



DC Family Policy Seminar

A community service project of Georgetown University

Saving Our Schools: Would Vouchers Create New Solutions or New Problems?



BACKGROUND BRIEFING REPORT

The DC Family Policy Seminar provides District policy-makers with accurate, relevant, non-partisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families.

The DC Family Policy Seminar is part of the National Network of State Family Policy Seminars, a project of the Family Impact Seminars, a nonpartisan public policy institute in Washington, DC.

A collaborative project of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (GPPI) and its affiliate, the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health (NCEMCH).

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Abstract

The District of Columbia's troubled public education system has been the target of a number of education reform initiatives in recent years. Few disagree with the need for education reform; however, the methods of bringing about change are subject to debate. Among the suggested approaches (and perhaps the most controversial) is the proposed implementation of a publicly funded voucher initiative.

Recent legislation introduced in Congress seeks to provide publicly subsidized education vouchers for use in both public and private area schools. Entitled The District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act, the bill would provide subsidies of up to \$3,200 to approximately 2,000 children from low-income families and also provide tutoring assistance to an additional 2,000 children. The proposed legislation has inspired fierce debate and raised substantive questions about whether such a system of vouchers could accomplish the desired result—an improved education system for all District children.

This seminar, the 19th in a series sponsored by the DC Family Policy Seminars at Georgetown University, will focus on national and local initiatives aimed at improving the quality of the public school system in the District. The goal is to bring different ideas to light and to discuss alternatives that District service providers, agencies, and citizens can use to address this problem. The policy objectives of this seminar are to (1) recognize the crisis in education and examine the effect that it may have on children in public school systems, (2) review research data and the impact of public voucher systems in other localities, (3) bring together key District participants to strengthen a coordinated response, and (4) provide policymakers with knowledge that allows them to make informed decisions. If the District of Columbia is successful in its approach, the quality of education for all District children will be greatly improved.

This report provides a brief introduction to the issues addressed by the DC Family Policy Seminar on April 23, 1998. The authors thank the numerous individuals in the District of Columbia government and in local and national organizations for contributing their time and efforts to this seminar. Special thanks are given to Hilary Kao, Vince Hutchins, Donna Ruane Morrison, Mark Rom, and the staff of the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health for hosting this seminar, and to Richard Murphy and the staff of the Academy for Educational Development for providing space and technical assistance.

Saving Our Schools: Would Vouchers Create New Solutions or New Problems?

This seminar is the 19th in a series designed to bring a family focus to policymaking. The panel features the following speakers:

- **J. Arthur Jones**, Ph.D., Senior Associate, Quality Education for Minorities
- **Andrew Laperriere**, Economic Policy Advisor, Office of Majority Leader Dick Arney (R-TX)
- **Bella Rosenberg**, Assistant to the President, American Federation of Teachers
- **Mark Robertson**, Assistant Superintendent, D.C. Public Schools

This seminar focuses on education reform in the District of Columbia and aims to provide research and program information on the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a voucher system in the District. The organizers of this seminar hope to encourage increased collaboration among community, government, and business members to ensure accessible, affordable, quality education for families in the District. This background report summarizes the essentials on several topics: it discusses the diverse educational needs of families in the District, provides an overview of the voucher issue, presents research findings from the Milwaukee Public Schools Voucher program, and discusses other current education reform efforts in the District. The contents of this briefing report are as follows:

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I. Introduction

Concerns regarding the quality of public education have fueled the growing popularity of school choice initiatives nationwide. While a varying number of reasons contribute to this movement, such factors as the low performance of students (as measured by standardized test scores) coupled with a multitude of safety and infrastructure issues appear to be the most oft-cited concerns. Although a number of alternatives have been proposed, one of the most controversial is the issue of public vouchers.

Legislation introduced in Congress in 1997 proposed the establishment of the District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act, H.R. 1797, a program that would provide public subsidies of up to \$3,200 a year per child for as many as 2,000 District schoolchildren. Aimed at providing assistance for low-income children, the provision allows the use of vouchers for tuition at public or private schools. Furthermore, it proposes tutoring assistance for another 2,000 children. Although the legislation has yet to come to a vote, the issue has nonetheless inspired fierce debate among lawmakers and parents.

Few argue about the need to reform the District's public education system; however, the methods of bringing about change are subject to debate. Numerous studies document the importance of greater family involvement in children's learning as a link to achieving a high-quality education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). As part of the goal of increasing family involvement, initiatives currently underway include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) increasing the number of charter schools in the area, (2) establishing higher academic standards for students, and (3) increasing teacher training.

II. District Community and School System Profile

The District of Columbia's rapidly changing demographics present numerous challenges to education reformers. According to 1990 Census figures, children and young adults (ages 17 years and younger) constituted approximately 19 percent of the District's population, compared to 23 percent in 1980. This decline represents a population loss of 26,400 children and young adults in the District during that time period. Approximately 77,000 students are enrolled in the D.C. Public Schools system (Loose and Strauss, 1997, September 30). The growing diversity of the District is reflected in the number of language-minority students in the system, totaling nearly 11,400 students in grades pre-K through 12 in 1991 (Government of the District of Columbia, 1994-96). While diversity vastly enriches the social fabric of the District, it also poses numerous challenges for educators. These challenges include recognizing and understanding the differences brought about by diversity and responding in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. The District's public schools are addressing these needs by offering bilingual/English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) education programs. According to the D.C. government, the District public school system employed 280 bilingual/ESL staff persons during the 1994-95 school year.

While the majority of children attend one of the 158 public schools in the District, a relatively high number of students (approximately 15 percent) attend one of 80 private schools in the Greater Washington area (Government of the District of Columbia, 1994-96). The majority of these students (approximately 80 percent) attended private or church-sponsored schools in the District of Columbia. The cost of attending private school varies; the median tuition per year in the area was approximately \$10,000 for elementary school and \$12,800 for secondary schools (Loose, C. and Strauss, V., 1997, September 30).

