"The Governors are ready to provide the leadership needed to get results on the hard issues that confront the better schools movement. We are ready to lead the second wave of reform in American public education."

Lamar Alexander
Governor of Tennessee
Chairman, National Governors’ Association

It’s *Time for Results: The Governors’ 1991 Report on Education*, a conversation among Governors with the rest of the world welcome to listen in.

It asks seven of the toughest questions that can be asked about education in the U.S.A., questions that *must* be answered if there are to be better schools. It sets up ways to keep up with what states do with the answers to these questions for the next five years, until 1991.

Better schools mean better jobs. Unless states face these questions, Americans won’t keep our high standard of living. To meet stiff competition from workers in the rest of the world, we must educate ourselves and our children as we never have before.

- Why not pay teachers more for teaching well?
- What can be done to attract, train, and reward excellent school leaders?
- Why not let parents choose the schools their children attend?
- Aren’t there ways to help poor children with weak preparation succeed in school?
- Why are expensive school buildings closed half the year when children are behind in their studies and many classrooms are overcrowded?
- Why shouldn’t schools use the newest technologies for learning?
- How much are college students really learning?
At our Idaho meeting in August 1985, the Governors divided into seven task forces, one for each question. For the past twelve months, Governors have led hearings around the country. We have talked with hundreds of parents, students, decisionmakers, and scholars. More than a thousand people sent in written suggestions and testimony. Individuals and educational groups all participated.

You'll find a summary of each of the seven task force reports—written by its chairman—beginning on page 8. For more information, there is a detailed report from each task force to help Governors find what has or hasn't worked in each area. And for still more, separate volumes of supporting works are available for each task force.

The Governors' advice doesn't beat around the bush. Here are some of the recommendations that attracted my attention:

- Now is the time to work out a fair, affordable Career Ladder salary system that recognizes real differences in function, competence, and performance of teachers.
- States should create leadership programs for school leaders.
- Parents should have more choice in the public schools their children attend.
- The nation—and the states and school districts—need better report cards about results, about what students know and can do.
- School districts and schools that don't make the grade should be declared bankrupt, taken over by the state and reorganized.
- It makes no sense to keep closed half a year the school buildings in which America has invested a quarter of a trillion dollars while we are undereducated and overcrowded.
- States should work with four- and five-year-olds from poor families to help them get ready for school and to decrease the chances that they will drop out later.
- Better use of technologies through proper planning and training for use of videodiscs, computers, and robotics is an important way to give teachers more time to teach.
- States should insist that colleges assess what students actually learn while in college.

These are only some of the most important ideas.

Yes, there was. To sum it up: the Governors are ready for some old-fashioned horse-trading. We'll regulate less, if schools and school districts will produce better results.

How Did You Find the Answers?

What Are the Answers?

But Was There No Common Thread?
Our vision of education reform should include the vehicle we make those policy decisions. If we first implement choice, true choice in public schools, we unlock the values of competition in the education place. Schools that compete for students, teachers, and dollars will be forced to make those changes that allow them to succeed. We will, in fact, set the pace, forcing Governors and other policymakers down the road. Choice, and the ensuing competition it will produce, is the force to ensure meaningful reform in education into the 1990s. If our children are to be competitive in the international marketplace, and we must be competitive in the international marketplace, then we must be competitive here as well. While there are many questions to answer, choice in public schools is the deregulatory move needed to make schools more responsive.

As William Shakespeare said in Hamlet, "We may not, as persons do, carve for himself, for on his choice depends the safety of the whole state."

In the long run, if we dare to take risks we will find that we have excellence. Instead of being defeated by the massive size and the overwhelming ethnic diversity of our public school systems, we will have turned them into generators of economic productivity and social creativity. The question is, do we dare try?

