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**PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

**REMARKS BY**  
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PEF

THIS IS A DAY OF MIXED EMOTIONS FOR ME.

ON THE ONE HAND, I AM SADDENED THAT THE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND HAS MADE ITS FINAL GRANT. THE WORK OF THE FUND AND ITS LOCAL GRANTEES IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE IN THIS COUNTRY. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES YOU HAVE SPAWNED CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND MULTIPLY.

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**PEF**

**ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS MEETING GIVES ALL  
OF US AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICLY RECOGNIZE  
AND CELEBRATE WHAT THE FUND AND ITS  
GRANTEES HAVE ACHIEVED DURING THE PAST  
FIVE YEARS.**

**MANY ORGANIZATIONS SPEND FIVE YEARS JUST  
GETTING THEMSELVES ORGANIZED. You HAVE  
JAMMED A LIFETIME OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS INTO  
THAT BRIEF PERIOD OF TIME.**

YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE MANY DIFFERENT  
WAYS THAT LOCAL GROUPS CAN ACT AS BROKERS  
BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO  
HELP IMPROVE NOT ONLY THE QUALITY OF  
EDUCATION BUT THE CLIMATE IN WHICH  
**EDUCATIONAL POLICY IS DEVELOPED AND  
IMPLEMENTED.**

EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE IS THE FACT THAT YOU  
HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT BUILDING

ORGANIZATIONAL MONUMENTS. YOUR EFFORTS  
AND YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS ARE THE REAL LEGACY  
OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND. AND IT IS A  
LIVING LEGACY, BECAUSE YOUR WORK IS GOING  
TO CONTINUE.

MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENED OF COURSE IS DUE TO THE VISION AND LEADERSHIP OF DAVID BERGHOLZ AND HIS VERY TALENTED STAFF. BUT IT ALSO IS DUE TO WHAT YOU HAVE DONE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL. FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRIMERICA FOUNDATION, I KNOW THAT THE SUCCESS OF ANY GRANT PROGRAM INVOLVES MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLY WRITING OR RECEIVING A CHECK. IT TAKES PEOPLE -- PEOPLE OF VISION AND DETERMINATION, PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO WORK HARD ON PROJECTS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN THEIR CAUSES. IF YOU FIND AND FUND THE RIGHT PEOPLE, ANY GRANT MAKING ORGANIZATION CAN LOOK VERY GOOD.

**SO DO WHAT I'VE TOLD SOME OF OUR MOST  
SUCCESSFUL GRANTEES TO DO. BASK IN YOUR  
SUCCESS. YOU HAVE EARNED IT.**

**I WANT TO BEGIN TODAY BY TAKING A FEW  
MOMENTS TO LOOK BACK AT 1983.**

**THAT WAS THE YEAR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION  
FUND CAME INTO BEING AND, COINCIDENTALLY,  
THE YEAR IN WHICH I FIRST BECAME ACTIVELY  
INVOLVED IN PUBLIC EDUCATION -- MY ROOKIE  
SEASON, SO TO SPEAK.**

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE WAS NOT  
A PARTICULARLY PROMISING OR ENCOURAGING  
YEAR FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION. A NATION AT  
RISK HAD JUST BEEN PUBLISHED AND HAD

BEEN - SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTEDLY - THE SUBJECT  
OF EXTRAORDINARY PUBLIC ATTENTION. AT  
FIRST, HOWEVER, NOBODY WAS CERTAIN  
IF WE WERE ON THE THRESHOLD OF A MAJOR  
RECOMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION OR IF THE  
REPORT WAS MORE ON THE ORDER OF A LAST  
HURRAH.

THERE WAS A GOOD REASON FOR CONCERN.

