Education and would later go on to work for the Kentucky Department of Education where she became intimately involved in the Kentucky Educational Reform Act.

So as you can see, from childhood I was taught that education is valuable and is a right, a very young person should be educated in this system and should not be infringed upon by economic status or physical location. In the past few months, the unemployment rate in Kentucky is the lowest it has been in thirty years. Along with that, large segments of our society have been denied economic bounty. The problem is crucial for our minority youth community, especially African-Americans and Hispanic Americans. Statistics released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1999 show African-American out-of-school males ages 16 to 24 living in urban poverty areas have an employment rate of 50 percent. Hispanic females out of school have an employment rate of 33 percent. That's in contrast with white out-of-school males who live in non-poverty areas who enjoy an employment rate of 84 percent, and white females in non-poverty areas who enjoy an employment rate of 76 percent. I give you these figures not to contrast black versus white, but to contrast young people growing up in non-poverty areas as opposed to young people growing up in poverty stricken areas. Eighty million dollars has been spent since 1990 for disadvantaged students in this country. However, test scores remain virtually the same.

The education dilemma must be addressed at grassroots level and we must entrust our parents to make decisions that affect the lives of our young people. By expanding school and parental choice we empower our citizenship to make decisions on their children's education. By allowing parents to remove their children from failing schools, we force those schools to direct their energy toward making sustainable improvements in their educational system. Allowing students to leave inadequate schools and use federal dollars to attend another public or private school, or to receive supplemental educational services from another provider of the parent's choice is the first step in improving educational opportunities for our young people. School choice and the option of federal funds for private school attendance are good instruments to bridge the current failing educational system, so that our young people do not have to sit in failing schools while we develop a strategy to reshape the educational system. However, it must be understood that this is just a bridge; the real goal must be to establish a public school system that gives them quality education whether they live in the hills of eastern Kentucky, the center of Chicago, or the suburbs of Los Angeles. Even as an immediate plan, school choice won't work for everyone, the demand overall is too great. But, if we develop a system of school choice and funding for other creative tutorial, character education, and academic enrichment programs we can serve a majority of our nation's children. However, ultimately, to effectively deal with the issues of education and poverty we must look at the problem in its totality and come to some resolve, realizing that each state, county, and city has diverse needs and issues. So we must come up with a national plan that lays the framework while empowering the states and local governments to address the issues in their own innovative ways. We must implement comprehensive plans that are sensitive to social, physical and economic dynamics of each community. Our President has made education a top priority and with committed members, like the subcommittee here and Congressman Fletcher, we can begin to reshape this nation's educational and youth development systems. "No Child Left Behind" is the framework for a comprehensive vision for improving education in our inner cities and rural communities. But it is just a

framework; it will take the commitment of our nation's schools, churches, and community based organizations, local and federal officials to make it work. The President has developed the outline. It is now up to each of us as citizens to develop our local action plans to fit the overall framework. It was an old African proverb, and that's what we're planning, the first stage, "It takes a village to raise a child." This time is now; our children can't wait another day. I thank you for this opportunity.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ERRAN F. PERSLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, YOUTH OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, WASHINGTON, DC – SEE APPENDIX D

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much, Mr. Persley. We'll hear now from Mr. Murray, and obviously he has a distinguished background, which you've heard about.

## *STATEMENT OF MR. ROBERT MURRAY, PRINCIPAL, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE, LEXINGTON, KY*

**Mr. Murray**. Thank you. First of all, just let me take a minute before I begin to thank Congressman Fletcher for taking the time to sit and meet with us over the last several months, sitting with us, hearing our talks, interacted with us, and I do want to say that I think that Kentucky is very fortunate to have you represent us in Washington, so I just wanted to say that. I'm here in speaking in support of the portion of the President's bill that speaks to character education. I'm a big supporter of character education, always have been. As the congressman said when he introduced me, I'm the principal of Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy of Excellence, and I'd like to begin my testimony with a quote from Dr. King. In twenty-six years of education I've read many things, but I don't think I've read anything more powerful than his words.

Dr. King said this, and I quote, "I often wonder whether or not education is fulfilling its purpose. A great majority of the so-called education people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from fiction. The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education that stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason and no morals. We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence

plus character those are the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only the power of concentration but also worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living", end quote. These words, in my judgment, embody the general mission of all educational programs and institutions. In order for us all to reap the benefits of our educational labors, the institutions and processes that build the "minds of students" must not take lightly their responsibility in part to build the "character of students." The traditional academic curriculum will give students the necessary tools needed for productive jobs and careers; character education will give them guidance for the use of those tools. Putting it another way, a carpenter can build a house with his tools or tear one down; or, a shovel can be used as a constructive tool to plant or to prepare a foundation for a young tree; or it can be an unearthing tool that unsettles or weakens the foundation of an old tree. These analogies are simple but realistic illustrations of Dr. King's philosophy. Without desirable character, one has no intrinsic guidance for the use of the skills they have attained.

In recent years, the proliferation of violence in our cities and towns has now invaded the boundaries of public educational institutions. Though schools are still considered some of the safest places for youth, there is cause for growing concern. And I'm sure you'll agree. Bizarre incidents such as those having occurred at Columbine, Paducah, and others have heightened the fears and anxieties of parents and school officials all over the country. Reactions have varied from increased numbers of uniformed officers, locks and buzzers on doors, zero tolerance discipline policies, criminal records checks for parents and teachers, and others. The public school of the 21st century is sadly taking on the image and characteristic of the juvenile institution of the 20th century. In spite of the current reactions and responses, the number of violent incidents appears to be on the increase. We have attempted to provide tangible solutions to problems that stem from intangible causes, that is, lack of ethical and moral character. Responses such as those mentioned earlier give an illusion of solving behavioral problems by creating short term or temporary compliance with rules and regulations, when in reality, the distorted value or belief system that sustains the student's negative inclinations remain firmly planted within the student's psyche. Student self discipline motivated by a proper belief system is the missing but needed source for positive student behavior. Character education at home and school is one necessary means to achieving these desired ends.

My day to day experiences with students over the years and particularly in recent years has confirmed my belief that many students are lacking an ethical foundation needed to guide their thoughts and actions. Many students, when questioned thoroughly about negative behavior respond in ways that clearly indicate a distorted value system or the lack thereof. They can tell you that they believe a certain act is "right or wrong" but cannot adequately explain why they believe it is "right or wrong." My observation is that disruptive student behavior stems from the student's perception of good versus bad, right or wrong, likes and dislikes, and other similar things. When the value system that shapes these perceptions is distorted, it is usually acted out in what we identify as negative behavior. Every individual at some point will voluntarily or involuntarily establish a belief system that could be good or bad. Ideally, this belief system will become rooted in what I call universal character principles such as altruism, human worth, honesty, respect,

responsibility, justice, self-discipline, courtesy, citizenship, and knowledge. I believe it is safe to say that these character principles are universally viewed as desirable attributes of character, regardless of creed or religion. They must be woven into the fabric of our educational processes and taught consistently. In this regard, the public school must augment the parent's efforts to develop their children socially and in character. These principles, if taught comprehensively, should transcend ethical and moral teaching and extend to a heightened knowledge of self, history, culture as well as a respect and appreciation for diversity.

Across the country, character education programs are found to some degree in most school districts. Some programs involve direct teaching of identified character principles; others integrate them among the academic subject matter. The format may vary but the intended goal should be the same, that is, the development of productive citizens who positively contribute to our societies. It has been said in both education and politics that, quote, "It takes a village to raise a child." That village being the public or private school, the home and family, and usually the faith based institution of choice. These three must function in harmony to build good students and good people. Though each has its distinct role to play, all three should overlap within what the law allows. The sole responsibility for character development can no longer be relegated to individual families and private sources alone. The public school has a role to play and must make Character Education a priority, determine a system to measure its attainment, and require its implementation. It is my belief, that Character Education should be an integral part of our American education system at every level but with particular emphasis in the grades K through 8. I applaud President Bush's administration's choice to include Character Education as a key part of its educational legislation. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. ROBERT MURRAY, PRINCIPAL, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE, LEXINGTON, KY – SEE APPENDIX E

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much, Mr. Murray. We appreciate that. We enter into the period of this hearing now which gives us, to ask you questions. We try to limit this to five minutes, but it never works with members of Congress. I'll start the ball rolling and then go to the others. My question actually is going to be probably a lot more general than even what we've talked about here today, but I'd just like to stress that I am a total believer that education begins at the very youngest age, actually the health of the mother when the child's in the womb and then when the child is born. I'm also convinced that what we do to help a child before the child ever gets near a school is something so extraordinarily important, that is, our present parents helping; are their parents literate? Are the parents there? Issues such as this. Another thing is, I'll tell you what I really like about Bush's education plan and why I'm such a strong supporter, and that is, the extra money and time we put into the reading, the, so you can read by third grade. I'm an absolute believer that you have to read by third grade. If you can't read, you're going to get in trouble the rest of your educational experience. I think we heard that a little bit with Johnny when you were talking earlier. And then I think the standards and assessments and the testing, and then not just that, but just filling in with time. Different children are making an effort 3rd, 4th, 5th grade. We're getting into the time where it's

important to help them, so all of a sudden you don't have 8th graders reading at third grade level, which is really what the problem is today.

This is, as stated up here, the most major education orientation done on federal government level ever, other than perhaps the original adoption of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act thirty-five years ago. And so as a result, we are dealing with very, very major issues, and I think that that's an extraordinary importance. We can't let kids progress just biologically. We have to make sure they can progress academically. What I'm going to ask you is off the subject of the bill. But back in my earlier comments, there are a series of federal programs; there's the Head Start Program, which you know about I'm sure. There is an Early Start Program that is basically helping families in terms of their necessities that they can help people with, whatever it may be. There's obviously day care, which is just that at this point. It's mostly day care. There are nutrition programs; there may be some of other federal programs. But I've always believed that education is partially cultural. I think the lower income you are the more likely you are to have problems as far as education is concerned, and you add to that the fact that you have a different skin color, speak a different language, you have added complications in terms of developing those kids in American society. We need to change all this, we need to find out changes right away.

And my view is that if we double some of these earlier education programs, we could take strong steps in the right direction particularly for those kids who aren't getting enough help at home. I'd be interested in your comments on that, the importance of those early programs, and maybe early programs here in Kentucky or other places in terms of what they're doing with respect to kids.

