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Thank you very much, John, and friends. It's very good to be back here.

I'll just correct John on one thing: I didn't start as a labor leader; I started as a teacher, and I didn't know that that would lead me to become a labor leader. But when I started teaching in New York City in 1952, the union had been around for a long time. The union had been formed in 1916, and here it was 1952 and only 2,400 out of New York City's 50,000 teachers had joined the union from 1916 to 1952 -- a very small percentage.

I remember I started teaching in 1952 at a salary of \$2,400 a year. That was with roughly all the courses for a Ph.D. completed. And I remember as I started teaching that I was given an assignment to do. I was to ask during the very first week I taught to go across the street to a supermarket during lunch hour and stand over candy bars, because the A&P supermarket had complained many of the students during lunch hour would go over there and steal candy bars. As far as the good public relations of the school, the school felt it was only right to assign one or two teachers to help the store.

Well, I came home exhausted and informed my mother, and she wanted to know what was teaching like because she always said, "When you grow up, you want to be a teacher; it's a great job." So I told her it was very tough, the kids were tough, it was very hard, and I wasn't getting paid very much and I couldn't even eat lunch; that I had to stand over the candy bars.

She said, "Well, the trouble is, it could be a good job. But you teachers are so smart that you're dumb."

I said, "What do you mean by that?"

She said, "You need a union. We used to have traditions like that..." -- she was a garment worker, and she went on giving a talk about how no factory worker would give up their lunch hour in that way, in a routine way. But it was very hard taking the message, and I don't have to share that with you. But you have already, in the few years working here building the state, organized a much greater percentage of the teachers in this state than we had in New York City in all those decades. You are moving very quickly and you're doing very well.

I'm very glad to be here at a time which is just a few weeks after our great election in North Forest, and I'd like the people here to stand and be recognized. And Gail and the HFP deserve congratulations.

As I sat with John and asked about the progress over the last year, there are just a few things we chatted

about. I won't go through all of them: wining payroll deduction in Dallas, the PSRP, representations in San Antonio and here in Corpus, winning three seats on a consultation council for the first time in El Paso. We chatted about where are we in the United States, how many districts do we have; at least a person there who says, "I'm in the AFT" one way or another, whether it's through one form of membership or another. A couple of years ago, it was 40 districts in a huge state like this. Now it's over 350. That's great progress.

You're doing it because of a number of things. First, it's your own effort. As you know, the way that one brings people into the fold is not through massive campaigns on radio or television -- it's largely one person to another person or persons who believes and who understands and has to do a lot of explaining. That's what all of you have been doing. That's why we've been growing.

You also can't make it unless you've got good leadership. I want to say a word about John because I know all of you in the state have been through some tough times. You're going through them right now. John is an AFT vice president. He has very effectively sold the AFT leaders and the rest of the country on the possibilities and prospects of organizing and building a strong teachers' union in this state.

You may or may not know it, but teachers of New York and Rhode Island and Illinois and places that are highly organized would get basically no assistance from the AFT -- in money. We help them by lobbying Congress and doing things like that, but they are paying dues and last year they sent \$1 million of that right here, your state, so that a lot of staff that you have, officers, have the ability to get out materials and everything else. These are teachers elsewhere paying their dues and sending it down here in the hope that one of these days you'll fill your organization, your membership up to a point where, instead of being on the receiving end, you'll be paying dues and sending it to some other state to help them to accomplish the things which by that time you would have accomplished.

I also know that when you went through that period of reform legislation you had to make tough decisions. It's easy when you don't count politically. It's easy when you are totally on the outside to say, "I don't like this," "I don't like that." You can wait to have somebody else do something to you and then you can yell and scream and criticize. But, for the first time in the history of the organization you were on the inside of something important, and when you're on the inside you can't always have it your way.

When you get collective bargaining, you're going to have some tough situations. Right now, it's easy to

complain about what the school board isn't doing, what the superintendent isn't doing, and what they are doing to us. But when you sit at the table, you're never going to get to write the contract by yourself. There is always going to be somebody there from the other side. You are never going to come back with everything you want or everything you like.

Part of that bargaining process is to know how much progress you can make, to exert your full energy and your powers to get as much as you possibly can. And then you've got to know when you've got a good deal. When you've got as much as you can get, your job is to go back -- and that's the hardest part of the job -- to sell it to your own members.

That's sort of what you did -- it is what you did in reform. You don't have a tradition here. You basically don't have collective bargaining. So it was very hard for teachers in this state to understand that you can be in the middle of it fighting and working, and when you're all finished you might have something that is pretty good but it's not everything you want. There might even be some bad parts to it, which there were.

The leadership as a result of that fight, of course -- John personally, and this organization now, you -- we are a major influence in this state. There isn't anything that's going to happen in education without

top people consulting, talking to us. Why? Because we have the smarts and guts to do the right thing. We're not just viewed as a bunch of complainers out there. We got in, worked with them, and they know we know things about education that they don't. And that gives us a tremendous amount of influence, power.

That doesn't mean we get everything we want. It doesn't mean everything is going to be happy all the time. But it means that we are not just on the outside waiting for things to happen to us; that we have the ability to shape some of those events, move some of those events. And that is extremely important. I can't think of anything that is more important.