WE HAD JUST COME THROUGH A MAJOR RECESSION. REAGANOMICS HAD TAKEN HOLD OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS. DRAMATIC CUTS WERE OCCURRING IN BOTH TAXES AND SPENDING, WITH THE PROMISE OF MORE TO COME. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT WERE INVOLVED IN SUCH AREAS AS EDUCATION, HEALTH, HOUSING AND NUTRITION WERE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO STRETCH INCREASINGLY LIMITED DOLLARS TO MEET RAPIDLY GROWING NEEDS.

ON TOP OF THIS, THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS FELT VERY THREATENED BY THE SUDDEN FASCINATION WITH VOUCHER SYSTEMS.



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**REF**

**As A NATION, WE SEEMED POISED TO TURN OUR  
BACK ON 50 YEARS OF HISTORY. PROGRAMS  
THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLES' LIVES  
CLEARLY WERE OUT OF FAVOR -- ESPECIALLY IF  
THEY COST TAX DOLLARS. AND THE NATIONAL  
DEBATE, TO THE EXTENT ONE EXISTED, CENTERED  
NOT ON HOW BEST TO HELP PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS  
IN NEED, BUT WHY WE SHOULD BE INVOLVED AT  
ALL.**

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PEF

INSTEAD OF REACHING OUT TO OTHERS WHO WERE  
NEEDY, WE WERE DRAWING BACK AND LOCKING  
THEM OUT EMOTIONAL GENEROSITY AND  
COMPASSION, ONCE THE HALLMARK OF THIS  
COUNTRY, WERE ON THE WANE. REPLACING IT  
WAS AN ATTITUDE OF I'VE-GOT-MINE-AND-  
YOU'RE-ON-YOUR-OWN.

THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED NOW. INDEED,  
SOME TRENDS MAY BE REVERSING THEMSELVES.

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\_\_\_PEF

**OUR ECONOMY HAS SHOWN STEADY AND SOLID  
IMPROVEMENT. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES HAVE  
DECLINED ALTHOUGH POVERTY RATES HAVE  
REMAINED DISCOURAGINGLY HIGH. THE  
ADMINISTRATION'S VOUCHER PROPOSAL IS BACK  
WHERE IT SHOULD BE -- INVISIBLE. FEDERAL  
FUNDING IS NOT WHAT IT SHOULD BE, BUT THE  
WORST OF THE BUDGET CUTS ARE OVER. THERE  
ARE SIGNS THE PUBLIC ONCE AGAIN IS ACCEPTING  
THE IDEA THAT GOVERNMENT CAN BE A POSITIVE  
FORCE IN PEOPLES' LIVES.**

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**PEF**

AND A NATION AT RISK, INSTEAD OF BEING THE  
BURIAL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, HAS TURNED OUT  
TO BE A NEW BEGINNING OF SORTS, A TRIGGERING  
POINT FOR VITAL NATIONAL EFFORTS TO  
IMPROVE BOTH THE QUALITY OF THE SCHOOLS,  
AND, MORE RECENTLY, TO PROVIDE GREATER  
EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWING  
NUMBERS OF AT-RISK YOUNGSTERS.

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## **PEF**

WITHIN A SURPRISINGLY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SERIOUS INQUIRY. THE OBJECTIVE HAS NOT BEEN TO TRASH OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS OR TO SIMPLY GATHER DATA; IT HAS BEEN TO FIND WAYS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS.

THE WHOLE SYSTEM HAS BEEN EXAMINED -- THE CURRICULUM, THE PROBLEMS TEACHERS FACE, THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, THE NEEDS OF MINORITY AND DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN, THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS, ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES, EVEN THE PHYSICAL, CONDITION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS THEMSELVES.



