

Washington to join Hunter in his crusade. After the ship sank, they endured almost 5 days adrift in shark-infested waters, where two-thirds of their shipmates perished from shark attacks, hunger, thirst, and exposure.

Let us, at long last, understand that justice delayed is justice denied and recognize in a very patriotic fashion the kind of sacrifices that were rendered at that particular time.

□ 1915

The Walt Disney Channel on Sunday has a very special and unique presentation about the *U.S.S. Indianapolis*.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. COX of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KLINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KLINK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KINGSTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS RE-MEMBERS ARMENIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, last year on April 25th, 1997, I attended a remembrance for the 1½ million men, women, and children who were persecuted by the Turkish Ottoman government and who perished during 1915 to 1923. The commemoration, held at the Worcester City Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts, honored the 60 survivors of the Armenian Genocide who are still living and residing in the Third Congressional District of Massachusetts. I had the privilege of meeting 14 of them, and nothing I can express will ever compare to their words or memories.

In the past year I have had the privilege to meet with many Armenian Americans in discussions not only about Armenia, but also on how to strengthen our communities, our schools, our health care, and the welfare of our children. I have learned a great deal from the Armenian community in central Massachusetts and I hope that they will continue to share with me their views and their insights.

I also had the opportunity to spend a memorable afternoon at the Armenian Youth Federation Summer Camp in Franklin, Massachusetts, also in my district. There I met and spoke with young Armenian Americans who come to this camp from all around the country. It is clear that the sons and daughters of Armenian heritage will continue to speak about their family's history and tragedy, and they will greatly enhance life in America with their spirit, intelligence and humor.

It is as much out of my respect for them, these young people, that I feel privileged to add my voice to today's commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Every year we gather not just to honor and commemorate the victims, but to stand witness and declare that we will never forget this horrific tragedy. What happened during those years was more than just a series of massacres carried out by the Turkish Government during a time of instability, revolution and war. Whole communities were wiped off the face of the map. Over 1½ million men, women, and children were deported, forced into slave labor, tortured and exterminated by the Ottoman Government of Turkey.

It was deliberate. Millions of Armenians were systematically uprooted from their homeland of 3,000 years and eliminated through massacres and exile. It was a carefully executed plan of extermination. It was the first example of genocide in the 20th century, and it was the precursor to the Nazi Holocaust and the other cases of ethnic cleansing and mass extermination that are the nightmares that haunt and characterize our own times.

Unlike Germany, the Government of Turkey, however, has never acknowledged its attempted annihilation of Armenians. Instead, successive Turkish governments have engaged in a global campaign of denial and historical revisionism.

Mr. Speaker, this is why we must remember, why we must always remember. This is why we must speak out, why we must always speak out. To forget history dishonors the victims and the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and it encourages tyrants everywhere to believe that they can kill with impunity.

Over 30 nations, from Australia to Russia to Lebanon, have adopted resolutions officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Earlier this month the Senate in Brussels, Belgium, approved a resolution recognizing and commemorating the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. Speaker, as an American and a Member of Congress, I am profoundly angry that the United States of America has yet to recognize the actions taken by the Turkish Government between 1894 and 1923 as acts of genocide against the Armenian people. What other name could we possibly give to actions that reduced the Armenian

population in the Ottoman Empire from 2,500,000 souls at the beginning of World War I to the fewer than 80,000 who remain today inside of Turkey? Yet every year the administration fails to acknowledge that a genocide took place in order to appease our Turkish allies.

As a Member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenia, I am a proud cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 55, legislation that honors the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and calls upon the United States Government to recognize the genocide and encourage the Republic of Turkey to acknowledge and commemorate the atrocity carried out against the Armenian people.

As a Member of that caucus, I work with my congressional colleagues to strengthen support and assistance to the people of Armenia; to support the Democratic process and elections recently held in Armenia; and to support and aid the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabagh who must daily confront the hostility and violence of Azerbaijan and the threat of another genocide.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 1,400 Armenian families who reside in my district, I will continue to work and speak on these issues in the 105th Congress. I will continue to honor the memory of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and I will continue to work for the freedom and human rights of Armenians everywhere.

I thank my colleagues, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER), for their leadership on Armenian issues and for coordinating these special orders today.

CRISIS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, April 19th, there appeared on the front page of the Orlando Sentinel, my hometown newspaper, an extraordinary article with an extraordinary insight into the nature and the scope of the problem with public education that we are facing in the United States.

