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We hear a lot of talk these days about "truth in testing," but this slogan may divert us from our most essential concern in education today: the quality of our schools. Quality is the real issue, and "truth in education" must be our new crusade for the eighties.

First, though, let me say that I reject the popular view that measurement and evaluation have become an evil. While it's absolutely true that testing has its limits, and that testing may sometimes be abused, this does not justify thoughtless condemnation of the practice. Testing has a vital role to play in the education process, and whether we call it measuring, testing, examining, evaluating, appraising, or assessing, the ultimate goal remains the same: to measure educational progress and to assist students in their personal and academic growth.

And I especially reject the view that we need an act of Congress to tamper with the testing process in this country. Government regulation has an important purpose, but when it comes to educational testing, Congress should be the "court of last resort." Unfortunately, federal intervention [redacted] is an imminent threat unless we work quickly to improve the testing process--and to do this we must have more collaboration between our colleges and secondary schools.

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We are undoubtedly facing a testing crisis today, though I am convinced that we have not yet reached the point where

government intervention is necessary. In fact, when this country faced a similar crisis 80 years ago because of the chaotic nature of college admission standards, leaders from the nation's most distinguished colleges and schools came together to form the College Board and work on their own solutions. The suggestion that a "committee of Congress" had the answer was unthinkable to them, and it is still unacceptable today. Granted, the content and administration of standardized examinations must be improved continually, but these changes can be achieved without intrusive legislation.

Nevertheless, there is today a grave mismatch between education and evaluation on both the high school and college levels, a disparity reflected in our current frustrations about the quality of testing. But this dissatisfaction is really a misplaced frustration about the quality of our schools and a deeply felt conviction that somehow education and evaluation must be more closely joined along the way.

I believe the time has come to link the so-called "standardized testing" in this country more closely to the education process. Today there is no clear-cut connection between our classrooms and our tests, and, indeed, we go to enormous lengths to make sure tests are not directly linked to the curriculum and to teaching. The disputed "high school competency tests" illustrate this point. Many states, in a desperate move to recapture quality, now require high school students to take an "exit test"; not to measure the curriculum, but to see if students can "cope" in our complicated world. And yet, it's a curious fact that many of the "skills" these tests purport to measure--such as filling out a check or an application form--may not be related at all to what we teach in school.

It is also a curious fact that we somehow feel more comfortable tinkering with tests and measuring something we call "minimal competency" than we do in talking about the goals and content of our education and in confronting the question of quality head on. In fact, as our purposes become more and more unclear, our testing methods seem to become more and more precise. In recent years we have focused on something we call "aptitude," not, as one might expect, on the content of the academic program, nor on the achievement of our students. We proudly claim that our admission tests are largely "classroom" and teacher-free and not influenced by outside coaching.

But I do not see in this a cause for celebration. I recently completed a two-and-a-half-year term as United States Commissioner of Education. During that exciting and rewarding tenure I worked with colleges and schools, I visited classrooms all across the country, and I talked to teachers and administrators at every academic level. Frankly, I was dismayed by our fragmented structures within the schools. I was dismayed that colleges could look condescendingly at schools and never offer their help or ask for help themselves. And I was dismayed that their only answer to falling scores was to "jack up" their own admission standards.

Today, 50 percent of all high school students in New York City will leave school before they graduate. This should be cause for great concern not only within the schools but within the colleges as well. There is, of course, the tragedy of

human waste in this terrible statistic. But when 50 percent of all high school students "drop out," this also means an "enrollment drop" for higher education. And for reasons of their own survival, to say nothing of the survival of this nation, colleges should be eager to work with schools to improve their academic standards.

Today we have a great range of high schools and an even greater diversity of students. Despite these variables, the predictive value of [redacted] examinations has been remarkably consistent in the past. But education and evaluation are growing further apart and they cannot and should not be totally divorced. To do so sparks great tension between those who test and those who teach, as we have seen. And public confidence in testing will continue to go down if the testing institutions and the schools try to run on wholly separate tracks.

I therefore propose that a national panel of distinguished educators and concerned citizens be convened--similar perhaps to the Committee of Ten that organized itself to form the College Board back in 1899. The goal would be to look--not just at our testing methods--but at the relationship between testing and something we call "standards."

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When the College Board began, high school and college teachers came together to talk about education and testing. After much debate these teachers agreed upon a core curriculum

in which all students would be tested. The nine key subjects were: English, history, chemistry, French, German, Greek, Latin, mathematics and physics.

Every core curriculum of the past was guided by a vision of coherence, based on the notion of a shared social structure, a communal view as to how all young minds should be trained, and a common belief in God, an afterlife, the Church, and the values that should govern life. Science and technology were eventually added to the rigid and required curriculum as society's self-image expanded, and soon what was "common" was the freedom of self-determination and what was "shared" was the right to be autonomous and unique.

Today, of course, no one would recommend an absolutely rigid course of study for every student, even though such a strategies may have made good sense in the past. To claim that our nation is not one culture, but many; to assert the rights of minorities; to protect individual liberties from mass tyrannies; to preserve the right to dissent, even to disobey--these are all keys to liberty. And to the extent that they have flowered in our midst, and have been affirmed by diversity in schools and campuses, to that extent we may be justly proud.