Now here we are in Texas. A couple of years ago, I read lots of articles about how New York State was going to go down the tubes, Massachusetts was going down, Michigan was going down, Illinois was going down, and Texas was where everybody was going to move and this was going to be the state that was really making it, and they were making it because taxes were low and they didn't spend much money on things like schools, and with the sunbelt you didn't have any energy problems, and you were getting all the stuff out of the ground and selling it elsewhere, and everything was just terrific.

As a matter of fact, some of us even got on committees that said the Federal Government ought to give

all this special help to New York and Massachusetts because Texas was going to be the only wealthy spot in this country just about, aside from Oklahoma and Arkansas and New Mexico. Those were going to be rich spots, and then the other places were going to be the emptied-out places in the country. A lot of them thought that.

Look what happened in just a very short period of time. What happened should have been predicted, and that is, all these raw materials, sometimes they cost a lot of money and sometimes they're worthless; eventually you run out of them. So, any state or country that depends for its livelihood on one crop or one raw material is going to face a day of reckoning. And those states where there is just one crop or one commodity that you can have, you know no matter what happens or what changes you give yourself a little bit of time and you will have prosperity. And that is if you've got a good crop and talented and educated people, because that's what makes things go. Because if you invest in education and talent, one business can shut down and one industry can shut down but those educated people -- people who have been educated once can be re-educated very easily.

That's what Massachusetts and New York and Illinois had, those states that looked like they were down and out. They had something that nobody noticed. A state like Massachusetts has spent a lot of money for 200 years

on education -- a lot of money. And when they were down and it looked like they were out, they just had all these very bright, well-educated people who just figured out what to do next, and the result is very, very great prosperity. That is a lesson that needs to be picked up here by your legislature and by your governor.

I know this is a tough time; you're fighting a lot of things you thought you had. As a matter of fact, some of you thought you didn't even like it, and now you're fighting a whole lot of things you didn't want.

[Laughter] It's a good part of education. It's happened to me, too. It happens to all of us. But that's a very key issue. If you shape this up, this education fight, this budget fight the right way, this state will make a comeback in a fairly short period of time.

Some of us lived through city bankruptcies, layoffs, all sorts of powerful things. Look at New York City: In 1975, \$13 billion in debt, losing population, laid off 15,000 teachers in one day, class size went from 30 to 42, and it looked like there was no future. That was it for New York City. Well, New York City has not had a year without a \$500 million surplus since then, and things look pretty good. It bounced back again with educational investment.

Now what you need, of course, is more organization. What you've got now is really a very good base for

starting. Just think of how different this state could be, think of how different schools and education could be, if 150,000 teachers in this state were in a single organization. Just think of how much more legislators would listen. Just think -- if each one of those people paid a couple of bucks and you put that into a massive public relations campaign -- how you could reach the parents and the business people of this state.

One of the really crying shames -- you know, there are industries but there just aren't many people working in them. If all of them organized, it wouldn't make much difference. And there are businesses where, if they did organize, the boss just pulls up and flies over to Taiwan or Hong Kong or Yugoslavia or somewhere else. Fortunately, transportation costs are still too high for us to move all the kids to Taiwan. But who knows what will happen in a couple of years.

Meanwhile, if we were organized -- and it's not just the teachers, it's the paraprofessionals, the school-related personnel; if you put all the people together it's probably about 250,000 or 300,000 in this state -- an organization of that kind and with talents in that organization can really do a tremendous amount.

Now that's the picture you need to take out. There are people who ask all sorts of questions like: "Should I join the AFL-CIO?" or "What about John Cole?" or "What about what happened in Houston" -- all those little

questions and doubts and suspicions, and all of those things ought to be pushed aside. I'm saying, "Look, there are 250,000-300,000 of us in this state working for the public school systems in this state. They listen to us. The people care very much. What kind of influence do we have now? What could we have?" And I give them a picture, an image of what they could have, what they could see if they were able to put themselves together as effectively as some other organized groups in our society have. And, of course, that means pushing for collective bargaining and the right to representation and just the ordinary rights that most employees, including most government employees, have all across the country now.

Now I'd like to spend most of the time today with you talking about the vision that we have for the future of teachers and the future of schools and the future of what will happen to kids in our society in public education, because I can't think of anything that is more exciting and more important. And all of us can feel a very great pride in what we are doing here. These are not ideas that came from somebody else. They are not ideas we were compelled to accept. They are ideas we put out there first, that we have been leading with, that we are still leading with. And when, some years from now, somebody takes a look at the tremendous and marvelous transformation and improvement in public education in

this country that is going to take place in this period, it's going to be very clear that teachers, through the American Federation of Teachers, were at the center of this. Some others accepted it eagerly and willingly; some others were dragged along; and some others will just keep fighting. But what we're about to get into is to basically transform education in America.