Student Performance

Despite the relatively large amount of money spent per pupil, students in the District still have a severe lag in achievement compared with their counterparts nationwide. In comparison to the 50 states, the District of Columbia outpaces other states in per pupil spending, allocating \$7,327 per student in 1993–94 (Hoff, D., 1998). Gauging students' knowledge by their performance on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills Scores (CTBS) in math and reading, students scored above the national norm in math for the third and sixth grades but fell far below the national norm in subsequent grades. (The national norm for each grade measured to 50). Moreover, reading test scores fell below the national norm in all grades. For example, 10th grade test scores in 1992 for reading and math averaged to 29 and 43 respectively, and decreased in 1993 to 26 and 39 (Government of the District of Columbia, 1994–96). These declining scores further emphasize the urgent need for systemic school reform.

Special Issues for the District of Columbia Public School System

The District of Columbia Public Schools system (DCPS) is unlike many school districts throughout the nation. Much of its uniqueness stems from its status as a non-state entity. As such, its organizational structure varies considerably. Like other localities, the DCPS was led by an elected school board; however, due to significant political pressures, the District Board of Education was relieved of a large number of its duties. While the Board maintains limited control of issues such as charter schools, decision-making power is essentially transferred to a Board of Trustees, which reports to the Control Board. Since the Control Board is held accountable by Congress, many of the decisions regarding public schools depend by default on the approval of Congress. This is unique in the sense that education administration, traditionally a state and local function, is accountable at the federal level. In this regard, education

policy is more centralized than decentralized in the District.

Vouchers were first proposed in the late 1950s by Milton Friedman, a libertarian economist, and most recently supported by conservatives, Republicans, and members of the religious right (Moe, T., 1997). The issue gained greater national attention during the 1980s and was finally established in the city of Milwaukee in 1990. The voucher issue has united segments of the conservative party who may not always share the same opinions: Christian conservatives who support church-affiliated schools, and free-marketers who wish to foster competition for the public system to force improvements (Lacayo, R., 1997, October 27). In recent years, however, support for vouchers has increased among African Americans, particularly among poorer households and younger voters. According to a national poll conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, support for vouchers among African Americans increased by 10 percentage points since January 1996, to approximately 57 percent (Vositis, D., 1997). Vouchers were supported most by younger African Americans ages 26 to 35 (nearly 87 percent), but were opposed by 66 percent of African Americans ages 65 and over.

III. Voucher Proposals in the District of Columbia

A number of “choice” programs have been proposed in the past; however, each carried dramatically different implications. Traditional choice reform efforts focus largely on facilitating greater access to local public schools, while other more comprehensive options argue that the “implementation of choice would transform the delivery of education by transferring the administration of public education to a market-driven network of essentially private schools” (Witte, J. and Rigdon, M., 1993). Researchers Chubb and Moe argue that market control should be used as a substitute, since the policy system is incapable of refraining

from interference (Fuhrman, S., 1993) and only contributes to its inefficiency.

Proponents of education vouchers advocate for government-subsidized grants to parents to allow them to send their children to choice schools, including private institutions. Unlike traditional education systems, which geographically assign students to a particular school, this system would give parents the freedom to select schools and would guarantee that public funds would follow students to any school they attend (Hill, Pierce, and Guthrie, 1997). Voucher proponents of the voucher system hope that it would improve on the existing system by encouraging initiative in schools and creating strong pressures for school performance (Hill, et al, 1997).

The voucher proposal for the District attempts to establish a middle-ground approach among competing alternatives by offering what some classify as a mixed system of subsidized choice between public and private schools (Witte, J. and Rigdon, M., 1993). The vouchers are basically financial checks distributed to a student's parents by the government. The money is sent directly to parents instead of schools for the purpose of enabling parents to send their child to a school of their choice. Proponents argue that vouchers would "produce an efficient production of education and a commensurate increase in student learning (Witte, J., 1997). Moreover, they argue that vouchers would enhance educational equity by extending to poor and middle-income families the school options that have traditionally been available only to richer families. In the case of the District proposal, parents are subject to strict eligibility guidelines based on socioeconomic status. Families would be eligible to receive the maximum yearly grant of \$3,200 if their incomes fell below the official poverty line. Families with incomes above but less than 185 percent of the poverty line would receive three-quarter scholarships of \$2,400.

IV. The Voucher Movement: Pros and Cons

A number of issues arise in the voucher debate. First among these is the question of equity. Voucher supporters argue that educational performance will be enhanced by improving the quality of schools through competition. Opponents, on the other hand, argue that not only will inequality increase and the quality of schools decrease, but also that badly needed funding will be drawn away from the public schools. A second issue is cost. Many argue that the cost of private education is far greater than the amount of subsidies provided. According to *The Washington Post*, the median cost of private schools in the District is \$10,075 for elementary and \$12,800 for secondary schools. Even in surrounding counties, the cost of school for students living outside the jurisdiction averages approximately \$10,000 a year. Moreover, if transportation were factored in, some type of guidelines or boundaries would be necessary to accommodate for cost or travel routes. On the other hand, proponents argue that such figures merely represent the median cost of private education in the District. Proponents point out that large number of schools in the District charge tuition consistent with the rate of subsidy provided by the proposal. The disparity between the amount of subsidy and the cost of private school education certainly presents challenges for low-income families. However, given the availability of private schools with lower tuition costs, this may not present a problem for families.

One of the final considerations in the voucher debate rests on constitutional grounds. The establishment clause of the First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." In any setting, government must not take a position that supports or inhibits any religious organizations. Thus, the Supreme Court has consistently struck down aid programs that benefit religious schools or help fund their instructional process (National Coalition for Public Education, n.d.). Proponents

argue, however, that the proposed legislation satisfies the constitutional requirements in that the program does not create a financial incentive to choose private schools and that it does not involve the government in the schools' affairs. Indeed, constitutional considerations for any reform effort must be taken into account to the degree that policies must conform with the law.

