

**Transcription of Albert Shanker Speech:
Goals 2000, October 19, 1994**

[Please note, there are many gaps because of audience noises, poor quality recording at lower end of voice register]

Side 1 (begins in mid-sentence)

For the most part, if any piece of it goes wrong, the whole thing doesn't work. But it doesn't mean that you can't return to that, or fix that part, but what we're dealing with here is the development of a structure for the secondary education which is similar to the structure that exists in most of the industrial countries and it works and all the structures but specifically structures are all different from each other. There are individual countries that, there is one, ----- and so forth, but there are certain aspects that are _____ and of course they all have different standards and they all have clear ^{state} ~~space~~, that is if we meet those standards at a high level there are rewards. If we meet them at not so high a level you get rewards that are not quite so high etc. So those are just two of the parts and there are others.

Now, one of the things that puzzles a lot of people is the question of of course, everybody is for high standards. So why are we bothering with this? I would like to stop and notice that basically almost nobody in ___ administration is for high standards. I would like to go back to a story, something that occurred in the process of achieving collective bargaining. It occurred in a lot of places, but I have a particular memory of a few of these. If you go back some years, there were very few of our locals that had collective bargaining. Lots of almost every local in the country adopted as its goal or its priority that we want to achieve collective bargaining. On the other hand, after adopting it, I could go out or other people who are members of Council or staff could go out and get locals involved and a local might say we want collective bargaining, if you look at what they were actually doing, if they had any staff the staff might be in the state capitol working on legislation matters. So all legislation state a ___ and if you look the amount of time devoted to collective bargaining legislation it was one tenth of 1%. And then, if they had meetings, you'd find very little in the meeting that had anything to do with collective bargaining. And then finally, they'd come to the meetings and they would take all sorts of positions. And this is what I remember in particular about ___ campaign that we spent a lot of time and a lot of money on - huge amounts - and the most we switched were about 35 votes or a small number of votes - that was the California politics, and I was looking at the literature that some of our folks were putting out there - we had polls, we had done a lot of polls, and the polls showed that the faculty was - the largest single vote factor would be ___ who were very liberal politically, on political election issues. They weren't the

majority, but they were the largest single block. And there was sort of a fairly wide center committee and there was a fairly small conservative group, and a lot of whether you could win the election or not - it turned out that most of the people who were on the left were supporting us, most of our leaders were on the left, and most of the literature was on the left. The people on the right didn't want collective bargaining at all, and they certainly weren't going to go for a real union, so they were going to vote for no organization, and finally at the run-off they had to vote for the other group. So the question of whether or not we could win the election depended on whether we could get a favorable breakthrough on the center group - because that's the group that we needed in order to complete the majority - because the move from to liberal left group was not as many - maybe 40% of the bargaining unions, but we still needed maybe 10% of this center group, and as I saw the literature that was coming out from our own people there, it was very extreme literature. Extreme left, and when you read it you'd say well, there's no way in which people in the middle are going to vote for this group that keeps putting this stuff out - they're going to say "Hey - I don't want that to represent me!" so at one point there was a sort of a shoot-out you might say, that we will put lots of money into the national debt and _____, this is a perfect campaign. And everyone in the campaign _____ and the polls showed were the losers, and so I decided if they ask for a meeting and I go out there, I could meet with the leadership movement see if we could come to some understanding about the direction of the campaign. And we met in the motel of the _____ and I said - You know, if we'd gone to collective bargaining in selecting these candidates for political office - there's going to be an election and you've gotta get the majority of votes and if you want to do that, everything that you say, everything that you do, you have to think - is this going to hurt you or is this going to help you? Is it going to lose votes - is it going to gain votes, what's going to happen - if you don't think that way you are not a serious candidate. You might dream of waking up one morning as Senator or Representative, or President but if you don't think in terms of every position - now that doesn't mean that you always have to make decisions to pander to people, there might be some things where you say look- I'm going to lose a few votes on this but when I am elected I want a mandate to do this because it's important. So it's not a question of doing everything that the polls tell you to do, but you certainly have to be thinking in terms of well, I'm not going to lose any on that one I'd better take this position very strongly. Because if you deal with the same people maybe I can win some of them back - you have to do that kind of thinking.