**Mr. Greene**. Well, from that standpoint of Early Start and Head Start and some of this all-day kindergarten that are doubting their children, there needs to be improvement, but this needs to be more widespread. My basic feeling is that after being in the middle school for most of my career, is that once we get to middle school it's nearly too late to do anything more about it. I guess what I'd like to do is that if you want a strong tree you start with the roots and the cultivation. If you want to build a good solid house it's got to be on solid foundation. And so if you want kids to get a good education to make them, if nothing more than just good citizens, and to appreciate reading and whatever, then without the reading, you know, we're not talking about it.

**Chairman Castle**. Mr. Murray, do you want to comment?

**Mr. Murray**. I'd like to comment briefly on Kentucky's Preschool Program, which is the closest part of Kentucky reform, which is designed to serve at-risk three and four year olds. It's a needed program because it's limited, I think, to that population. I really feel like all students can benefit by this, not just those at risk. And it's shown, of course, many of us come from different situations and have the, some have the good fortunate of good early education and others don't. But I can certainly see the need for at-risk three and four year olds, and I believe all kids. I guess if somebody would provide funds to, to support that, but I would support it for all kids not just those at risk.

**Chairman Castle**. Mr. Persley.

**Mr. Persley**. I just have one comment on that. I come from Washington, D.C., and so, of course, I support all the early programs, Head Start, Reading Start. But there's another problem in our society, that is, that in my area I deal with fourteen, sixteen, eighteen-year-olds that have children of their own, and education truly begins at home. And what kind of education can those fourteen, sixteen, eighteen-year-old mothers give to their children. So we have to talk about programs that reach the homes, young mothers and fathers, help them to educate their children also. So it has to be, has to look at it from both sides of the cycle because, yes, we need programs that catch them in the beginning. There are a whole lot of people who are already committed who make sure that education is being developed, and then grow along with their children to stop that cycle.

**Chairman Castle**. That's in lieu of the Character Education Mr. Murray talked about. People talk in terms of these kids when they're having babies. Mr. Ibarra, do you have any thoughts?

**Mr. Ibarra**. Yes, I do. Basically my first job coming back from Vietnam was working with Head Start, working for Head Start for ten years. It was my Head Start programming. But one of the things that I found that strengthened that early education part was that there was parental involvement. And one of the significant things, and I think this is important, and it could be that once you involve the whole family, the child is basically learning how to learn, and by offering them a choice they see that in education there is a choice. But basically the cornerstone of Head Start has been giving the child an early inclination of his learning. So Head Start, for me, has always exemplified or should be included in the education program. Parental involvement, choice, curriculum; I remember that was my job. We worked with parents. And all the parents have chosen what the child needs in learning, and we need cooperation or collaboration of the parent and the teachers to develop a plan. I feel an obligation to say this, that Kentucky, the southeastern United States is different from the southwestern United States where the majority of Latinos are in Texas and Austin and New Mexico where my mother was from, also Arizona, California. We are going to a transitional period now where you see a lot of Latino and Hispanic children. But I think basically the principle of Head Start should be somehow incorporated into any education.

**Chairman Castle**. I think you mentioned; I should have; Head Start, for example, we have incorporated the need to have more people working Head Start, having teacher certification. And I, in my hometown of Delaware, which is a majority of minorities, I met with the people who were running this, and they just want to make sure that their own employees have the opportunity to be certified as part of that, the importance of that. Well, thank you. Let me turn it over to Congressman Fletcher.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank each of you for your testimonies. I think you bring a good spectrum of input here. Let me say first, and I know there are several folks that are involved with KERA, Mr. Persley you mentioned your mother. KERA's principles are mainly the same principles that were implemented in H.R. 1. More local control, accountability for particular testing are done in a little different way, but I think some of the principles that we've seen here are principles that work well. We still have a long way to go, but are being implemented in H.R. 1. Let me ask a question of each of you or have each of you answer this. As we met with this Minority Advisory Committee, we were often hearing barriers, impediments to really implementing, and I

know Mr. Greene you have mentioned some, that allow the freedom here locally to really address some of the concerns and problems. Let me say, let me ask you, I know we've got a lot of very talented teachers here. We've got a great leadership in the community, but for some reason we're not closing the gap. And our gap here in Fayette County, in Lexington, Central Kentucky, reflects nationally. And actually if you look at it, we're on the lower side of the national level of things. So what are some of the barriers we can eliminate that would help us address this problem and really give these children an opportunity?

**Mr. Greene**. Well, with regard to flexibility, my feelings are that if the child can't read, then we shouldn't be teaching much of anything else until we make sure that child can read. But the school structure does not allow the flexibility. I mean, you can have forty-five minute pullouts, but the child in 6th grade reading at third grade level; you need more than forty-five minutes. I mean, that child may need to be blocked off in a three-hour block for reading, writing, discussing, and we just need to make sure that they learn to read. And that's one of the biggest restrictions that you have is on, on the physical planning and on the human resources because you can't block out one teacher for three hours to deal with a set of, of students because they have other responsibilities. So one of the barriers I see that's up the road. That's like you're in the middle of the road, and you can't turn back. It's what we're doing now but you can't lie down on cancer. It looks to me if the kid's still dying from underneath. So what we need to do is when we finally get to the attention of the year before we have to intervene because we're there simply by, my own feeling is just stop and teach the reading. If you can't read then the rest of the stuff is irrelevant. And we need the flexibility to say you're reading at a certain level and we will keep you until 9:00 to 11:30, however, to 12:30 or whatever it takes until you, you know, you can read.

**Mr. Ibarra**. That's going to be hard to follow. I think that we all try to share or compare our own personal developments a lot. I, myself, was with the center of migrant farm workers. I learned to read when I was three in English and in Spanish. And I think that inspiration of that leadership, and I think that Mr. Greene is totally correct. Reading, especially for language, our language is a challenge for Latinos, Hispanics. I think that reading is the experience that they should be given. Reading is the core of anything. So if it requires three hours of a program that is specifically designed to increase the reading skills, it should be handled. But it should not mean to keep them because they have a second language in a category that would only impede them throughout their life. And does not mean that the child should be in the corner because he can't read in English without knowing whether he can read in Spanish. The testing should be part of that, an adequate testing, including the parents to provide the social aspect, the socialization for children to see how intelligent and talented they work at home, handling his situation at home, and see how much he's taught, how much their passing at the situation at school, but I think that reading is the key.

**Mr. Persley**. I concur with these gentlemen. I just want to add that what they said is definitely correct, but there's another issue here about funding for programs outside of the regular school walls. We have to look at programs that help our young people outside of the school structure. Our current system is not working. We have to look at programs that have great innovative ways of teaching our young people. All children don't learn the same way. The current approach has to be changed. We have to start looking at

alternative ways of teaching our young people. We have to provide funds for that. We innovate our teachers with all different kinds of young people. Not every member needs a traditional classroom setting. So we have to start focusing on ways to create alternative ways so that all of our young people can learn. All people can learn. Thank you.

**Mr. Murray**. Let me say, the achievement gap between minorities and majorities is a very complex problem. It is the number one priority in this district; and the one focus in our district is on literacy, improving reading, for that leads to a step in the right direction. It is one step and one solution to one cause of the problem. Problems stem from social reasons, economic reasons, interactive reasons between teachers and students, practice. It is a host of things that affect that gap. And the first step to solving the problem is understanding the problem. To what extent we understand it, I'm not sure. Though our reform in Kentucky is certainly on the cutting edge of reform, and I think it has received some admiration in the states, the surrounding states, it has its parts that need to be improved. I do not think the numbers of teachers and administrators has increased. In order to address the social and interactive things that take place among students, the intangible things that are not necessarily academic in nature, but affect these choices. We have to be understanding and sensitive to the fact that our teaching status must be diverse. They must contain the ability to address any and every problem that the child comes forthwith. Sometimes I think it's simply a clear misunderstanding of not knowing how to get through to a particular child. There is no one, no one, no simple solution to the very complex problem. And the first step to identifying it is laying out, recognizing exactly what's causing it.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much. We appreciate that and all the good questions and answers from all of the witnesses. Now we'll turn it over to Congressman Isakson.

**Mr. Isakson**. Mr. Greene, I understand the fact that your hypothetical underachiever is named Johnny. I thought that was one of the best pieces I have read. And I want to make two comments and one of them begs a question. I do agree that folks who come from a disadvantaged high poverty area are the ones most at risk, and I agree with your comments. The President's earlier meeting, first initiative is money and resources as well as flexibility, whatever; teachers use what's best. But you made another statement. And in that statement you, you talked about this hypothetical student who by the time they had been promoted to the 5th grade and actually assessed upon their reading, three years, 6th month, I think is what you gave, my belief is that President Bush's testing of reading and math beginning in the 3rd grade will help us change that dynamic because we're really going to have to start measuring before it's too late. Am I right or wrong?

**Mr. Greene**. You're right, but I'd like to start it earlier. I want to start it earlier. I want to start when, when they're first born. My own feeling is that the kids who are in poverty more than anyone else need an education. The one thing that they have in abundance is intelligence and I can develop that. What I can't provide is breakfast for them. I can teach them to go figure out how to get breakfast, you know. So the problem is, it's back to that little proverb that says if you give me a fish, I give you a day to teach me to fish for a lifetime, and I just think we're at the point where we have to make the decision that

first of all, we have to make sure that we understand that all kids can learn.

**Mr. Isakson**. And don't misunderstand. I agree with everything you said here. I want to repeat what I said. My question was specifically with regard to require annual testing of grades 3 to 8. I agree with you on resources. I agree with you on early childhood development. I heard everything that was said. Your reference in this was that teachers were passing them because they were grading him based on his level, the level that he could read not the level he should be reading which tells me in the absence of an assessment or measurement, some kids are actually being passed along because they're reading well at the level they're at even though it's two years behind where they are. And my question to you is: This is not a loaded question, am I right or am I wrong if we put an annual assessment on reading component in at 3 through 8, aren't we more likely to have higher expectations for these kids and get better results, or am I wrong?

**Mr. Greene**. We would, and if we added another program to that. What happens to the kids when they don't meet the expectations? See, we've been retaining kids. I'm not, I'm not against retaining them, but I don't want to retain a child and just repeat the same thing. I think there ought to be, if we keep a child back because they didn't meet those standards, then there ought to some kind of program to make sure that they do. I mean, we've got everything in place. So I'm all for it. I'm all for the standards. I think that's what one of the problems, we don't have the standards. We're so busy, I don't know, dealing with the self-esteem that we forgot to teach.