We had a meeting a few weeks ago in San Diego -- it was the Carnegie Forum -- and it established the first National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, a proposal which we made about three years ago. Pretty soon, we'll have nationally board certified teachers, just as there are Certified Public Accountants and actuaries certified and board certified surgeons. And, for the first time, we'll have a group composed of a majority of teachers -- as a matter of fact, a majority of classroom teachers -- that will decide how do you find out what's a good teacher and what type of assessments. We are beginning a process where, for the first time, we're not waiting for a state school board or some other group. The profession itself is going to take the responsibility.

Out there in San Diego there were teachers and school superintendents and school board presidents brought together from districts that were doing some very great and some very new things. The interesting thing is that

there must have been about 15 different outstanding presentations of great things that were happening. Every one of those 15 was from an AFT district.

I went to somebody and said, "How come the NEA doesn't have anybody presenting anything here?"

They said, "We searched high and low, and we couldn't find any of these good things happening in any of their districts." [Applause]

I'd like to share with you the thinking. Fred Hechinger, who used to be the education editor of The New York Times, tells a story about a man whose son is going to the same school that he went to. So, years later -- I guess 25 or 30 years later -- the father goes to his son's school, walks into his son's classroom and happens to take a look at a piece of paper there, and it's an examination with a bunch of questions. He says, "My God, this is exactly the same set of questions that they gave me 26 years ago when I was sitting in this room."

He grabbed that piece of paper -- he was very angry things hadn't changed -- and he went down to the principal's office and he pointed it out. The principal said, "What do you mean?"

And he said, "That's exactly the same set of questions that I was given here years ago."

The principal said, "Don't worry, we still have the same questions but we changed the answers." [Laughter]

Now, in education we keep dealing with the same questions. If you look back 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years, somebody is always reforming the schools; somebody is always talking about exactly the same issues. But the trick is to come up with not just different answers but with better answers. That is what I want to talk about now.

A couple of years ago, a number of us sitting around took a look at things and said, "You know, we can't really improve schools by just doing a little more of the same thing. It just won't work." For instance, there are 2.2 million teachers in this country. We know that to get good teachers you need higher salaries. But what are the chances that 2.2 million people are going to get a huge salary increase? A \$1,000 increase for 2.2 million people is \$2.2 billion. That's not counting social security, pension, and other costs.

What are the chances this country is going to put in enough money to raise teachers' salaries by 50 percent or 60 percent or 70 percent to a point near where other professionals are? What are the chances of getting \$30 billion or \$40 billion or \$50 billion? I'm not saying you can't do it in one district or one state; sure you can. But the thing is, while one state is going up, another one is going down. So when you're all finished, you may not be standing still but the country is standing still.

Then we look at what is happening. We're about to lose half the teachers in this country. They are retiring, a lot of them. A lot of them are leaving for the same reason teachers always left. I come to cities like this -- yesterday I was in Ohio. Every day I go into a hotel, airport, and every day somebody says, "Hi, Al." And I turn around, and I want to see if I know that person, if it's a relative. The person says, "You don't know me. I used to be a teacher." Nobody ever says, "Hi, Al, I used to be a surgeon." [Laughter]

The whole country is full of <sup>ex</sup>nice teachers. A couple of years ago, I thought of quitting as president of the AFT and starting a new organization called the American Federation of Former Teachers. It would be just loaded with people.

So we're losing half the teachers in this country, 1.1 million in the next six years. Half of them are leaving. We've got to bring teachers in. Somebody might say, "That's no problem, just round up the usual suspects. Teachers have always been leaving and you have always been finding new ones, so find a new one."

You can't find new ones now because the reason we used to get teachers is, we used to get the refugees who were running away from somewhere and came to us. Like there was the Great Depression in the 1930s, and we got all of those people who needed jobs then. Then we got people who didn't want to serve in the armed forces and

they preferred to fight in Corpus Christi rather than Vietnam. So we got a certain number of people who didn't want to be drafted.

Then, of course, we got a lot of women who realized they couldn't go into medicine, law, banking, accounting or any of those other fields. You look at any of those professional schools, and they were 50 percent women, and in some cases 65 percent women. All those women in those professional schools were teachers or nurses. But we don't have them any more.

So we're going to need 23 percent of all the college graduates in this country to come into teaching each and every year for the next 12 years just to hold on to what we've got. That's without reducing class size or doing anything else -- 23 percent. And you go to the colleges and you ask the kids, "How many of you want to become teachers?" Six percent. And some of them would make good teachers but some of them couldn't pass the spelling test or arithmetic test. The only test they can pass probably is to put a thermometer in their mouths, or something like that. And that's all a lot of schools require. But it's unfortunate.

Then we say, "All right, what do we need to attract teachers?" You're no longer getting them because they are running away from something. Now you've got to use the old-fashioned method of attracting people: You've got to use plain, ordinary incentives. You've got to

convince somebody they're going to be better off being a teacher than something else.

How do you do that? You can do it with more money -- I just said that, but very, very expensive. You can do it by giving them a greater sense of job satisfaction, by giving them a smaller class size. But I just said we couldn't even replace the teachers who are about to leave. How are you going to get enough teachers to reduce class size if you can't even get enough to replace the ones who are about to leave? It's going to be very hard to do.