V. Case Studies: Voucher Programs in Other Settings

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

The relatively new nature of voucher programs provides limited options for research comparisons; however, efforts such as that of the Milwaukee Public Schools may provide insight into the effects of the voucher initiative in one locality. Caution must be taken in interpreting and applying the research data to a program in the District, given differences in the demographic profiles of Milwaukee and Washington, DC.

Beginning in the late 1980s, a group of Milwaukee parents joined together to protest Milwaukee's school system. Parents charged the school system with failing to educate low-income children. Proponents rejected the idea of busing students to different schools, arguing that children deserved good schools close to home. Moreover, they argued that if good schools could not be offered through the public sector, the government should provide alternatives in the private sector (Moe, 1995). Through this effort, a pilot program was established, limiting the number of vouchers available to a maximum of 1,000 low-income students and to a small number of participating schools. Only seven students participated in the first year (Moe, T., 1995).

In 1995, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) served almost 1,000 low-income families who sought to enroll their children in nonsectarian private schools. Eligible families were subject to income requirements that were not to

exceed 175 percent of the federal poverty level. Largely advocated by African-American and Latino activists dissatisfied with the public schools, participating families' average earnings were \$11,625. Of the total number of eligible parents who participated in the program, African Americans constituted about 75 percent and Latino families about 17 percent (Fuller, B, 1995).

Results from MPCP

Scholars have analyzed data on the Milwaukee Public School program and widely disagree on the program's impact. Although parents expressed great satisfaction with their child's participation, the voucher program's effect on student achievement is not clear. Evidence is mixed, due in part to the new and small-scale nature of the program.

Analysis from the Milwaukee program provided results on several different aspects, including the type of families most likely to participate in the voucher program as well as student performance in choice versus non-choice schools. Preliminary analysis showed that parents who were already involved in their child's education were more likely to participate in the voucher program. Self-reported information indicated that over half (53 percent) of parents who selected the choice program had attended some college courses, compared with 30 percent of matched low-income Milwaukee parents who constituted the control group (Fuller, B., 1995). Moreover, parents participating in the voucher program had fewer children and reported more consistent supervision of homework than did nonparticipating parents. Further, over three-fourths of participating families were headed by single parents. Although parents responded favorably to the choice programs, the attrition rate was relatively high, measuring approximately 35 percent each year. This was partly attributed to the high rate of transience among low-income households (Fuller, B., 1995).

A study conducted by Witte compared the achievement (based on standardized test scores) of

students enrolled in private schools with public vouchers to the achievement of relevant control groups. The study initially compared two control groups: (1) a random, non-choice sample of Milwaukee Public School (MPS) students, and (2) a sample of nonselected choice applicants who were randomly rejected from choice schools when particular schools were oversubscribed (Witte, J., 1997). Comparing choice students with MPS students, Witte found no differences in math and a weak advantage in reading for MPS students. When the study results were corrected for missing data, however, the effect on reading scores were statistically insignificant. Further, the comparison between the choice and nonselected groups found no differences in reading; however, in math, choice students performed better than those in the nonselected group, especially in the third and fourth years (Witte, J., 1997). Witte considers the latter results invalid, however, based on several factors: primarily, over half of the group nonselected by oversubscribed schools did not return to MPS, effectively dropping out of the experiment. The nonreturning students in the nonselected group tended to be from higher-income, more educated families, with the remaining nonselected students who returned to MPS representing lower-income, less educated families. This underachieving group would already have less potential for achievement gains in the future (Witte, J., 1997). Witte concluded that choice students and MPS students were similar across the four years, showing no essential difference in test scores.¹

On the other hand, research on the Milwaukee program conducted by Greene, Peterson, and Du provide conflicting results. Using different analytical procedures, Greene et al. find that after three

¹An evaluation of Witte's research by Paul Peterson, Jay Greene, and Chad Noyes provides a critique on the possible shortcomings in the methodology and research design of the Witte study. See "School Choice in Milwaukee" by Peterson et al. in the *Public Interest Journal* (Fall 1996).

years of enrollment in the choice program, students scored 5 percentile points higher in math achievement (Greene, J., Peterson, P., Du, J., 1997). The number of percentile points increased even more for students during their fourth year in the choice program.

While the evidence is mixed on the relative benefit of the Milwaukee choice program, Witte does report greater parental satisfaction with students in the choice program. Moreover, Witte notes a higher rate of parental involvement in the choice schools, as well as improved financial, staffing, and physical conditions (Witte, J., 1996).

VI. Other Reform Efforts in the District

In the District, a number of efforts have been explored that address individual components of reform or follow another approach. These proposals include increased parental involvement in school affairs, strengthening of teacher training and academic standards, charter schools, and privately funded efforts. This report does not evaluate the merits of these reform efforts and merely provides a discussion of current programs in the District.

Parental Involvement

According to the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE), choosing the best school for a child is an important aspect of parental involvement and could improve student achievement; however, NCCE cautions that there is no guarantee that choice will automatically improve the family-school partnership (Ooms, T. and Hara, S., 1992). Many believe that choice plans lead to more parents becoming involved in collaborative decisionmaking with school personnel; however, this has not been the result of choice in the private-school sector. As researchers Ooms and Hara (1992) point out, it is equally plausible that choice might lead to less parental

involvement: "Once parents have been able to choose a school which they feel is going to be able to educate their child, they may believe that there is much less need to get involved either in governance or other school involvement activities." Though the evidence on increased parental involvement in private schools is mixed, perhaps other methods should be explored within the public schools.

Charter Schools

Among the school reform efforts sweeping the nation are public charter schools. In 1996, Congress passed the District's charter school law as a tool to help reform the District's public education system. Charter schools are public, nonsectarian schools that are independently managed and open to all students. The schools may not charge tuition and are held to strict levels of accountability. Each school has a high degree of autonomy and can be organized by parents, teachers, or other community members. The charter schools are a publicly funded choice alternative and receive their funding based on the number of students who choose to attend the school. There are currently 4 charter schools operating in the District, with possibly up to 20 more opening in the 1998-99 school year (Hoff, D., 1998). Because of charter schools' recent implementation in the District, relatively little evaluation of their merits exists.

