

TURNING POINTS
PREPARING AMERICAN YOUTH
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

PRESENTED TO:
CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

REMARKS BY:

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WESTIN HOTEL
WASHINGTON, D.C,
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TURNING

THANK YOU, DAVID,

MY FOCUS IN EDUCATION THE LAST 10 YEARS HAS BEEN ON URBAN CHILDREN AT RISK AND BECAUSE OF THAT I HAVE AN APOCALYPTIC VISION OF THE FUTURE, DISTURBING FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL CHILDREN "AT RISK" HAVE BEEN MARSHALLED TIME AND AGAIN, HERE IS "A DAY IN THE LIVES OF AMERICAN CHILDREN," PRESENTED BY THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND:

1,868 TEENS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

988 AMERICAN CHILDREN ARE ABUSED

2,989 CHILDREN SEE THEIR PARENTS DIVORCED

1,099 TEENAGERS HAVE ABORTIONS

1,287 TEENAGERS GIVE BIRTH

TURNING

110 BABIES DIE BEFORE THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY

27 CHILDREN DIE BECAUSE OF POVERTY

5 SCHOOL-AGE YOUTHS ARE MURDERED

5 TEENS COMMIT SUICIDE

THE FACTS ARE NOT NEW BUT OUR INCREASING
RECOGNITION IS NEW, WE ARE BEGINNING TO ARRIVE AT A
MORE REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY
LARGE NUMBERS OF CHILDREN, WE ARE PUTTING ASIDE THE
TRADITIONAL COMPARTIMENTALIZED VIEW THAT LOOKS AT
EDUCATION AS ONE PROBLEM, HEALTH AS ANOTHER, FAMILY
INCOME AS A THIRD,

TURNING

IN ITS PLACE, WE ARE BEGINNING TO ADOPT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE VIEW THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE WAYS EDUCATION, HEALTH, NUTRITION, HOUSING, FAMILY INCOME, SOCIAL SUPPORTS AND EVEN POLITICAL DECISIONS ALL INTERACT TO FORM THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE AND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM,

MANY COMMUNITY LEADERS INCLUDING THOSE IN BUSINESS ARE BEGINNING TO SPEAK OUT IN A POWERFUL WAY -- YES, OF COURSE, ON TOPICS OF EDUCATION REFORM SUCH AS CURRICULUM CHANGES, TEACHER COMPENSATION, SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT, SCHOOL CHOICE -- BUT ALSO ON PRENATAL CARE, EXPANSION OF W.I.C. AND HEADSTART, (TWO ENORMOUSLY SUCCESSFUL BUT UNDERFUNDED PROGRAMS), QUALITY DAY CARE.

TURNING

WHILE MORAL, ETHICAL AND EQUITY ISSUES ARE PARAMOUNT, IT IS SURVIVAL INSTINCTS THAT ARE PRESENTLY GALVANIZING THE BUSINESS WORLD, IT IS CLEAR THAT REGARDLESS OF TECHNOLOGY, WE ARE DOOMED AS A WORLD POWER UNLESS WE DO A BETTER JOB WITH OUR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, IT IS RIDICULOUS TO TALK ABOUT COMPETING ECONOMICALLY WITH JAPAN AND GERMANY IF OVER 25% OF OUR WORK FORCE DOES NOT EVEN HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION WHICH AT BEST IS INADEQUATE,

BUSINESS MEN CAN AND SHOULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE CHANGE PROCESS UNDERWAY, AS A MATTER OF FACT, I KNOW OF NO EFFECTIVE REFORM MOVEMENT THAT DOES NOT INVOLVE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN A MAJOR WAY.

TURNING

AND I THINK THE REASONS ARE CLEAR, LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE A SOURCE OF JOBS, OF MONEY, OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS, OF LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS AND OF ADVOCATING POWER, LET ME STRESS PARTICULARLY THE ADVOCATING POWER, TODAY IT IS IRONIC BUT TRUE THAT BUSINESS TESTIMONY ON EDUCATION IN MANY CASES CARRIES MORE WEIGHT THAN DOES TESTIMONY OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS -- FOLKLORE HAS IT THAT BUSINESS PEOPLE ARE MORE OBJECTIVE AND TOUGHER ON ISSUES THAT INCREASE SPENDING AND THEREFORE TAXES,

TURNING

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL,
BUSINESS SUPPORT IN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS FOR MORE
FUNDS FOR DISADVANTAGED SCHOOL DISTRICTS HELPED TO
PRODUCE AN INCREASE AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF SLOW
DECLINE,

RECENTLY A VISIT BY CORPORATE LEADERS TO
COMMITTEE HEADS WITH IMPACT ON EDUCATION AND HEALTH
ISSUES FOCUSED ON NEED FOR DRAMATIC INCREASES IN
HEADSTART FUNDS AND FURTHER INCREASES IN CHAPTER 1
AND SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN RAISING FUNDING
LEVEL.

TURNING

BUSINESS IS BECOMING MORE
REALISTIC ABOUT FUNDING, RECENTLY A REPRESENTATIVE
OF C.E.D. WHICH HAS AMONG ITS MEMBERS OVER 200
C.E.O.'S OF AMERICAS' LARGEST CORPORATIONS, TESTIFIED
BEFORE THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE IN FAVOR OF
SHARP INCREASES IN W.I.C., HEADSTART, DAY CARE AND
SUPPORTED INCREASED TAXES NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT.

