material input. Very interesting, so I'm glad you did it.

[*At this point, Secretary of Education Richard Riley commented on standards in education, and then the students continued their demonstration.*]

The President. The one thing I would say to you—we have to go, but you are going to live in the most exciting period of time in human history, in terms of what people can do with their minds and their imaginations and what people can do on their own. It's going to be a very, very exciting time. But it will only be an exciting time for people who can access it. That's why the learning is so important.

Someday you may be building—one of you may be building trains that go 500 miles an hour, that people get in, and therefore, then, they don't pollute the air. And they all travel together, so they can read while they're studying during their commute times. You may be doing things you can't even imagine now because of what you're learning.

And that's the thing I would emphasize. You can't imagine what someday you might be doing with what you're just now learning here. And I envy you in that way. I think that the 21st century will be a time of enormous possibility for young people like you, and all you really need to tap it is a great education. And I'm glad you're getting it.

Thank you.

Teacher. I know they can do it. Well, thank you so much. We're very pleased to have you come.

The President. I'm glad to see you. Thank you.

Teacher. Thank you for coming.

The President. I wish I could see all the cars driving. What you should do, you should make a movie of this. You should have everybody—inspire classes all over America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the eighth grade science classroom.

Remarks to the First in the World Consortium in Northbrook
January 22, 1997

Thank you very much. First of all, let me thank Mary Hamblet for her introduction and for that fine statement about the thrill of teaching and the changes of teaching. Would all the teachers in the audience please stand? Thank you very much. [*Applause*] I thank you all very, very much.

Thank you, Dr. Kimmelman, for your leadership in the First in the World Consortium. I thank all the other superintendents and administrators who are here. Thank you, Congressman Porter, for your leadership for education and, I might add, for your leadership for safe streets in the United States, in the Congress. I appreciate that very much.

Thank you, Secretary Riley. Everything Dr. Kimmelman said about you was true, even if you did have to write his speech for him. [*Laughter*] I like it that the Secretary of Education is prouder of being a grandfather than anything else in his life. I think that's a good signal for America's future.

We're glad to be joined today also by Mayor Daley and Congressman Blagojevich. Welcome. Cook County Assessor Tom Hines; your State senator, Cathy Parker. Welcome. Thank you for being here. Village presidents Nancy Firfer and Mark Damisch, thank you also for coming. I thank the Glenbrook Concert Orchestra for the music. Thank you all.

I am honored to be here with all of you, humbled and encouraged by your passionate commitment to education. I came today to talk about your remarkable success, hoping it will reverberate all across America and people will want to know what has been done here and how, and to talk about why and how this must be done all across America.

As we come to the end of this century and set about the business of preparing America for the next century, as I said in my Inaugural Address, it is especially important that we be able to say we have kept the American dream of opportunity alive for all of our children. I think

all of us know in our heart of hearts that that will be a slogan and a dream only, unless we give to all of our children and expect from all of our children world-class educational opportunities and world-class learning.

What I want to do in the next 2 weeks leading up to my State of the Union Address to the Congress and to the American people, is to lay out some concrete things we can do in Washington to help to achieve those objectives. We do live in a time of enormous possibility. I was just—you know, it's—the last couple of days is the first free time I've had in a while—[*laughter*]—and I was trying to create some more space in our living quarters in the White House, and I was moving some reference books around that our daughter sometimes uses and her father and mother sometime use. But I was—there was one on the Age of Reason and one on the Age of Enlightenment. And I really do think there's a good chance that the 21st century will be called something like the Age of Possibility or the Age of Promise, when people write about it 100 years from now, because it really will be possible for more people across the world to live out their dreams and live up to their God-given abilities than ever before in human history. It will be possible. But ''possible'' or an ''Age of Promise,'' those are operative words. There are no guarantees here.

And in order to realize that promise, we've got to make sure our people are prepared for it. There is a veritable revolution in the way we work and live because of science and technology. The world which was once divided by the cold war is now united by not only free markets and open trade but by common security challenges that threaten all open societies. Young people are continually entering jobs that weren't invented a couple of years ago. The young people in this great hall today will be doing jobs, many of them that have not been imagined by any of us here. And it's very important to understand that.

I spent a day at the National Institute of Health not very long ago going through in some detail the status of the human genome project. And it is clear to me that before very long, when young parents like Secretary Riley's son and daughter-in-law come home with a baby from the hospital, there really will be a map of the baby's genetic code available to the parents. Some of it, of course, will occasionally be troubling and profoundly worrying. But by and large what it will do is to give us a way of maximizing the health and potential of all people from medical care to diet to exercise to understanding how they can best live their lives from the beginning. No one would ever have imagined this.