**Mr. Isakson**. You really got your self-esteem.

**Mr. Greene**. Yes, sir, I do.

**Mr. Isakson**. Mr. Ibarra, I come from the state where two of my school districts, five years ago, had less than a fraction of one percent Hispanic students. Now I have over fifty. You made a statement in your testimony that cautions us against flexibility or transferability in funds. And as I understood it, it was probably out of some fear that limiting, efficient funds might go to some other program other than Hispanics. Is that correct?

**Mr. Ibarra**. Right.

**Mr. Isakson**. Okay. Just want to ask you this question. It's also true that flexibility might allow more money to go to eliminating student programs in those areas where they have the flexibility to take other funds where they don't have the need and put it in a concentrated program. Is that a fair statement?

**Mr. Ibarra**. My concern is this: Having more funds has been around for a while, and those funds include, where you've said, like reading 5 or 6, have not been able to design or concentrate to make those funds for the purposes that they were. I've heard that. I've had the opportunity to deal with many people in the educational profession, in the educational profession here in Kentucky, from the people themselves, telling me that this has been done. And I've seen it in other states, in Texas. It's essential that we safeguard, that loophole, not to widen itself in terms of those programs that may be adequate to meet specific needs of these children, that not go to support some other program, it becomes, I

don't know, acceptable at that school. My concern is specifically and simply this, that it should be that standards that are used to allow these changes be specifically enforced. And those programs are relevant.

**Mr. Isakson**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Castle**. Mr. Murray, although, you quoted Dr. King, you did so beautifully in your quote. I assume it's yours, there's no question, is the best I've heard about where we've been messing up on. You say in your testimony we attempt to find tangible solutions to the problems that are intangible causes, and you were talking about using mental, integrities and all these other things, Columbine violence when talking about students, and I agree with you. Character Education is important. It's unfortunate it's important. I will say that. It wasn't important when I was going to school in the '50s because I was more worried about what my father would do to me when I got home. That's changed the world. You hear about attention deficit disorders. I think parental deficit disorder is the biggest problem we have right now in terms of disciplining these kids, and I don't say that to criticize the parents, but the ones who just aren't engaged. And that takes me to my final question. In your character education program, to what extent do you try and draw in the parents with the kids? I mean, if we have a lot of kids coming in and we don't have a value system and these character terms are not things upon which they make a lot of decisions. You are at this school. Correct?

**Mr. Murray**. No. I'm at Martin Luther.

**Chairman Castle**. In your school or in your programs, is there a component of your character education that hopes or helps to bring the parent in so maybe it just goes beyond the classroom back to the house?

**Mr. Murray**. The program that I run is a determined alternative program, most participants are students who do not do very well in public schools. Many of them will come from what we would term as disadvantaged. Many times those parents are not frequently found in schools. What we determine to do in realizing that was to try to remove every barrier we could to parent participation. In fact, our campaign was to open the doors. Now, this was prior to the legislation that required parental criminal record check, which is kind of complicated. So we would open the doors and we extended invitation to parents to be in the school constantly. Our hope was that the schools be innovated with parents because we found schools that have parents all the time involved in these schools. The parent sits right along the side of the child in the classroom and watches, experiences their education. If the parent wants to volunteer or help in the school he is at liberty to do that. So we remove the barriers to all the schools. We will simply make an attempt to begin parent participation through traditional means, normally takes place unless there's a conflict. This is what we did and we removed the barrier. At the beginning of this year I sent a letter out, and I mentioned this to Congressman Fletcher, I sent a letter to every parent. It was a letter for the parent to say it's truly important. The letter requested the employer give the parent at least two days a year off without loss of leave or pay to be in the school and help and participate with their child. Right now if I'm called to jury duty I'm allowed to do that. If we did it in education there may be less of a need for me to be called for jury duty. So, I strongly support those kinds of things. It's innovative. And I'm hoping that somehow in your city maybe monies can

be found to supplement the employers or corporations and they be allowed to do it. Because that will do, that will put parents in the school at least two days a year. What parent if they could take two days from their job without pay, allowed to leave, why would they not go to the school.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you. Let me sort of shift gears here for a moment if we can. We're going to sort of bring this to a closure, this portion of the hearing. What I'd like to do is give the audience an opportunity to participate in this. I'm going to try to sort of keep the same guidelines if I can. If you have a statement we don't want to take more than five minutes on the speaker so we can get around to a number of people. And we'd like to use you all; answer briefly and I'll try and call on you, but we don't need everyone to comment. If every single statement is made, we might be here forever. You are more than welcome to make statements. You're welcome to ask questions. And you can ask it on anything as it relates to education. This is a Subcommittee of Education Reform. Our subject matter is limited to that; and so as a result, we need to make sure it's restricted to the subject of education. But try to be as brief as you can so that others will have an opportunity to comment or to ask questions. Where's Daniel? Daniel's got the microphone over there, and as you can tell, the acoustics are a little bit difficult in this gymnasium so you will have to speak and enunciate clearly as you can so that we can try to pick it up. It will be necessary if you can for the record state your name and anywhere you're from, like Lexington or wherever you may be from.

**Ms. Barrot**. I'm Regina Barrot. I'm a research associate at the University of Kentucky and a research associate for the Cloone Institute. And I live in here in Lexington, Kentucky. I'm a native. One of the questions that was presented, asked, what are some of the barriers to the, addresses the achievement gap. One of the concerns that I have is the way that the funds are disseminated for disadvantaged students. I think a process is, the way it is currently, I believe the monies are disseminated through the Department of Education through the title of the programs, et cetera, and I think a lot of citizens see that this process is not making a significant impact in terms of closing those achievement gaps. So I guess my question is: Do you have any ideas or know the process for disseminating funds to, to create programs for educational opportunities for kids? And the other gap, the other problem that I see, is that there's no current system in place; let me just rephrase it a little bit different. Teachers have to get a certain amount of professional development. And part of the professional development if they want to teach a multi-cultural education to a multi-cultural student population, they have to learn about the culture. They have to learn through strategies and working with these students. Now, they have had certain amount of professional development; however, there's no standard that's in place that they have to, that they have to take professional development in certain areas. And I think that's the barrier. If they're not interested in changing their ways of thinking, their strategies, their teaching, then they will not be, they're not, and they don't have to do it. So I think that that's the barrier as well.

**Chairman Castle**. Let me try to take a stab at it on a couple of those things. I don't know the specifics of this, but I think it's very important to understand what we are doing in this H.R. 1. First of all, the federal government funds seven percent of all education across the United States of America. That's probably roughly true equalization or close to it in the country. Here in Kentucky that's probably true here, too, if I had to guess it would be seven percent. The dissemination distribution of funds is of overwhelming

importance. And when you come from a small state like I do, Delaware is a very small state; we depend a lot on the state. When you come from bigger states they all put all the money into some dated, some different processes that is through local school districts or even local schools, and we get into that argument. We are going through that right now with this legislation. Now I will tell you, and I've been sitting on this and John's been sitting on this, but we have a meeting on this and we're doing a lot more distribution of formulas, but similar formulas where the amount of money then goes to a state or to a local school district by levels of poverty as opposed to just population. That's shifting quite a bit from the previous Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This particular act is much more poverty-directed than it's ever been before. We've actually signed a Page Title 1 in our Committee, the appropriators have not done that because we need Title 1, which, just got a little bit too broad, and we wanted to go more to those children that really have greater needs, but the appropriators have so many suburban people that say they need that money. It's very difficult. You couldn't get it passed those problems, so we're doing that for you. It's very difficult. So as a result of that we are, we're taking a hard look at how these funds are distributed or disseminated. We're also stressing flexibility. Some community states have taken advantage of it so far. I'm not sure where Kentucky is. But the education flexibility legislation we passed the last year and we're going to have more flexibility in this legislation. To sort of answer your second question which is a question of professional development in respect to teachers.

We're also trying to support flexibility, so when we go to professional enhancement of teachers, we will give to the local states and districts more flexibility in terms of how they're going to spend that money. Having said that, I for one am not totally happy with all I see in the use of those funds, and as I see this has doubled. I see programs developed not as meaningful as they should be. Now, as you go through this bill, there's a whole series of different titles. And each title may have a different formula for all of this. There's no one common program, so it's hard for me to answer the specifics of it all. Generally, I think you'll be pleased with the direction that this bill is taking. Does anyone want to take a crack at it?

**Mr. Fletcher**. Let me just say, first, I'd like to thank you for your work when you served on the Advisory Committee for me and you're very helpful. But, you know, if you're wondering, though, ninety-five percent of the money goes right back into the schools and get more of the resources back locally in the schools. I can offer administrative reasons and other things. That's difficult; but we're moving in that direction with ninety-five percent which would alleviate the problems you've mentioned that the fact that the times, sometimes it gets down and I'm not sure how much gets down there.

**Chairman Castle**. This is an interesting point. I met yesterday with my governor and the superintendent of education in Delaware. We were sitting there talking about how we were at the meeting, and, you know, I know the governor well, and she said, well, her goal is to get I think it's eighty percent of all state dollars admitted into the classroom. So she's basically trying to use all the federal money for overhead administration so the state money could be going to the classroom. We in Congress say we need that ninety-five percent of the money to be given to the states to go to the classrooms. Frankly, I mean, to tell you somehow, my only input is that we need to have some administration. We need to have money in the classroom, and I don't think they'll disagree up here. I don't think you will disagree, ultimately where you educate a child is in the classroom. Sometimes

it's support the business structure such as this, to support the teachers and help them; you do need government administration type of spending, so it's a very interesting point. I never heard anybody on the state level on that point we're making at the federal level with respect to where the dollars go on that particular issue.

**Ms. Shafer**. My name is Sandy Shafer, S-h-a-f-e-r. I'm employed at Fayette County Schools, and I'm a graduate of Layette. I'm also the elected official for Fayette County here and I am currently working on, Fayette County Schools strategic plan. I think I've heard a lot of comments about the saying, 'it takes a village to raise a child'. My comment is that a child's learning is through play, and we need to incorporate arts in academics as well as recreation because the child does learn outside the classroom. And there are many of us, who looking at a book, is not going to be like getting out on the stage speaking in front of people is something that's going to increase your ability to work with others and to look at yourself as to how you can perform under pressure in a team event. You're in the state of Kentucky where twelve men have taken basketball to the heights of religion and that is not something that is a builder of confidence. These young men who started out in our educational system, when they practice for two hours, they, and they're practicing for four million people because they were, and the same state in this city right here we have the state high school boys and girls champs in basketball, they carry those high school teams.