And I stood in front of them and I said well, I'm here to find out. I said the AFT has lots of places across the country which need help. We don't have enough money and we don't have enough staff to send them all over the places and meet all the needs and all the requests. We're putting huge amounts here we've already done it we'll continue to do it and frankly, and I hope you don't

think this is a threat, it's not a threat, but there really isn't any point of our putting huge amounts of money in if we're absolutely going to lose and if there are other places we can win. We'll try and build the organization. So we need to have discussions as to how we see this thing. And I said pretty much what I just said, that just saying that you want collective bargaining doesn't mean you really want it. You only really want it if you're making all your decisions in such a way that shows you're behaving like a candidate, you're behaving like somebody who knows that there is some consequence coming down here, a day of reckoning, there's an election. And if you're not behaving that way you can say all the nice things about collective bargaining that you want, you can say "it's a priority", "it's a terrible thing that the State doesn't have legislation on it", "it's too bad that the other teachers...." you can talk about it all you want, but if you aren't doing certain things, if you aren't picking up members and you're not getting petitions signed, and you're not taking positions and taking actions which will muster the majority vote you are going to need on election day, then you're not really going for collective bargaining. There's a difference between a pipe dream, dreaming that you're going to get something and doing something. That's the difference between the two - a lot of us, in parts of our lives, we are dreamers about things. We would like for things to happen but we don't pull ourselves together in such a way as to make sure they happen. In other things we do. Well, the first person who raised his hand after I got finished talking in Los Angeles said "You've got a hell of a lot of nerve coming out here talking to us about winning the election...as we sit here in Occupied Mexico [laughter] - Well, here was a guy who was one of the presidents of one of the chapters on one of the campuses who was running on the basis that California was Occupied Mexico and thought that was the right thing to do. I smiled back and said "Well, you're obviously not interested in collective bargaining - you're interested in something else, maybe - your cause may be very just and appropriate, but you're mostly interested in giving California back to Mexico. [laughter] I don't think you're going to be very successful..... So that was a meeting that lasted three or four hours.

Now, what I'm saying is that in a field of high standards we have exactly the same thing. Everybody talks about high standards and you won't really find very many people who will talk against them. But the question is in how many places do you see people with respect to every educational decision, namely how students are grouped, whether they are promoted or whether they are left back, whether disruptive kids can remain in the classroom or not remain in the class, whether you've got a full inclusion movement or not a full inclusion movement, how teachers are hired in terms of their capacity to deal with difficult subject matter - I mean, just take a whole bunch of issues and ask yourself - if we were to have a little exercise here and I were to say write down 30 things, 30 issues, like the competence of teachers in their subject matter, the lack of disruption from disruptive environs,

etc. - just write down a whole bunch of things which are necessary in order to achieve high standards. And then if I were to ask you to return to that and say how many cases does the principal, superintendent, the school boards, state education agency, governor, or indeed, our teachers - in how many of these situations are these people do they say we will make a decision on this issue in the following way because the key thing is to have kids achieve high standards. That is, in how many cases is this teacher hired - does this teacher really know his biology very well. Because the biology exam is given in all the countries - I'm not a Science major, but when I saw those, my guess was I spent time around schools, I've watched folks teach who were Science teachers and who obviously, like anything else, ranged in ability, I saw these things I said there are a lot of our teachers who would not at this point feel comfortable dealing with the subject matter that is there - subject matter they themselves maybe never covered or maybe they once covered it years ago but haven't - maybe it wasn't considered high school stuff and they've lost it now. But how many, in how many school districts is the academic achievement of teachers technically very few, it's very low. So if you were to take all these things into account - if you were to - it's like is that outfit really going for collective bargaining or are they trying to give California back to Mexico? And if we raise the same sort of issue - are these people in education really in favor of high standards, I would say that almost every decision that has been made without asking the question what they don't take that into account. Because if they did, they couldn't build on it. It wouldn't with the things that they do. No one would come through with a policy of full inclusion no matter how disruptive or problematic the kid is. If you are interested in the students, you choose high standards. You'd say well, some kids can be included, but what about the kid who takes all of the other kids' time - what's going to happen to standards? You see, they are not talking about all these kids are going to learn biology or learn mathematics, or are they going to be very good readers and writers, they are talking about a social thing. Are they going to elect to get along with each other? So it's a different set of issues.