I think that this is an article which should be read by all of our colleagues, and I call it to our colleagues's attention.

I also at this time, so that I do not forget to do it later, although I am going to be referring to this liberally, would like ask that the entire text of this article and the accompanying text of a teacher's diary, an insert on the front page of this newspaper, be introduced into the RECORD following my remarks today.

Mr. Speaker, back a couple of years ago, the Florida legislature passed a law requiring that every student who graduates from high school in the State of Florida had to have a 2.0 average throughout their high school studies. A 2.0 on a four-point scale means a

C average. My colleagues might be surprised to learn that somebody would have to have a C average to graduate. Before that they only had to have a 1.5, and my colleagues would not believe the uproar that it has caused in our school system, but it has.

At exactly the same time the legislature said we are also going to say that what counts for C is a 70 on a scoring sheet of paper when students take a test, no longer a 65. So they have to have a 70 get a C and they have to have a C average to graduate.

Here is what this newspaper article found after a year or so of operation of this law. This article entitled, "Thousands continue to fall short," by Mike Berry says,

First semester grades for the Class of 2000 are in and they show that a third of central Florida's sophomores are in serious trouble and on a path that would keep them from graduating. Schools have been struggling for a year and a half to find ways to rescue these kids. But the latest grades show that very few have been able to turn things around. More than 7,000 students remain on the brink of failure. If that weren't bad enough, the new freshman class is doing worse than last year's freshmen. More than 11,000 kids have D or F averages. That's 40 percent of the class.

The article goes on to say that,

At Leesburg High, Principal Wayne McLeod expects half of his freshman class to drop out. A large number of them have a special problem: They cannot read. Many simply cannot fathom the concept of a textbook. Forty percent of the freshmen are years behind where they should be.

Berry goes on to say,

These kinds of problems are not new. The truth is that schools have been graduating kids who can't read for years. In Florida, one of every four freshmen entering a college or a university needs some kind of remedial help. And though educators and legislators have been talking about the 2.0 rule for a couple of years, there still is no comprehensive plan for a way to turn things around. That is being left up to individual schools. At the district level, officials only now are starting to talk about overall strategy.

Last year you could have filled the lower bowl of Orlando Arena with Central Florida freshmen who couldn't make a 2.0. This year, the first that the rule applies to every student, you could fill the entire arena and still leave another 6,000 standing outside.

"Students who earn more than 24 credits can drop their lowest grade" in some of these schools, Berry says. "There are classes without tests. There are sessions where kids get one-on-one attention." But regardless of what the teachers do, these kids still don't have a 2.0 average.

The question he poses is: Who is to blame for this? And we can go through a lot of hand-wringing. Obviously, we know there are problems with the schools themselves, but there are also problems with the kids and there are problems with the parents and their involvement.

"Regardless of what teachers do, too many kids," he says, "care only about their lives outside the classroom. One Oak Ridge math teacher, Cherry Jones, struggles to teach multiplication, only

to hear kids respond, 'Why? I've got a calculator.'" And another surprise these days is the attitude of some parents. They don't care either.

But, Mr. Speaker, I thought the most interesting point of all about this came from a diary that accompanied this text and this article by an English teacher in Central Florida, and I am just going to quote a little bit of what she had to say. This is one day's entry.

Today I gave a test. As always, the students were allowed to use their notes. The way I see it, I serve them better by honing their note-taking and comprehension skills as opposed to memorization skills. I have been giving open-note tests since day one.

Even so, every time I lecture I have to remind them to copy what I write on the board. They have been in class for 150 days. When will they catch on that it will be beneficial to have notes?

Last week I put a note on the board about when the test would be. Every day since, I reminded them. Yesterday, I gave them a list of topics that would be covered. Last night I put a reminder on my homework hotline.

Apparently, I speak a different language than they do because a quarter of them came in this morning and said, "We have a test today? You didn't tell us we had a test today! Can we use our notes?"

Now it's 8 o'clock and I've just finished grading the test. My spouse has gone into the other room, tired of hearing me yell, "How many times did we go over this?" as I drew a line through another wrong answer.

More frustrating than the students who answered incorrectly were the ones who don't even attempt an answer.

We have got a major problem with education in this country this is only illustrative of this problem, but I commend my colleagues to read the whole text of this article and the diary because it does give an insight we do not get anywhere else.

