

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: / / EDO CONTROL: G20000499  
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FINAL REPLY:

President Clinton

TO:

Agency Heads

FOR SIGNATURE OF : \*\* GRN \*\* CRC NO: 00-0646

DESC: ROUTING:

Preparing American Youth for 21st Century College  
and Careers

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Little, SBCR

DATE: 10/20/00

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:  
HR Bird

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

For Appropriate Action.



## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 13, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Preparing American Youth for 21st Century  
College and Careers

Six years ago, I signed into law the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 to expand career and educational opportunities for our youth. A one-time Federal investment to jump-start State and local education improvement and workforce development efforts, the initiative will end next October after helping raise the academic performance of millions of students.

States and schools have used School-to-Work resources to help students achieve high academic and industry-recognized occupational standards; encourage community and business involvement in our schools; and integrate technical and academic education. Through innovative learning strategies like strengthened curricula, work-based learning, internships, and career academies, School-to-Work has made learning more relevant to the challenges students will face after high school graduation.

Research shows that School-to-Work students take more challenging classes, earn higher grades, and are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college. In particular, School-to-Work programs such as career academies have improved the academic achievement of students who are most likely to drop out of school. School-to-Work helps students see the relevance of their studies for their futures, motivating them to attend classes and study hard, and has created thousands of new partnerships between businesses and schools.

But the need for highly skilled and educated workers has only grown in the past few years. Information Age jobs require more skills and knowledge, much of which was unknown only a decade ago. More than four-fifths of manufacturers use computers in design or manufacturing, and nine-tenths of them report difficulties in finding qualified job candidates. The number of jobs that require a college degree is growing twice as fast as the number of other jobs. In these strong economic times, the National Association of Manufacturers describes the shortage of skilled workers as "the only dark cloud hanging over our future."

As the School-to-Work legislation nears its conclusion, the Federal Government must prepare to continue its support of State and local efforts that prepare our youth for postsecondary education and careers. To build upon the lessons of School-to-Work program and coordinate the efforts of Federal programs to prepare youth for their futures, I hereby establish the National Task Force on Preparing Youth for 21st Century College and Careers. The Task Force will examine how a coordinated Federal policy can help all youth prepare for future careers in a rapidly changing, technologically driven economy.

The Task Force shall be co-chaired by the Secretaries of Education and Labor. Other members of the Task Force shall include the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Commerce, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and other executive branch officials as determined by the co-chairs. The Department of Labor shall provide funding and administrative support for the Task Force.

The Task Force shall, to the extent permitted by law:

1. promote coordination and collaboration among Federal agencies seeking to improve the academic achievement and career preparation of America's youth;
2. continue existing efforts to involve businesses and community organizations in improving the education and training of our youth;
3. promote sustainable School-to-Work reforms in interested States and encourage the effective utilization of Federal School-to-Work funding through outreach, technical assistance, and dissemination of research findings and best practices;
4. help State and local agencies locate resources, including Federal resources, for initiatives that build on their School-to-Work efforts;
5. report to the President, through the Director of the National Economic Council and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council, no later than January 15, 2001, on:
  - (a) the ways in which the School-to-Work Opportunities Act has improved students' academic performance and career readiness, including community involvement, integration of academic and occupational curricula and standards, small learning communities, career development, application of academic and technical knowledge and skills in the 21st century workplace, development and utilization of industry-recognized portable credentials, and coordination of secondary and postsecondary education;

- (b) the extent to which States are preparing to sustain School-to-Work reforms as Federal support under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act phases out;
  - (c) measures the Federal Government can undertake to promote the effectiveness of State and local School-to-Work reforms;
  - (d) how the Departments of Education and Labor can build on the School-to-Work program to collaborate and coordinate critical programs that prepare youth for postsecondary education and careers; and
  - (e) other matters related to our youth's preparation for and transition to postsecondary education and careers, as deemed appropriate by the Task Force.
6. Report to the President, through the Director of the National Economic Council and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council, no later than September 15, 2002, on:
- (a) updated and revised findings from the Task Force's January 2001 report;
  - (b) how the efforts of Federal agencies to prepare our youth for further education and careers, in addition to those efforts of the Departments of Education and Labor, can be better coordinated, be made more effective, and incorporate the lessons learned from the School-to-Work program;
  - (c) the gaps, if any, between current Federal activities and the rapidly changing education and training needs of the American economy, and how those gaps could be addressed by Federal, State, or local governments or private organizations;
  - (d) how School-to-Work strategies can best prepare special populations for college and careers, including individuals who do not graduate from high school, ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged students, youths involved in the juvenile justice system, and students with disabilities;
  - (e) what, if any, critical needs exist for new data and research related to improving the academic achievement and career preparation of our Nation's youth; and

- (f) other matters related to our youth's preparation for and transition to postsecondary education and careers, as deemed appropriate by the Task Force.

The Task Force shall terminate after it issues its final report to the President in September 2002.

*William D. Clinton*