Well, let me quickly cover a number of things and then we'll open this up. First, what we're talking about here is national legislation, and we're talking about the United States of America finally trying to pull itself together to develop a structure. The first thing we have to ask is why should the AFT be so concerned with this? Why should you? Why do we ask you to come here? Why did you come? Why did we spend so much time and energy trying to get this thing passed, shape it up. Well, let's address the issue I've talked about, we've talked about for quite some time now: and that has to do with what shape is American education in today? Can we keep American education? Many of you - did you get the stuff on EAI yesterday? You heard about it. Now, a lot of people in the old days had the same reaction that probably many of you did, they would have said, "Well, here's a

third, no second year in a row that the scores have gone down, and it's obviously hanky panky because the scores have been held back for a period of time, well it's hard for us to sign a contract before I know what's going on here, and there are things in the article that indicate that maybe some pressure was brought to bear to either not release the scores or to fool around with them - this company is finished now." Well, if you think so, I want to suggest that you may be dead wrong. That the public, or a large part of the public is so fed up with the fact that the public schools are in lousy shape, that they're not going to turn on EAI. My prediction is that in spite of the bad news that the City gave, that EAI for at least a period of time will continue to expand, even though it's on a virtuous angle now. And that's because you can't beat something with nothing. You can't beat something just because it has a problem. The fact is our everyday public schools have a problem. We can forget about that - we sort of think well, maybe they'll come along. I mean, if you look at the levels of achievement of youngsters, although there are some other problems surrounding the schools, - so we have - I took the shuttle down from New York this morning - Newsday, the newspaper has found out that Rudolph Juliani's legal staff from New York is coming up with a proposal that will allow the City to float tax-exempt bonds for religious schools in New York City. They'll build new buildings for Jewish and Catholic parochial schools - this is in a city where the public schools are falling apart - they haven't been repaired in three years. You have Governor Whitman in New Jersey proposing scholarship funds to send kids to non-public schools. You have Jeb Bush running in Florida with a voucher program and others all across the country and even friends of ours insist on putting Chapter 1 stuff and Goals 2000, every piece of legislation that passes even though we've fought like hell for them and they're our friends and they don't want to alienate us, we cannot prevent more and more from moving in that direction. We are at a very, very low point. I was up in Hartford debating with the head of EAI and I would say that probably, we had a poll done there - we're talking public relief, didn't think very much of EAI - and we had a question there: if the teachers and the parents came up with a plan to improve the public schools, would you support hiring EAI or would you support the teachers and parents? Without telling what the plan was, there was no plan actually, the old party majority said they would rather have the teachers and the parents than they would be willing to get rid of the EAI. So you have to have something. When an EAI comes along, when an Answers Project comes along, and by the way these are only two and there are already new companies, there's going to be a lot of money in this - and they are going to be out there. You got a guy like Mayor Daly, you know, Democratic mayor, powerful machine, and there he is talking about "I'm thinking about bringing EAI in". Superintendent Cortinas is in New York City talking about meeting with the Edison Project at EAI, so is the mayor. This is going on all across the country. So far the deadline is in Baltimore and a few other places, but this is going to break out all over and it is a very, very substantial