Washington Scholarship Fund

One of the growing philanthropic movements nationwide is the establishment of privately funded scholarship programs. While structured similar to the proposal introduced in Congress, the key difference is that the scholarships are funded primarily through charitable donations. In 1993, the Washington Scholarship Fund (WSF) was founded in the District to provide financial assistance to low-income children for private or parochial schools. The popularity of the WSF has grown tremendously over four years, from 30 stu-

dents at 12 schools in 1994 to 450 students at 75 private and parochial schools in the current year. In 1998, the program received 7,573 applications for an available 1,000 scholarships. The privately financed charity pays up to 60 percent of a student's tuition, or as much as \$1,700. Several businesses have committed additional funding for the program, including \$6 million pledged over the next three years by businessmen Ted Forstmann and John Walton.

As with the charter school program, relatively little empirical evidence exists on the effect of the scholarship fund on raising student achievement. However, several parents have reported greater satisfaction with having the opportunity to send their children to private schools.

DC Standards and Testing

Virtually every study documents the social and economic benefits that a high-quality education can hold for a child. A quality education includes setting high expectations for students based on rigorous academic standards, strong leadership from administrators, a well-trained teacher workforce, parental support, the maintenance of order and discipline, and the monitoring of student achievement (National Commission on Children, 1993). Late last year (1997), the District hired a new academic chief to overhaul the troubled school system. The new leadership produced an academic blueprint that included plans for increased teacher training, increasing parental involvement, and strengthening the system's infrastructure. Moreover, the administration set standards-based testing for students in certain grades; the standards had to be met before promotion to subsequent grades. These efforts have been established only recently; they will need to be time-tested to determine whether they can be useful tools for achieving and measuring sustainable improvements.

VII. Policy Considerations

On the surface, choice programs appear to be viable solutions for beleaguered public educational systems, to the degree that they allow for increased parental and community involvement. However, because of the complexity of voucher programs and the relative newness of the movement, it is difficult to adequately gauge the empirical benefits of implementing such a system. The lack of research and the unique issues of the District are causes for concern in implementing the proposed voucher initiative. Certainly, more research must be conducted to analyze the effects of such a system in creating a school system that is beneficial for all children.

The varying levels of parent education within the District population add to the complexity of the analysis, setting the District apart from the Milwaukee experience. Those families who participated in the Milwaukee program were already most involved in their child's education; over half of the parents reported having attended some college courses. For example, within the District's Hispanic community, over 33 percent of Hispanics have not completed ninth grade, compared with only 9 percent of the total population, and 47 percent of the District's Hispanic population do not have a high school diploma. On the other hand, over 17 percent of the District's total population hold graduate or professional degrees (Government of the District of Columbia, 1994–96). These differences in educational levels have the potential of affecting parental participation in choice programs, adding to the inequities in opportunities for students whose parents are not as involved in their children's education.

Another area of consideration for policymakers involves educational cost issues. Although public subsidies provide some relief for families in offsetting the cost of private education, these may not be enough to cover the entire cost of tuition. While certain families may benefit from these subsidies, all families may not have the additional

resources to spend for their children's education.

Broader systemic change that concentrates on developing a clear and focused agenda for school improvement is needed in the District. This includes following current reform efforts that encourage teacher training and strengthen the system's organizational infrastructure, as well as ensuring accountability for clearly developed and challenging standards. Following these types of alternatives that work on changing the existing structure by increasing accountability and focusing on high standards may lead to the desired result of a quality public education for all students.

VIII. Conclusion

The controversy over voucher initiatives is an issue that will likely recur in future debates on education reform. Though it is important to explore innovative approaches to improving the quality of public education for all students, caution must be taken in implementing programs that might widen the education gap. Existing empirical evidence on voucher programs shows inconsistent or minimal effects on student achievement; future research should further explore this relationship. Other areas of research should include outcomes concerning parental perception of quality in schools, improvements in safety and infrastructure, and issues of equity.

Proposals that espouse greater choice in schools must be based on informed decision-making as well as carefully constructed plans focusing on the specific needs of the community. Under the guidance of the current D.C. Public Schools system, it is hoped that change can be accomplished. Systemic reform is a long process that requires a significant amount of time and tenacity. It is in providing these opportunities to *transform* rather than eliminate the current system that a quality and equitable education for all can be achieved. ■

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Appendix A

National Resources

Academy for Educational Development

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The Academy for Educational Development (AED), founded in 1961, is an independent non-profit service organization committed to addressing human development needs in the United States and throughout the world. Under contracts and grants, AED operates programs in collaboration with policy leaders, nongovernment and community-based organizations, businesses, governmental agencies, and international multilateral and bilateral funders, as well as with schools, colleges, and universities. In partnership with its clients, AED seeks to meet today's social, economic, and environmental challenges through education and human resource development; to apply state-of-the-art education, training, research, technology, management, behavioral analysis, and social marketing techniques to solve problems; and to improve knowledge and skills throughout the world as the most effective means for stimulating growth, reducing poverty, and promoting democratic and humanitarian ideals.

Accelerated Schools Project

Stanford University

CERAS 109

Stanford, CA 94305-3084

Phone: (415) 725-1676

Fax: (415) 725-6140

The Accelerated Schools Project provides a comprehensive approach to improve learning for

children in at-risk situations. Accelerated schools are designed to bring all students into the educational mainstream of elementary school by providing the kinds of rich and challenging learning activities that usually have been reserved for students in "gifted-and-talented" programs and to build on these gains at subsequent levels of schooling.

Achieve, Inc.

1280 Massachusetts Ave.

Suite 410

Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: (617) 496-6300

Fax: (617) 496-6361

Web site: <http://www.achieve.org/>

or

444 N. Capitol St., N.W.

Suite 422

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 624-1460

Fax: (202) 624-1468

An outgrowth of the 1996 National Education Summit, Achieve is a resource center for governors and business leaders, designed to aid them in their efforts to improve student achievement and raise the level of educational standards. The organization serves as a national clearinghouse database for academic standards.