**IN FOUR YEARS WE HAVE GONE FROM WONDERING  
IF PUBLIC EDUCATION HAD A FUTURE TO A  
POSITION WHERE AN ENCOURAGING NUMBER OF  
LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE BEGINNING TO DESIGN  
AND IMPLEMENT THE FUTURE THAT BEST SUITS  
THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS.**

**GIVEN ALL THIS, THE NATURAL TENDENCY WOULD  
BE TO CONGRATULATE OURSELVES.**

**THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS THAT DESPITE SOME  
POSITIVE OUTWARD SIGNS, FM NOT SURE  
PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS YET ACHIEVED THE  
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NECESSARY TO  
SUSTAIN IT IN THE YEARS AHEAD.**

**MOREOVER, I AM AFRAID THAT IF WE FAIL TO CAPITALIZE FULLY ON OUR WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY, WE MAY FIND OURSELVES IN A MUCH MORE DIFFICULT POSITION FOUR OR FIVE YEARS FROM NOW.**

**AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE IS THE ROLE THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS BEEN PLAYING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.**

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN PUBLIC EDUCATION DURING THE LATE 1970s AND THE EARLY 1980s WAS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT.**



BUSINESS HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YEARS. BUT EXCEPT FOR PLACING AN OCCASIONAL CORPORATE EXECUTIVE ON A SCHOOL BOARD OR IN SHORT TERM MANAGEMENT ASSIGNMENTS, WE HAD STEERED CLEAR OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION. WE KNEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS WERE IMPORTANT. WE JUST THOUGHT SOMEONE ELSE SHOULD WORRY ABOUT THEM.

BESIDES, THE UNIVERSITY WAS OUR NATURAL .  
POINT OF CONTACT. THAT'S WHERE OUR KEY  
EMPLOYEES AND OUR FUTURE EXECUTIVES WOULD  
COME FROM. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE  
CORPORATION AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL WAS JUST  
TOO TENUOUS AND TOO INDIRECT. AND THE  
CONTROVERSIES WHICH HAD BESET THE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS - SUCH AS BUSING, TEACHER STRIKES,  
COMPETITION WITH PRIVATE RELIGIOUS  
SCHOOLS - WERE HARDLY AN INDUCEMENT TO  
BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT.

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, THOUGH, IN THE MIDST OF ALL THE GROWING CONCERN ABOUT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS, THE NATIONAL ECONOMY, ADULT ILLITERACY, AND OUR FUTURE WORK FORCE, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY BEGAN TO REALIZE IT DID IN FACT HAVE AN IMPORTANT STAKE IN THE FUTURE OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THE FACT THAT MANY **CEOs**, MYSELF INCLUDED, WERE PRODUCTS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DIDN'T HURT.

BUT OUR CURRENT INVOLVEMENT WITH PUBLIC EDUCATION REPRESENTS SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST A CHANGE OF HEART, OR A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF OUR OWN SELF-INTEREST.

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PEF

SOMETHING ELSE ALSO IS AT WORK.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN  
ROOTED IN A PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL  
COMMITMENT THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, IS NOT  
FOUND IN OUR OTHER SOCIAL, CIVIC AND  
PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVORS.

MANY OF OUR SCHOOL RELATED ACTIVITIES  
CONTAIN A MODEST FINANCIAL COMPONENT. BUT  
THE KEY INGREDIENT OF MOST EARLY  
SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS  
WAS THE PERSONAL PARTICIPATION OF  
EXECUTIVES AND EMPLOYEES ON A REGULAR  
BASIS -- NOT ALL OF THEM, BUT ENOUGH TO  
CONVEY THE MESSAGE THAT THIS WAS NOT A  
HAPHAZARD OR TRIVIAL EFFORT. AND ENOUGH  
SO THAT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY LEARNED  
FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE AS WELL.

NEW TYPES OF CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS ALSO EMERGED: COMMUNITY-WIDE COALITIONS THAT SEEK SPECIFIC PROGRAM AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES; ADVOCACY GROUPS THAT LOBBY IN WASHINGTON, STATE CAPITOLS AND CITY HALL ON BEHALF OF ESTABLISHED EDUCATION PROGRAMS THAT WORK AND FOR NEW IDEAS THAT DESERVE TO BE TESTED.