Just in the last couple of years, we've seen the first successful treatment for stroke. It now seems possible that we might actually be able to repair some of the damage done by strokes. We have uncovered two genes that seem to be at the basis of either the cause of, or dramatic propensity to, breast cancer. We have seen nerve transplants to the spines of laboratory animals which has given movement to the lower limbs of laboratory animals that had their spines severed.

The Internet was literally, as I said in the Inaugural Address, the mystical province of physicists 10 years ago. Today, it's an encyclopedia that 8- and 9-year-old kids teach their parents how to use. [*Laughter*]

When I became President, 3 million Americans—thanks in large measure to technology—were working in their homes full time. At the end of my first term, 12 million Americans were. At the end of my second term, it is estimated that 30 million Americans will be. Not all good—it will also pose some new challenges: How can we continue to maintain our community? How can people work together in teams productively if they either need to or have to do some of their work at home?

But change is out there. At a time like this, it is critical that we not only know certain things but that we be able to learn for a lifetime. And we know that requires an enormous grounding, not only in the subjects we master but in the way we learn, which is why I was so glad in the introduction to hear Mary talk about different ways of teaching. Because the way teachers are teaching now engage the children in a learning process that they can then apply to any other subject that they have to face throughout their lives, so that they can become lifetime learners.

Now, this is really not all that new. Education has been at the heart of America's progress for over 200 years. First of all, our Founding Fathers were highly literate people. Where would we be if Thomas Jefferson had known nothing about the great philosophers who went before him?

Right after the Civil War, as the country was spreading westward and occupying the whole continent, the Congress provided for the establishment of land-grant institutions, like the great State universities in Illinois, in my home State, all across the country. Abraham Lincoln really oversaw it during the Civil War, the idea, but the institutions themselves were actually created after the Civil War. It dramatically changed America, the idea that we could actually give people a college degree who lived in a place as far west as Illinois, which was on the edge of the frontier when Mr. Lincoln was elected President.

Then, at the beginning of this century, we finally made public schools like this available to all of our children. People moved from farm to factory, from the country to the city, and it became essential that everyone at least have some basic education. After World War II, out of a sense of national obligation, we gave all of the veterans a chance to go to college, and it was one of the central elements in exploding the great middle class and creating the kind of middle class communities we have here in this consortium. It was a phenomenal thing.

Now, the Government did not do that for anyone. All it said was, you served your country; here's a college degree if you can get it—if you can get it. And that's the beauty of education; you can't really give it to anyone. You can put it out there, and you can help people, but the students themselves have to seize it.

Now, this has been an obsession of mine for a long time. I grew up in a State—when I was born in my home State, our per capita income was only a little over half the national average right after World War II. And I know that everything good that's happened there in an economic way has been in no small measure the result of our elevating the levels of education. In a much more personal sense, I am absolutely certain that I would not be standing here as President today if it had not been for my teachers. It is clear, and I'm certain.

When I became Governor almost 20 years ago now, we began to do things to try to help advance the cause of education. My daughter just had one of her best friends up here to the Inauguration who is a student at a school of mathematics and science that I established as one of my last acts as Governor. Dr. Kimmelman mentioned the National Education Goals, which were promulgated by the Governors and President Bush in 1989. I had the honor of being the Democratic Governor whose job it was to draft the goals.

So I know a lot about those goals. And I thought they were very good then; I think they're better now, because the wealth of our country now no longer primarily depends upon our oil, our gold, our land, or our factories. It is now and will increasingly be measured in the minds and creativity of our people and our achievements in science and technology and also in the humanities, because we have to learn how to manage all this new power we're giving to ourselves.

We have to, in short, commit ourselves for the first time now to have the best education in the world, not just for the few but for the many. We have the best higher education system in the world; there's no question about it. But we do not have the best system of education in the world from start to finish for all of our children, and we cannot be satisfied until that is exactly what we have in the United States of America. Now, the Congressman said this; the Secretary said this; Dr. Kimmelman said this. In America, we have a unique heritage. Our educational system is a local system governed by local school boards and the people they appoint; governed by laws enacted at the State level, not the national level. And the Federal Government's role in education basically is a fairly recent vintage. It goes back about 30 years or so.