threat to public education and the answer to it is yes, (1) we know the public schools have plenty of problems - we admit that there is a problem; (2) is doing something about it and what we're doing is something that works in other places; and (3) this is no great fix, it's not like EAI who said they'd come in and next year the scores would go up - well, they didn't, they didn't go up, and so we're not telling you the scores are going up in a year or two. We're putting something in the place that took these other countries years and years to put in place and we're going to keep building it and keep working on it. So we're building a structure and maybe the first curriculum that's put in is better than what we've got now and kids will move up a little bit and then stop moving up - we're going to look at it again. In a way, it's like collective bargaining: a lot of naive teachers who's fathers liked bargaining said well when you get collective bargaining you know, they'll solve all our problems once and for all. Well, we know when you get collective bargaining it basically gives you a process, a structure, for constantly returning to do things. It doesn't solve all your problems at any one time. And it won't solve them a 1,000 years from now, but it is a way of dealing with them. And that's what this process we're talking about now is - a way of saying well, something's going wrong. Is it the standards? Is it the way the curriculum relates to those standards? How do the textbooks relate to the standards? How does teacher training relate to all this stuff? What about mistakes and consequences? In other words, a whole bunch of - it's like something is wrong with your automobile, your refrigerator, or something else and if you're a knowledgeable person you say, well let's look at this first, and if that isn't it, you say well, let's look at that. So this essentially puts into place a number of checkpoints that are all connected with each other as part of this machinery. Because right now, if somebody says what's wrong, we can sit here for five hours and say it's this...it's that - I mean, people get a sense of hopelessness. That's another thing. People out there know that we've got problems with family breakdown, we've got problems with poverty in this country, we've got problems with health care, we've got problems with _____ babies born, and they know that. Every poll shows that the public is very supportive, very sympathetic to teachers and very trusting of teachers. Not of teachers' unions, and that's true of ____, that being a part of this we can be seen in a very different sort of roll, of building a system that is worth building. So that's the reason this is sort of a last chance to do something. And it's got a national imprimature, and it's got some major partners and it's got the Governorship Award and it's got some major parts of the business community and so there's sort of the makings of a potential coalition of people to say hey, we're going to work on this for a period of time. Although the first shot is probably going to be like a ten year period before we put this thing in place so it looks like something. And you know what? In ten years we're likely to realize we've made a lot of mistakes and we're going to start again shaping it up. This is an ongoing sort of thing. And that's, by the way, not a bad vision for the public to

have...no quick fixes, nobody's going to tell me - you may be the kind of person who when you're sick will go out and find somebody who claims to have this great cure - most people won't do that, they will go and find doctors who say this is hard, try this, we don't know if that will work, if that doesn't we'll try something else - we've got more faith in people who don't oversell than people who do and that's part of this.

I started by saying that I wanted to do a number of pieces on what could go wrong. Well, one thing that can go wrong is that we don't put really high world class standards into place. We put nobody or - almost nobody in the United States has ever seen what kids in other countries do. Isn't that interesting? And here we are, we've been working all these years, and very few people in the United States know how well can kids read and write in third grade in Russia, Germany, Japan, France, England, Australia. Is it about the same as the United States? Or, are most of those countries way ahead and we're way behind? I figure if you look at it you'll find -- I've related this before -- but I guess about a year ago I was getting up about the usual time in New York, I was having coffee and watching the TV set and it was a replay on some students who had immigrated to the United States from the former Soviet Union and these were 6th, 7th, and 8th grade kids. And they were asking if you miss your home country, do you want to go back, do you like it here - all sorts of general questions. When they got to schools, they all had the same answers - school was boring, it was like what we're learning in the 8th grade what we learned in the 3rd grade. It was hard to believe, but if you look at the textbooks in these other countries, and look at examinations from these other countries, there is a huge difference. Kids are capable of a lot more and they are capable of it a lot earlier. So that's the first thing, the first thing is that we put in our states and our localities - we sit down and develop world class standards by saying here's what we do now, let's make it a little bit higher and we'll call that world class standards, and actually, compared to what everybody else is doing we would still be miles behind. So the first big mistake we could make, we might not have world class standards, that's one thing. Secondly, once you have those standards, you have to connect those to a curriculum, and there are a number of mistakes you could make here. One of them is to basically say that every individual teacher decides - once you understand this - it's every individual teacher who decides what the curriculum is. Or maybe every school does, or maybe every district does. So you can say once the standards are there - you can count on other people to translate it into what goes on in a classroom and here we have a very careful line. It's a question first of all of what kids learn in 3rd grade and 4th grade and 5th grade - what they learn, and second, how it is taught. How is it approached. The more diversity you have in what the curriculum is the more of a failure it's going to be. Because as kids move from one school to another, from one teacher to another, no teacher will ever know exactly what a student has had before, and if you want to take something up with them which

