

TALKING POINTS

Dr. Boyer's remarks to
Teacher Centers Project Directors
Hyatt Regency, Washington, D.C.

June 6 11:30 A.M. Yorktown Room

I'm delighted to be here today--all the more so because I've been receiving so many encouraging reports about what the centers have been doing this past year. It's gratifying to know that so many of you, with diverse backgrounds, are cooperating to make this new program an example of what can be done with boundless energy commitment and some very specific ideas.

Recently, the importance of teaching came forcibly home to me through a personal experience. Last October the Office of Education established the Horace Mann Learning Center. The Center is a place where those who work in our organization can continue their education and advance intellectually and professionally.

I was asked to teach a group of employees at the Center how to do a better job of communicating with the public. The course is elective. These students want to learn better ways to write letters, regulations, and memos. It was a revelation to be in front of a classroom once again -- to experience firsthand the importance, even the power, of the teacher. The experience refreshed my understanding of the role. And I became more than ever convinced of the need teachers have for the highest quality education we can give them.

I've heard some fine reports about your accomplishments during the first year of these Teacher Center Projects. They have contributed to a surge of enthusiasm around the country for the not-so-new idea that Teachers Do Make A Difference.

We've known this all along, of course, but it's good to find some acceptance of the idea by a little wider audience. Public support for the teacher centers has been gratifying. And it's encouraging to note that the program's budget for fiscal 1980 has been increased--to \$12.625 million. Teacher Centers are being recognized as a highly effective means of training and retraining teachers. Teacher Centers can make a difference, too.

Some of the centers are turning up still new ways to get teachers, students, and other members of the community interested in what goes on in schools.

From rural Vermont, where the Washington West Resource Center is located, I hear what they've done to reach out into the surrounding area.

I've learned that the New York City center is trying to reach individual teachers in their schools.

And, Indianapolis, the center has helped bring about a new spirit of cooperation between the school system and the teachers.

These and other successful projects bolster my hope that Federal support can make a difference. On May 17 we held a meeting in Washington to talk about public confidence in education. I said then that I had visited dozens of schools around the country. What I saw confirmed my conviction that teaching is one of the toughest assignments in today's society.

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 THINGS TO SOLVE

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Aside from the many problems which you find in every school, your most challenging task is to give ~~these~~ children the intellectual stimulation they need to succeed. — IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE.

All of you know that I feel very strongly about the need to teach children how to read, write, and speak English skilfully enough to enable them to master more difficult subjects later on, thus helping them manage to live in an increasingly complex world.

Two recent events illustrate this point. Very shortly the Office of Education will set up a new Bureau of School Improvement which will bring together 23 discretionary programs, including teacher centers. Many of these programs are now in bureaus where they are overshadowed by large formula and grant programs. Placing these discretionary programs in one organizational unit will make them more efficient and effective and give them greater impact nationwide. Each program, however, will continue to operate under its own authority with its current staff. Consolidation of these programs into one bureau will make it possible for you to learn more about each other and ~~xx~~ share your successes.

We are proposing regulations which will give this new Bureau a Basic Skills Program which will give emphasis and add resources to Federal, State, and local efforts to "ensure that our schoolchildren achieve a basic level of competence in essential skills."

We must improve education so ~~it~~ we can respond to the rapid changes we see taking place in our society. To do so we must make our system of training and retraining educators throughout their careers more effective, and teacher centers are one of the best examples of ways to bring this about.

And we must change education so that it responds to the fact that the old concept of going to school and then graduating into the world of work is past, as if school and work were separate entities without

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relationships to one another.

The walls between school ^{and} work are crumbling fast. Almost everyone is going back to school or back to work. Everyone needs to learn, at every stage of life.

Here, too, teacher centers have the right idea, ^{by} offering all kinds of training to teachers, students, parents, and the community. ^{You} ~~they~~ are helping to change the stereotypes we've had of education. ^{high} It's ^{high} time we did change such stereotypes!

Basically, the idea of teachers being responsible for their own training is proving successful and will probably be the model for other education programs. ~~to reach everyone~~ The ultimate goal may be far off, but I'm confident we'll eventually see it—a better education for anyone who wants it. Changes in education are always possible if we have ~~the~~ the courage to try. You have that chance and with your deep commitment and strong voices, your programs ~~can~~ make the difference to millions of ^{the} students who need the best education we can give them.

The cooperation I see today among you gives me ^{great confidence} a hope that this can be accomplished.