So if you don't think that recreation is a main part, you're wrong; I guess I wish Harry Bonson had been affecting me. I would be out there in that ball field. I would have taken you all to those heights, too, if I had that opportunity. So I want this to be for all students because economically, socially, every time we talk about a student, it needs to be across the board the same, and it's not only recreation, but it's arts, because the arts build character. We're talking about character development and that's where it really is. In this state you have cut those qualities back so that it's very deficient and it's not as easily accessible particularly to kids who really need that. In this state you have cardiovascular issues. We have the highest heart disease. We've got to get our kids out there exercising.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much. Johnny Isakson.

**Mr. Isakson**. Ms. Shafer, I appreciate your comment, but I want to make a comment in response. Mr. Greene, Mr. Murray, Mr. Persley all addressed it. When I chaired the State Board of Education Authority we tried to raise academic standards, the arts folks, the P.E. Folks, the music folks. There's always a special interest, and I understand that, but Mr. Greene said it right. If a kid cannot read by the end of the 3rd grade, he can't read the rules of the game; he can't read the sheet music or anything else. So my point is, what we're trying to do is get enough resources in the early development of children so they have the competency base to be whatever they can be whether it's a screen writer, an artist, a football player or a physicist. And this is what the President's plan is about. So as we talk about reading and math, as we talk about early childhood, as we talk about limited English proficiency, we're not talking about it to the detriment of the arts, P.E. And music. We're not talking about it to the detriment of physics, but we're talking about it, and Title 1 is all about this, if we can't get them to a basic level of competency before they have all the choices in life then they're not going to have any choices at all. So your

comments are correct.

**Chairman Castle**. I'd just like to say one thing. I actually agree with what you're saying. I think it's twice as important, sometimes the only outlet that some kids have many confidences. It's important to keep that up. We don't fund this at the federal level in terms of schools, so it's really a local, state decision to working you into the schedule, but I would also point out that outside of school, like in Delaware, one out of four kids is involved with the YMCA and YWCA, and one out of seven kids is involved in the Boys and Girls Club in our state. So there are other activities, too, which are not from school function, but we need to make sure it's a holistic view on all these areas.

**Mr. Mile**. My name is Leonard Grant Mile. I'm the Executive Director of the Renaissance Learning Program. We are a privately funded educational foundation and our only purpose for existence is closing the achievement gap. We had the privilege of working for Fayette County Schools in a number of locations. The after school programs really address these problems, and I am glad to say that working very closely with Fayette County Schools we have, in fact, closed the achievement gap with the students that we are dealing with. The one quote that I want to leave you with today is that this is not something that could be done in five years, in ten years, in twenty years. This is something that can be done right now, every day, right here. We're doing it at Johnson Elementary School and we're doing it in Northern Elementary School. When we started there it was the tenth lowest scoring school in the state. It is now the National Title 1 school. We all have the ability to do this. I just want to speak very briefly to a couple of issues that were raised right here.

The first thing is the need for diversity approaches. We've got to have a thousand different experiments. This nation was founded on liberty. It was founded on choice. It was founded on the ability to do things in different ways. One size does not fit all. We have a program every day from 3:00 to 6:00 where we started advanced placement programs for inner city children in kindergarten where they get language, accelerated mathematics and a great book literacy program. Our kids are learning at three times the rate of children who are not in this programming. Their literacy scores have gone in one semester from a way below average to average in one semester, and it's not that we're geniuses. It's not that we're brain surgeons. These are very, very fundamental things, but we have had, as a private organization, the flexibility to bring in an arts program where our kids get drama and music every day, bring in Read Books and Literacy Program. And, again, we're still being privately funded. What I want to encourage you to do, right now there is so much federal money available in the 21st Century Grant programs and in other programs, and all of this legislation, and all of this money goes in one direction, it goes to the public school system. Now, there's nothing wrong in funding the public school system. They're simply getting the funding. They're wonderful people who are doing a great job, but what I believe we must do is open up these dollars for private and nonprofit organizations so that they can come into our community base, that are run by parents, that work directly with children in every ethnic community and discern what works.

Clearly we have the data of what works in this community and a couple of other, a couple of other schools, and it works right now. Now, we're not the only organization that does this. There are a lot of private organizations, nonprofit organizations that do

this. But we've got to break the strong hold of public education going in one direction. We've got to experiment. We've got to empower the people in these rooms who are parents create grassroots organizations like ourselves that are actually solving the problem right now. You've got the solution. It will be wonderful if we can get some federal dollars to help us. But I assure you we will continue to succeed irrespective of whether or not we get the funding.

**Chairman Castle**. What works best in your program?

**Mr. Mile**. The after school program.

**Chairman Castle**. If you had to pick one, one thing that you think is most helpful to these kids. Is it the after school program?

**Mr. Mile**. I think so. And the reason I say that is because teachers and cultures come up against each other. You've got a public school system that's working very, very hard, but you've got a public school system that's tied down by political considerations, bureaucratic rules, much of which come from the federal government, about the kinds of forms and kind of things that teachers have to do all day. They have less and less time to teach. Principals have less and less time to lead because of the non-academic things that are imposed on them. The reason we've been so successful is that we are only accountable to our parents. We're only accountable to our parents and our test results, so that when we go in there and we can work with kids where we have no paperwork to do, where we have strong discipline, strong moral values, and enormous support of the religious community, and when you have that freedom to do just what has to be done and shape what you're doing to the child, rather than political considerations, rather than bureaucratic forms and doing those things, when you get your freedom to choose and to teach with principles and the freedom to lead, things happen. And, you know, I implore you if you consider doing it, open it up, open up the billion dollars of federal funds in the 21st Century Learning Program and other programs of private organizations, nonprofit organizations that have succeeded.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you. Mr. Murray, would you like to say something? Let me say something first. The 21st Century Learning Program, so everyone knows what you're talking about, are the after school programs that are funded by the federal government. It's gone in five years from about $800,000 in appropriations, so I think that's an eight hundred million dollars appropriation. And they'd be increased this year. Probably some of your schools are now involved in it recently, but it basically has happened in the schools, generally run by the schools. I think in response to the issue of private-nonprofit, I'm not sure, and we're looking at more and more state based type initiatives. We're looking at more and more things in that area, but I imagine that relates to programs in the public schools. I mean, that is, that is the separation point that legislation we need may or may not be able to get done. Mr. Persley.

**Mr. Persley**. I just want to comment briefly because in Washington, D.C., we have the First Learning Centers. We also have great programs, and programming. The Youth Opportunity Grant, which is actually in the Department of Labor that we use back in Richmond. And we use community-based organizations to do most of that work. We have partnered with six community-based organizations to do our tutoring. We also have

a lot of recreational programs and culture activities. So there are programs out there that federal dollars sponsor and that work for us to get those dollars to all states that they can use to get to, to get the community based organizations and nonprofits to help develop their systems and better serve our people.

**Chairman Castle**. Mr. Greene.

**Mr. Greene**. Yeah. I'd like to make a comment for the record. I do not wish for my zest for teaching kids to read to be misconstrued as me being against extracurricular activities. Two blocks from here I teach inner city kids, to all the kids who live in this area. As noted, I've been a football coach. I went to school on a football scholarship. I practically lived in the recreation department when I was not at home. So I, when I'm pushing reading, I'm not trying to exclude anything. Music, I directed, implemented, and drove in three or four cars in the ground with a gospel-singing group of young kids from the 6th grade all the way through high school. So when I'm pushing reading, I'm not excluding anything. I'm not putting anybody out. I just think that from my perception that's the most important thing that I can do today. I can start tonight to do, to affect everything that I need to; I want to do put it that way.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Let me just make one comment. What we're trying to do is give back more local flexibility in how the money is spent locally. As the chairman's mentioned, probably with the public school systems where it's at, the flexibility is going to be. Personally, I feel like a community coming together looking at the problems to put the child first, and not put any one particular system or anything above the well being of that child. And this community, like all communities across the country, must come together and say let's use all the valuable resources and let's use what works. And, Leonard, I appreciate your bringing this approach and information. Politically some things are very difficult, but I do think the more local control, the more focus we can get on the child locally, the better chance we have of really closing this gap, not just for a few students, but really closing it for anyone, and it may very well involve using programs like you say at the local level. I think those ought to be open and certainly very viable options for the local community to engage in.

**Ms. Muhammad**. Good morning. I'm Patricia Devine Muhammad, and I'm also in the Minority Advisory Committee with Congressman Fletcher, and I want to thank him, on behalf of the subcommittee here, and I think he's done a great job. But I remember at one of the meetings Congressman Fletcher had asked after much frustration, I guess, that under segregation, did the black community have as much problem with education as we seem to have today, and I thought it was a profound question. And the answers that people gave were that, no, we really didn't have a problem with character education or reading even though they were second-hand books and second-hand materials. And I think the answer that was presented was because the African-American community had invested interest in educating its own because if it's educating its own students then that's how a community can move ahead. Whereas they in our country, and I think it's a national problem that this, being a national, a federal Committee and taking this back to the President, that this country can prosper. It can flourish. People can make great money on the stock market and still have poorly educated people. And that's something to think about. We're talking about having this great country, but our people are not educated. I remember, you know, teachers talking about the nation at risk. I think that

was under the Reagan Administration. Now, something, something is going to happen to this country because of our low education status.