[From the Orlando Sentinel Online]
THOUSANDS CONTINUE TO FALL SHORT
(By Mike Berry)

First-semester grades for the Class of 2000 are in and they show that a third of Central Florida's sophomores are in serious trouble and on a path that would keep them from graduating.

Schools have been struggling for a year and a half to find ways to rescue these kids. But the latest grades show that very few have been able to turn things around. More than 7,000 students remain on the brink of failure.

If that weren't bad enough, the new freshman class is doing worse than last year's freshmen. More than 11,000 kids from five Central Florida counties have D or F averages. That's 40 percent of the class.

Under standards that applied to most freshman for the first time last year, these kids will need C averages to graduate.

Florida's get-tough standards

The reality is that they cannot meet the most basic standards. Despite numerous remediation programs, schools just don't know how many kids will graduate.

Number of Students below 2.0 GPA at the end of the first semester '97-'98

Last year, educators in large part were talking the company line: If you raise the bar, the kids will meet it.

But the numbers are daunting. There is great uncertainty. More teachers and administrators are acknowledging how tough things really are.

Here are some of the signs:

In 23 of 39 Central Florida public high schools, the percentage of incoming freshmen making D's and F's increased this year. At 19 schools, more than 40 percent of freshmen can't muster a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale. At four of those schools, half of the freshman class can't cut it.

In Lake County, where four of every 10 freshmen have D or F averages, officials are rushing to set up alternative schools to help at least some at-risk kids graduate. Lake officials said they've made the decision because of research by The Orlando Sentinel showing that schools aren't coping with the crush of student failure.

Although grades for sophomores improved a bit from last year, one of every three 10th-graders still is in trouble. The schools are working to help failing kids, but there clearly is no quick fix.

There are 5,490 juniors and seniors below a 2.0. They, too, must meet that standard for their last years of school. Borderline seniors won't know until a few days before graduation whether they'll get diplomas.

Lump them all together, and the number of kids at risk is accumulating at a frightening pace.

A year ago, schools were concerned with 7,311 freshmen who couldn't manage passing grades. Now they must try to help 24,000 who aren't making it.

At some schools, officials say they're not worried, that students tend to do better as they get older.

In Volusia County, for instance, high school services coordinator Tim Egnor found many historically had begun high school with abysmal grades.

"If past history has any accuracy whatsoever, this just won't be that big a deal," Egnor said. "It always looks really ugly up front, but . . . four years later there's always been dramatic improvement."

THE HARSH REALITY

But the bottom line is this: When kids needed a 1.5 grade-point average to graduate, about one in four didn't make it. Now, there is an even tougher standard, and no one knows how many more might fall by the wayside.

Many teachers feel besieged. They say they are facing ill-equipped, often uninterested kids they just didn't see 10 years ago.

Florida's new get-tough rules say every student must have a 2.0 cumulative grade-point average—a C—to get a diploma. Every time a kid gets a 1.5 in one class, he has to do better than 2.0 in other classes to improve his average.

But as kids get older, they have less time to pull up their grades. At the same time, the grading scale has gotten tougher. Now, kids have to get a 70 for a D. The cutoff used to be 65.

Many among the current crop aren't going to make it, or they'll spend six years in high school, or they'll get a certificate of completion, which means they went to school but never got a diploma.

And that doesn't point to a bright future. Without diplomas, kids cannot get into college. They cannot compete for the best jobs. And so there is pessimism.

At Leesburg High, Principal Wayne McLeod expects half of his freshman class to drop out. A large number of them have a special problem: They cannot read.

Many simply cannot fathom the contents of a textbook. Forty percent of the freshman are years behind where they should be.

Lake School Board member Mary Fletcher, a former teacher, remembers her shock when she returned to Leesburg High. "I assigned a classic to the class," she said, "and one girl raised her hand to protest: 'I don't do reading.'"

One indication of the problem is that Lake County held back many more freshmen this year than the year before, but that didn't do much to help the percentage of sophomores below 2.0.

Who's to blame? Everyone points a finger, either at high schools for doing a bad job, or at middle and elementary schools for passing along kids who should be held back, or at parents.

What is clear is that thousands of kids just aren't ready.

Oak Ridge High freshman Michael Petty got A's in middle school. Now, he is struggling with a 1.25 grade-point average.

"In math class last year, the only real work was graphing. When we came here and went straight to doing equations, it was like, 'Equations? I don't know how to do any of this.'"

Making things worse, many kids are living in a dream world. School, they think, has no connection with their lives. They just want jobs so they can get cars.