requires certain background knowledge, you're not going to be able to assume that the kid learned it the year before, so what are you going to do? You're going to do like now, you're going to have to go back and spend a third to 40% of your time going back over stuff which you should rightfully be able to say I am sure that since this kid has been in the 3th, 4th, 5th grades, this kid has gotten this stuff, no matter what teacher he had. Now, that's a very tough thing to do. Our teachers are not accustomed to this, they have all the freedom - well, if we don't give up that freedom we're not going to make it, because you can't cover all the stuff that you need to cover if you're constantly going back because you don't know if the kids have gotten it before or not. So that's an important issue, it's going to take quite a bit of time. By the way, there are very few educators saying that - that a common content with the kids makes a difference. And yet, that's what they have in these other places. And the second thing - And that's happening, like the English teachers and the Social Studies teachers in the California curriculum - every subject matter group gets together and puts down all the things the kids should know and be able to do. And you know what it is? It's everything in the world - so you have a curriculum that is so loaded with everything that you cannot possibly cover everything. I was out in California a couple of years ago to see some classrooms that were Social Studies classrooms and right on the second or third or fourth page of the California framework it said "These history frameworks guarantee every teacher that the students that that teacher has had has covered the materials. For the first time in California history, when you get the kids you know that they have covered this, this, and this and now you can go on from there, and every classroom I went into the teacher said we think the curriculum guideline is terrific, we like these textbooks, we went home and read them ourselves because they were so interesting, we learned a lot of things from them, but they said you know I could only cover about half the stuff in my class last year because nobody ever bothered to figure how much can kids learn in one year. Now, if you've got twice as much or three times as much as what the kids can learn, that individual teacher has to pick and choose which half or which third, and what you are doing is you're getting different kids learning different things again. So the next thing that has to happen here is that those people who decide what are kids to learn, what are the topics that will be covered, they have to have fights among themselves. They can't just say Ok, if you want to put in the Civil War go ahead, I won't include it in this, you put in that and everybody puts in what their favorite topic is, so this is too much, this is three times as much as the kids can possibly absorb, now we have to decide what are the most important things. What's less important. We have to have fights - that's not as much fun as just making up the list. Now you have to have fights with your colleagues and that's unpleasant. We are not accustomed and we don't like to do that. But until we are willing to have fights to say this is more important than that, and you can't teach both because there isn't enough time, then collectively we

haven't done as much as the professionals and that's what is already happening. It's already happening and there's huge amounts of stuff being put there so it's really not a guide at all. It's like giving somebody an encyclopedia and saying here, pick it up and _____.

Well, where are we on time? We're out of time. I think I'll make one more point. The thing that shows you that very few people are really serious about high standards is the thing that is going to be very hard to get at and it has to do with stakes. If kids perform, if they do their homework, they learn their stuff, they all understand it, they ask their friends, they ask their teachers if they're really plug away at it, and attain these high standards - _____ as compared to the kid who doesn't come a good part of the time, who tears up his book, who doesn't do the homework, who doesn't care about books, right now there's not too much difference - they both get passed on. OK, so one kid gets C's and the other one gets A's, or at some schools the one kid who doesn't do very much gets B's and the other one gets A's because we don't want poor self esteem so we won't the kid C's so everybody gets A's and B's; they all get promoted, move on and graduate, and then - even if they haven't learned anything - they go on to college which somebody will pay for, Uncle Sam or yourself, so there's no reason to work hard. And if there's no reason to work hard, kids won't work hard. That has to be put into this. Kids have to know if you work hard and do well, there is something at the end, and the two things that kids want, basically, that can be provided by a system - they want access to good jobs, and they want higher education a strong education whether it's higher or not. We've got to - in all other countries - if you work hard and you get A's and B's and meet these high standards you are going to be able to go to college - but if you don't meet them you can't go to college. And that's a very strong message. And when you have that, that's when people take things seriously. They say, look, you can't put these disruptive, violent kids in the classroom because you realize that you're going to destroy the chance that these other 25 kids are going to college - they're not going to be able to go to any college in Germany, or in France, or anywhere - they can't go to any college, whether or not they have money - you've got no right to put that sort of kid or to group kids in this way. You can't waste time in this world or we'll never - you see, it's all hinged to - there are consequences. And so people can start getting angry and they're going to say hey don't try out your experimentation here, this is going to have consequences for these kids and they are going to know, the parents are going to know, and everybody else is going to know. And so that is an extremely important part of this whole thing. Now, obviously, consequences have to be phased in. We now have an open system of admissions. I just read through the book called City on the Hill, by a guy named Fowle. It's a book about City College, New York which was the first to have open admissions in the country. It's a very sad book, and basically shows you a lot of kids who did not do well in high school and didn't decide to go college