But, because of flourishing information technology that has not happened yet. So if we are a nation at risk, and I think we are, because soon if our economy goes down and other things happen, and there are countries that are educating their people, that are putting money into making sure that their children are healthy and active, they're going to start moving up, and we're going to start saying that this is definitely a nation at risk. But we need to understand that our country, even though we seem to have all of our SUVs and nice homes and real estate market is booming, we do not have a hold on this country. We are a nation at risk. And sooner or later it's going to catch up with us. Thank you.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Patricia, thank you. We appreciate your service. One of things, the group has gotten out of this, is the mention of broad questions of how things were done in the past. Probably at one point there's a lot more flexibility and local control in some of those schools, and that's the issue. I think we've made great strides on equalizing the funding over the years. It's just very disappointing to me that in all utilization funding, for example, we spend probably twice as much per student in our lowest school here in Lexington as we do at a school that has the best performance. So it's more than just equalizing the money. It's allowing the flexibility and control, and some folks say, directly say, "Let's focus on the child and not be bound by a system that says we can't take this student out, for example, and teach them." So I appreciate your input. And you work with after school programs and do a very good job in helping a lot of minority students here right in this area. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. You raised a very complex question. I was going to let this go, but you're right. I don't think culturally in this country we have really taught people the importance of education. I'm talking television news or whatever. The difference in their income and their lives they become uneducated. And it doesn't mean you have to get a Ph.D. Or a master's degree from college, just to be able to read, I mean, being able to do basic functions because it's going to help you tremendously over your opportunities in life. I see nothing but quality in your life and enjoyment of your life. We absolutely have to do this, and we are a nation at risk. I'd like to think sometimes we're a part from a nation at risk, but we're not. We are a nation at risk. I mean, essentially you have some state like California, the next population that's already there is going to be Hispanic, for example. It's going to happen in Texas, as well. In Delaware, we have forty-two languages spoken in our state. Just in little Delaware we have that problem. We have huge areas we need to overcome in terms of educational. Part of it is getting all of us motivated to make sure that people understand the importance of education. Mr. Persley's been to Washington, D.C. Most of us know him pretty well, and this is a very difficult social, cultural problem in Washington, D.C., where the public wouldn't even begin to educate a young person. We need to work on this. It's character education; part of it is character at home.

It is developing kids at young age and affording them opportunities and getting them, showing them a path. There are a lot of blockages for them now. The job we have ahead of us, all of us here in this room, and all of us in Kentucky is just absolutely huge. Frankly, I think we, as members of Congress need to focus on it every single day if we can with the help of all of you to try to do something about it. It's complex. There are

ways to get the answers to this. There's a myriad of answers out there, to this. Each individual is different. We need to understand that. We need to work on it. By God, in this country we do need to work on it.

**Mr. Stratton**. Good morning, Congressmen. My name is Mike Stratton. I'm a principal in Richmond, Kentucky. And I'm glad to have you congressmen here. And I hope you all can stay since Derby is running, so spend a little money here in Kentucky. Appreciate you being here. Ms. Farris' son is one of my students so I want to make sure she's on the job here while you all were here. But, seriously, a couple of months ago, I was on the internet and we were going to see what President Bush had to say and what his policies in terms of education would be. A couple of statements that were said I have here and I would like to expand on just a bit. Number one, my brother here from Martin Luther King, I appreciate what he had to say about character education. I've been in this business twenty-six years and the past four in elementary, the rest of it secondary and middle, and I wish twenty-six years ago they told me to stay and tell me about elementary school to stay there. But somewhere along the way kids change, and I think character education, and you have a government that really stress education; number one, it's not a white thing. It's not a black thing. It's not a Spanish thing. It's not a Latino thing. It's the right thing regardless of color or where you're from and everything. And I think that's where we're going away from that, and I'm glad to see we're addressing character education as being a top priority because we got to live together, we get along together, and we can do things the right way. Number two; I appreciate Mr. Greene.

I sort of came up maybe the same way as the coach, and I can see where reading is very important. In my school we are seeking out testing, like most of the educators that are here, we've been testing for the past week. We're going to continue in our character testing, but I want to carry this a little bit further where we test ourselves in Kentucky across this great country, and not only encourage testing, but I'd like to see a pretest where a kid goes into the classroom and after a year of being there, posttest to see what they've learned, maybe we can find out exactly how much we're doing in education instead of some of the other testing that we're spending great amounts of money for. Reading is important. Our school went to the phonics and I think phonics is very important for a kid learning how to read before they're in the 3rd grade, so I see where we're looking at 3rd grade. And after that I can see where we need to look at reading and testing reading 3rd graders because after that I don't know really how to catch up, Congressman Fletcher, after the 3rd grade. I appreciate the panel's input. I appreciate the Congressman giving us the time to voice our questions concerning education. I thank you very much for coming, and I hope in this great state of Kentucky we can move forward in education in the right direction. Thank you guys for coming and being with us.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you, Mr. Stratton, and I appreciate your work. You know, several folks have mentioned to me that by the 3rd grade we're behind, and I know Mr. Greene has mentioned the problem starts right out of the womb or the work needs to begin right there especially on literacy, education, character education, as well. One of the things that has really gotten my attention down at the elementary school, Russell Elementary School here, and speaking to folks, and talked about scores of the early childhood development that's given to children as they come in, and I was shocked that the four and five year olds particularly that couldn't recognize if you asked them to point to their nose

or ears or eyes, but it still, it brought to me the importance of the home life. Nothing can replace the parents and that sort of thing, but right now students spend more time with teachers than they do parents. And I think it is clear that we must do something in this country to stop the cycle that we have; children raising children who haven't found the skills in themselves to be able to provide that child the early nurturing, and it is very difficult, but I think that's why we have Early Start and the programs that were initially, that are very, very important; that we catch those children early. If they come in and aren't able to do the very basic things that you would expect your children to do at a very young age, the age of one or two, then we really need to have some very focused intervention programs at that time, catch them pretty early. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. Take a look at the clock and it's 11:46. We want to take a couple more questions if we can. We don't really have any closing statements here so we're going to try to fit in as much we can. We will limit our comments and try to hear from you because several people may have comments.

**Ms. Raines**. I'm Shirley Raines. I'm Dean of the College Education Cabinet, and thank you for coming here and for being at Booker T. Washington. I'm going to pick up on something that Mr. Greene said. Mr. Greene helps us not only because he is conscious of our community, but also he walks the walk and talks the talk in regards of what he has to say. I know the other three do, as well. I want to ask you a question about teachers. We're doing a lot to improve the quality of teacher education, but we're facing a tremendous shortage in this nation of teachers. And some of our best teachers, some that you mentioned, Dr. Fletcher, as ions of excellence, are about to float off into retirement and we desperately need help at, with the federal government helping our states to recruit more minority teachers, but also to recruit teachers because we're concerned about filling the ranks. We're trying to do a better job of teacher education. We have a long way to go, as well, because teaching has changed, schools have changed, society has changed, and we have to replace those who are leaving. I'm a former Head Start teacher, so I have the passion and the values of parent involvement and all of those kinds of things that I think our teaching course shares, but we do need to be sure to find ways to replace them. What do you and this Committee and the President have planned to help us?

**Mr. Fletcher**. I'm going to let the chairman answer. Mr. Chairman, I'll let you answer that.

**Chairman Castle**. It's a very interesting question. First of all, pleased I'm very pleased with your question. The best speaker on this I've heard from the, in the last few months was a fellow named Bernie Lee, who is from Chicago. He works for the Chicago School District, and that's a big city. And this guy is a non-educator who says we need to hustle, and basically they're working on everything. They're working on a student to teacher program with help from the federal government. He's working on bringing in bright people for three or four years, he says, "I don't care if these teachers don't like me." He says, "If I can get three or four years, I'm a really bright person. That's good as far as I'm concerned." They're trying to get all kinds of alternative features into the system in Chicago percentage-wise. I mean, nobody quoted or misstated anything, but he has a high percentage of the new teachers who are coming in alternative programs. So that, that has worked extremely well. We, in this legislation, and I don't have all the details here, but I think you'll be pleased with some of the professional development. We're

trying to make sure that, you know, teachers prepare the subject matter in which they're willing to teach for starters. That if they have to go back and learn it, we'll give them the opportunity to go back and be able to learn it. That we are giving more flexibility to teachers in terms of what they can do in their professional development to keep them interested in their jobs. If you think that's important, you're absolutely right. It's almost a crisis level. It's for a whole variety of reasons to teach. And this is a shared problem that we all have to face. I'd just like to ask you one quick question. Do you have programs for bringing in people who want to teach who have not gone through a regular educational program?

**Ms. Raines**. Yes.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you. She said yes.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Let me say, you know, as we look at what a student's interest is; it's very clear. I know folks don't go into teaching for the money. That's obviously the pay that's out there. Well, it is a problem. We're going to have to address it. How much emphasis do we put on it until we educate our children? We can go over to the commercial electrical contractor who graduated from high school, he had a good education, he can read, after just a short period of time he's making $60,000 a year. You start teaching after four years and you have a tremendous responsibility of teaching these young children and you make $30,000 a year. That kind of gives you an idea, where we put our focus and our emphasis. That's going to take, I think, a lot to change from the local community, and I think funding and getting more resources now. Teachers, personally, I think have lost a great deal of their professionalism, since the same thing happened among physicians by the way, and we need somehow to restore that. I just came back from a Family Literacy Conference in Dallas a few weeks ago, and one of the most important things in education is the child having a well-qualified teacher in the classroom. That's very important. Thank you.

**Mr. Isakson**. I wanted to thank you very much for being here. It's a credit to yourself and the University of Kentucky that the Dean of College and Education would be here because the College of Education plays a huge role in the supply, and it is inevitable and unfortunate that all alternative certification and to, to teachers and all these things we're dealing with right now, even have to be there. We wish we had enough of you in the system, but we don't. In specific answer to your question, when President Clinton proposed his 100,000 Teacher Program, which was controversial for a lot of reasons, but the reality after you get in the classroom, we wanted 100,000 certified teachers to be hired, and one of the things Congress did, under Bill Whitley and Mike Castle and Ernie Fletcher which was really great, was giving flexibility for the states to use that money to, for professional development of existing teachers to get them certified in the field, because not only did we not have enough teachers, of the ones we have, we don't have enough of them to raise a certified teacher program. So that flexibility gave school systems a great, great opportunity. But I want to say one other thing that relates to Mr. Murray. We didn't actually introduce Georgia, the three years that I chaired the Board of Education, to find out why we were losing so many teachers, and it was in the first years years. That's where the big crisis is.

And income is number 7. You know, it was the fact, as Ernie said, it wasn't the factor, because people went into it out of the love. As Mike has said, women who predominate the teaching profession used to not have a lot of alternatives. Now they have tons of alternatives, but still people who do teach out of passion. Our biggest problem, and one of the things we should talk about, because one of those things you got to do is change minds and hearts. Number one was parents, I mean, teachers felt like it was for the parents. You know, that they didn't have the type of support they needed to do what they needed to do in the classroom, and that was the number one factor. And the last thing I wanted to say is this: In the consequences of President Bush's program for failing schools is money and resources a Title 1 school is determined to be failing after its first year, there's money for intervention, professional development, character and I mean, charter school programs, things of that nature, but there is money for resources constantly.

