

THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, INC.
FORUM
DROPOUTS IN AMERICA: ENOUGH IS KNOWN FOR ACTION

REMARKS BY
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THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, INC.
AND
CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AMERICAN CAN COMPANY

THE GREATER WASHINGTON BOARD OF TRADE
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DROPOUTS IN AMERICA: ENOUGH IS. KNOWN FOR ACTION

THIS IS MY FIRST OFFICIAL PUBLIC ACT AS
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP. I AM
PLEASED THAT THE SUBJECT OF THIS FORUM -
CONFRONTING THE DROPOUT PROBLEM IN OUR
SCHOOLS - IS AN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH I HAVE
STRONG PERSONAL FEELINGS. IT IS ALSO AN
ISSUE THAT IS OF INCREASING CONCERN TO THE
AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

AS THIS REPORT MAKES CLEAR, ALL OF US IN THE
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS NEED TO RESPOND
MORE VIGOROUSLY AND COMPREHENSIVELY TO THE
DROPOUT PROBLEM.

THE REPORT, DROPOUTS IN AMERICA: ENOUGH IS
KNOWN FOR ACTION, POINTS OUT THAT WE KNOW
MORE THAN WE REALIZE ABOUT HOW TO MEET THE
EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF THOSE
CHILDREN WHO ARE MOST AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT
OF SCHOOL.

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THE REPORT MAKES CLEAR THAT WE KNOW ENOUGH TO
DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION AT THE PRESENT TIME.

THE REPORT ALSO MAKES CLEAR TO US THAT WE
REALLY CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT ANY LONGER IN
DEVELOPING A PLAN OF ACTION.

GOOD DATA AND GOOD PLANS ARE IMPORTANT. BUT
SOMETIMES YOU CANNOT WAIT UNTIL ALL THE
EVIDENCE IS IN AND ALL THE PLANS ARE
FOOLPROOF.

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THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES OCCURRING IN THIS
COUNTRY DEMAND ACTION. BY THE YEAR 2000,
ONE-THIRD OF THE NATION'S CHILDREN WILL BE
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED. IN SEVERAL OF
OUR MOST POPULOUS STATES, THE MAJORITY OF
STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE FROM
MINORITY RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS.

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**THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN GROWING UP IN
POVERTY IS UNCONSCIONABLE. THE NUMBER OF
CHILDREN HAVING CHILDREN IS APPALLING. OVER
50 PERCENT OF AFDC (AID TO FAMILIES WITH
DEPENDENT CHILDREN) FAMILIES ARE HEADED BY A
HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT. AND, WE KNOW THAT
FAMILY ECONOMIC STATUS IS A KEY VARIABLE IN
PROJECTING WHO WILL -- AND WHO WILL NOT --
STAY IN SCHOOL AND GRADUATE.**

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IF A CORPORATE EXECUTIVE WERE PRESENTED WITH
THAT KIND OF DATA REGARDING A PRODUCT, HE
WOULDN'T ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DATA.
HE'D ASK FOR ACTION.

THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT WE NEED TO DO.

WE CAN'T WRING OUR HANDS AND WISH THE DROPOUT
PROBLEM AWAY. CHANGE WILL COME ONLY THROUGH
BOLD, DETERMINED, CONSISTENT, PERSISTENT AND
COOPERATIVE EFFORT. THIS IS WHERE YOU COME
IN; THIS IS WHERE WE ALL COME IN.

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EDUCATION HAS BEEN THE TRADITIONAL AVENUE OF ESCAPE FROM POVERTY THROUGHOUT THIS NATION'S HISTORY. TODAY, WE NEED EFFECTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED MORE THAN WE HAVE NEEDED THEM AT ANYTIME DURING THE PAST 50 YEARS. WE ARE MOVING TOWARD A SOCIETY AND ECONOMY DIVIDED BY INCOME, EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY. IF WE FAIL TO TAKE ACTION TO REVERSE THIS TREND, THEN WE BETTER BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR INACTION, CONSEQUENCES THAT WILL AFFECT, IF NOT OUR GENERATION, THEN CERTAINLY OUR CHILDREN'S GENERATION.