and by this time, they had responsibilities - working through the day, have kids to take care of, and yet they are going to college a certain number of hours in the evenings and they realize that they made a mistake and they realize that a college education is worth something. So it's basically like a second chance - what this book is about is the author goes into - these kids are all taking remedial classes. They're taking elementary school reading and elementary school writing, they're taking arithmetic classes. Some of them are in these classes for eight years - they are taking their elementary school work - they're not getting college graduate work, they can't really get into the college part until they pass these things. What it shows you basically is that the issue is very interesting because the whole issue was shouldn't all kids have access to a college education? Wouldn't that be a good thing? What the writer who favored open admissions said is and I must say I did when I started as well, he said it's one thing when you give kids who don't have the ability to read, write or count access to a college which is now going to be full of other kids who can't read, write or count, what are you giving them access to? You are really giving them access to a remedial program at the elementary school level - the education they are getting is no longer college level. So, I mean, the issue of stakes is extremely important. And the question of whether people really believe in standards - they can say "I believe in standards" but if they say "Well I believe in standards but you know you shouldn't ever reward or punish anybody" - it's like saying well, we're going to have races but we'll never give out first prize or second prize - we'll say to everybody "you're a winner" - well, how many people are going to get up early in the morning and sweat and do all the things that you need to if everybody is going to be a winner no matter how badly, how slowly, or how good or who they are in this particular thing.

Now, I said that was the last one, but I'll throw one other line, because it's somewhat popular. And that has to do with the issue of a single set of standards for all kids. You're going to have that in almost every state and every district - we must have a single set of standards for all kids because that's the only democratic thing to do. If we don't, lower income and minority kids are going to be put in the lower tracks, they'll be put there on the basis of stereotypes and it's not equal, etc. Well, if you have one set of standards, they cannot be my standards. Because some kids will not come to school very much, some kids will not pay attention very much, some kids who can't take it, they are physically not wired that way, and there's some kids who are very disturbed, and there are also some kids who are not as smart as other kids. There are some who are pretty stupid. There was a testing expert at the Brookings Institution some months ago and this was a testing expert who said "I don't know what to tell you, I don't even like to believe it, but it's been some years ago I went to a kibbutz in Israel and there were all these kids - now this is a farm there, all the adults are working and the kids are basically left there in camp with teachers and