Another thing teachers would like to do is they'd like to have time to talk to each other, to compare ideas. They'd like to have colleague relationships because there are very few adults who'd like to be locked in a room with a bunch of kids for their entire lives. Most adults want some human contact. Now don't get me wrong; kids will eventually become human -- that's what education is all about -- but they're not quite there yet. [Laughter.]

But you need time. How do you get the time? Very simple: Instead of teaching five periods a day, you hire more teachers so you can teach four. But where are you going to get more teachers? Anyplace you look, you are looking at a lot more money for all these things. With salaries, smaller class size, and a reduced teaching load you're looking at people who aren't there, money that's

not there, and as long as you keep saying that's the only way to do it, it's probably not going to work very well.

Now you've got to ask yourself, would it work even if you were able to do it that way? And here I want to share some maybe more revolutionary thoughts. How well are we doing in schools across the country? And I'm going to make it even broader: How well are schools doing in just about all western industrial democracies? Well, let me give you a picture of how well and how poorly we're doing.

There's a national assessment that has been taking place now since 1967. It's called the National Assessment of Educational Progress. They don't just give these little idiot multiple-choice examinations where, at the end, you come out with some number and you don't know if that number means anything or not. These are very good assessments. They take a sampling of about a quarter of a million kids all across the country and they sit them down for quite a period of time, and they will tell you how many of our people don't know how to read a single word; how many can only read "Exit," "Stop," "Go;" how many can open up a box of something and follow simple instructions; how many can read the words in a comic book; how many can read the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the New York Times; how many can read something that has some technical information and figure it out; how many can understand an airline timetable or

a bus schedule or a railroad schedule -- not that that's so important in and of itself, but that is the same sort of table you get in lots of other information.

Well, let me give you some of the results of this. Now I'm going to give you the results of 17-1/2-year-old kids who are about to graduate. See, the dropouts are already gone; we're not even counting those kids. These are the good kids. These are the successful kids. These are the ones who are making it. Well, how many of them can read "Exit" and "Stop" and "Go"? Almost all of them. There's nobody that is totally illiterate. They can practically all read the words in a comic book. When it comes to the Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post, only 35 percent of those who are graduating high school can read it. And when it comes to being able to get any technical information at all, 4.7 percent -- 4.7 percent -- can get it.

Now let's go on to something else. How many kids who are about to graduate can write a letter to a boss they'd like to have as a boss, their future employer, in which they write a fairly decent letter -- you know, nothing by Shakespeare or Dickens -- just a decent letter in which they have some persuasive and reasoning ability; that is, they kind of figure out what that jobs needs and they say, "I'm the one for you because last summer I worked in my uncle's grocery store and I know how to take care of a cash register and watch customers, and then the summer

before I did the following in Boy Scouts, and I can take responsibility, and I can do this"? How many can write a letter like that that shows a little bit of persuasion, a little bit of critical thinking, some mustering of arguments to the conclusion you're trying to reach? Twenty percent. Twenty percent of all the kids who are about to graduate high school in this country are able to write a simple letter which shows a little bit of reasoning and a little bit of critical thinking.

Well, I can go on with that in other fields. Believe me, in all these cases the news is pretty bad.

Now, where does this all lead us? Does this mean that our schools aren't trying? Of course not, we are trying. We are trying very hard. Well, maybe it means God only made 20 percent of us smart; we are lucky. And maybe if we work real hard we can find 21 or 22 percent of the people are smart. I'm not ready to accept that.

By the way, if you go over to England, France, Germany or Holland, or those countries, you find about the same percentage of kids who are able to do those things. So we've got to ask ourselves why this is happening, and I'd like to share with you our line of reasoning for what's happening.

You know, 15 years ago if you went to Ford or General Motors or Chrysler and said to them, "How come 25 or 27 percent of your cars have to be sent back and they're lemons?" they'd say, "That's what mass production is all

about. There are all these things coming up and things go wrong, and there's a certain amount of lemons in any process and there's nothing that can be done about it." Then, of course, along came the Japanese and somehow they found there were ways of figuring out a mode of production where you have practically zero lemons.

I can think of something else. I think of the fact that for 2,000 years human beings went to doctors in the hopes they'd be cured, and until very recently if you went to a doctor the chances are that instead of being cured you might very well be killed. Why? Because the doctor didn't know he was supposed to wash his hands and sterilize his instruments. That was a very recent discovery. So what was happening in medicine was the person who was supposed to cure you was inadvertently harming you because of standard ways of operating.

Now I'd like to ask a question, which is this: Are there certain things we do in school that are similar to the old production processes in our factories; that is, where we're turning out lemons because of the nature of the productive process? Are there certain things we're doing which are the equivalent of not washing our hands or sterilizing our instruments? That is, are we inadvertently harming some of the people who come to us to get help? Are we turning kids off or away from it when we're supposed to be turning them on?

Now I'm going to touch on a few of the things we do, and I'm going to do it not for the purpose of placing

blame but because I believe that the only answer to the improvement of our schools is that we have to bring teachers to a point where we're sitting together in each school in this country talking about these things and re-shaping the institution so it becomes something very different from what it is today.

