
OPENING REMARKS

PRESENTED TO

NEW YORK CITY

EDUCATION POLICY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

BY

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CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRIMERICA CORPORATION,

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THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP,

AND

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NEW YORK CITY PARTNERSHIP

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

**GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO TONIGHT'S
DINNER AND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONTEMPORARY LOCAL
SCHOOL BOARDS.**

NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

TONIGHT, I WEAR A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT, YET
COMPLEMENTARY HATS, IN WELCOMING YOU TO
THIS SESSION. I AM PRESIDENT OF THE
PRIMERICA FOUNDATION -- WHICH UNTIL
RECENTLY WAS KNOWN AS THE AMERICAN CAN
COMPANY FOUNDATION. THE FOUNDATION FUNDED
THE SCHOOL BOARD STUDY THAT SERVES AS THE
BASIS OF OUR DISCUSSION TODAY.

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NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

IT IS THROUGH MY WORK WITH OUR CORPORATE
FOUNDATION THAT WE CAME TO CHAMPION THE
ESSENTIAL ROLE WHICH STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL
SYSTEMS PLAY IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

OUR EXPERIENCES AT THE FOUNDATION HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO ACTION THROUGH A VARIETY OF FUNDING STRATEGIES SUPPORTING PUBLIC EDUCATION --- PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSES, PUBLIC AWARENESS INITIATIVES, MODEL PROGRAMS, AND STUDIES OF THE ROLES OF KEY CONSTITUENCIES IN EDUCATION.

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BECAUSE I WEAR A SECOND HAT, AS CHAIRMAN
OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE NEW YORK
CITY PARTNERSHIP, I HAVE A KEEN INTEREST
IN ANY DISCUSSION WHICH FOCUSES ON SCHOOL
BOARDS -- THESE UNIQUE AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS
WHICH PLAY SUCH A VITAL ROLE IN THIS CITY
AND IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

THE PARTNERSHIP'S EDUCATION COMMITTEE IS
STRUCTURED TO PROVIDE BROAD SUPPORT TO THE
NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS -- NOT JUST
TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL

PROGRAMS. ITS MAJOR FOCAL POINTS INCLUDE:

- 0 JOIN-A-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, AND

- 0 POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TO
THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

I WEAR A THIRD HAT AS THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF
THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP'S
BOARD OF DIRECTORS. IEL IS THE PARENT
ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW YORK CITY EDUCATION
POLICY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM WHICH HOSTS
TONIGHT'S MEETING.

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THIS PROGRAM REMAINS IEL'S MOST VISIBLE
LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY -- WITH A PROUD 23
YEAR HISTORY AND 2,500 GRADUATES NOW
SITUATED IN INFLUENTIAL LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

**AS A MATTER OF FACT, TWO OF YOUR GRADUATES
ARE PARTICULARLY VISIBLE TONIGHT. JULIE
LATZER, FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM CLASS OF '85,
PROVIDES STAFF SUPPORT FOR ME AT THE NYC
PARTNERSHIP, AND MIGUEL GARCIA, FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAM CLASS OF '85, IS THE MANAGER FOR
OUR NATIONAL THEMES PROGRAM AT THE PRIMERICA
FOUNDATION.**

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AND, OF COURSE, MY WORK WITH YOUR LEADER,
MIKE USDAN - I WON'T TELL YOU HIS CLASS
YEAR - HAS BEEN SATISFYING AND PRODUCTIVE.

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IN 1985, THE PRIMERICA FOUNDATION PROVIDED
IEL WITH A GRANT TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC
POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS.
IN NOVEMBER 1986, IEL RELEASED THE
PROJECT'S FINAL REPORT, ENTITLED,
SCHOOL BOARDS: STRENGTHENING GRASS ROOTS
LEADERSHIP. OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS,
THIS STUDY HAS GENERATED A GREAT DEAL OF
REACTION FROM SCHOOL BOARDS AND ATTENTION
FROM THE PUBLIC.

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TO

NIGHT, WE'LL HEAR MIKE USDAN'S PRESENTATION ON THE
REPORT AND THE REACTIONS OF ROBERT WAGNER AND JEROME
HARRIS.