THE MORE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY BECAME INVOLVED, THE MORE WE LEARNED ABOUT THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EACH TYPE OF ACTIVITY.

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## PEF

**IN ADDITION, WE ARRIVED AT SOME CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ROLE WE COULD AND COULD NOT PLAY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.**

**THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS MAY HAVE COME INTO VOGUE WHEN MAJOR CUTBACKS STARTED TO OCCUR IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. BUT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY UNDERSTOOD VERY QUICKLY THAT IT WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENT.**

PEF

WE DON'T HAVE THE FINANCIAL,  
ADMINISTRATIVE OR POLITICAL CAPACITIES TO  
DEVELOP AND OPERATE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS.  
EVEN IF WE DID, IT WOULDN'T BE A GOOD  
IDEA. WHO WANTS THE EDUCATION OF OUR  
CHILDREN TO FLOURISH OR WANE DEPENDENT  
UPON WHETHER CORPORATE PROFITS ARE RISING  
OR FALLING? OR WHETHER A CERTAIN PRODUCT  
OR SERVICE BECOMES A MAJOR SUCCESS?

I CERTAINLY DON'T.

IT WAS DIFFICULT ENOUGH JUST LEARNING THE  
AREAS IN WHICH WE COULD BE EFFECTIVE AND  
THEN FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN THOSE DIRECTIONS.



**PEF**

**AT THIS POINT, A QUESTION MUST BE WORKING  
ITS WAY INTO YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS, A QUESTION  
SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING: IF THE PRIVATE  
SECTOR ROLE IS DEVELOPING SO NICELY, AND  
  
IF THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS SUCH A  
WELL-DEVELOPED SENSE OF ITS LIMITS AND  
CAPABILITIES, WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE  
WRONG?**

**LET ME TELL YOU.**

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## PEF

IN AN ORGANIZED ACTIVITY, PARTICULARLY ONE WHICH IS NEW AND INNOVATIVE AND CREATES A LOT OF EXCITEMENT AND PUBLICITY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS, THERE COMES A POINT WHEN YOU START TO LOSE INTEREST. YESTERDAY'S INNOVATION BECOMES TODAY'S ROUTINE. YOU GET TIRED AND BORED. NOBODY IS PAYING MUCH ATTENTION ANYMORE. You DON'T HEAR THE PRAISE YOU ONCE DID. THE SUPPORT SYSTEM THAT KEPT YOU GOING STARTS TO FALL AWAY. YOUR MOTIVATION IS GONE. INERTIA BEGINS TO SET IN.

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YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. IT'S CALLED SLIPPING  
INTO A RUT. EVERY INDIVIDUAL AND EVERY  
ORGANIZATION GOES THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE.

I THINK THERE ARE SOME EARLY WARNING SIGNS  
THAT THIS IS BEGINNING TO HAPPEN TO THE  
AMERICAN CORPORATION WITH RESPECT TO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION.

THE MORE I TALK WITH BUSINESS COLLEAGUES ABOUT VARIOUS PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMS, THE MORE IT SEEMS THAT THE AMERICAN CORPORATION IS TURNING INWARD. IT'S AS IF THEY ARE SAYING: WE DID OUR JOB FOR FIVE YEARS. Now LEAVE US ALONE SO WE CAN GET BACK TO GIVING OUR BUSINESS ALL OUR ATTENTION.

A SECOND SOURCE OF CONCERN IS THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN BUSINESS. IN A VERY BASIC SENSE, IT NO LONGER IS OPERATING AS IT USED TO.

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**PEF**

WHEN CORPORATIONS BECAME INVOLVED IN  
PUBLIC EDUCATION, THEY DID SO LARGELY  
BECAUSE THEY SENSED THEY HAD SOME IMPORTANT  
TIES TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES, TIES WORTH  
BUILDING, TIES WORTH MAINTAINING. AFTER  
ALL, THESE WERE THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY  
WERE LOCATED AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WERE  
AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN THE QUALITY OF  
COMMUNITY WELL-BEING.