GOVERNORS’ ACTION AGENDA

Governors should take the lead in establishing a new social compact with educators, parents, community members, and the public. This compact will feature:

- Clear, measurable goals for students and schools established by the state's leadership.
- Reduced state requirements that limit the ways in which local communities and individual schools help their students achieve the expected curriculum.
- Encouragement and assistance from the state for schools and districts wishing to create specialized programs.
- Opportunities for families to select from among public schools.
- Rewards for schools and districts where students are making progress toward state-established goals.
- Intervention by the state in districts and schools where there is a failure to make progress over time.

Governors should talk with citizens about the new social compact being proposed. Our form of government has been adaptable to the needs of our society, and local control of education is one of America's highly venerated and valued traditions. This report implicitly and explicitly supports this rich American approach to governance. Clearly, the success of the force's recommendations hinges on how well we sort out the new elements and responsibilities between the state and local levels of government and responsibility for education. We need to create forums that focus on these new roles and responsibilities. Governors need to define the nature of state concerns and issues, and citizens and educators alike need to be active participants in the discussion. Governors can also explain how expanded choice, and parent involvement fit into the new social compact.
use to be made of the idea of choice among schools has become

For the last decade, the idea of choice among schools has become

weaned with the question of providing funds to private and parochial

choice among schools: choice that is not constrained by the drawing of lines on a map

But these task force recommendations deal only with choice among

Schools that is based on the presumption that public education tax dollars belong

We also conclude that greater parent involvement in schools is vital to

We believe that schools must reach out to parents, making them feel welcome and showing them how to extend and enrich

The most effective schools are those in which everyone works together for clear, specified, and

And what is appropriate and urgent for some educators and families will be of less interest to other families and educators. Finally, we

We urge parents to recognize that a child’s education cannot be exclusively

The job of the school’s responsibility. No matter how superior a teacher is, children will

The school has reached their potential unless there is cooperation between the home and

Recommendations

II. Provide technical assistance to school districts and universities by encouraging instruction in effective parent-involvement techniques to be included in preservice and recertification training programs of all teachers and administrators.

Increased parental involvement involves development of specific skills. Districts and universities should encourage parents to learn how to hold parent conferences, how to show parents ways they can reinforce and extend classroom lessons, and how to involve parents in advisory and school site management committees. The state education departments should work closely with districts, intermediate units, and professional and community organizations, such as the PTA and Home and School Institute, to help develop and refine training.

II. Create the climate for greater parent involvement.

Carefully planned activities can help draw attention to parent-involvement programs that deserve wider recognition. They also will bring together people who should be working more closely together. These efforts could include:

- Develop a program to recognize and reward outstanding parent involvement programs. The state department should work with professional organizations of teachers, administrators, and school board members to share information about award-winning programs.

- Create a statewide task force on parent and community involvement to identify outstanding programs and make recommendations to policymakers, educators, business people, and community groups.

- Hold a yearly conference on parent and community involvement in education, and invite educators, parents, community groups, and business people to attend. The Governor should take the lead, and plan the meeting with the chief state school officer. The statewide task force mentioned above should make presentations.
- Make public service announcements that encourage parents and community members to become more involved in working with public schools. The Governor should appear in some of these announcements, along with educators and community members who have designed award-winning programs.

3. Provide incentives to school districts.

This can be done in a variety of ways, including demonstration grants programs, and by providing funds to school districts to establish cooperative programs.

It is not enough to simply encourage or require educators and parents to make decisions together. Most educators and parents have not received any training in shared decision-making. Old patterns must be changed, new patterns developed. States can help by providing assistance to school districts that are willing to experiment and that will share their experiences with others. A competitive demonstration grant program could be offered to districts that are willing to experiment with school-site management programs. All school districts in the state should be eligible for these grants, which will cover planning and training activities.

Some small, rural districts have difficulty offering the kind of courses and programs that are necessary to challenge and stimulate some of their students. States can help by providing funds to school districts to establish cooperative programs in programs that are being requested by students but that individual districts have difficulty offering. This can include advanced courses in science, mathematics, and world language, along with vocational courses and alternative programs to reduce dropouts.

4. Expand opportunities for students by adopting legislation permitting families to select from among kindergarten to twelfth grade public schools in the state. High school students should be able to attend accredited public postsecondary degree-granting institutions during their junior and senior years.

