

# RILEY SAYS NATION HAS A "MORAL URGENCY" TO RECONNECT WITH CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

Citing a decade in which the pace of school reform has been far too slow, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley recently said "the time has come to move from the negative crisis of education to a positive solution."

Riley's remarks came in his first annual "State of American Education" address delivered before more than 700 students, educators, business, labor and community leaders at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Riley said there is a compelling need for adults to reconnect with America's children. "If I am troubled by anything, it is this: we seem, as a nation, to be

drifting toward a new concept of childhood which says that a child can be brought into this world

and allowed to fend for himself or herself. There is disconnection here that demands our attention ... a disconnection so pervasive between adult America and child American that we are all losing touch with one another."

There is, Riley said, "a moral urgency to our coming together ... a need to act ... to reconnect."

He announced a new family involvement campaign to en-

courage all adults ... whether parents, grandparents, stepparents, aunts, uncles, or close

friends ... to take a special interest in a young person and guide that child's education. He encouraged schools, communities, and businesses to support the campaign by helping family members to help their children.

"I believe," Riley said, "that all parents, indeed any adult, regardless of his or her station in life or even their level of education, has the capacity and obligation to teach their children a

love of learning."

The campaign will draw on the lessons from examining

version of education to something new."

Riley also warned that politi-

## EDUCATION

parental practices around the world and will teach a series of concrete steps that parents can do to become involved in their children's education.

This spring, the Secretary will also publish "Riley's Rules," a compendium of simple but helpful advice on education for parents. Riley said the Education Department is also planning to issue a series of papers devoted to close examination of major topics in education. The first will address the role of parents.

In his address, Riley focused on some of the obstacles education reform faces. He conceded that "education, like any institution in our society, can be intolerant of new thinking, bureaucratic, and reluctant to give up old habits." But he said there is evidence of "resiliency, the capacity for innovation, the early beginnings of a fundamental shift away from the old assembly-line

cal bickering can set the reform movement back.

"Nothing can be accomplished," Riley said, "if we continue to hurl political invective... At the same time, nothing is gained by the intransigence of some in the education community who see any outside reform or proposed innovation as unneeded, unwanted, and unnecessary..."

"The public wants higher academic standards, more accountability, and some sense that their children are getting prepared for the coming times. They do not want a conservative or a liberal, nor a Democratic or Republican, solution to our nation's education troubles."

Riley cited two major administration initiatives nearing passage in the Congress — the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act — as ex-

amples of the effort "to make higher educational standards a nationwide priority" and to encourage every citizen to participate in the reform process.

"Reform is best," he said, "when it is voluntary, inclusive, and bottom-up ... when we involve parents, teachers, and the entire community in putting their children first." Riley said he supports such innovations as public choice, charter schools, schools-within-schools, magnet schools, and efforts to expand early childhood and after-school programs. However, he rejected private school vouchers and cautioned that contracting outside firms to operate schools "may be one interesting option to try, but it is no panacea."

Returning to his call for reconnecting citizens and schools, Riley cited the "disconnect" between teachers and parents and noted that "the two most powerful groups of adults who can influence the course of education in this nation seem to be talking past each other."

Riley also said there is a vital need to reconnect with alienated minority youth and called

(See Riley Says, Page 9)

## TEST SCORES RELEASED FOR GRADES SIX, EIGHT

Test scores for Clark County School District sixth graders for 1993-94 show comparable performance with the previous year, while scores for eighth graders on a new test version are at or above the national average.

Sixth graders and eighth graders were both tested in October 1993 using the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS), Fourth Edition, which

measure performance in reading, language and math. Separate tests measured students' academic ability.

Sixth graders took the Test of Cognitive Skills, and eighth graders took the SRA Educational Ability Series.

Sixth graders scored at the 51 percentile in reading, 62nd percentile in math and 54th percentile in language. The lan-

guage score remained the same from the 1992-93 school year, while reading declined from 53rd percentile and math declined from the 63rd percentile. Student ability remained at the 57th percentile for both years.

Eighth graders scored at the 55th percentile in reading, 61st percentile in math and 55th percentile in language. Comparison scores are not available because 1993-94 was the first year that eighth graders took the fourth edition of the CTBS. Student ability ranks at the 50th percentile.

The 50th percentile is considered the national average.

"We're pleased that overall our scores remain above the national average," said testing director Judy Costa. "We've managed to maintain a positive profile in spite of all the changes our district is undergoing."

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## KIMBERLY BAILEY SPEAKS AT H.P. FITZGERALD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S CAREER DAY ON "HOW TO SELL YOURSELF!"



Kimberly Bailey, known for her Kimberly's Entertainment News Broadcast on KCEP, syndicated column in Jack The

Rapper, and E.O.B.'s Business Program, recently served as one of H.P. Fitzgerald Elementary School's Career Day" speakers,

and spoke to students on "How To Sell Yourself."

Coordinated by H.P. Fitzgerald' principal Shirley Barber, and Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams, community notables were asked to come and speak to their H.P. Fitzgerald students on their individual careers and secrets in becoming a success.

Bailey was applauded by the students because she gave them a different kind of presentation geared towards developing their own self esteem, and knowing "How To" sell themselves. According to Kimberly, "A child's self-esteem is very important and once we focus on it's true development, the educational process will then again be celebrated by the children."

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