We bring a bunch of kids into the first grade, we put them all into a class and say to them all, "Here's the book. I'm going to read you all the same stories. I'm going to ask you the same questions. I'm going to give you all the same numbers to work on." What are we saying to all those kids? We're saying, "You're all six years old and you're all in the first grade. Basically you're all the same except that some of you may be faster, slower, stronger or weaker, smarter or dumber." We're really telling them they're all the same and we start getting them to kind of compare themselves with each other. That's what they always do: Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of us all?

Well, are they all the same, those kids? Just remember, they all entered the same day, the day school started. Why do they have to start on the same day? Because that's when the teacher starts talking. If they come in later, it's like coming in at the end of a movie. They might not understand it as well.

Now, because we took them in on the same day, the oldest kid in the class is a year older than the youngest kid because they were born over the last year. You know,

there's a cut-off date; there's a certain day. If your birthday is on that day, you'll get in that year. If your birthday isn't on that day, you wait another year. So we've got one whole year of kids.

So you've got a class now in the first grade. We're telling them they're all the same, but the oldest kid is one year older than the youngest kid. Does being one year older make any difference at the age of six? My God, that's most of your conscious life at that point. Yes, it's like the difference between 20 and 80, or something like that, in terms of development. It's huge.

Now what does research tell us? Sure, there are some exceptions but research basically tells us that the oldest kids in the class, who happen to be lucky enough to have the right birthdays, they're smarter -- or they think they are; they happen to be older. But they're faster and they're stronger and they're smarter, and they get to feel just great in school. Whereas, the other kids in the class -- when a kid gets to be 17 years of age, and you go to a school and you see who the dropouts are, you'll find that disproportionately the kid who was the youngest kid in the class has ten times the chance of being a dropout, even if on the IQ test the younger kid is smarter.

So what are we doing there? We are setting up unfair competition. We are taking like a heavyweight champion and a lightweight champion and we're saying, "You're both fighters and we'll put you in the ring and you both go at

it," and the lightweight always loses, or almost always loses, and decides he's not going to play any more. So that's one little thing that we do. So the question is: Should we organize the schools in such a way that kids would not have to be in unfair competition with each other?

Now the next thing we do is, I start asking the kids questions, requests. Why? Because I want to make sure they understand what's going on. I want to see who is learning and who isn't learning. I want to keep them awake. I want to get Johnny to stop pulling Mary's hair, so I say, "Johnny, what is the answer to this question?" I get his attention, and he realizes I'm looking at him. Well, in some kids, every time you ask a question their hands are always up. They love school. They'd come Saturday, Sunday, Christmas day. Boy, it's great for the ego.

But then there's a whole bunch of kids who never raise their hands. They're the ones who are always praying. You see, there is prayer in schools. [Laughter] They are praying, "Please don't call on me." But I do call on them because I have got to keep all of them awake. When I call on them, they never can answer it. They either turn red or say, "I don't know," or take a wild guess, and everybody else giggles and says he's dumb or stupid or something else.

How would you feel if day after day you got called on once, twice, three times, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

Thursday, Friday, week-in, week-out, and every time you got up you never got it? What are we really doing with a kid when we do that? I know we don't mean to do that, but let me label that correctly: That's called "public humiliation." What happens to people who are humiliated? Is humiliation a stimulation to learning?

Well, some friend of mine once took me out and said, "Al, today we're going to teach you how to play tennis." All my friends were there, and the first ball I missed, the second I missed, the third went into a lake, and the fourth one went somewhere else. I don't know how long I was there but it seemed like eternity. But I can tell you that I have never touched a tennis ball again. I've never followed it on television. I don't know anything about the game.

After that happened to me, I did what most people do when they experience intense failure, especially in the presence of their friends and colleagues. I said, "That's not my game." That's what I said. And that's what a lot of these kids say very early. They say, "Well, you may think I'm dumb -- and maybe I am -- but that's not my game. I'm not even going to try, so don't laugh at me when I don't make it. You guys can try, but I'm not. But I am going to show you I'm good at some other games. I know how to throw things at other people and I've got the guts to do things that none of you smarty pants have." Or, "I know how to disappear and you can't find me all term. I've got my own smarts."

So the question is: Can we, especially in the early years, find a way of creating an education environment in which the kids -- some of their privacy is preserved so they don't have to show their stuff until they know their stuff? Then we've got something else -- and this is the key to it all: that is, the reason we don't succeed very well in schools is that we are compelling the kids to perform an unnatural act. We are compelling them to do something that adults can't do. It's saying, come in at 9:00 in the morning, you sit still and listen to other people talk -- other kids and teachers -- from 9:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon.

How many adults can sit still and listen to other people for that period of time and get anything out of it? Very, very few. And we say basically the way we're going to learn is by listening to other people talk.

But what if I don't learn by listening? What if I learn it in other ways? So, we've got a system -- it's not that only 20 percent of the kids are smart; it's that only 20 percent of the kids in the United States, England, France, Germany, et cetera, are able to sit still and learn by listening. And nobody knows how many would learn in other ways, except we do know that people do learn in other ways because people who flunk out of school, drop out of school, sometimes are recognized as very brave people who succeed in all sorts of fields because they found a way of learning in other ways. But we don't give anybody a chance to learn in any other way.