Many simply won't show up: "These kids will not come to class," McLeod said. "They will not do a bit of work when they do come. We need to fail them."

Parents are scared. Don Peplow, parent of a Lake Mary High junior, said he is afraid too many students below a 2.0 are going to give up. D students can't suddenly be expected to start making B's and A's, he said.

"They're going to say, 'Screw it. Why bother?'" Peplow said. "That's what really gets me."

A BLEAK OUTLOOK

These kinds of problems are not new. The truth is that schools have been graduating kids who can't read for years. In Florida, one of every four freshmen entering a college or a university needs some kind of remedial help.

And though educators and legislators have been talking about the 2.0 rule for a couple of years, there still is no comprehensive plan for a way to turn things around.

That is being left up to individual schools. At the district level, officials only now are starting to talk about overall strategy.

In Lake County, "we are absolutely still developing a program," Superintendent Jerry Smith said.

For 10th-graders who did very poorly last year, Lake has special programs. But only 60 kids at each high school can get in.

In Osceola County's Gateway High, where 40 percent of the Class of 2000 is below 2.0, the dropout prevention program was dumped two years ago.

A few miles west, at Poinciana High, there is a seventh-period class for extra help. But it only works for kids with transportation because it ends more than an hour after the last bus has gone.

Most remedial programs deal with small groups, so teachers can work closely with the kids. And that means they are expensive.

To try to buck that trend, Colonial High tries to find a mentor for every kid in trouble.

Social studies teacher Dee Libonati recognized that Jeffrey Cope needed help. Jeffrey is bright and conscientious, but he lost interest and got behind. She offered to meet regularly with him before school.

"You gave me a lot of encouragement," he told her. "You always checked up on me."

Jeffrey is doing a lot better. But the bad news is that there are almost 600 underclassmen at Colonial alone who need help.

What has been left out of the discussion of "raising the bar" is this: How long it will take before results begin to show?

"We knew we were in for a long-term fight. But we have to start somewhere," said Frank Brogan, state education commissioner.

"We were always very careful to point out that you cannot take a freshman already two grade levels below his peers and in six months see that student catch fire."

Nevertheless, the new rules affect thousands of kids who would have graduated under the old system.

Last year, you could have filled the lower bowl of Orlando Arena with Central Florida freshmen who couldn't make a 2.0. This year, the first that the rule applies to every student, you could fill the entire arena and leave another 6,000 standing outside.

Jennifer Reeves, a senior director for Orange County schools, thinks it was a mistake to impose the 2.0 requirement all at once, instead of phasing it in.

"It wasn't our decision. I wouldn't have done it that way. It was a lot to throw at kids. It's a feel-good thing: 'We're going to be tough.'"

Caesar Campana, who teaches freshman English at Orange County's Edgewater High, isn't surprised at the poor showing.

"On top of the 2.0, we're asking our students to pass a year of algebra I, and this is difficult for a lot of our students."

"They say, raise the bar. I love that. It's like taking a kid in a weight room who can't bench press 200 pounds, and saying, 'I'm going to make you stronger. So you have to bench press 300 pounds.'"

UNINTERESTED AUDIENCE

As difficult as the task is, schools are feeling great pressure to get kids through. There is remediation, tutoring, night school.

In Volusia County, they've held pep rallies to fire kids up about studying harder. Some schools sent letters home to parents. Some offer alternative classes that award more credits in less time.

Students who earn more than 24 credits can drop their lowest grade. There are classes without tests. There are sessions where kids get one-on-one attention.

At Lake County's Eustis High, Lino Santos, 17, has done well in a special class for 10th-graders.

"I used to be a D student," he said, "and now I am pretty much an A and B student."

Here, the work is simpler. "It is much easier," said Crystal Edge, 15, another Eustis High 10th-grader.

And that may be a mixed bag. "There are some days when I feel this is great. If kids don't get their diploma, what will they be doing? This keeps them in school," said Skellie Morris, who teaches at Tavares High.

"But maybe we are giving them the easy way out."

Yet, it's not just a matter of finding something that works. Regardless of what teachers do, too many kids care only about their lives outside the classroom.

At Oak Ridge High, Assistant Principal Susan Storch said some kids are far more concerned about having good jobs and cars.

"Their future is Friday night," Storch said.

Oak Ridge math teacher Cherry Jones struggles to teach multiplication, only to hear kids respond: "Why? I've got a calculator."

Bobby Jones is a typical 10th-grader at Umatilla High. He has a C average. He could do better. It just isn't worth the investment.