Carefully designed programs permitting choice among public schools can increase student achievement, educator morale, and parental satisfaction. Furthermore, providing choice among public schools is another way to maintain accountability, and can encourage school districts to work more closely together. To be effective, choice plans must incorporate certain features. The state does have an interest in the quality of education and must develop certain guidelines about the conditions under which learning opportunities are offered. We select to balance opportunity and restrictions for educators and families.

While no single plan is appropriate for all states, all legislation should include certain features:

- Schools should not be permitted to discriminate on the basis of religion.
- Schools must agree to respect due-process guarantees in the discipline of students and faculty, including following state law about the issuance of reprimand, suspension, and expulsion of students.
Schools must test students and periodically report their progress to parents.

Schools must agree to keep all financial records open to inspection by the state department of education and use uniform accounting principles.

Schools must agree to report all pupils' attendance to the state.

Participating schools must agree to accept the funds generated by state and local taxes as the full cost of educating students and may not charge additional funds.

State and locally generated tax funds should follow the students.

Movement of students in and out of school districts should be permitted as long as it does not have a negative impact on court or legislatively mandated desegregation/integration plans.

School districts enrolling fewer than 2,000 students should be permitted to count for purposes of state reimbursement the net number of students transferring to other districts (if any) for the first two years of the program.

Legislation should permit students to choose from schools in their own district, in their own or adjacent districts, or any district within the state as long as racial balance guidelines described above are followed.

Districts may decide whether they have room to admit nonresident students, and if so, how many and at what grade level. However, they should not be allowed to use any form of admission test for nonresident students, unless the students are attempting to enroll in a district program that does have such an examination.

States should make it easier for teachers to choose among schools and districts by encouraging school boards to honor all of an educator's past experience on the salary schedule and giving full credit for past experience in pension programs.

States should work for greater reciprocity in teacher certification, so experienced teachers will find it easier to move from one state to another.

The state department of education's role should be to:

- Determine dates by which schools and school districts announce whether and how many openings they have for the following year, and the date by which families should indicate a preference for moving from one school to another.
- Develop methods of providing information and counseling to families wishing to consider a transfer for their children.
- Develop guidelines permitting teachers who wish to transfer from one district to another to receive credit in seniority systems, salary schedules, and pension programs for all their previous teaching or administrative experience.
- Administer a fund established by the legislature to support transportation costs for students.
- Establish a monitoring and assessment function so programs can be evaluated and modified as directed by the state department of education. Such evaluations would at a minimum examine the effect of plans on student achievement and attitudes, programs available in districts, rate of cooperation and consolidation among various districts, parental involvement and attitudes, racial balance, and educator attitudes and morale.

“E”educational excellence for our students can best be achieved when we have total involvement of teachers, students, administrators, and parents to establish and cultivate a dialogue among all parties in setting the goals for our schools.”

Edward D. DiPrete
Governor of Rhode Island
• Administer a program to provide planning and training funds to schools that are willing to establish cooperative programs from which families may choose, or that are willing to accept students from low-income groups, or students who have not succeeded in previous schools.

• Develop financial procedures by which students who move from one district to another bring the state and locally generated funds with them.

**HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCEEDING?**

* Policymakers should ask the following questions to determine whether they are succeeding:

1. What percentage of schools have been recognized with specific identities and missions?
2. What percentage of parents in the state are able to choose among public schools?
3. What percentage of teachers are able to select from different kinds of programs in which they will teach?
4. What percentage of school districts have formed new cooperative relationships to pool resources and offer a greater diversity of programs?
5. What percentage of school districts have established programs to help teachers work more closely with parents?
6. What percentage of increase or decrease in student achievement and performance scores has occurred after choice programs were implemented?
7. What changes in graduation and attendance rates occurred after choice programs were implemented?