Let's take a look at one other thing we do. A kid goes to school. It's the first day of school, September, and he says, "When is the final exam and the final mark?"

"Next June."

Well, if I'm that kid, I say, "Listen, this is September. It's a beautiful day out. If the final exam is next June, I'm not doing my homework tonight. I'm not a crazy compulsive, you know."

Now, you know what we require kids to do? We require kids to understand something that very few of us adults understand: that is, every single day -- today, tomorrow, and the next day -- will have an effect on something ten months from now. You want to conduct an experiment and see how many adults can do well at this? You give somebody their full pay for the next ten months today, and see how many have any of their money left. [Laughter] I mean, that is the kind of learning we're asking these kids to do.

Now I'm not saying they don't have to learn this. We all should learn it. It's part of being an adult. But don't expect six-, seven-, eight-, nine-, ten-, eleven-, twelve-year-olds to have that sort of discipline when most adults don't have it.

So what happens? I don't do my work the first couple of days, and third, fourth and fifth. Pretty soon, it's the middle of October and I don't understand a word the teacher is saying now. I'm hopelessly lost.

What are my choices now? One choice is, I can stay in school and come every day from October to next June, and be humiliated every day when I'm called on; or, I can drop out. Now when I drop out, when can I drop back in again? Next September. Now I'll have freedom for ten months. And when I come back, if I drop back in again, I have to be with a bunch of kids who are one year younger than I am. I'm going to be with the babies. The greatest sign of failure of any kid is to be put in with a bunch of kids who are the babies, one year younger. So how many dropouts come back? Very few.

Can schools be organized any differently? Well, my son went to a school called the CIA, the Culinary Institute of America, and I tried to have dinner with him after he was there for a couple of days and he wouldn't have dinner with me. I said, "Why not? You've only been there a couple of days."

"I've got to study tonight."

I said, "Are you crazy? You've only been there a couple of days."

He said, "You don't understand, Dad. The semesters here are three weeks long."

That means if you're late to class by 15 minutes, you're suspended for the semester because you've missed a major part of the semester. It means any teacher who spends two minutes telling a joke that doesn't really teach something is committing a criminal act. It also means if you run off with your girlfriend to

Ft. Lauderdale, and you drop out of school and you think it's forever, and then the thing breaks up, you can come back in every three weeks. [Laughter]

It also means if you flunk the course, the teacher doesn't have to say, "Gee, do I shatter him psychologically by making him take a whole year of his life over again, or do I move him forward even though he's not going to understand anything that's going on?" Taking three weeks over isn't the same as losing a year off your life. It's a lot easier to do it. But no school is organized that way, right? So these are the kinds of things I'm thinking about.

There is also one more very important thing in this, and that is, we're doing a lot of things with kids. We teach them how to do all sorts of short answers. All these tests that these kids are given, and the test scores, unfortunately were being driven by a lot of tests that were very stupid kinds of tests.

You know, there's a great educational philosopher in this country. His name is Father Guido Sarducci. Now, Father Sarducci a couple of years ago decided he was going to open up a college, and he said that for \$500 you just go for one day, you take all the courses and all the examinations, and then you get a Bachelor of Arts degree, you get the diploma and the whole ceremony -- everything in one day for \$500. People thought this was some sort of a phony gimmick. He says, "No, this is real. Let me tell you how we do it:

"The curriculum of my university is made up in the following way: We go out and we find college graduates who graduated three years ago and we find out how much they remember of what they learned. For example, we find somebody and say, 'When you went to college, you took three years of Spanish, right?'

"'Yes.'

"'How much do you remember?'

"'I only remember como esta usted and muy bien, that's all.'

"So we get you to learn como esta usted."

[Laughter] "We give you the examination, and when you pass you get credit for three years of Spanish. Then we go to history and we do all the others." [Laughter]

Why is that funny? It's funny because so much of education is a lot of memorizations for an examination, which is then absolutely lost. It has got nothing to do with education at all.

What is education really about? You see, the thing that really worried me about those things was the kid not being able to write a letter, because that is thinking, it's communicating, it's trying to figure out what does the boss want and what does he really need. This is what are called the "HOTS" -- higher-order thinking skills. Those are the important things.

How do you get kids to be able to think? Try to get them to write. They write, and then you have got to read what they write, and you can't just put down a B, C, or

the coaching there's not much point in your doing the  
goes through the individual coaching; and if you don't do  
good essay to write?" And if you go through this, nobody  
country, we said, "How often do you give the kids a real  
So, to and behold, as we polled teachers across the

of work for one set of papers.  
mark it and 5 minutes to talk to the kid, that's 25 hours  
kids. Marking 150 papers -- if it takes you 5 minutes to  
30 kids in the class, 5 periods per day. That is 150  
percent of the kids can do that? I know why: You've got  
Well, why isn't that happening? How come only 20

individually.  
think or to write in groups. They've got to be coached  
any sort of athletic event. You can't teach kids how to  
he writes it again, it's like coaching for a ball game or  
think and talk to him and get him to think more, and then  
re-do that?" And you know if you get a kid to write and  
You do that with him and say, "Now, do you think you can  
that?" And he looks there and says, "Well, not really."

