

And so the accountability schools understand—the accountability rules understand that schools can achieve. And that’s why these eight are up here with us. And I want to cite two examples. One, Beulah Heights Elementary in Pueblo, Colorado—the proportion of fourth graders reading at or above proficiency has gone from 50 percent, which is clearly unacceptable, to 86 percent in 3 years.

How do we know? We measured. He wouldn’t be standing here if we didn’t measure. We’d be guessing as to whether or not—and we’d find out, unfortunately, after the 50 percent that couldn’t read graduated from high school and still couldn’t read. Accountability helps address problems early, before it’s too late. Accountability gives us a chance to praise a principal and thank your teachers too.

At Del Valle High School in El Paso, less than half the children in that high school could pass an Algebra I exam 2 years ago. See, we measured in Texas. We wanted to know. This year, the number has risen to 74 percent.

I want to tell you what J.R. Guinn has said. He said, “You have to make the expectation of success part of your belief system.” We’re raising the bar, and we expect success. And J.R., you’re getting success. Thank you for your leadership. Good job.

All these school leaders understand it’s not easy to turn a school around. They know that. It’s hard to go from frustration and despair to achievement and pride. Yet these principals and the teachers have made the effort, and they’re seeing the results. And it must make you feel great.

This administration is committed to your effort. And with the support of Congress, we will continue to work to provide the resources school need to fund the era of reform. This school year, we’re providing more money than ever before to help States and school districts. The Federal Government is going to spend \$22 billion this year. Over the last 2 years, we’ve increased funding for elementary and sec-

ondary education by 49 percent. That’s a large increase.

It is not enough to spend more on schools, however. This issue is not just about money. We must spend money more wisely. We must spend money on what works. And we must make sure we continue to insist upon results for the money we spend.

The priorities of the No Child Left Behind Act will be reflected in the budgets I submit, as long as I’m working here. This year, for example, I’m requesting more than \$1 billion for the Federal reading programs in next year’s budget.

Now, I want you to know something about reading. Laura and I share a passion for reading. We want to make sure every child learns to read by the third grade. However, we will not fund reading programs which do not work. My friend Reid Lyon is here from the National Institute of Health. Reid is a reading expert. He understands the science of reading. He explained to me a long time ago, some curricula work and some don’t. He understands what works. Again, I repeat, we’re willing to spend more money. We’re not going to spend money on curriculum that will not teach our children how to read.

But we are willing to spend it, because we understand that if you can’t read, the science programs don’t matter, it’s hard to excel in math. Reading is the gateway to knowledge. Reading is the true civil right of the 21st century, as far as I’m concerned.

And we’re proposing more money for Title I students as well. We’re going to ask for the ’04 budget a billion-dollar increase, up to \$12.3 billion for Title I students, because one of the goals in this Nation has got to be to close the achievement gap.

That starts with having high expectations. You see, I want to repeat what I said earlier: I believe that too many of the adults figure certain children cannot learn. And they just say, “Heck, let’s just move them