But essentially what the Federal Government has tried to do over time is to equalize opportunity in education by opening the doors of college to more people, by recognizing that some districts don't have the resources and some States don't have the resources to meet the needs of people, by dealing with the problems of populations who have needs that may be more expensive. And I think one of the great advances in education in my lifetime has been the provision of educational services through the school systems to students with disabilities, enabling them to achieve enormous things.

And then, increasingly, over the last 10 to 12 years, the Education Department has tried to do more in research and in spurring reform. And since I have been in this office, we have moved in all those areas. We've dramatically increased the number of people in Head Start. We've improved and expanded college scholarships, college loans, and work-study, adding

200,000 more places there at the end of the last Congress—thank you, Congressman Porter—and the biggest increase in Pell grants in 20 years. We've done that. We've helped 70,000 young people work their way through college by serving their community in the AmeriCorps program.

And we did pass two things that I thought were very important for grassroots reform. One was the so-called school to work program, which helps deal with young people who aren't going to 4-year colleges but do need further education. We know now that unless you have at least 2 years of education after high school, young people this day and age are almost certain to be put in jobs where their incomes go down, not up.

The other was the Goals 2000 program, which had a simple idea. We should have a system by which school districts and States can establish very high national standards but have more flexibility school by school, district by district, to decide how to meet those standards. That's what Goals 2000 was about. So it just simply says, we at the national level will give the States some money and then the States can give it to school districts. If they will figure out—if they will, A, set high standards for themselves and then, B, figure out how they want to meet those standards and be held accountable for them.

And that's what this First in the World Consortium did. There is no better model for what we were trying to do in the entire United States of America than what you have done here. And you should be very proud of yourselves.

Now, as we look to the next 4 years, there are some things that I'd like to do in that first category, that basket of things I mentioned. I do think there are more things we need to do in the area of equal opportunity and helping deal with resource problems.

The most important thing we can do is to open the doors of college to all and to make sure that the first 2 years of college become as universal by the year 2000 as a high school diploma is today, and I think—that's clear that we know how to do that. We have proposed a $1,500 tax credit for people for the first 2 years of college, which is the cost of a typical community college tuition in America; a $10,000 a year tax deduction for the cost of any college tuition—I can see you adding it up now—[*laughter*]—and making it easier for more people to take out IRA's and then withdraw from them, tax-free, if the money is used to pay for a college education. I think all of those things will help.

We've proposed to collapse all these Federal programs, about 70 of them that pay for various kinds of job training, and get rid of all of them, put the money in a fund, and send every unemployed or underemployed person who would be eligible for any of them a simple voucher, a skills grant that they could then take to the nearest community college or other educational institution to decide on their own what kind of training they need, which I think is a very important idea.

We have funds in there to complete our work of connecting all of our schools to the information superhighway by the year 2000, which will make it possible for the first time in history for students in the poorest or in the most remote school districts to have access to the same information other children have in the same way at the same time. It can literally revolutionize educational opportunity in a way that I believe is very important.

And finally, it's not a problem here, but I've spent a lot of time in our schools, and it's very hard to lift children up in schools that are falling down. The educational infrastructure of the country has deteriorated dramatically, number one. Number two, we have for the first time a group of young people coming in that are going to be bigger than the baby boom cohort. We have now the largest number of young people in our schools in history. I'm glad for that; it takes a big burden off us baby boomers that—[*laughter*]—the kids are taking over again. It also means great things for how we're going to pay for all of our retirement several years down the road. [*Laughter*] But in the near term, I have championed a proposal that has been spearheaded by Senator Carol Moseley-Braun that will spark a 20 percent increase in school construction and renovation that I think is very important, by having the Federal Government use limited monies to leverage down the interest rates when school districts make an extra effort to do things that have to be done in their schools. That is also important.

And finally, for the districts that need it, I also have been a great champion of the charter school program, and that is all in our budget. The mayor and I are going down to Chicago in a few moments to talk to the school board about that.

Now, all of these things will help, but how are we going to get the standards? There are two things that we're going to do in the next 4 years, I hope, that I believe will make all of the difference. Number one is we are going to hire 30,000 reading specialists to mobilize a million volunteers to teach every 8-year-old in the country to read independently by the third grade. Now, we can talk all about the standards in the world, but if the children literally cannot read—an astonishing percentage of our young people are not proficient in reading when they have to learn these things—then we can't achieve very much later on.