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AN IEL REPORT ON SCHOOL DROPOUTS IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD OR EVEN A SMALL PART OF IT. THE VALUE OF A REPORT SUCH AS THE ONE THAT JACKIE DANZBERGER AND ANDREW HAHN HAVE WRITTEN IS THAT IT HELPS US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND, THEREBY, MORE EFFECTIVELY CONFRONT THE ISSUES. I TRUST THAT YOU WILL FIND THIS AFTERNOON'S SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS HELPFUL. I HOPE IT WILL LEAD US A STEP CLOSER TO THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION THAT WILL HELP US ADDRESS THIS VERY CRITICAL ISSUE.

THANK YOU.

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THIS REPORT ALSO PROVIDES SOUND STRATEGIES TO AFFECT ADOLESCENTS' DECISIONS TO STAY IN SCHOOL TO COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL. AT EVERY POLICY LEVEL AND IN EACH INSTITUTION OR AGENCY PROVIDING SERVICES TO AT-RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES SHOULD ADDRESS THE TOTAL PROBLEM AND CRUCIAL NEED TO RESPOND TO CHANGING NEEDS FROM CHILDHOOD THROUGH ADOLESCENCE. THIS CANNOT BE LEFT TO CHANCE. AS THE REPORT INDICATES, WE KNOW ENOUGH TO DO A LOT MORE THAN IS REFLECTED IN CURRENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

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BELIEVE ME --- I AM NOT MAKING AN ARGUMENT
FOR ESTABLISHING NEW COORDINATING
BUREAUCRACIES AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF
GOVERNMENT AND BETWEEN THE SECTORS. WE CAN
NO LONGER DELAY DEALING WITH THE FACT THAT
INDIVIDUALS ARE AT THE END OF ALL THESE
POLICIES AND SERVICES WHICH ARE SEPARATELY
GOVERNED AND FUNDED. WE DO NEED TO PROVIDE
INCENTIVES THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
RESOURCES -- CORPORATE AND TRADITIONAL
PHILANTHROPIC -- TO THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND
AGENCIES SEEMINGLY MOST RESISTANT TO
SELF-INITIATED CHANGE.

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FINALLY, AS SOMEONE FROM THE BUSINESS
COMMUNITY CONCERNED ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF
THIS NATION'S ECONOMY AND ITS SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL STRUCTURES, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE
PERSONAL COMMITMENT FROM BUSINESS LEADERS --
FROM CEO'S OF MAJOR CORPORATIONS, OWNERS OF
SMALL BUSINESSES AND YET TO BE IDENTIFIED
ENTREPRENEURS OF TOMORROW'S BUSINESSES -- TO
PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT TO ASSIST IN
IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR OUR GROWING
POPULATION OF CHILDREN AT RISK.

MY GENERATION OF BUSINESS LEADERS IS
RETIRING. THERE IS A VERY DIFFERENT
GENERATION OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COMING
THROUGH THE RANKS. WE MUST CONVINCING THIS NEW
GENERATION THAT WITHOUT THEIR COMMITMENT TO
PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR IMPROVING THE
PROSPECTS OF CHILDREN AT RISK, THEIR OWN
BUSINESS SUCCESS WILL BE BOUGHT AT THE
EXPENSE OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STABILITY,

AND HISTORIC
AMERICAN ECONOMIC
ASSUMPTIONS.

IN CLOSING, WE KNOW ENOUGH NOW TO IMPROVE THE
NATION'S SCHOOL COMPLETION RATE. TRUE, WE
DON'T HAVE SOLUTIONS TO ALL THE VARIABLES
THAT AFFECT ANY ONE ADOLESCENT'S DECISION TO
STAY IN SCHOOL AND ABILITY TO ACHIEVE IN
SCHOOL. BUT THE REAL QUESTION IS, DO WE HAVE
THE WILL TO ACT UPON WHAT WE DO KNOW,

ESPECIALLY WHEN IT REQUIRES, AS THIS REPORT
SUGGESTS, CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS, RELINQUISHING ORGANIZATIONAL
"TURF," COLLABORATING, AND DEALING WITH
UNCOMFORTABLE SOCIAL REALITIES. I HOPE SO.

THANK YOU.