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BY ANNE V. HIGGINS
Folder Title: YA-62A – Letters from Students
re: Their School
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 14, 1983

11/13/84

Dear VnameV:

On behalf of President Reagan, I want to thank you for your letter about your school.

Since receiving the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education in April, the President has heard from hundreds of teachers and students, many of whom invite the President to visit their schools. While the President would like to meet with everyone who has written, his schedule has allowed him to visit schools only on a select basis. These visits have confirmed the President's belief that our nation has thousands of outstanding schools. We can also be proud of our many excellent students, teachers and school administrators. We cannot look at ourselves as a nation, however, without seeing room for improvement.

Unfortunately, the facts presented to the President show that improvement is needed, and the President is confident that those same dedicated teachers and administrators recognize this. For example, since 1963 scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test have shown a virtually unbroken decline. Thirty-five of our States now require only one year of math to graduate; 36 States require only one year of science. We have begun to recognize that many of our students place badly compared to students in other industrialized countries. Sadly, an estimated half of our country's gifted young people do not fulfill their potential.

Some people believe that these problems are due to a lack of money for education. In spite of the stories you may have heard, total spending for education is increasing. According to the National Education Association, total expenditures for the nation's public schools this year are expected to reach \$116.9 billion. That is up seven percent from last year and more than double what was spent just 10 years ago. If money were the answer we should be further ahead than we were 10 years ago -- but that is not the case.

(6/13/83)

We in America spend more money per child for education than any country in the world. The answer for good education is not more money, but better leadership, dedication from better-trained teachers, discipline, homework, testing, and more efficient use of time. The best way to encourage these attributes is to reward excellence in our students, teachers, and administrators. Teachers should be paid and promoted on the basis of merit.

The President has endorsed these ideas as well as other proposals to improve education. Some of these ideas, like tuition tax credits and vouchers, will allow greater choice and competition in our school systems. The President's math and science plan will help provide teachers with funds to get extra training in these important subjects.

The goal of these proposals is to recognize the many good things about our schools and to identify and promote the best ways to make the improvements that everyone agrees are needed. The President's suggestions would do this not by repeating the steps that have failed over the past decade, but by using the facts uncovered by the National Commission on Excellence in Education to seek new and innovative solutions. He needs and wants to know what teachers and students believe will work best, and letters like yours assist him in this process.

Students, parents and teachers play a vital role in preparing our country for the world of tomorrow. If we work together, we can ensure that all of our children receive the finest education possible.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,

Anne Higgins
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Correspondence

Winside_addressW

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

YA62A (Letters from Students)

6/13/83

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With the President's best wishes,

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

6/10

Date:

To:

Anne

Chuck did original version
YA62 — Connie didn't
like it

Now we get request for
two more YA62A and

YA 62B on same topic
(YA62B has only 3 add. words.)

ROBERT C. HILL
Deputy Director
Presidential Correspondence
Office
Room 94, x7610

RB