THAT BOND PROVIDED THE GLUE AND RATIONAL  
FOR AN AWFUL LOT OF CORPORATE ACTIVITY IN  
PUBLIC EDUCATION.

THE GROWTH OF CONGLOMERATES, MERGERS,  
ACQUISITIONS AND ABSENTEE OWNERSHIP,  
HOWEVER, ARE MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO  
SUSTAIN MANY TIES BETWEEN CORPORATE  
AMERICA AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

**PEF** \_\_\_\_\_

CONVINCING INDUSTRY THAT ITS OWN  
SELF-INTEREST LIES IN WELL-EDUCATED KIDS  
WHO LIVE IN ITS OWN BACK YARD IS A MUCH  
TOUGHER SELL WHEN THE CORPORATE  
HEADQUARTERS IS 1,000 MILES AWAY AND THE  
VISION OF THE FUTURE IS INCREASINGLY SEEN  
IN **90** DAY CYCLES. IT'S ALSO MORE  
DIFFICULT TO BUILD LASTING EMPLOYEE  
INTEREST WHEN EMPLOYEES ARE TRANSFERRED  
AND REASSIGNED ON A REGULAR BASIS.

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PEF

I MENTION THESE TWO PROBLEMS -- THE FIVE-YEAR SLUMP AND THE IMPACT OF CHANGING CORPORATE PROFILES ON COMMUNITY TIES -NOT BECAUSE I BELIEVE PUBLIC EDUCATION IS ABOUT TO IMMINENTLY LOSE THE PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT IT HAS WORKED SO HARD TO MAINTAIN, OR BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR WANTS OUT.



**I MENTION THEM BECAUSE WE NEED TO  
UNDERSTAND, AS CLEARLY AND SPECIFICALLY AS  
POSSIBLE, THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN  
WHICH WE ARE WORKING AND THE CHANGES THAT  
ARE OCCURRING WITHIN THAT ENVIRONMENT.  
OTHERWISE, WE WILL BE ACTING ON A SET OF  
ASSUMPTIONS THAT MAY NOT EVEN EXIST OR  
WHICH, IF THEY DO, MAY BE IRRELEVANT.**

**THE SUPPORT GENERATED DURING THE LAST  
SEVERAL YEARS WILL NOT DISAPPEAR OR  
DISSIPATE EASILY.**

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BUT THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM WE FACE. OUR PROBLEM IS THAT WE NEED TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE TIES BETWEEN BUSINESS AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. AND IN ORDER TO DO THIS, THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY CANNOT TAKE TOO MUCH FOR GRANTED.

YESTERDAY'S CORPORATE CONCERN IS NOT AN AUTOMATIC GUARANTEE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL'S PLACE ON TOMORROW'S CORPORATE AGENDA.

THE DAYS WHEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD COME TO THE SCHOOLS ARE PRETTY MUCH OVER. NOW THE SCHOOLS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS MAY HAVE TO SEEK OUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

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## **PEF**

**WE WILL HAVE TO PERSUASIVELY DOCUMENT AND  
DEMONSTRATE THAT BUSINESS HAS A DIRECT  
STAKE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.**

**WE WILL HAVE TO DESCRIBE THE WAYS IN WHICH  
OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE WILL BE DETERMINED BY  
WHAT HAPPENS IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

**WE HAVE TO CONVINCING BUSINESS THAT THIS IS  
ONE ISSUE IN WHICH IT CANNOT AFFORD TO BE  
UNINVOLVED.**

AND WE WILL HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS.