AT THE STATE LEVEL, THERE ARE MANY MORE
OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW YORK STATE, FOR EXAMPLE
BUSINESSMEN HAVE HELPED INCREASE THE % OF THE STATE
BUDGET GOING TO EDUCATION, HELPED IN PASSAGE OF
LEGISLATION FOR NEW SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY, HELPED
PRESS FOR LEGISLATION TO REFORM LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS,
AND I AM SURE THIS KIND OF SUPPORT HAS EXISTED IN
ALMOST EVERY ONE OF OUR 50 STATES,

TURNING

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, BUSINESS GROUPS ARE PRESSING MAYORS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS FOR CHANGES WHICH WILL PRODUCE EDUCATED GRADUATES OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

I AGREE WITH THE REPORT THAT BUSINESS' KEY ROLE IS AS A POWERFUL ADVOCATE FOR SUPPORT OF ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE FINANCING FOR THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION REFORM BUT IT IS THROUGH ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT WITH DIRECT SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS THAT PASSIONATE AND ACTIVISTS ADVOCATES ARE DEVELOPED, HERE ARE FEW EXAMPLES OF THINGS UNDERWAY.

TURNING POINTS

- 0 SCHOOL BOARDS: THERE IS A REVIVING INTEREST IN SCHOOL BOARDS. AN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL INSTITUTION THAT NEEDS AN ENORMOUS BOOST FROM TALENTED MEMBERS – BUSINESS LEADERS USED TO CONSTITUTE 90%, NOW 10%, DOUBLY IMPORTANT AS MOVE TOWARDS COMMUNITY BOARDS.
- 0 JOIN-A-SCHOOL PROGRAMS: AN IDEAL WAY TO PUT A TOE IN THE WATER FOR THOSE INVOLVED, I DO NOT SEE THIS PROGRAM AS A PALLIATIVE. IT IS AN EYE-OPENING, HAIR-RAISING EXPERIENCE WHICH CHANGES PARTICIPANTS FOREVER, AS ONE TEACHER SAID "YOU'VE OPENED ADOLESCENTS EYES TO OPTIONS THEY DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED, AND THE FACT THAT YOU CARE, HAS GIVEN ENORMOUS LIFE TO EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL."

TURNING POINTS

0 COMMUNITY WIDE BUSINESS/SCHOOL

PARTNERSHIPS: THE CALIFORNIA BUSINESS

ROUND TABLE, THE BOSTON COMPACT, SCHOOL AND

BUSINESS ALLIANCE OF N.Y., DADE COUNTY'S

SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, THE

ROCHESTER N.Y. PROGRAM AND MANY, MANY

OTHERS,

0 BUSINESS GROUPS ACTIVE IN EDUCATION:

NATIONWIDE -- NATIONAL COUNCIL ON LITERACY,

C.E.D., NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS,

LOCALLY -- ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE, NYC

PARTNERSHIP AND MANY OTHERS,

TURNING POINTS

0 INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN THE I HAVE

A DREAM PROGRAM: A STOP GAP MEASURE BUT A

GOOD FINGER IN THE DIKE UNTIL MAJOR
EDUCATION REFORMS ARE IN PLACE, 125

SPONSORS IN 24 CITIES (6500 KIDS). A
POWERFUL & COSTLY MENTORING PROGRAM WHICH

FOLLOWS 40 TO 60) KIDS FROM 6TH GRADE
THROUGH GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND
REWARDS WITH FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION,

0 COUNTLESS LITERACY & NUMERACY PROGRAMS:

BIG COMPANIES -- FORD, XEROX AND MANY
OTHERS -- ARE INTO THIS, IT'S ANOTHER
ESSENTIAL REMEDIAL ACTIVITY THAT WILL HAVE
TO BE CONTINUED FOR AT LEAST A GENERATION.

TURNING POINTS

- 0 MENTORING: MORE AND MORE EMPLOYEES ARE

GETTING INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY MENTORING
PROGRAMS INCLUDING PARENTING EDUCATION,
BOTH KIDS AND PARENTS NEED A STRONG SUPPORT
NETWORK,

- 0 MANY BUSINESSES ARE ENCOURAGING TEACHING AS

A SECOND CAREER FOR AMONG OTHERS -- EARLY
RETIREES,

TURNING POINTS

BUT HAVING TALKED A LITTLE ABOUT HOW MUCH BUSINESS IS INVOLVED BOTH IN POLICY AND PROGRAM AREAS, I AM LEFT WITH MAJOR CONCERNS:

- 1, INCREMENTALISM WON'T DO IT,
- 2, MULTIPLICITY OF EFFORTS AND LEVELS,
FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL TEND TO DILUTE,
- 3, DO WE HAVE STAYING POWER FOR A MASSIVE
EFFECT THAT MUST CONTINUE FOR 20 YEARS IN
ORDER TO PRODUCE EDUCATED GRADUATES FROM
OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

TURNING POINTS

4, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT GRADUATES OF THE LAST 20 YEARS? BY THE END OF OUR REFORM PROCESS, WE WILL HAVE 40 YEARS OF SEMI-EDUCATED PEOPLE,

5, HOW CAN WE BROADEN OUR BASE OF SUPPORT,

WE HERE TODAY ARE THE SAME ONES WHO HAVE ATTENDED SIMILAR CONFERENCES OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS. ALL I DO KNOW IS THAT WE MUST REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS AND OUR SUPPORTERS -- WE CAN NEVER AFFORD TO ADMIT EVEN PARTIAL DEFEAT OR WE ARE SURELY FINISHED AS A NATION,

TURNING POINTS