Advantage Schools

5039 Weaver Terrace, N.W.

Washington, DC 20016

Phone: (202) 966-9622

Fax: (202) 966-9622

Advantage Schools is a Boston-based corporation that, in conjunction with local partners, creates and operates charter schools, a promising new

kind of public school permitted in many states. The mission of Advantage Schools is to create a new generation of world-class urban public schools in the United States. This year, Advantage and its local partners received charters to operate three charter schools of scale. Advantage also plans to open new schools in 1998 in several states and in the District of Columbia.

Alternative Education Resource Organization

417 Roslyn Rd.
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577
Phone: (516) 621-2195 or (800) 769-4171
Fax: (516) 625-3257
E-mail: jmintz@igc.apc.org or jmintz@acl.nyit.edu
Web site: <http://www.speakeasy.org/~aero/>

The AERO helps individuals and groups of people who want to start new community schools, public and private, or change existing schools. It also provides information to people interested in homeschooling their children or finding private or public alternative schools. Its newsletter offers networking news from various realms of alternative education.

Alternative Public Schools Inc.

28 White Bridge Rd.
Suite 311
Nashville, TN 37205
Phone: (615) 356-6975
Fax: (615) 352-2138

APS is a for-profit school-management company based in Nashville, TN. The company currently manages one public elementary school with an enrollment of 375 students in Wilksburg, PA. APS seeks additional contracts with local school districts and other government entities to manage existing and newly created public schools. The fundamental purpose of APS is to provide better education, particularly for high-needs children in urban areas.

American Association of School Administrators

Contact: Dr. Paul Houston, Executive Director
1801 North Moore St.
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (703) 875-0700
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E-mail: webmaster@aasa.org
Web site: <http://www.aasa.org/>

The AASA is the professional organization for more than 18,000 educational leaders across the United States and Canada and in many other parts of the world. Founded in 1865, the association has a diverse membership, including superintendents of schools and other central-office administrators, building-level administrators, principals, college and university administrators and professors, and administrators from other local, regional, state, and national educational agencies.

American Civil Liberties Union

125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004
Phone: (212) 549-2500
Fax: (212) 549-2646
E-mail: aclu@aclu.org
Web site: <http://www.aclu.org>

The American Civil Liberties Union is the nation's foremost advocate of individual rights—litigating, legislating, and educating the public on a broad array of issues affecting individual freedom in the United States. The ACLU is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, 275,000-member public interest organization devoted to protecting the basic civil liberties of all Americans and extending these liberties to groups that have traditionally been denied them.

American Educational Research Association

Contact: William Russel, Executive Director
1230 17th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 223-9485
Fax: (202) 775-1824
E-mail: aera@aera.net
Web site: <http://aera.net>

The AERA is concerned with improving the educational process by encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education and by promoting the dissemination and practical application of research results. Its 21,000 members are educators; administrators; directors of research, testing, or evaluation in federal, state, and local agencies; counselors; evaluators; graduate students; and behavioral scientists. The broad range of disciplines represented by the membership includes education, psychology, statistics, history, economics, philosophy, anthropology, and political science.

Annenberg Institute For School Reform

Brown University

Box 1985

Providence, RI 02912

Phone: (401) 863-7990

Fax: (401) 863-1290

Web site: www.aisr.brown.edu

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform promotes and advocates for the reform and redesign of American schooling. It strives to study and promote successful change in a substantial number of schools which, in collaboration with their communities, help all children to learn to use their minds well. The Institute seeks to answer three interrelated questions: How can the public be effectively engaged to develop appropriate expectations for their community's schools? How can teachers, schools, districts, and their communities best hold one another accountable for meeting these expectations? What tools and strategies do teachers and schools need to enable them to understand and meet these expectations?

Association for Effective Schools, Inc.

8250 Sharptown Rd.

R.D. Box 143

Stuyvesant, NY 12173

Phone: (518) 758-9828

Fax: (518) 758-9833

E-mail: aes@usa.net

A clearinghouse for effective-schools research for practitioners, the association establishes model

effective-schools programs in districts and provides staff development, training, and support services. It campaigns to unify the theories and techniques of all effective-schools practitioners.

Brookings Institution

1775 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 797-6000

Fax: (202) 797-6004

Web site: <http://www.brook.edu/>

The Brookings Institution, a private, independent, nonprofit research organization, seeks to improve the performance of American institutions, the effectiveness of government programs, and the quality of U.S. public policies. It addresses current and emerging policy challenges and offers practical recommendations for dealing with them.

Carnegie Corporation of New York

437 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10022

Phone: (212) 371-3200

Fax: (212) 754-4073

Web site: <http://www.carnegie.org>.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York was created by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding. The last of Carnegie's endowments, it is the only one of the various Carnegie agencies to be established as a grantmaking foundation. The Corporation selects a few areas at a time in which to concentrate its grants. Currently, it has three major programs, one of which is Education and Healthy Development of Children and Youth. Within that program are four areas of concentration: early childhood and early grades, young adolescents, science education, and education reform.

Claremont Institute

250 West First St.

Suite 330

Claremont, CA 91711

Phone: (909) 621-6825

Fax: (909) 626-8724

Web site: www.claremont.org/

The Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy publishes works by conservative thinkers on a variety of policy issues in California and the U.S., including education, welfare, and civil rights. It also conducts studies and administers a number of programs operated through the following centers: the Center for the Study of Natural Law, the Golden State Center for Policy Studies, the Salvatori Center for the American Constitution, and the Center for Environmental Education Research.

Center for Educational Leadership and Technology

165 Forest St.

Marlborough, MA 01752

Phone: (508) 624-4877

Fax: (202) 624-6565

E-mail: webmaster@celt.org

Web site: <http://www.celt.org>

The CELT is a nonprofit education agency whose primary mission is to integrate education reforms and research with effective uses of technology. The center helps organizations develop strategies to address both technology and its users. It offers services and model programs in technology planning, curriculum and research, and professional development to public and private educational institutions at all levels.