IF WE WANT BUSINESS TO STAY INVOLVED -  
INDEED IF WE WANT TO KEEP PUBLIC  
SUPPORT

FOR THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM MOVEMENT -  
THEN WE WILL HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE  
HAVE A PRODUCT WORTH INVESTING IN. MANY  
BUSINESSMEN, INDEED MANY CITIZENS,  
STILL CLING TO AN OUTMODED VIEW OF  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS A TIRED OLD  
INSTITUTION THAT HASN'T CHANGED FOR  
25 YEARS AND WON'T CHANGE FOR AT LEAST  
ANOTHER 25.

THIS IS THE WRONG TIME FOR SCHOOL  
BUREAUCRACIES TO HUNKER DOWN, TO RESIST  
CHANGE. CHANGE IS OPPORTUNITY, AND THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE WON'T LAST FOREVER.  
THE FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT CHANGES IN THE  
WAY OUR SCHOOLS ARE MANAGED COULD STALL  
THE EDUCATION REFORM MOVEMENT AND  
ULTIMATELY DOOM IT. AND CYCLES OF  
INTEREST ARE SUCH THAT IT WILL BE VERY  
DIFFICULT TO RENEW INTEREST IN PUBLIC  
EDUCATION FOR A LONG TIME AFTERWARDS.

**I AM NOT PREDICTING DOOM AND GLOOM; I AM ONLY EXPRESSING A HEALTHY REMINDER OF THE STAKES THAT ARE INVOLVED. IN FACT, FOR THE MOST PART, I REMAIN PLEASANTLY UPBEAT ABOUT THE PERSISTENCE, BREADTH AND GROWING SOPHISTICATION OF THE EDUCATION REFORM MOVEMENT.**

**THE LATEST MANIFESTATION OF MY OPTIMISM IS THE REPORT ISSUED EARLIER THIS MONTH BY THE COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN.**

I WANT TO READ JUST ONE PARAGRAPH FROM  
THAT REPORT TO YOU.

"THIS NATION," THE CED REPORT SAYS,  
"CANNOT CONTINUE TO COMPETE AND PROSPER IN  
THE GLOBAL ARENA WHEN MORE THAN ONE-FIFTH  
OF OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY AND A  
THIRD GROW UP IN IGNORANCE. THE NATION  
CAN ILL AFFORD SUCH AN EGREGIOUS WASTE OF  
HUMAN RESOURCES. ALLOWING THIS TO CONTINUE  
WILL NOT ONLY IMPOVERISH THESE CHILDREN,  
IT WILL IMPOVERISH OUR NATION -- CULTURALLY,  
POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY."

PEF

THIS IS A REMARKABLE REPORT, BOTH BECAUSE  
OF THE MESSAGE AND BECAUSE OF THE MESSENGER.  
IT RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF VIEWING  
EDUCATION NOT AS AN ISOLATED PHENOMENON,  
BUT AS A PROCESS THAT INTEGRATES AND  
BUILDS UPON ALL WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT  
HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. AND IN  
CALLING ONCE AGAIN FOR THE BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY TO BECOME A "DRIVING FORCE" FOR  
THE CHANGES IT RECOMMENDS, THE CED  
REAFFIRMS ITS EARLIER POSITION THAT THE  
ECONOMIC FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR  
NATION DEMANDS THAT BUSINESS BECOME  
INVOLVED IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.

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PEF

THAT MIGHT NOT BE NOTEWORTHY IF IT CAME  
FROM A MORE LIBERAL STUDY GROUP.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY WHEN IT COMES FROM AN  
ORGANIZATION WHOSE 225-MEMBER BOARD IS  
COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES.

MARCHING ORDERS ABOUT THE OVERRIDING  
IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION HAVE THUS  
PENETRATED TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF  
CORPORATE AMERICA.

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OUR JOB IS TO ASSURE THAT THIS CRITICAL MESSAGE IS  
DISSEMINATED AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE AND THAT ITS  
RECOMMENDATIONS DON'T JUST SET ON THE SHELF.

IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT. ALL IT IS GOING TO  
TAKE IS A LIFETIME OF WORK.

THANK YOU.