At the end of the year, too, there's more money, but the leadership of this school ultimately makes a tremendous amount of difference whether the teachers stay, too. And we have a principal and we have a couple of principles here. I want to say that one of the keys, I think we got to take more and more focus on this, is the accountability at the administrative level to support the teacher in the classroom, and that's the principal of the teacher. That's a huge part of the retention factor. If we can retain more than we hire today and not be this three out of the four, after the third year, then we'll solve a lot of our teacher quantity problems. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. We're going to take one more question, but before we do that, I'd just like to make one more comment. But I want somebody to come out and paint a positive picture about teaching, I think higher than that, the people running down the teaching profession somewhat. It would be a great policy. But, secondly, I don't think this is any kind of a soft or derogatory sentence, you know, I took my first two-week vacation in thirty-seven years last year. The whole idea was being be able to do something different. I'm sorry. Excuse me. Camp counselor many, many years ago, probably the best job I ever had, and I can't do that now because these guys keep me tied up in Congress the whole time. And there are many benefits of teaching that we don't encourage, show our hardship, their confidence. I think that's sound. Teaching is a great job. You know, it's rewarding. We need somebody to carry that bat out there, and say, "This is a great job." One final question.

**Mr. Sams**. My name is David Sams. I've worked since I was raised here in Lexington, and I have a 5th grade education with probably equivalent to a 6th grade reading education because I had a very slow start. And it was the teacher that made a difference in my life because I had the disadvantage that you talked about. And it was a teacher whose name was Mac. I'll never forget her name because she took the time to tutor me in that subject, and there are teachers out there that care. And, you know, when I broke my leg at work I had the time to go and sit in the classroom with my, with my child. I had seen so much of the same thing that was happening to me that's going on still today. The slow learners are getting pushed to the side because there are not enough teachers in the room. These teachers need help. They need more on-hand one-on-one. They're asking the teachers to do way too much. Yes, they can teach the ones that are above average, and they can go on and be great people, but the ones that are down at the bottom is going to hold jobs like me. They're going to do the things that other people don't want to do.

I'm happy to have a job, happy to be part of this society, but there's one thing that I'm dissatisfied with is not having enough help in classrooms of these teachers. They failed me. I'm not about to let them fail my kids from the education that we need. So we need to put more people in the classroom. One-on-one is what's going to close the gap. That's what she did for me. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. I think that's our closing statement. It's more than we can say. Let me thank all of you very, very much for being here today. We particularly thank the panel who's given their time to prepare to be here today; Mr. Murray, Mr. Persley, Mr. Ibarra, Mr. Greene. Let's give them a hand.

**Mr. Fletcher**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it very much. This is one of five hearings that have been done across the country outside Washington, D.C. We've done a number within the capital in the hearing room or the committee room, but I want to thank the chairman for making the effort to come down. This is the last trip before we actually begin to do the final work on the bill on the House side, so it's a very important hearing. And, again, I want to thank you for bringing the subcommittee here and for your continued faithful interest in education and our students across this nation. And, Congressman Isakson, thank you also for making the sacrifice for coming here when, as many of you know, in public service there's a lot of times you're not with your family and be willing to sacrifice to come to another district. Thank you very much and please give them a round of applause. I want to thank Ann Farris for opening up the school of Booker T. Washington here for your hospitality. Many of you that come out today we've got a tremendous, a wealth of experience. I know everyone didn't get to have some input, but please write us. And, again, I want to thank the panel and all of you. And I'm very encouraged with this new bill, new approach that we're really beginning to focus, and I know that a lot of you worked a long time in the federal level to give you the power that you need to really make sure folks like David have the kind of opportunities that they deserve. Thanks and we appreciate it.

**Chairman Castle**. The hearing stands adjourned.

Whereupon, the subcommittee was adjourned.

***APPENDIX A – WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE***

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE MIKE CASTLE**
**CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM**

**HEARING ON**
**"ENSURING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MINORITY CHILDREN"**

**TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2001**
**10:00 A.M.**

Good morning. I am pleased to welcome you to the Education Reform Subcommittee's hearing on Ensuring Educational Opportunity for Minority Children.

I am pleased to be here in Lexington with my good friends Dr. Fletcher who represents this Congressional District, and Johnny Isakson, Congressman from Georgia. We are all interested in hearing the views of the Panel today because when we return to Washington DC we will be debating one of the top priorities of the American people, improving the quality of education for our children.

As many of you know, President Bush's education reform blueprint, appropriately entitled "No Child Left Behind," or H.R.1 as we call it, provides more flexibility for state and local authorities and more options for parents to ensure that all children receive a quality education. Specifically, the plan consolidates several small K-12 education programs and directs more decision-making authority, with respect to academic priorities, to those at the state and local levels -- individuals who are best acquainted with the unique needs of the children in their schools. We know that folks here in Kentucky know best what is needed to improve their schools.

Before we hear from you let me just summarize some of the things we are considering in H.R.1 that we believe will be helpful in improving your schools. We always keep in mind that the federal government only provides about seven percent of the funds, so we don't want to

overburden you with regulations that don't make any sense. At the same time it is important, since we are spending your hard earned tax dollars, that we make sure the money is well spent. The No Child Left Behind proposal we will be considering when we return includes funds to:

- Develop annual assessments in reading and math;
- Help failing schools improve and then finally after three years if changes don't take place, choice for students to attend another school where they can get a good education.
- A tripling of the funding for research based reading instruction
- A flexible grant program for professional development and improving math and science partnerships;
- Drug and violence prevention in partnership with faith based organizations;
- A formula grant program to enhance education through technology;
- Opportunity for a State to become a "Charter State" and be free of federal regulations in exchange for academic improvement.

These are some of the ideas we are considering in H.R.1. We have held hearings in other parts of the country to discuss these ideas, and we are pleased to hear from you today and learn from you how we can make these proposals better. As with every piece of legislation there are some things you'll like and others that you won't, and that's OK. Our objective is to craft the most effective legislation possible to improve our schools. I know that is your objective as well.

This morning we are fortunate to have a distinguished panel of witnesses. We will hear from Lexington native Erran Persley, who is working for Washington DC Mayor Anthony Williams, about the need for more parental choice as a tool to improve our schools; Robert Murray, Principal of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy for Excellence here in Lexington, on the need for more character education; Richard Green on the need for reducing the number of students

who can't read proficiently; Abdon Ibarra on how H.R.1 will affect the Hispanic community; and Ms. Elaine Farris who will discuss how greater flexibility in federal funding can assist local schools improve academic instruction.

I want to thank all of you for your willingness to testify here today. I look forward to hearing your views on how we can work together to improve the education of all our children so that no child is left behind.

***APPENDIX B – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RICHARD GREENE, UPWARD BOUND MENTOR, CRAWFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL & LEXINGTON TRADITONAL MAGNET SCHOOL, LEXINGTON, KY***

# LITERACY AND THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Views from the playing field

I will begin my testimony with a description of a school situation involving a student named Johnny. Johnny lived in the Government Housing Projects with his mother, younger brother and sister. His mother worked two jobs (one full and one part-time) to assure her family a decent standard of living.

In August of 1990, Johnny entered the sixth grade with a record of better than average grades and behavior. He was polite, well mannered, neatly dressed and eager to start school. His first two weeks of school went by without a major incident. Other than getting lost a couple of times and failing to open his combination locker on one other occasion, he had done well.

But, by the start of the fourth week , Johnny began having academic difficulties in Language Arts , Social Studies and Science. His required weekly writing journal for Language Arts and questions at the end of chapters, assigned as homework, for Social Studies and Science were incomplete or not done at all. His mother was contacted and a parent/teacher conference was scheduled. During the conference, teachers agreed to monitor and sign Johnny's assignment book each day. His mother agreed to read his assignment book each evening, sign it , and have Johnny show it to each of his teachers the following school day. The Language Arts teacher ended the conference by suggesting to the mother that she consider testing Johnny's reading ability as the next viable option.

When monitoring and several additional parent/teacher conferences, and a subsequent placement

in the school's afternoon school tutorial program did not produce the desired academic results by the end of the first 9-week grading period, Johnny's mother decided to have him tested.

The results of the testing were spirit shattering. Johnny's reading comprehension was listed at 3.6 (3rd grade- 6th month) and vocabulary was listed as 3.9 (3rd grade- 9th month). Not one reading category was listed as greater than or equal to 4th grade. Recovering from her initial shock at hearing these scores, the mother ask, " How did my child get this far, reading this badly?"

Conversations with three of Johnny's former elementary school teachers revealed that Johnny's passing grades in reading were never based on reading books at grade level, but, on reading books that matched his ability. It was quite possible, that in 5th grade, he was reading from 3rd grade books. Additionally, an intensive review of his cumulative folder revealed that Johnny, judging from his performance on the kindergarten assessment tool, started kindergarten well behind his peers. Seven years later, in 6th grade, he was still behind, with very few options for catching up.

If the situation just described were an isolated incident involving a single student, then the law of averages could be adequate justification. But, it is not. This situation occurs with disturbing frequency each and every school year. Johnny is a not single student. He is composite representation of the 300 disadvantaged students that I have personally guided through very similar situations. While each situation differs slightly, they all have two glaring characteristics in common. **One, the students entered kindergarten with a knowledge base so lacking in**

**the most basic skills that he/she was easily considered to be grade level behind in his/her first formal year of public schooling. And, two, their reading level entering 6th grade was below fifth grade level.**

A lack of knowledge of the most basic skills (color and picture recognition, letters of alphabet, rote counting, and numeral comprehension) and poor reading skills are the factors most responsible for the low literacy rate of disadvantaged students and the existing achievement gap. If increasing the literacy rate of disadvantaged students and closing the achievement gap are to be accomplished, ***early identification*** and ***effective intervention*** are critical. Ensuring that children of poverty have mastered the basic skills necessary to become effective readers by third grade will eventually narrow the achievement gap. The research shows that, if children leave third grade not reading, they are candidates for failure in English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, etc., and most importantly, life itself. The nation can ill-afford to allow this destructiveness to continue.