Center for Education Reform

1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W.

Suite 204

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 822-9000

Fax: (202) 822-5077

E-mail: cerdc@aol.com

Web site: <http://www.edreform.com>

The Center for Education Reform is an independent, nonprofit advocacy organization founded in 1993 to advance substantive reforms in education. The center serves as a clearinghouse for information on education issues and works with diverse constituencies nationwide to help enact reforms to improve access, accountability, and assessment, and to expand educational opportunities for all children.

Center for Leadership in School Reform

950 Breckenridge Lane

Suite 200

Louisville, KY 40207

Phone: (502) 895-1942

Fax: (502) 895-7901

The Center is designed to encourage and support the transformation of existing rules, roles, and relationships that govern the way time, people, space, knowledge, and technology are used in schools. The center provides technical assistance, training, and consultation to school districts, school faculties, school boards, and others involved in issues of school reform.

Center for Social Organization of Schools

Contact: James McPartland, President

3003 N. Charles St., Suite 200

Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: (410) 516-8800

Fax: (410) 516-8890

E-mail: atrisk@csos.jhu.edu

Web site: <http://scov.csos.jhu.edu/>

The purpose of the center is to study how changes in the social organization of schools can make the schools more effective for all students. The emphasis on social organization is based on the theory that changes in the structure of an environment will produce changes in the attitudes, behaviors, and accomplishments of the people in that environment. Thus, schools can be made more effective for all students through changes in the organization of the classroom, school, and district.

Consortium for Policy Research in Education

Graduate School of Education

University of Pennsylvania

3440 Market St., Suite 650

Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325

Phone: (215) 573-0700

Fax: (215) 573-7914

Web site: <http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre/>

The CPRE unites five of the nation's leading research institutions in a venture to improve student learning through research in education policy, governance, and finance. Members are the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Education Research and Improvement. The CPRE conducts research in education reform, student and teacher standards, state and local policymaking, education governance, school finance, teacher compensation, and student incentives.

Council for Learning Disabilities

P.O. Box 40303

Overland Park, KS 66204

Phone: (913) 492-8755

Fax: (913) 492-2564

Founded in 1967, the council is composed of and serves professionals interested in the study of learning disabilities. The council works to promote the education and general welfare of individuals having specific learning disabilities by improving teacher preparation programs and local special education programs and by resolving research issues.

Council of the Great City Schools

Contact: Michael Casserly, Executive Director

1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 702

Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 393-2427

Fax: (202) 393-2400

E-mail: mroot@cgcs.org

Web site: <http://www.cgcs.org>

The CGCS is a membership organization and an organized coalition of 50 of the largest urban school districts in the United States. The council was organized to study, develop, implement, and evaluate programs designed to secure and ensure quality education and equality of educational opportunities for urban youngsters. The council was formally established in 1961 as an outgrowth of educators' and laypersons' concerns that no existing national organization was directly solving or focusing attention on the problems of large urban school systems. Since that time, the council has sponsored many fact-finding, research, and technical assistance programs and has focused the attention of Congress and the nation on issues vital to CGCS members.

Eagle Forum

Box 618

Alton, IL 62002

Phone: (618) 462-5415

Fax: (618) 462-8909

E-mail: eagle@basenet.net

Web site: <http://www.basenet.net/~eagle>

The Eagle Forum is an organization advocating issues involving family, education, and national defense. The forum supports a pro-family and conservative philosophy and promotes morality, private enterprise, and national defense. Increasing tax exemptions for children to end what the forum calls unfair tax discrimination is a part of its mission. The forum strives to strengthen parents' and pupils' rights in education. Some 80,000 members are a part of this organization, which was founded in 1975.

Education Alternatives, Inc.

1300 Norwest Financial Center

7900 Xerxes Ave., South

Minneapolis, MN 55431

Phone: (612) 832-0092 or (800) 326-3354

Fax: (612) 832-0191

Education Alternatives, Inc., operates public-private partnerships in education. EAI works in cooperation with parents, school boards, adminis-

trators, and members of the community to improve the quality of education in public and private schools. Through management of school operations and proven educational programs, EAI strives to enhance students' academic performance and personal growth. EAI has been operating schools since 1987.

Editorial Projects in Education, Inc.

Contact: Virginia B. Edwards, President and Editor
Education Week
6935 Arlington Rd.
Suite 100
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: (301) 280-3100

Editorial Projects in Education, Inc., publishes the weekly newspaper *Education Week* (also available on the World Wide Web) and the monthly journal *Teacher Magazine*. The primary mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public concerning important issues in American education. The publications cover local, state, and national news and issues from preschool through 12th grade. They also provide periodic special reports on issues ranging from technology to textbooks, as well as on books of special interest to educators.

FOCUS (Friends of Choice in Urban Schools)

Contact: Malcolm Peabody, President
1530 16th Street, N.W.
Suite 001
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 387-0405
Fax: (202) 667-3798

Galef Institute

11050 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: (310) 479-8883
Fax: (310) 473-9720
E-mail: sue@galef.org
Web site: www.galef.org/galef.html

The Galef Institute serves children, educators, and parents dedicated to school improvement by

collaborating with educators in creating programs that will help children develop positive attitudes toward education and help them become contributing members of society. The Galef Institute developed Different Ways of Knowing (DWoK) to improve classroom practice. Offering professional development and a student-centered curriculum, Different Ways of Knowing emphasizes the arts.

Higher Order Thinking Skills

P.O. Box 42620
Tucson, AZ 85733
Phone: (520) 795-2143
Fax: (520) 795-8837

HOTS is a thinking skills approach for Title I and learning disabled students in grades 4-8. The program combines the use of Mac/IBM computers, drama, Socratic dialogue, and cognitive psychology to create a sophisticated learning environment for educationally disadvantaged students. HOTS is currently used in 2,000 schools around the country. The program is a complete system with software, daily lessons, teacher training, and follow-up support.

