

So they reach an agreement with the Department of Education on a charter. So they get a 5-year waiver from the rules and the regulations. And, yes, they do get flexibility. They get flexibility to move their dollars around to their areas of focus and their areas of need.

In exchange for that increase to flexibility and in exchange for eliminating the paperwork, they reach an accountability agreement that says, for that flexibility for the dollars and that freedom from the red tape, we are going to focus on results, and we are going to agree on these accountability standards for all of our students, to make sure that we deal with all of our students and do not forget about any of our students. The State then gets that flexibility.

If, after 5 years, the States have not met their accountability guidelines, the Federal Government can come back and say they did not do what they said they were going to do. They did not get the results that they were going to get. They have got to go back into the categorical programs.

Flexibility, elimination of red tape, and a freedom to focus on results. It is the welfare model. What do we believe that this will lead to, and what are the values that drive this kind of a strategy? We believe that education needs to be student centered. Successful schools are not forced to rely and focus on Federal paperwork. They have the opportunity and the freedom to focus on each and every child. They are results oriented, not process oriented.

We believe in equality. Each and every child in America must be given the opportunity to succeed in his or her school.

Another value we have is that parental involvement and local control. Schools thrive, and we have seen this wherever we went, schools thrive when parents are integrated into the learning process, when parents and adults are viewed as equal partners in decision making and direction setting, and when decisions are made at the local level by individuals who know the names and understand the needs of each child in their school.

Freedom. We believe that families and students deserve the opportunity to choose the school that they will attend.

Safety. Successful schools are free from violence. Children and parents need schools which can provide a secure learning environment.

Basic academics. It is another core value much the schools and the successful schools that we have seen focus on basic academics. Reading, writing, and math are taught as the foundation of lifelong learning and a sound future. The methods used to teach these subjects and others should be based on sound science and reliable and reputable research.

Discipline. Successful schools maintain disciplined environments where all are respected.

Flexibility. Schools need the ability to shape programs and policies that fit their particular needs. One size does not fit all. It did not work in welfare. It does not work in education. No two school districts or States are the same, and a one-size-fits-all Federal education system just will not work. One size fits all cannot replace the knowledge or the concern. To imply that people at the local level and that parents and teachers and administrators do not care about their children at the local level sells them short. It does not sell them short, it is just a total lack of understanding of what is going on in local America today.

Results. Successful schools implement accountability mechanisms which measure whether or not a child is learning.

Finally, another value is we believe that dollars need to be spent in the classroom and not on bureaucracy. Successful schools spend less time and resources on paperwork and more time on classroom resources.

We all want a better education system. We want common sense principles that drive our education strategy. For us, that means parental involvement. It means basic academic. It means flexibility. It means dollars to the classroom, and it means eliminating red tape.

For the other side, it means creating a Federal school board and running one's local school in a much more direct way from Washington than at the local level. That is just not going to work. It is not the right way to go.

We have a wonderful opportunity in today's prosperity to reform and to rethink the education model. We did part of it earlier this year when we did the Education Flexibility Act, providing a certain degree of latitude and flexibility in States to deal with the paperwork that has been imposed upon them.

We can build off that now by giving States and local schools the flexibility in how they spend their dollars and focusing on meeting the needs of their children's learning.

We can provide parents with the opportunity and the flexibility to secure their child's education by providing tax relief in the form of education savings accounts.

We can get more resources focused into the classroom by saying, when it comes to Federal education spending, Washington comes last. It does not mean we cut our Washington spending. It says that, for every dollar we spend in Washington, instead of getting 60 or 65 to 70 cents back to a local classroom, which is where the leverage point is, which is where we can have an impact on learning, we are saying we are going to get 95 cents of every Federal dollar back.

So without even expending more money in Washington, we can increase the amount of Federal dollars that get to the classroom, the local classroom, by 50 percent. That is an effective way to improve education.

We have made a lot of progress. We are going to continue working on this issue.

As I wrap up, I take a look at what we have accomplished and what we want to accomplish this year. We are going to have a balanced budget. We are going to begin the process of setting aside \$1.8 trillion for Social Security and Medicare. We are going to provide tax relief to the American people. We are going to strengthen our national security so that we can be secure at home and abroad.

We are going to focus on education. We are going to allow parents and local schools to focus on meeting the needs of their children. We are going to provide States the flexibility. We are going to take the model that worked in welfare, and we are going to take that same kind of criteria, which is a trust in the local level, a trust in the State level, and saying the top-down structure does not work. We have got a model that works. We have seen it work. People have experienced it. People are benefiting from it. We need to take that same model and apply it to education.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GILCREST (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness.

Mr. SANFORD (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for after 5 p.m. today and the balance of the week on account of official business.

Mr. PACKARD (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for after 4 p.m. today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. McNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. DUNCAN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MICA, for 5 minutes, today.