## *EARLY READING FIRST*

*An essential step in closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers.*

A state- by- state analysis by the National Education Goals Panel of the National Assessment of Educational Progress(NAEP) from 1993 to 2000 yielded the following facts. " Reading scores in most states have remained flat, and the reading achievement gap between white students and black or Hispanic students has widened further." Additionally, " 63 percent of black fourth graders, 58 percent of Hispanics, 60 percent of children in poverty, and 47 percent of children in urban schools scored at " below basic " reading competency levels."

While disappointing, these facts are not surprising to me or to anyone who has kept abreast of educational research and/or writings. We were forewarned by Samuel Blumenfeld in 1985 that "13 percent of American 17 - year- olds are functionally illiterate, i.e. cannot read above fourth grade level. And the figure may run as high as 40 percent among minority youth. " Jonathan Kozol stated in his book Illiterate America(1985) that " between 24 and 44 million American adults cannot read the poison warning on a can of pesticide, a letter from a child's teacher, or the front page of the daily newspaper." An article in Right to Read Report(vol 1, no.8, January 1994) stated that " In 1930, 80 percent of African Americans over the age of 14 could read. By 1990, after the doors of desegregated education were opened to offer minorities what was thought to be a new era of opportunity, only 56 percent of African Americans over the age of 14 could read." And, in 1997, Dr. Larry Lezotte, noted effective school researcher, warned us " that if children leave what we call the third grade, not reading, the probability of those kids ever being reclaimed into the mainstream of academic success downstream is slim to none."

In spite of these warnings, and many others from numerous sources, the educational hierarchy continued with programs that were obviously ineffective. Attempting to close the academic gap, instead of preventing it initially, and lack of accountability rendered all but a couple( Head Start-All Day Kindergarten) ineffective.

President Bush's **Early Reading First** initiative targets children living in high poverty areas. It seeks to ensure the reading readiness of every child residing in these pockets of poverty.
It will provide the critical early identification and intervention necessary to prevent reading failures. Instruction will be delivered via the proven strategies of phonemic awareness, phonics, guided and oral reading, and application of reading comprehension strategies.
It charges each state receiving funds with the responsibility of providing an annual report containing evidence that the state is **effectively** carrying out the Reading First Program.

The Early Reading First initiative has the right focus, adequate funding, an extra $600 million has been authorized for reading programs, and the proper assessment tools. It is an essential first step in any effort to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers. President Bush seems to be echoing the sentiment of the late Ron Edmonds, a noted researcher on effective school, that " we can, whenever and wherever we choose, teach all kids whose education is important to us. We already know more than we need to do so."

For better than seventeen(17) years, I have witnessed the number of disadvantaged students with severe(two or more levels below grade level) reading deficiencies increase exponentially. I have witnessed , first hand, the emotional agony of parents when learning that their child's weak

reading skills were preventing him/her from realizing academic success. But the most disturbing images have been the looks of frustration and doubt on the faces of students failing subject after subject after subject because their reading skills were not adequate enough to generate academic success. To this long over due literacy initiative, I say " WELCOME!". Our children have waited far to long and they deserve better.

# Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement – "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

| Your Name: Richard L. Greene | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Are you testifying on behalf of a Federal, State, or Local Governmental entity? | (Yes) | No |
| 2. Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government entity? | (Yes) | No |
| 3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1996: | | |
| 4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you are representing: | | |
| 5. If your answer to question number 2 is yes, please list any offices or elected positions held or briefly describe your representational capacity with the entities disclosed in question number 4: | | |
| 6. If your answer to question number 2 is yes, do any of the entities disclosed in question number 4 have parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities for whom you are not representing? | Yes | No |
| 7. If the answer to question number 2 is yes, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which were received by the entities listed under question 4 since October 1, 1996, including the source and amount of each grant or contract: | | |

Signature: Richard L. Greene Date: 5/1/01

Please attach this sheet to your written statement.

***APPENDIX C – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ABDON IBARRA, DIRECTOR, HISPANIC SERVICES, LEXINGTON, KY***

## Comments – Mr. Abdon Ibarra

Although the educational plight of the Latino/Hispanic population in the United States is still not resolved nor is it being adequately addressed, it is imperative to continue to examine efforts that address this concern. The number of Latinos in the Southeastern United States is growing and this has created new demands on the educational, social, and economic infrastructure of this part of the country. Therefore, legislation such as H.R. 1 not only represents a renewed focus on the education of the disadvantaged, but it also creates a new opportunity to right the failures of the past and address the needs of the future.

H.R. 1's provisions calling for accountability of the schools that receive this aid should be enforced and used to protect the education of children. School systems must understand that their role is not to perpetuate themselves, but to continually learn to teach the changing population which make up their schools. Appalachian migrant children, African-American children, poor white children, Hispanic children and all children who require staff development should be viewed as a priority. This new and diverse population brings with it new challenges that must be confronted. Hispanic/Latino statistics in educational development have been termed as insignificant when used to measure success or failure in educational achievement. These children also count, and therefore the implementation of the provisions that require progress in all schools is essential to ensure that all children are provided with a meaningful education.

H.R. 1 also provides for the transfer of funds between programs; up to 35 percent without state permission, and up to 100 percent with state sign-off. This provision should be closely monitored to avoid what is happening now where these funds become supplemental funds for other programs within the school districts. This should be allowed only for relevant programs that advance the mission and goals of this legislation. This would ensure state and local commitment to the disadvantaged student population.

Finally H.R. 1 provides for parental choice and promoting English fluency. These two provisions hit at the heart of the Hispanic/Latino educational experience. Students whose first language is Spanish often remain in classes that hinder their development because they are kept in these classes too long. Students are stigmatized because their first language is perceived as a burden rather than an asset. Parents have a choice to either place or not place children in such programs. In addition schools are mandated to teach these children to speak English in three years. Latino parents have always desired choice and proficiency in English for their children.

In conclusion, this legislation must be monitored closely to ensure compliance because the clock is ticking and the population of disadvantaged children is continually growing. This growth has been caused by an educational system that has not been held accountable. It is a system that has been unable or has refused to adjust to the needs of a diverse student population. This bill represents a new hope for many of us that advocate

on behalf of all children, but particularly for minority children and specifically for Latino children.

## Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement – "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

Your Name: ABDON T. BARRA, Jr

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Will you be representing a federal, State, or local government entity? (If the answer is yes please contact the Committee). | | X |
| 2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1998: None | | |
| 3. Will you be representing an entity other than a government entity? | | X |
| 4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you will be representing: None | | |
| 5. Please list any offices or elected positions held and/or briefly describe your representational capacity with each of the entities you listed in response to question 4: None | | |
| 6. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received by the entities you listed in response to question 4 since October 1, 1998, including the source and amount of each grant or contract: None | | |
| 7. Are there parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities you disclosed in response to question number 4 that you will not be representing? If so, please list: | | X |

Signature: [illegible] Date: 5/1/02

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

***APPENDIX D – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ERRAN F. PERSLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, YOUTH OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, WASHINGTON, DC***

Testimony by
Erran F. Persley
On

# *THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS OF EDUCATION*

May 1, 2001

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Good morning. I want to thank Congressman Fletcher and the other members of the Subcommittee on Education Reform for this opportunity to testify on this important topic. I had the great honor of talking at length with Congressman Fletcher about education and youth development and I am encouraged by his commitment to create an educational system that truly leaves no child behind.

My experiences as both the Acting Director of the Youth Opportunity Grant Program in Washington, D.C. and as a youth advocate have convinced me that education and overall youth development has become a crisis situation in America. However, I must state that the views I express today are my own and should not be attributed to a particular institution with which I am associated.

Although I currently live in Washington, D.C., my commitment to education and to this state are deeply rooted. I was raised right here in Lexington, Kentucky. I attended The Lexington School and graduated from Lafayette High School. During that time my mother worked for the Fayette County Board of Education

and would later go on to work for the Kentucky Department of Education where she became intimately involved in the Kentucky Educational Reform Act. So as you can see, from childhood I was taught the value of education and understood that access to a good education is a fundamental right of all young people, a right that should not be infringed by economic status or physical location.

While the country as a whole is experiencing the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years, there are many segments of the population that are not sharing in this economic bounty. The problem is crucial for minority youth, especially those living in high-poverty urban and rural areas. Since Kentucky is a predominately rural state, we have to take a very close look at these figures and what they mean to our young people.

Statistics released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1999 show African-American out-of-school males ages 16-24 living in urban poverty areas have an employment rate of only 50 percent, and Hispanic out-of-school females ages 16-24 living in poor rural areas have an employment rate of 33%. By comparison, white out-of-school young males living in non-poverty areas have an employment rate of 84%, and white out-of-school young females living in non-poverty areas have an employment rate of 76 percent. I make these distinctions not to contrast race but to contrast poverty stricken, rural, and urban areas to non-poverty areas.

The situation is even worse for young minority males who are high school dropouts. Half of out-of-school African American males in high poverty areas are high school dropouts, and the employment rate for these youth is 29 percent (based on 1990 Census data). The full-time employment rate for these youth is only 20 percent, suggesting that only a fifth of young African American high school dropouts in high poverty areas have a source of income sufficient to support a family.

The employment rate for Hispanic youth in high poverty areas is also cause for concern. Out-of-school Hispanic male youth in such neighborhoods have an employment rate of 63 percent and a full-time employment rate of 52 percent. Further, over two-thirds of out-of-school Hispanic males in high poverty areas are high school dropouts. The employment rate for these youth is 59 percent and the full-time employment rate is 49 percent.

A cycle has been created and a crisis situation has developed in our impoverished rural and urban communities and it must be addressed utilizing all of our national and local resources in a combined effort. It is for these reasons that I support a comprehensive approach to addressing our educational problems and President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" legislation (H.R.1). The President has committed to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. President Bush's plan includes: increased funding for

education, annual testing, accountability at the state and local level and provisions for school choice.

$80 billion has been spent since 1990 to assist disadvantaged students in our country, however the test scores have remained virtually the same. The education dilemma must be addressed at the grassroots level and our parents must be entrusted to make the changes at the local level to ensure a quality education for our young people. By expanding school and parental choice we empower our citizenship to make decisions on their children's education. By allowing parents to remove their children from failing schools, we force those schools to direct their energy toward sustainable improvements. Allowing students to leave inadequate schools and use federal dollars to attend another public school or private school, or receive supplemental educational services from another provider of the parent's choice is the first step in improving educational opportunities for our young people.