MegaSkills Education Center

Contact: Harriett Stonehill, Director
The Home and School Institute
1500 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 466-3633
E-mail: EdStaff@MegaSkillsHSI.org.
Web site: <http://www.megaskillshsi.org>.

The MegaSkills Education Center, a program of the nonprofit Home and School Institute, provides training and educational materials for parent involvement, student achievement, character education, business/community partnerships, and school-to-work programs. HSI works with federal, state, and local government agencies, school districts, corporations, and community organizations.

“I Have a Dream” Foundation

330 Seventh Avenue
20th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: (212) 293-5480
Fax: (212) 293-5478

The “I Have A Dream” Foundation is headquartered in New York. Local IHAD Projects have individual sponsors who adopt certain grades from elementary schools or entire age groups from public housing developments. Each project provides its children with academic support, cultural and recreational activities, and individual attention for 10–12 years. IHAD’s goal is to ensure that every participant who graduates from high school is functionally literate and prepared either for employment or for further education. Once these students graduate from high school, I Have A Dream provides tuition assistance for college, university, or accredited vocational school.

IMPACT II

Contact: Ellen Meyers
285 West Broadway
New York, NY 10013
Phone: (212) 966-5582
E-mail: elmeyers@aol.com

IMPACT II is a teachers’ network that identifies and connects innovative teachers who exemplify professionalism and creativity within public school systems. It has established a confederation of sites that have adopted its grants-and-networking model to support local teachers. IMPACT focuses on curriculum, leadership, policy, and technology.

Institute for Educational Leadership

Contact: Michael Usdan, President
1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 822-8405
Fax: (202) 872-4050

The IEL is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve educational opportunities and results for children by developing and sup-

porting leaders working together. Operating nationwide, the IEL works with leaders from education and health and human services, all levels of government, advocacy groups, corporations, private foundations, schools and school boards, stressing the cross-sector collaborative skills necessary to effect change in today’s complex society.

National Academy of Education

Stanford University
School of Education
507-G CERAS
Stanford, CA 94305-3084
Phone: (415) 725-1003
Fax: (415) 723-7235
E-mail: ea.elc@forsythe.stanford.edu

Distinguished practitioners including university scholars from the behavioral sciences, humanities, and education who have made notable contributions to educational scholarship are a part of the NAE. The NAE provides a forum to advance the highest standards for educational inquiry and discussion. It operates with private foundation and federal grant funds, and its principal function is to stimulate lines of research.

National Alliance for Restructuring Education

Contact: Judy Coddling
700 11th St, N.W., Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 783-3668

A program of the National Center on Education and the Economy, the alliance works with states, large city school districts, and organizations to restructure schools, school districts, and state education policy around high standards for student performance.

National Parent Teachers Association

330 N. Wabash St., Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611-3690
Phone: (312) 670-6782 or (800) 307-4PTA
Fax: (312) 670-6783

The National Parent Teachers Association (PTA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving

the welfare of children and youth. Primary areas of PTA activities include strengthening and preserving public education, supporting big-city schools, and preventing alcohol and other drug use. In addition, the PTA has worked in various areas of child health and safety, such as encouraging traffic safety education and establishing nationwide projects on smoking and health, seat belt and child restraints, and AIDS education.

Parents for Public Schools

P.O. Box 12807
Jackson, MS 39236-2807
Phone: (800) 222-1222 or (601) 982-1222
Fax: (601) 982-0002
E-mail: PPSCchapter@aol.com

Parents for Public Schools (PPS) is a national organization of grassroots chapters dedicated to recruiting students, involving parents, and improving public schools. PPS mobilizes parents to build better public schools and communities. Founded in Jackson, MS, in 1991, PPS has 53 chapters in 20 states.

People for the American Way

Carole Fields, President
2000 M St., N.W.
Suite 400
Washington, DC, 20036
Phone: (202) 467-4999
Fax: (202) 293-2672
E-mail: pfaw@pfaw.org
Web site: <http://www.pfaw.org>

Founded in 1980 by Norman Lear to monitor and counter the divisive agenda of the Religious Right political movement, People for the American Way works through grassroots organizing, lobbying at all levels of government, and legal advocacy to engage more Americans in civic and political action, to defend and strengthen vital institutions such as our public education system and public broadcasting system, and to protect individual and religious liberty.

Public Education Network

Contact: Wendy Puriefoy, President
601 Thirteenth St., N.W.
Suite 900 North
Washington, DC 20005-3808
Phone: (202) 628-7460
Fax: (202) 628-1893
Web site: www.publiceducation.org

The Public Education Network, formerly known as the Public Education Fund Network, is a national association of local education funders committed to achieving quality public education for all children, especially the disadvantaged. LEFs are independent, nonprofit, community-based organizations that are broadly representative of their communities and are located in communities with a high proportion of disadvantaged students.

RAND Corporation

Contact: Kathleen Shizuru
Institute on Education and Training
P.O. Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
Phone: (310) 393-0411, ext. 6684
Fax: (310) 393-4818
Web site: <http://www.rand.org/centers/iet/>

The RAND Corporation is a national research and dissemination organization that has an education-related arm called the Institute on Education and Training. The primary purpose of the IET is to conduct research and analysis and provide technical assistance that will help improve policy and practice in education and training in this country.

State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Contact: Brad Adams
Phone: (608) 266-2853
Web site: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/sfms/choice.html>

Information on the Milwaukee public school voucher program can be accessed through the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Web site. In addition to the voucher project, the Web site provides a comprehensive

collection of programs throughout the Milwaukee public schools.

Teach For America

Contact: Christine Thelmo
20 Exchange Place, 8th floor
New York, NY 10005
(212) 425-9039, ext. 131

Teach For America is a national teacher corps of college graduates from all academic majors and cultural backgrounds who commit to teach for two years in low-income area urban and rural public schools.