"Look what you said here. Now do you really believe  
Then you go down to the third paragraph and you say,

"That's right."

said is so much better." And he looks at it and says,  
sentence? Look what you said here. What you've just

"Well, why didn't you say that in the first

and he'll tell you.

"Good," "Bad." You've got to then sit with the kid for  
five minutes and say, "What was this all about, Johnny?"

marking. So it's surprising that 20 percent of the kids can write and think; it really is.

Well, how are you going to get to do it? Suppose you reduce class size in half. That would mean in this country instead of having 2.2 million teachers, we'd have 4.4 million teachers. It means we'd have to hire one-half of all the college graduates in this country. So we wouldn't have doctors and lawyers and generals. Everybody would be a teacher, right? And it would cost a lot of money, and we'd have to build twice as many classrooms and twice as many schools. And after reducing class size by half, you'd still have to take 12-1/2 hours to mark a set of papers. You see, it still wouldn't work.

So, trying to get this done by saying "Give me some more help" in the usual way isn't going to work. So how can we solve all these problems? How can we take care of the needs of the kids? How can we take care of privacy? How can we get rid of the business of sitting still and keeping quiet?..How can we get rid of "This is the only one way to learn: listening to somebody"? How can we create some privacy? How can we create a system in which teachers can earn \$60,000 and \$70,000 and \$80,000 and \$90,000? How can we create the time for you to mark the papers and coach the kid? How can we create the time for you to talk to other teachers? How can we create time where you can think about what you're doing, when you're not always busy acting, performing?

You know what the best teachers attorney told me on this? "Get rid of all teachers colleges. The way teachers are right now, the best apprenticeship would be to go to acting school for a year." You go and put on an act every day, only it's a different play every day, and the people didn't pay for their tickets and they didn't want to be there. [Laughter] Very, very tough job.

Now I want to share with you the fact there is an institution which does something like what I'm going to get to with schools in just a minute, and has been doing it successfully for many years. It's called Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Think about it. The Boy Scouts have a curriculum. You have to pass a lot of tests to become a Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class.

How does a Scoutmaster teach 40 different kids all the different things a kid is supposed to learn? The Scoutmaster never stands up there to give a lecture. So he never says, "I'm going to give you a great lecture on how to tie knots." He never does it. Why not? Because a lot of kids have been there for four years, five years, two years, and there might only be one or two kids who even want to learn knots.

How is he going to give the 30 different lectures he's got to give if he doesn't have 40 or 50 adults in that room to do it? You see, he says, "Johnny, you take this book. That is the handbook. And here's a piece of rope. See if you can copy these three. They're the easiest ones. Don't get discouraged if you don't do it

that way. It's hard." Then he goes on to the next kid with the next thing and helps each one. He gives them an idea about how they might learn. You see, the teacher isn't the worker; the kid is the worker. The teacher is the one who is helping the kid.

And, by the way, if the kid isn't learning himself, there's no way you can pour it into him. That's what's wrong with this kind of system. We do all the work and they are asleep. That is when we're lucky, when they're not fighting us. [Laughter]

All right, so then I go over to Johnny and I see he hasn't tied the knot, and I say, "Okay, Johnny, come here. I told you that was hard. Here's a board that has the actual knots. Pull them off, take a look, untie them. Maybe you can copy them down."

If that doesn't work, then I say, "Johnny, go over to Freddy. Freddy will give you stories about how knots are tied." In other words, I'm not the one who's doing all the performing. I'm the one who's helping each kid do that.

Now, first, we have a class in which there are no lectures and in which there are one or two or three computers and one or two or three VCRs, and one or two video disk players, and a number of tape decks so people can listen to audio, and there are some simulations, games, and various models. Could we have it so that each kid is working at his own speed?

That is, as of this semester there are 250 things each kid is supposed to learn. Suppose each kid has a list. You wouldn't give him the 250; it would look staggering. You would do it, let's say, 15 or 20 things at a time. When he finished with those, he moves on to the next.

"Mary, this morning what would you like to do?" Then you say, "Well, Mary, you are really pretty good at reading, and I think if you read this book, this chapter, you could learn it." Then you find a way of kind of testing Mary.

Jack comes over and you know he couldn't read that; it's too difficult. He's not ready for it. You say, "Jack, here's a video tape. This is about how the Grand Canyon was formed. This is put out by National Geographic. It's really beautiful. I envy the fact that you're about to see this for the first time. It's going to show you just how this all happened."

So you've got all sorts of different ways of getting kids -- by the way, if the kid who tries to read it can't read it, you might say, "I've made a mistake," just like a doctor. He'll give you a pill and you come back and say, "Hey, this didn't cure me. As a matter of fact, it gave me a total headache." The doctor says, "Try this one." A doctor never guarantees that the first thing is going to work. He's got one theory and does another one. That's because they are all individuals.

We are all individuals. That is what's wrong with trying to process all the kids at the same time, like a factory. Factories can work if you're putting uniform materials through the machine. Kids are not uniform materials. That is why you can't put them through the machine. It's why you can't do the same thing with all of them.