School choice and the option of federal funds for private school attendance are good instruments to bridge the current failing educational system, so that our young people do not have to sit in failing schools while we develop a strategy to reshape our nation's educational system. However, it must be understood that this is just a bridge; the real goal must be to establish a public school system that is responsive to the needs of our nation's young people. A system that ensures

that all young people are receiving a quality education whether they live in the hills of eastern Kentucky, the center of Chicago, or the suburbs of Los Angeles.

Even a as an immediate plan school choice won't work for everyone, the demand overall is too great but if a system is developed that combines school choice and funding for other creative tutorial, character education, and academic enrichment community based programs we can serve a majority of our nation's young people. Do I support school choice? Yes. But ultimately to effectively deal with the issues of education and poverty we must look at the problem in its totality and come to some resolve, realizing that each state, county, and city has diverse needs and issues. So we must come up with a national plan that lays the framework while empowering the states and local governments to address the issues in their own innovative ways. We must implement comprehensive plans that are sensitive to the social, physical and economic dynamics of each community.

The starting point for this effort is our educational system but it doesn't end there. All of our community resources must be utilized to create new outcomes for our young people. Education and economic development are intricately linked; the success of each of them is dependent upon the other. Over the years, both the public and the non-profit community have moved away from comprehensive, community-based planning strategies. Most of the successful programs in this country have innovatively combined the local community groups with private and

public sector partners to effectively address community issues. Individually some of these programs have achieved success in small segments of the community but by working in a comprehensive effort the benefits are multiplied and the winners are our nation's young people.

Many of us remember the Great Society Programs of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Fueled by the civil rights movement and a federal surplus, the Great Society programs embarked on an ambitious initiative to eradicate poverty in the United States. The method that Kennedy and Johnson developed was a plan for integrated community planning and development. President Kennedy's philosophy is resident in President Bush's belief that the efforts of private citizens combined with that of the private sector and federal and local governments can bring about economic and social revitalization to some of our most impoverished regions of the country.

Our President has made education a top priority and with committed members in congress like Ernie Fletcher we can begin to reshape this country's educational and youth development systems. "No Child Left Behind" is the framework for a comprehensive vision for improving education in our inner cities and rural communities. But it is just a framework; it will take the commitment of our nation's schools, churches, and community based organizations, local and federal officials to make it work. The President has developed the outline it is now up to each of us as citizens to develop our local action plans to fit the overall

framework. As the old African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child." The time is now; our children can't wait another day. I thank you for this opportunity.

## Successful Community-Based Initiatives

### Migrant Issues Project

Clay County is the heart of a sugar beet area in Minnesota. Hispanic farm workers from south Texas are invited there to work, particularly during the early summer. However, the city of Moorhead (population 30,000) found it increasingly difficult to host families of migrant farm workers. Some concerns about health, legal services, and schooling were being addressed largely with federal funds. But other issues crucial to Hispanic farm workers families were not taken care of: additional schooling, housing, access to welfare, and steady employment.

To respond to these needs, in 1989 the local community created the Migrant Issues Project, "Joint Powers". The co-sponsors of this project were Clay County, the City of Moorhead and the Moorhead School District. The sugar beet growers and a grant from the West Central Minnesota Initiative Fund of the McKnight Foundation assisted the program financially for its first three years. Funding also

supported a full-time community coordinator who helped form representative task forces to address several issues.

**Inner Vision – Chicago, Illinois**

Inner Vision works diligently to increase student's self-esteem and character development. The Inner Vision philosophy is simple: Increase a student's self-worth, instill a sense of pride and self-respect, expose students to new environments (and new levels of thinking) and provide consistent examples of high quality individuals who have the ability to make a child's education relevant for his/her future aspirations. The Inner Vision team accomplishes their goal through a comprehensive character education program that goes beyond the walls of the traditional school setting.

During the first year of implementing Inner Vision's creative learning techniques and character education curriculum in Chicago schools, students experienced a 70% increase in math TAP (Test of Academic Proficiency). One school, Corliss High School achieved a 22% increase in reading TAP scores, the schools highest in 10 years.

**Youth Opportunity Grant Program-Department of Labor**

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) specifies that Youth Opportunity Grants be used to increase the long-term employment of youth that live in empowerment zones, enterprise communities, and high poverty areas. To achieve this goal, Youth Opportunity Grants concentrate a large amount of resources in high-poverty areas to bring about community-wide impacts on; (1) high school completion rates (2) college enrollment rates (3) employment rates.

The Washington D.C. Youth Opportunity Grant Program has partnered with community based organizations, the private sector, the Metropolitan Police and Fire Departments, and various federal agencies to create a holistic approach to youth development. The program serves an estimated 1,000 youth each year and assists them in: academic enrichment, GED attainment, life skills training, college preparation, technological training, pre-employment skills, and job placement.

# Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement – "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Your Name: | | |
| 1. Will you be representing a federal, State, or local government entity? (If the answer is yes please contact the Committee). | Yes | No X |
| 2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1998:<br><br>NONE | | |
| 3. Will you be representing an entity other than a government entity? | Yes | No X |
| 4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you will be representing: | | |
| 5. Please list any offices or elected positions held and/or briefly describe your representational capacity with each of the entities you listed in response to question 4:<br><br>N/A | | |
| 6. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received by the entities you listed in response to question 4 since October 1, 1998, including the source and amount of each grant or contract:<br><br>N/A | | |
| 7. Are there parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities you disclosed in response to question number 4 that you will not be representing? If so, please list:<br><br>N/A | Yes | No |

Signature: E. Perales Date: 4/26/01

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

***APPENDIX E – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. ROBERT MURRAY, PRINCIPAL, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE, LEXINGTON, KY***

# Character Education

**"Rebuilding the Village"**

During the inaugural celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday as a national holiday, Ebony Magazine published an impressive tribute to Dr. King. The tribute consisted of a number of speech excerpts and quotes given by Dr. King over his lifetime. As I read through these short passages, I discovered a particular quote that more or less expressed his vision or philosophy of education. To this day, I have not read a more profound statement about education. Dr. King wrote these words about education and I quote:

**" I often wonder whether or not education is fulfilling its purpose. A great majority of the so-called education people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from fiction.**

**"The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason and no morals. We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character --- that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only the power of concentration but also worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living."**

These words, in my judgment, embody the general mission of all educational programs and institutions. In order for us all to reap the benefits of our educational labors, the institutions and processes that build the "minds of students" must not take lightly their responsibility in part to build the "character of students." The traditional academic curriculum will give students the necessary tools needed for productive jobs and careers; character education will give them guidance for the use of those tools. Putting it another way, a carpenter can build a house with his tools or tear one down; or, a shovel can be a constructive tool used to prepare a firm foundation when planting a young tree; or it can be an unearthing tool that unsettles and weakens the

foundation of an old tree. These analogies are simple but realistic illustrations of Dr. King's philosophy. Without desirable character, one has no intrinsic guidance for the use of the skills they have attained

In recent years, the proliferation of violence in our cities and towns has now invaded the boundaries of public educational institutions. Though schools are still considered some of the safest places for youths, there is cause for growing concern. Bizarre incidents such as those having occurred at Columbine, Paducah, and others have heightened the fears and anxieties of parents and school officials all over the country. Reactions have varied from (1) increased numbers of uniformed officers (2) locks and buzzers on school doors (3) zero tolerance discipline policies (4) criminal records checks for teachers and parents, etc. The public school of the 21st century is sadly taking on the image and characteristic of the juvenile institution of the 20th century. In spite of the current reactions and responses, the number of violent incidents appear to be on the increase. We have attempted to provide tangible solutions to problems that stem from intangible causes, i.e., lack of ethical and moral character. Responses such as those mentioned earlier give an illusion of solving behavioral problems by creating short term or temporary compliance with rules and regulations, when in reality, the distorted value or belief system that sustains the student's negative inclinations remain firmly planted within the students psyche. Student self discipline motivated by a proper belief system is the missing but needed source for positive student behavior. Character education at home and school is a necessary means to achieving these desired ends.

My day to day experiences with students over the years and particularly in recent years has confirmed my belief that many students are lacking an ethical foundation needed to guide their thoughts and actions. Many students, when questioned thoroughly about negative behavior

respond in ways that clearly indicate a distorted value system or the lack thereof. They can tell you that they believe a certain act is "right or wrong" but cannot adequately explain why they believe it is "right or wrong." My observation is that disruptive student behavior stems from the students perception of good vs bad, right vs wrong likes and dislikes, etc. When the value system that shapes these perceptions is distorted, it is usually acted out in what we identify as negative behavior. Every individual at some point will voluntarily or involuntarily establish a belief system that could be good or bad. Ideally, this belief system will become rooted in what I call universal character principles such as **altruism, human worth, honesty, respect, responsibility, justice, self-discipline, courtesy, citizenship, and knowledge**. I believe it is safe to say that these character principles are universally viewed as desirable attributes of character, regardless of creed or religion. They must be woven into the fabric of our educational processes and taught consistently. In this regard, the public school must augment the parent's efforts to develop their children socially and in character. These principles, if taught comprehensively, should transcend ethical and moral teaching and extend to a heightened knowledge of self, history, culture as well as a respect and appreciation for diversity.

Across the country, character education programs are found to some degree in most school districts. Some programs involve direct teaching of identified character principles, others integrate them among the academic subject matter. The format may vary but the intended goal should be the same, i.e., the development of productive citizens who positively contribute to our societies.

It has been said among educators and politicians that "it takes a village to raise a child." That village being **the public or private school, the home and family, and usually the faith based institution of choice.** These three must function in harmony to build good students and

good people. Though each has its distinct role to play, all three should overlap within what the law allows. The sole responsibility for character development can no longer be relegated to individual families and private sources alone. The public school has a role to play and must make Character Education a priority, determine a system to measure its attainment, and require its implementation. It is my belief, that Character Education should be an integral part of our American education system at every level but with its particular emphasis in grades K through 8.

I applaud President Bush's administration's choice to include Character Education as a key part of its educational legislation.

The opinions and views expressed above are based on the sum total of my educational and personal experiences as a teacher (6yrs.), principal (26yrs.), and as a parent.

**Submitted to the office of Congressman Ernie Fletcher**
**April 27, 2001**

**Robert N. Murray**
**Principal**
**Martin Luther King Academy**

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