Appendix B

District Resources

Advantage Schools

Contact: Jim Ford
5039 Weaver Terrace, N.W.
Washington, DC 20016
Phone: (202) 966-9622
Fax: (202) 966-9622

Advantage Schools is a Boston-based corporation that, in conjunction with local partners, creates and operates charter schools, a promising new kind of public school permitted in many states. The mission of Advantage Schools is to create a new generation of world-class urban public schools in the United States. This year, Advantage and its local partners received charters to operate three charter schools of scale. Advantage also plans to open new schools in 1998 in several states including the District of Columbia.

ASPIRA Association, Inc.

Contact: Julia Howell-Barros
1444 Eye Street, N.W.
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 835-3600

ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX) reaches out to Latino parents who desire to become involved in their children's education but may not be sure where to start. The main goal of APEX is to train parents to improve education in their communities and to help them mobilize other parents to join in their efforts. The APEX Program is made up of two basic components—the APEX Workshop Series, and technical assistance on a one-to-one basis. The ASPIRA Association hopes that the APEX model of what parents do in their communities and schools will build a growing core group of parents who advocate for their children's education.

Before and After School Program

Contact: Carver King, Program Coordinator
D.C. Public Schools
1230 Taylor Street, N.W.
Room 202
Washington, DC 20011
(202) 576-7132

The Before and After School Program provides structured activities on public school grounds throughout the District for children ages 5–12 before and after school as well as during the summer months.

DC Committee on Public Education (COPE)

Contact: Ken Campbell, Staff Director
1155 15th Street, N.W.
Suite 301
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 835-9011
Fax: (202) 659-8621
e-mail: dccope@erols.com
www.dccope.org

COPE acts as the liaison between the business community and the D.C. Public Schools system in developing effective public-private partnerships to help implement key school reform initiatives. COPE's activities including acting as an independent, informed advocate for systematic school reform; helping to promote, strengthen, and expand the District's charter schools movement; and facilitating individual school partnerships that are effective in moving students from high school to the world of work.

DC Action for Children

Contact: Diane Bernstein
1616 P Street, N.W., Suite 110
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 234-9404

DC Action for Children (DC Act) is an independent, nonprofit, multi-issue advocacy group dedicated to improving the lives of children and families in the District of Columbia. DC Act advocates for building communitywide support for preventive, comprehensive, and integrated services delivered at the neighborhood level. DC Act works with local providers, policymakers, and citizens on behalf of District children and families to ensure that their basic needs are met and their rights protected.

D.C. Public Schools

Contact: Janie McCullough
Corporate and Community Relations
415 12th Street, N.W.
Room 904
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 724-4235

The mission of the D.C. Public Schools is to make dramatic improvement in the achievement of all students today in preparation for their work tomorrow. The vision of the D.C. Public Schools is to make the District's school system exemplary by the year 2000.

Parents United for the DC Public Schools

Contact: Delabian Rice-Thurston
1300 19th Street, N.W.
Suite 330
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 833-4766
Fax: (202) 835-0309

The mission of Parents United is to empower parents and the community with information and advocacy skills to transform D.C. Public Schools in order to ensure educational success for all children.

Spanish Education Development (SED) Center

Contact: Marta Egas, Executive Director
1840 Kalorama Road, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 462-8848

Spanish Education Development (SED) Center provides day care services for children 2-1/2 to 4 years of age through its nationally accredited bilingual preschool program; a before- and after-school program for elementary school children, and ESL and Spanish classes for adults.

The Washington Scholarship Fund

Contact: Douglas Dewey, President & Executive Director
1133 15th Street, N.W., Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 842-1355
Fax: (202) 293-7893

The Washington Scholarship Fund was started in 1993 by a group of business and community leaders to help Washington families in need send their children to private school. The aim of the Washington Scholarship Fund is to throw open the doors of opportunity and give deserving youngsters a boost to a better life. The program pays 30-60 percent of annual tuition (maximum of \$1,700 annually) for eligible children to attend the private school of their choice. There are only three criteria: students must be residents of the District of Columbia, must be from low-income family, and must be entering grades K-8 during the current school year.

About the DC Family Policy Seminars

The DC Family Policy Seminar (DC FPS) is a collaborative project of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (GPPI)* and its affiliate, the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health (NCEMCH). The mission of the DC FPS is to provide District policymakers with accurate, relevant, nonpartisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families.

The DC Family Policy Seminar is coordinated by Hilary Kao, Project Director, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 2000 15th Street, North, Suite 701, Arlington, VA 22201. Phone: (703) 524-7802.

*In January 1997, the Graduate Public Policy Program became the Georgetown Public Policy Institute.

To receive additional information about the DC Family Policy Seminar, or to request copies of the following briefing reports or highlights, please contact Antoinette Laudencia or Katherine Shoemaker at (703) 524-7802.

- *Finding Families: DC's Foster Family Deficit.* February 1998.
- *Building the Future: Strategies to Serve Immigrant Families in the District.* October 1997.
- *Diverting our Children from Crime: Family-Centered, Community-Based Strategies for Prevention.* May 1997.
- *The Child Care Crisis in the District of Columbia: Can (or Should) Businesses fill the Gap?* March 1997.
- *Feeding our Families: Community Food Security in the District of Columbia.* November 1996.
- *Keeping our Kids Safe: Preventing Injury in DC Schools.* September 1996.
- *Fundraising for Family-Centered Organizations in the District.* July 1996.
- *Strengthening Families: Parenting Programs and Policies in the District.* April 1996.
- *Transitioning from Welfare-to-Work in the District: A Family-Centered Perspective.* February 1996.
- *Helping Families and Schools Get it Done: Mentoring Interventions in the District.* November 1995.
- *Caring for our Children: Meeting the Needs of Low-Income, Working Families in the District.* September 1995.
- *Families that Play Together: Recreation and Leisure in the District.* July 1995.
- *HIV/AIDS: Helping Families Cope.* April 1995.
- *Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs: A Family Approach.* February 1995.
- *Family-Friendly Welfare Reform: Using Welfare Policies to Strengthen the Family.* November 1994.
- *Preventing Family Violence.* September 1994.
- *Preventing Adolescent Violence.* May 1994.
- *Preventing Teen Pregnancies.* December 1993.