It is true that our student population is the most diverse in history in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin. But that can be a great asset for the United States. There is no other large democracy as diverse as ours. And in a global society, in a global economy, that's a huge, huge asset. But we have to have the language of common parlance in order to enable us all to function together. And we simply have to provide the resources and the people, and we're going to need a lot of volunteers to do this, but it will literally revolutionize education in America if we have universal literacy by the third grade. And that is the goal of this, and I hope all of you will support that.

But the most important thing we can do is something that the Federal Government should not do directly, but something I'm convinced will not happen unless we get out here and beat the drum for it and work for it, and that is to have recognized high standards for math and science and other basic subjects that are national in scope, measured by national and international standards, adopted locally, implemented locally, but nationally recognized and nationally tested throughout the United States. Until we do that, we will never know whether we have achieved our goal of international excellence in education for every student in the United States. And I ask your support for that.

This has never happened. People have talked about this. When we wrote the national education goals, we anticipated that we would have to develop a set of national standards, not Federal Government standards, national standards. The councils of mathematics teachers and science teachers have done a lot of work on this. A lot of work has been done on this.

But nobody has yet been willing to say, or at least we haven't had enough people willing to say, whether they were Governors or State superintendents of education or local school boards, "We're all going to accept these, and we want to have some tests we can give to our students which will measure not how smart they are, not what they might have happened to learn but whether they know the things that we say are essential for every student to know in math and in science in order to succeed and win in the world they're going to live in." That is what we must do as a nation, and we have delayed too long. We shouldn't delay anymore. By the time we start the new century, we ought to have these standards adopted, embraced, and evaluated in every school district in the United States, and I want you to lead the way, just as you are here.

I have heard all the arguments in the world against this. But no one has yet made a compelling case to me for how calculus is different in Chicago from Little Rock, Arkansas, or Cody, Wyoming, or for that matter, Germany or Singapore or any other place in the world. That is what is the genius behind what you've done here with this First in the World education consortium.

We already know we're not doing well enough as a nation. What our students in general learned in math in the eighth grade is learned in Japan in the seventh grade. Even more troubling to me, what each year students in Germany and Japan learn 10 to 20 math subjects in depth, our students are asked to cover 35 math subjects and therefore don't learn any of them in depth.

Last year, educators around the world gave a half a million students, including 40,000 in the United States, the same test at the same time to give us a clear picture—our first clear picture—of what world-class education really means and how close we are to meeting it. We learned that our eighth graders are above the international average in science but below it in math. We know that every child in America, however—we can see that from the tests—we know that every child in America can meet these high standards if we have the courage and the vision simply to recognize the standards, to set them as the bar we're trying to jump over, to teach them, and to test whether children have learned them.

I do not understand why we are so afraid to do this. Don't we believe in our children more than this? And I do not believe there

is a rule that says if you happen to be poor, you can't learn these things. I don't believe that either. When we were writing these goals—I remember it was about 2:30 in the morning—we got to this thing, ''What are we going to say about math and science?'' And somebody said, ''We're going to be first in the world in math and science in the 21st century.'' And another person said, ''Well, that will never happen. Now, how can we set a goal we know we can't meet?'' So they looked at me and said, ''What do you think, Bill?'' And I said, ''Well, okay, suppose we just say our goal is to be third in the world.'' [*Laughter*] There was no more discussion. We wrote the goal. Our goal was to be first in the world.

And this is not political rhetoric. Every single examination of the capacity of the human brain has shown that over 90 percent of the people in our country can learn way over 90 percent of what they need to know to do very, very well in the world we're going to live in. Sure, it will be harder for some than others. Some subjects are harder for some people than others. Not everybody will know everything on every exam, but we can do this. And we can no longer hide behind our love of local control of the schools and use that as an excuse not to hold ourselves to high standards. It has nothing to do with local control. There's no school board in America that controls the content of algebra.

I just left a junior high school where I saw these young people making their own automobiles out of paper and rubber bands and paper clips. Stand up there. Where are the students in that class? Here they are. All of the students in the class I just visited, stand up. [*Applause*] So they built these light little cars with their paper wheels, and they wound up this propeller with a rubber band that was tied across the whole length of the car, and then it went ahead. And they said, ''This demonstrates one of Newton's laws of motion, which is that every action generates an equal and opposite reaction.'' And they also talked about how the wheels had to be round instead of flat, but they couldn't be too slick, because there would have been no friction, and then no motion would be possible.