Now I'D LIKE TO SHARE A FEW THOUGHTS OF MY OWN ON SCHOOL
BOARDS AND BUSINESS. . . • • WHEN ONE THINKS OF ALL THE
EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE SUPPORT FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, IT
IS STRIKING TO CONSIDER HOW LITTLE INTERACTION THERE IS
BETWEEN BUSINESS AND LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS.

SCHOOL

BOARDS, DESPITE THEIR ESTABLISHED VITAL
ROLE AS IMPORTANT-GRASSROOTS-BASED
POLICYMAKERS, HAVE BEEN FOR THE MOST PART
IGNORED IN THE RECENT NATIONAL REFORM
MOVEMENT LED BY POLITICAL AND BUSINESS
LEADERS.

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THIS RAISES SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS:

**ARE SCHOOL BOARDS NOW PERIPHERAL TO THE
CURRENT SCHOOL REFORM MOVEMENT?**

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OR ALTERNATIVELY, IS THERE SIMPLY SOME
KIND OF MISMATCH IN FUNCTION?

INTEREST?

OR RESPONSIBILITY? . .

A MISMATCH THAT HAS LED TO A
BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
BUSINESS AND SCHOOL BOARDS -- TWO
ENTITIES THAT OUGHT TO HAVE A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER.

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I BELIEVE THAT THESE QUESTIONS ARE WORTHY
OF EXPLORATION. WE MUST BEGIN TO FOCUS
MORE ATTENTION ON THE STRENGTHS AND
WEAKNESSES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD.

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THESE GRASSROOTS INSTITUTIONS MUST BE EFFECTIVE IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE OUR EDUCATIONAL GOALS. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE CERTAINLY SPECIAL AND UNIQUE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE CENTRAL BOARD AND THE 32 COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS IN THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM, THERE ARE ALSO SOME COMMON, GENERIC ISSUES CONFRONTING ALL SCHOOL BOARDS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SIZE OR COMMUNITY COMPOSITION.

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THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS BEGUN TO RECOGNIZE
THE STAKE IT HAS IN IMPROVING PUBLIC
EDUCATION. MORE BUSINESS PEOPLE AND
ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE VIEWING QUALITY
EDUCATION AS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT. .
ONE WHICH IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE VERY
FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY.

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AS A SOCIETY, WE NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO IMPLEMENT SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL CHANGE AND
TO IMPROVE THE WAY WE EDUCATE OUR
CHILDREN.

ALTHOUGH MOST STATES HAVE ENACTED SWEEPING
SCHOOL REFORMS IN RECENT YEARS, THESE
INITIATIVES HAVE LARGELY BYPASSED LOCAL
SCHOOL BOARDS.

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LUCKILY, SCHOOL BOARDS ARE NOT PROHIBITED FROM RECOVERING AND ASSERTING THEIR PROPER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE REFORM MOVEMENT. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS NEED TO BE WILLING TO PROVIDE MORE AND CREATIVE LEADERSHIP TO ENABLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS TO SUCCEED AND BE SUSTAINED.

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FINALLY, LET ME OBSERVE THAT VIRTUALLY
ALL SCHOOL BOARDS ARE DIVIDED OVER A
VARIETY OF ISSUES. THE SUCCESSFUL
SCHOOL BOARDS ARE THE ONES THAT ARE
ABLE TO TRANSCEND

THE PETTY DIFFERENCES TO
COMPROMISE CREATIVELY TO REACH A
SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION ... AND

IMPORTANTLY, TO
PRESENT A UNIFIED VIEW OF EDUCATION TO
PARENTS, TEACHERS AND THE NEW, LARGER
AUDIENCE INVOLVED IN THE EDUCATIONAL
POLICY-MAKING PROCESS TODAY.

NYC ED. POLICY FELLOWSHIP

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS EVENING. I THANK ARTHUR BARNES, PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK URBAN COALITION AND THE CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THEIR GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY AND LOOK FORWARD TO A STIMULATING SESSION ON A TOPIC OF VITAL SIGNIFICANCE TO OUR COMMUNITY.