And I happen to believe that students must be free to follow their own interests, to develop their own aptitudes, and to pursue their own goals. But truly educated persons must also move beyond themselves, they must gain social

perspectives, they must see themselves in relation to other people and times, and they must understand how their origins and wants and needs are tied to the origins and wants and needs of others.

There is, of course, no single combination of courses to capture the essence of our oneness. A curriculum that suggests that students have nothing in common is just as flawed as one that suggests that all students are alike. But this story of diversity, with all of its validity and vision, has because of excess turned us away from our original purpose: to adequately prepare the student for the world in which he or she lives outside of school.

In the past I have suggested that we restructure our elementary and second schools to reflect more closely our changing social agendas, and to join more closely the education and evaluation process. Perhaps it bears repeating here.

First, I proposed that our school system should be restructured beginning with what I called the "basic school," a four-year institution designed to focus on the fundamentals of learning, especially the mastery of language. We are all engaged in the sending and receiving of messages. Language is what makes us a unique species, and all students should be required to master the written and spoken word. After all, the effective use of symbols is the exquisite human skill that separates us from

all other forms of life. The mastery of this process is essential to all future education and it cannot be endlessly postponed; it is the connecting tissue of our culture and the tool for other learning. Therefore I'm convinced that we need better ways to measure the language progress in the early grades, and new instruments to link the written and oral development of the student before he or she goes on to what I call the "middle school."

The middle school would replace the so-called junior high. This would be a four- to five-year institution in which a new kind of "core curriculum" would be taught. In fact, this search for a new common core of subjects is a point where college and school interests clearly intersect. Both the middle school and college teachers could work together in building a two-part general education sequence--introductory and advanced--with one level related to another. Such a curriculum could focus on our common heritage, those events, individuals, great ideas and great literature that have contributed consequentially to human gains and losses.

After all, we do have an obligation to help the human race remember where it has been and how, for better or worse, it got to where it is today. It is essential that we gain an understanding of this past from which all of us have come, for to do so enables us to

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Face the challenges of the present. All of us are caught up in a world of social institutions. We are tied into schools and banks and towns and health plans and clubs--into the entire structure of contemporary life. No education has done its job if it does not recognize our common membership in our social structures and clarify for students how these structures came to be and how they now function in the broader social context. This is necessary if we are to understand how these organizations can and should be changed in light of our emerging needs of the future, [redacted] And as tensions grow more acute and the quality of our environment is threatened, we must begin to seriously confront these new demands [redacted].

Tomorrow's students will be concerned about our food and energy supplies and how they can be appropriately distributed and equitably shared; they'll be concerned about reducing the poisons in our atmosphere; and they'll be concerned about the increase of unemployment and growing economic constraints. We must not only look at the heritage we share and our fundamental common experiences of the present, but we must also focus on those alternatives for the future that are being shaped by what we do today. And our schools will have to address these concerns if they are to remain socially viable institutions. And here's where the "transition school" comes in. To understand ourselves and our contemporary world, we need to focus on the meaning of vocation. I believe that schools and colleges should be places where students come to understand that, for most of us, work is an expression

of who we are and where we fit in today's society. In the transition school, a three-year institution to replace the so-called "comprehensive high school," which is largely a failing institution, the curriculum would be broken down into many smaller "cluster units." Students would continue their study of the basics of general education, but each student would also begin to specialize following his or her own aptitudes and interests. There would be, for example, cluster schools in the arts, in health sciences, in computer technology, in mathematics, in community services--just to name a few. Some students would have part-time apprenticeships and others would go to college early. For this school to function effectively, we would have to know much more about the individual student, and with the decline in the number of students for the 80s, this will be infinitely more possible than it is today. Much guidance and evaluation will be needed in order to place students in the appropriate program in this transition school.

Today we are, quite literally, a nation of learning. We have all sorts of colleges to serve all sorts of students. And adults in every walk of life are discovering that they must return to school to stay in touch with changes in their fields. Given these conditions, it is ludicrous to suggest that our only job is "sorting people out." Our job in the future must be to help students learn more about themselves. Test must be used increasingly for guidance and for placement and not for sorting only. When the College Board began in 1900, the goal of testing was clearly stated in the words of Nicholas Murray Butler, one of the founders of the board: "The sole purpose of the test is to determine whether the pupil is ready to

go forward with advantage from one institution to another." Today, we reject this narrow view of testing. We are convinced that all students--not just the privileged few--must "go forward with advantage." And our job must be to help students of all ages chose the most appropriate path to take.

One final point. In the days ahead we must also find new ways to identify and assess our most creative students. The truth is that for many years our tests have measured recall and problem solving and the use of words and numbers, and these have been most useful. But we have been less successful in measuring the imagination and in identifying the creative and artistic student. It is a disturbing circumstance that in recent years the inventiveness of this Nation has been going down. Between 1966 and 1975 the U.S.