"I would have to spend all of my time in school," he said. "I just won't do it."

"I'm a slacker. I'm still passing, but I could have good enough grades to get a scholarship. But it is not going to happen because school is not my main priority."

Sadly, it is not simply a question of attitude. Talk to longtime teachers. They'll tell you there have been fundamental changes in the way things are.

Storch calls it "simplistic" to impose higher standards and expect kids suddenly to rise to the occasion.

"We will do our best. But we would all like to see some of these people come to a high school—any high school—and experience it for themselves. How they remember school to be, that it is not what it is today."

For DeLand High School sophomore Shante Thomas, the tougher standard has added to an already hefty load. Shante is 15, has a 1.7 grade-point average and often misses school because her 1-year-old, Lametrian Harding, suffers from chronic bronchitis.

Shante brings her son to a child-care facility at her school. And although there is an after-school tutoring program, she can't attend. The child-care program closes when classes end.

"I want to do good, and I know I could, but for me it's hard to catch up," she said. "I have all these other things I have to do, like change diapers and take care of my baby."

Another surprise these days is the attitude of some parents. They don't care, either.

"We have parents now who advise their children to drop out of school and get a job," said Delores Gray, longtime guidance counselor at Leesburg High. "I about fall out of my chair when I hear them."

PUSH FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

So what's the answer?

Across Florida and the nation there is a push for more accountability. Brogan, the education commissioner, three years ago began publishing a list of Florida public schools that fall below minimum expectations in test scores. Since then, the number of schools on the list has dropped from 158 to 30. Those still on the list this year may face some sort of state intervention.

Administrators are thinking about typing principals' job reviews to student performance. But they are stepping very gingerly.

What happens, Seminole County's secondary education director Tom Marcy asks, if a school consistently fails to improve?

You would have to look for a trend, not just a change from one semester to the next, he said. Then you would have to make sure there were no significant changes in the student population or faculty, that might explain a drop in grades. That can happen with something as simple as a change in attendance zones.

Should teachers who raise test scores get more money? Should principals who fail to teach kids get fired?

Historically, educators have fiercely resisted such moves. The rationale: Should a principal of a school with a largely poor, highly mobile student body be as accountable as one in an affluent, stable community flush with bright-eyed honors students?

"It's very controversial," said Peter Gorman, associate superintendent in Osceola County.

However, he said, "the public can no longer accept us saying we can't improve our schools based on factors beyond our control."

Eventually, the pressure—and the new emphasis on grades—will bring most kids up to speed, Seminole Superintendent Paul Hagerty says.

But for years to come, some kids will go without diplomas.

"It may take a trauma for a few kids," Hagerty said, "to get the attention of the others."

FLORIDA'S GET-TOUGH STANDARDS

Florida's education reform effort isn't just the 2.0 rule and a tougher grading scale.

This year, all teachers must teach the Sunshine State Standards—guidelines for what kids should know and be able to do by certain grades. This year, the state begins to

measure progress with its Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

The state is requiring schools to target students who fail to meet math and reading standards, a chronic problem. In Orange and Osceola counties, for example, at least 30 percent of eighth-graders scored below the 25th percentile on reading and math achievement tests. That means they did worse than 75 percent of kids across the country.

There is a push to get kids up to speed early on, particularly in reading. A state law that takes effect next year won't allow grade school kids who don't read well enough to be promoted. Seminole County has new elementary school tests to diagnose reading problems. In Lake County, there are 250 reading volunteers in elementary schools. Orange County this year will have summer school in at least 19 low-achieving elementary schools—more than double the number last year.

[From the Orlando Sentinel Online]

TEACHER'S DIARY: 'APPARENTLY, I SPEAK A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE THAN THEY DO'

Today, I gave a test. As always, the students were allowed to use their notes. The way I see it, I serve them better by honing their note-taking and comprehension skills, as opposed to their memorization skills. I have been giving open-note tests since day one.

Even so, every time I lecture, I have to remind them to copy what I write on the board. They have been in class for 150 days. When will they catch on that it will be beneficial to have notes?

Last week, I put a note on the board about when the test would be. Every day since, I reminded them. Yesterday, I gave them a list of the topics that would be covered. Last night, I put a reminder on my homework hotline.

Apparently, I speak a different language than they do, because a quarter of them came in this morning and said, "We have a test today? You didn't tell us we had a test today! Can we use our notes?"