So you've got all these different ways, and now you've got a team of adults working with those kids. You've got a lead teacher who was certified by the National Board. That teacher knows all the technology, knows what's inside the computer, knows what the different video and audio tapes are and everything else. Then you're going to have one or two regularly certified teachers on the team. And then you're going to have one or two college students who are interns -- they are learning to become teachers.

Right now, you don't find any other adults in your room because you're busy lecturing or talking to the kids or questioning them, and any other adult in the room -- first of all, they can't help you. I mean, there's only one person who can lecture at a time. Their being there represents a threat. First of all, they might notice you made a mistake in your lecture; or some kid might blow up and they might say, "That's your fault" -- you had a witness there. You want to just close that room and be left alone.

However, if you've got 30 or 40 or 50 kids, or 100 kids, working on different things, adding another bunch of adults who can help them individually -- you go into a Scout troop and see what parents do. They can't teach the kids all the tests but each one might know one or two of them. You can use a lot of help in that room. So you can have college kids now. They're not going to do the whole thing, but they can help a bunch of the kids. You can have paraprofessionals working, as well.

Now notice you're not busy lecturing. The kids are doing all the work. You've got time now. You and the other adults can sit down and talk about how we've tried the five different ways of teaching Mr. Johnny, and Johnny didn't learn; is there another game we can work out? Is there another movie? Is there another something? You've got time to think for the first time about individual kids. Not only that, you've got time to mark papers because you're not busy doing anything else all day long except helping this one and helping that one.

See, I'm not saying put all of those kids in front of technology and they warm up to it and get that wonderful human contact coming out of the set. [Laughter] That is not what I'm saying. I'm saying they're not getting too much human contact now because you're dealing with them as a group and you've got to control them all the time. Now they're going to get their information and facts and skills from those different machines, and so forth --

and, by the way, the best way to do it is to get an older kid to help a younger kid. They are both helped that way. When the older kid has to learn how to explain it, he really learns it. And the younger kid learns it. And it's one on one, so it's not embarrassing.

Notice that the kids are on different machines. They make a mistake and nobody else is giggling. They're not being publicly humiliated. One kid goes faster and another kid goes slower. He doesn't have to do it at the time because there's not one person talking and keeping the pace. So, we've got all these things going.

Now you've got the time to sit with each of those kids, mark their papers, and coach them and get them to think, express themselves, and we get to do the things we've never been able to do before. And if they've got a lead teacher and other teachers who are not yet board certified, and interns, you can have a lead -- by the way, if you have a teacher of this quality at the head of every team, you don't need all the supervisors down the hall -- you don't. [Applause] So that's what I'm talking about. That's what we're beginning to work with.

How are we going to do this? You can't press the button and do it tomorrow. We're about to create a new world for kids and for teachers, and it's a world in which teachers are going to have time, in which they have time to do the right things, in which they do have colleague relationships, in which they don't have the impossible job of getting 20 or 30 kids to sit still

and be quiet -- which nobody can really do, in which you have a differentiated staff so you can, on an objective basis, work toward a real professional salary of \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000, \$90,000, \$100,000 a year.

It will be a school in which the talent isn't moved out of the classroom and down to central headquarters or down to the office. The talent is going to be right up front working with the kids and with the other adults. You don't need a bureaucracy because there's going to be a lot of smart people up here. They are not going to feel that all people here are dumb so they have to have inspectors watching them. And you're going to have kids who have a very different relationship to their work.

Now that's where we are. I think it's a very exciting vision, and it's one essentially which says that the teachers are going to be running that show, a team of people talking to each other -- not every teacher doing what he or she wants to do but the whole group of teachers talking to each other, reading, doing research, trying new things, using technology. It's a very, very different vision.

Why are we doing this? Are we doing this because we're just tired of the old system and we're trying to come up with a new picture? Is this just the old-time game of coming up with a new idea every couple of years -- which we are all sick of -- in education? I go back to those results. The results of getting kids to sit still and be quiet and questioning them and getting

them to be embarrassed in front of the whole class has produced massive failure in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, every major western country. This is a system that can work.

Now, if the current system doesn't work we're going to have a terrible price to pay. We're going to get a lot of politicians and businessmen a couple of years from now and they're going to say, "We gave you reform; we told you what to do; we gave you some raises; we put some kindergarten classes in there. We did all these things for you, and look what happened."

And in five or ten years from now if the results of our schools are about what they are today, you know what they are going to say? "School boards think they are too political. The administration is incompetent. The unions are only worried about protecting incompetence. The whole public school system is rotten from top to bottom. And the only way you can improve things is to give parents vouchers and tuition tax credits and let them go out, let private industry set up their own schools and get some competition, and get out of this public school monopolistic bureaucracy which is insensitive to the needs of the students." That's what they'll say, and they'll win on it if we don't come up with something better.

Well, you can all be, I think, proud you're in an organization that is not fighting off change, that is not just stuck in the same rut; we're growing.

This is going to be a very good year for us nationally. It's a good year for you in this state in terms of growth. It's a good year for us in other ways in that just about every governor and every legislator and every top businessman and every journalist and everybody who knows anything about education in this country knows that the educational ideas that are right in the forefront are no longer coming from other places; they are coming right where they ought to come from: the teachers themselves.

Thank you very much.

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