Now, that is—the rule for that is not different in California. [*Laughter*] It is still the same. And I told these young people when I saw them with their cars, I said, ''If I would have had a class like this when I was 13, I might be in a different line of work today.'' [*Laughter*] It was so exciting. But to pretend that somehow holding ourselves to these standards and agreeing that there has to be some uniform way of measuring them is giving up local control, is just an excuse to avoid being held accountable because we're afraid we can't make it. And it's selling our kids down the drain, and it's wrong. It is not right.

So what happened when you did it? What does that report say? It says, in effect, that the eighth graders from the First in the World Consortium tied for first in the world in science and tied for second in the world in math. I think that's pretty good for their first time out.

That happened because—look around this room. Can you imagine a school district or a set of school districts with more genuine local control than this one, with—more than these—more parental involvement, more committed teachers, more—you know, you've got local control. But you didn't use it as an excuse not to throw your hat in the ring. I think it's great that it came out this way. But if you had finished eighth and ninth, I would still be here to pat you on the back because you had the guts to do it.

That's the important thing. That's the important thing. When we were coming out here on the airplane, the Congressman and Mayor Daley and Secretary Riley and Kevin O'Keefe of our staff, we were talking about, you know, what men talk about on airplanes, we were talking about basketball—[*laughter*]—and how Michael Jordan scored 51 points last night. And Kevin O'Keefe reminded me that there was somewhere a basketball coach who had removed Michael Jordan from the high school basketball team. Now, what's the point of that? [*Laughter*]

You know, we laugh about it. The coach might have made the right decision, and the decision he made may have spurred him on to what he later did. But the point is, it's okay if you're not winning when you start. It's okay. I know more about—but Scottie Pippen, who is from my home State, was essentially the manager of a college basketball team when he was a freshman in a very small school—couldn't even make the team. By the time he was a senior in college, he was the best player in that division in the United States, and he was only beginning. When you play a game like that, you know how to measure people. I mean, there is a way you keep score there.

Again, we're not talking about young people's human worth. You don't diminish somebody's human worth, you enhance their human worth when you help them to develop their capacities. So I cannot say again, I am elated that you scored so well. I almost wish you hadn't done quite this well, so I would—because everybody else is going to say, ''Well, we wouldn't do that well.'' That's not the point. That is not the point. The point is to know the truth so you can do better. That is the point.

Finally, let me say that there are things that we can do in the Department of Education. We can validate this testing mechanism. One of the problems I had—there are lots of standardized tests in America today, you know. Most kids are tested until the tests are coming out their ears. But what are the relevant tests? These tests shouldn't be IQ tests. These should be effort tests and effort directed in the right direction. The thing that's good about this test is, this test measures whether these young people know what it is important to know in mathematics and science at this point in their life, if they're going to be very successful at a later point in their lives and if their nations are going to be successful. That's the important thing.

So we can help. We can help with the Goals 2000 program. We can help with the charter schools. We can help schools to join in this movement toward setting strong national standards and then to know that if they give the students examinations, that the tests are relevant to what it is they're saying the children should know in the standards. We can do that.

The schools can push ahead. We could have every superintendent in the country prepared to give the speech that we heard this superintendent give today. We can do that. But what really will have to happen is that business leaders and parents and community leaders, religious leaders, people that are at the grassroots level are going to have to demand that this be done and are going to have to say, ''Do not be afraid. And if it doesn't come out okay the first time, don't worry.'' We're going to use that not as a stick to beat somebody to death with but as a spur to lift people up with. That's what we have to say.

And so again I say: The young people in this room today are going to live in the greatest age of possibility, the greatest age of promise ever known. Our obligation as Americans is to give all of them the chance to make the most of their God-given abilities, to give all of them the chance to live out their dreams, to take whatever they have and make the most of it. And we will never get this job done unless we do what this First in the World Consortium has done. And if we do it, sure as the world, America will be number one.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. in the gymnasium at the Glenbrook North High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Hamblet, teacher, Wood Oaks Junior High School; Paul Kimmelman, consortium coordinator; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Nancy Firfer, village president, Glenview; Mark Damisch, village president, Northbrook; and Chicago Bulls basketball players Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Al Hunt of WBIS in Chicago, Illinois
January 22, 1997

Part I

Mr. Hunt. Mr. President, I want to thank you for being one of our first guests on S-Plus on our second day of broadcast.

The President. Thank you.

National Economy

Mr. Hunt. All right. Let me start off with a question about the economy. You oversaw a very good economy during your first administration, average growth of about 2½ percent a year, and yet there's still not enough money to do some of the things you want to do, and there's still income and wage disparities. Do you think it's reasonable in a second Clinton administration to look for slightly faster growth, say 3 to 4 percent a year?