

SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL

PARTNERSHIP

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

REMARKS BY

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THANK YOU, SHEL!

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT A FIRST RATE SYSTEM
OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IS EVERY BIT AS
IMPORTANT TO OUR FUTURE AS OUR NATIONAL
DEFENSE SYSTEMS,

IN MY JUDGEMENT, THERE IS NO MORE VALUABLE
DOWN PAYMENT THAT WE CAN MAKE IN OUR FUTURE
THAN TO INVEST IN EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN
AMERICA'S PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS. IT IS OF UNQUESTIONABLE VALUE.

AND YET, WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A DILEMMA.
MAJOR NATIONAL REPORTS REVEAL THAT THE
STANDARDS OF EDUCATION IN OUR PUBLIC
SCHOOLS ARE IN SERIOUS CONDITION. AT THE
SAME TIME, THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS SUPPORTED
CUTBACKS IN EDUCATIONAL FUNDING AND SET
SIGNIFICANT BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS.

THE RESULT? PUBLIC EDUCATION IS FACED WITH
AN OVERWHELMING OBSTACLE TO THE REVERSAL OF
DECLINING ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, PERSISTENTLY
HIGH DROPOUT AND TRUANCY RATES, LOW MORALE
AMONG EDUCATORS AND DISINTERESTED
COMMUNITIES WHICH ARE RELUCTANT TO IDENTIFY
THEMSELVES AND THEIR FUTURE HOPES WITH THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

I AM DISMAYED BY THIS TURN OF EVENTS.

IS UNHEALTHY FOR OUR COUNTRY.

INCREASINGLY, THE AMERICAN BUSINESS
COMMUNITY IS REALIZING THE VESTED INTEREST
WE SHARE IN THE QUALITY OF OUR SYSTEM OF
PUBLIC EDUCATION, AMERICAN BUSINESS CAN
AND SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN AND SUPPORT
EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BUT WE MUST CAREFULLY DEFINE ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES. BUSINESS IS NOT
GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
SHOULD NOT MEAN PRIVATE SECTOR SUBSTITUTION
FOR PUBLIC SECTOR RESPONSIBILITY.

BUSINESS CAN AND SHOULD SUPPORT GOVERNMENT
BY CONTRIBUTING FINANCIAL LEVERAGE, BUT NOT
BY ASSUMING THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES
OF GOVERNMENT NOR THE EDUCATIONAL
RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATORS. WHEN WE CAN
CRAFT AN APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR BUSINESS
PARTICIPATION, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD PURSUE IT
WITH DEDICATION AND WITH VIGOR,

THAT IS WHY I AM SO DELIGHTED TO BE HERE
THIS MORNING FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

WE AT AMERICAN CAN BELIEVE WE HAVE HELPED
DEVELOP AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM FOR PRIVATE
SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.
WITH THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIP, WE ARE FUNDING A STRUCTURE-A
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND
VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL SECTORS--SO THAT THE
PROCESS OF PARTNERSHIP CAN GET STARTED.
ASSUMING THE STRUCTURE WORKS, WE WILL WANT
TO SUPPORT ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

IN THE PAST, THE AMERICAN CAN COMPANY,
THROUGH OUR FOUNDATION, HAS MADE

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL
EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS. THE SUNY PURCHASE
WESTCHESTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IS
MARKEDLY DIFFERENT. THROUGH THIS PROGRAM AS
WELL AS THROUGH OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH MARTIN
LUTHER KING HIGH SCHOOL IN NEW YORK CITY
WE ARE MOVING OUT OF THE TRADITIONAL
CORPORATE ROLE OF AD HOC SUPPORT OF
EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS AND HAVE COMMITTED
OURSELVES TO A MAJOR LEADERSHIP ROLE IN
STIMULATING A PROCESS OF COORDINATION AMONG
ALL THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR BETTER EDUCATION.

THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IS A PARTNERSHIP OF
UNCOMMON CHARACTERISTICS. IT IS A
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN A STATE GOVERNMENT AND
A PRIVATE CORPORATION; A PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN A STATE UNIVERSITY AND MUNICIPAL
SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND; IT IS A PARTNERSHIP
AMONG THE ELEVEN HETEROGENEOUS
PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS THEMSELVES.
MOST IMPORTANT, THIS IS A PARTNERSHIP OF
RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH WHICH PROJECTS WILL
CONTINUOUSLY BE EXPLORED AND DEVELOPED IN A
SYSTEMATIC WAY.

THE APPROACH WE ARE TAKING THROUGH THIS
PARTNERSHIP SHOULD BE BOTH EFFICIENT AND
AFFORDABLE. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS IS AN
AMBITIOUS EFFORT. IF THIS PROGRAM
WORKS AND WE THINK IT WILL IT WILL BRING
SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS TO WESTCHESTER
COUNTY. MOREOVER, BECAUSE THIS EFFORT IS
RATHER UNIQUE, ITS SUCCESS WILL MAKE IT A
MODEL FOR REPLICATION BOTH THROUGHOUT THE
NEW YORK STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AS WELL AS
FOR OTHER STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
NATIONWIDE,

AMERICAN CAN IS PLEASED TO PLAY A PROMINENT
ROLE IN THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM, INDEED, WE SEE IT AS
A MILESTONE FOR OUR FOUNDATION, AND WE
EXPECT TO POINT WITH PRIDE TO THE
ACCOMPLISHMENTS THE PROGRAM WILL ATTAIN
OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

THANK YOU.