**OVERCOMING OBSTACLES**

There is a lack of consensus about appropriate roles of parents and educators. Some, but certainly not all, educators believe they are the professionals and parents should defer to their judgments. Some educators have had bad experiences with parents. They have encountered parents who would not support disciplinary procedures, or who did not keep commitments to help. For that there is no excuse. However, these attitudes can lead to cynicism and lack of interest in working on new parent-involvement programs. Such attitudes can discourage parents from working closely with the school or becoming more involved in helping determine priorities for their children's schools.

Governors can help overcome these attitudes by using public service announcements and other media to challenge parents to become more involved in their children’s education; honoring parents who become involved in their children’s schools and encouraging schools to recognize such parents and reminding parents that regardless of which school they select, they all have critical responsibilities.
Governors also can recognize and reward educators who reach out to parents and encourage them to be involved in their children’s education; name an advisory commission of parents and teachers to identify and expand appropriate roles and recommend to the Governor a model for implementation; and ask the state board of education to expand its liaison role between parents and teachers.

Another obstacle may be educators who oppose allowing parents to choose among public schools because they believe that families cannot make important choices among schools; transportation will be impossible or extremely costly to work out; school boards, not parents, should have the right to determine what options families have; or funds should not follow students to other districts or to postsecondary institutions unless school boards approve. They also may think that public school choice is a “foot in the door” for plans to provide funds to private and parochial schools, will make planning more difficult, or will hurt very small school districts.

Governors can help overcome such obstacles by stating often and publicly support for public education; being willing and prepared to make adjustments in choice legislation, including school finance; establishing fairly rigid initial parameters for choice with relation to transportation, demographics, and other mechanical impediments; ensuring the drafting of well-constructed choice programs; working closely with educators and parents to develop details and guidelines of programs; including some provisions in choice programs to cushion the impact on small school districts; visiting and calling attention to choice programs that are working well; developing alliances with parent, citizen, business, and other groups that support such programs; and providing funds to encourage and reward school districts and postsecondary institutions that work together.

‘‘W’’e’re gaining ground in America today. But . . . we still have a long way to go. We are at this point in 1986 where we’re trying our best to put together a program that will say yes, by 1991 we’ll have the means at hand by which to educate our people more effectively than we have in the past.”

Robert D. Orr
Governor of Indiana
WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN 1991?

Major schooling decisions are based upon where a child lives or the color of his skin...not upon the child's academic needs. What would happen if public schools had to meet special needs of a variety of students, rather than forcing students to meet the needs of an educational bureaucracy? This is a sensitive issue and we don't want to be misunderstood. We are firm and committed supporters of the public school system, and we are dedicated to equal opportunity. But a school system that doesn't serve the needs of many of our children undermines the meritocracy.

Today we have generic public education for our children. There are unique programs within schools, but very few public schools have their own unique identities. Too many of our public schools are interchangeable cogs in a bureaucratic wheel that rolls over kids with special interests, talents, and needs. Yet many communities have shown that it is possible to meet the administrative demands of mass education while doing a better job of creating unique learning environments for their students.

At its best, meritocracy offers our children the possibility of succeeding in whatever areas their talents lie. Yet one of the deans of the University of Colorado said that our public schools don't serve the needs of either the lower 30 percent or the top 10 percent of our students. An education system that doesn't serve 40 percent of our children undermines that meritocracy.

Governors are committed to quality public education. However, we believe that we can remain dedicated to a system of public schools and still increase consumer sovereignty.

There is nothing more basic to education and its ability to bring our children into the twenty-first century than choice. Given a choice in public education, we believe parents will play a stronger role in our schools. Innovative new programs will spring to life. Parents and the whole community will become more deeply involved helping all children learn. Teachers will be more challenged than ever. And, most important, our students will see immediate results.

In 1991, we will look back on any number of significant education reforms, some implemented before this report, many generated as a result of these task force findings. In an effort to increase productivity and competition, and make the system generally more responsive, states will adopt a smorgasbord of ideas. We may develop testing criteria, increase the length and number of days our students spend in school, and offer a variety of incentives and salary alternatives to recruit and keep good teachers. However, the catch for policymakers will be to decide from a variety of ideas which ones are best suited for a particular state or school district.