Now, it's 8 o'clock and I have just finished grading the tests. My spouse has gone into the other room, tired of hearing me yell, "How many times did we go over this!?" as I drew a line through another wrong answer.

More frustrating than the students who answered incorrectly are the ones who don't even attempt an answer.

I explain to them before every test that I will give them partial credit if I can see they knew at least a little about the answer.

Even if their answers are different from what we discussed in class, I will give credit if they can explain their point of view.

Believe it or not, I have had students choose to take a zero because they left their notes at home. What do they do in other classes? What were they doing for the last week when we were learning about the ideas that test covers? Where is their survival instinct?

I encourage what is known as "thinking out of the box." I want my students to disagree with me. I want them to think, to seek alternatives. Sadly, most of them just can't. Sadder still, many don't want to. They want to be given the answer; they want to write it on the test from memory; and then they want never to think about it again.

I think that the theory that high expectations will cause kids to rise up to meet those expectations is only true if the kids already have some foundation to stand on. But by the time they reach the upper grades, their feet are already mired in quicksand.

One foot is stuck in their own inescapable kid-ness, which causes them to try and get out of as much work as possible.

But the other is mired with teachers who don't expect them to do anything but memorize. I have kids who are about to go to college whose teachers actually give them a copy of the upcoming test to use as a study guide.

And do you know what? Even after that, some of them fail. Why should I try to teach them to think?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ACTIVITIES DURING THE DISTRICT WORK PERIOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to go through a number of issues. Wednesday evening is the opportunity for the freshmen Republican class to spend a little time on the House floor and brief our colleagues and, indeed, the rest of the country on some of the activities that we are pursuing throughout America in our respective districts.

I know for me out in the Fourth District of Colorado that I represent, which is essentially the eastern plains of the country, I spent the last two weeks over the Easter break working pretty hard, actually. It was not much of a break at all. We did a lot of town meetings and a lot of visits at school sites throughout the district and so on.

I wanted to spend a little bit of time tonight just telling my colleagues about some of the activities that I had pursued with the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities that made a site visit out to my district recently, and report back on some of the comments that we received at that subcommittee.

It was a subcommittee of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations led by the chairman of that committee, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA). They came out to the town of Timnath, Colorado, which is a little bit east of Fort Collins, and Timnath is a community that includes an elementary school that we went to visit, Timnath Elementary School.

The school was a unique one and one that I think provided perhaps the best snapshot of education in my district as far as at the elementary level, because this particular community is located just on the outskirts of a bigger city, the City of Fort Collins, but still has a large rural component. So we have an interesting mesh of children from urban as well as rural settings, and of

course that is representative of the district overall.

We met for a day-long hearing of the subcommittee, again, part of the Crossroads in Education program of the committee which has taken place in several States throughout the country under the leadership of the committee.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, about some of the individuals that we heard from. Our focus was asking local leaders about what works and what is wasted in public education today. We heard from Don Unger, who is the superintendent of the Poudre School District in the town of Fort Collins.

He cited one of the biggest problems that he is confronted with as a superintendent of a relatively large school district in Colorado. He said that we continue to receive increased Federal mandates. What he focused on, for example, were the changes made in the IDEA bill last summer, which are taking well over 100 hours of staff time with no new resources provided to support this additional mandated requirement.

He also spoke about parent and staff litigation against the school district which he said caused a major demand on staff and dollars. These litigations are coming from three areas, he said: the Office of Civil Rights; right to due process under IDEA; and through parental and staff complaints to the State government.

□ 1930

He said that some of the things that are working very well are the efforts here in the Congress to consolidate Federal programs, and, in fact, this Congress accomplished that in the last session with a number of education titles that we reviewed and consolidated here. He spoke about some of the literacy programs that we have promoted as a Republican Congress, and commented that they are working very well in his district.

Secondly, we heard from a woman named Pat Chase. She is the president of the Colorado Association of School Boards, and she takes in a perspective in her testimony of the entire State and all of the school boards that she represents, which are 176 in number, of locally elected school board members, and all very dedicated to education.

She says that the efforts in the State to lead local school districts in establishing standards are being received very positively, and have had a very positive impact on local schools. She, once again, hit on the issues of public school mandates, and described the Federal mandates that we are handing down to school districts as being particularly detrimental. She said the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act has been somewhat of a problem that imposes drug and alcohol testing requirements on school bus drivers, and she said that the mandate has the best of intentions. And on a State level and local level it is something that, in fact, Colorado would