counselors and they only see their parents for 15 minutes in the evening before going to sleep and one day a week _____ and you would expect that in a place like that the kids would all have - they all have the same amount of money spent on them, they all eat the same food, they all have the same teachers, so you're getting rid of all the other factors, you know that work for or against the kids, well some of the kids were learning calculus and other kids were still counting on their fingers, and some of them were dumb and some were brilliant, and some were brave and some were lazy and some were hard working, and they were just different. There was a whole range of learning - you'd think that with conditions like that that they'd be very similar. Now if you've got one set of standards, suppose we had one high set of standards for everybody. Supposed we had the olympic standards. Well if you put me in a class with the olympic standards, I'd give up. I'm never going to scrimp like that, I'm never going to run like that. In order to make kids succeed you have to get them to want to work. People will work to achieve something that they can't do now but they won't work to achieve something that they feel is impossible. If you give us standards that are so far away from this point - from wherever they see themselves - so you constantly have to have something out there that's moving, and by the way, that's the big difference between what we advocate and traditional tracking, because on your traditional track all these kids are not getting any work from you. Or they are given the same junk over and over again, just to keep them quiet, like ditto sheets with I don't know what they've got now, but 60 addition problems - busy work. So the whole thing is that people who talk about one standard for everybody have to be talking about minimum standards because most of the kids are ____ - you see you bring the standards down to the point where most of the kids can pass - about half the kids who are the harder workers and there are those who have more ability are lazy and can learn it without working very hard. Now it's a tough issue. But if the tracking system is put in correctly so every kid works hard and is given work to do - work that is difficult for that kid to do, work that gets that kid to be better and better, then he's doing the best job he can do. If he's not doing a good job you'll lower the standards so that it's easier to ____ them. You're not doing a good job if you have high standards so most of them feel they'll never make it. So basically, you've got to take these standards and at the beginning, I'd have the same standards for all the kids in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade, where it's really too early to tell who's going to work hard and all that. But at a certain point, I don't know whether 7th grade, 8th grade, 9th grade - Germans do in 5th grade, Japanese do it in 9th grade and at a certain point you have to say hey, we're going to keep these kids working, but we're going to have multiple standards.

Now, most of the points that I have set before you will be unpopular as all hell. They are politically incorrect. It may mean that the country has to go through a period of doing it wrong before it goes back to it and gets it right, but it's

still, I think that these points - you're going to hear something about this at the next presentation. I wish that Debra Wadsworth was here first, because I would have given the same points but in a very different way. You're going to hear about how a lot of the positions that the AFT take - Debra Wadsworth is going to talk about this but this is specially a report about how the American people feel about and what they believe about educational issues and I think you are going to find that if we take hold of a lot of the things that we've been pressing for that we will have tremendous amounts of what parents and business groups and others and the positions that the schools are now taking in many cases are not popular positions. The public doesn't like them. But that is part of why they are willing to vote for vouchers and these other things.

Well, let's give time for a little back and forth.

tape ends

Side 2 - begins in Mr. Shanker's response to a question

... you have community colleges, technical schools, basically, not full academic liberal education, but a combination of further education with some vocationalism attached to it for strength. Then you have job opportunities and that's something where we have to convince business, school board, some of the other things out there where they are trying to get industry into some of these things, but for a kid who isn't going to go on to college, you can say well, you can get the following certificate from high school because you meet the standard. There will be bigger companies like ____, IBM, stuff like that, which will hire you, whereas they would not hire you if you did not meet the standard, so you would essentially have to get a series of incentives because we don't have standards for everybody. You're right. The interesting thing is that we think only in terms of college but you should think of colleges, you should think of vocational training, you should think of different levels of jobs and so you can reach - practically every kid would say "If you complete this you're going to get something good at the end of it. If you do better, you get something that's a little better." And that's pretty visible. However, the other piece of this is that the thing that makes this so democratic - in all of these other countries - they didn't use to - but in all these other countries they have second chances. So, if you take a kid who's not doing so well in school and couldn't get into a four year institution so he does something else, so five or eight years later that person is a different person now and has a family and is more serious and they now realize that by not learning more they deprived themselves of the opportunity to do something. They are now willing to take the responsibility to do some additional studies, to go back and to get into a four year institution or a two year institution. So you create a democracy not by letting everybody in in the first place whether they are qualified or not, but you create the democracy by holding high standards and saying if you don't meet them now, this isn't the end of it, you can make them later.

Question by ____ Mitchell, United Teachers New Orleans

In the article, Making Standards Count, it states that in England and Wales 31% of the students take the examination and 24% pass.... In France, 43% take the exam and only 32% (gap in tape).

Resumes with Mr. Shanker responding:

...Did somebody try to get them to learn it? That's an opportunity to understand. There are obviously places where there aren't textbooks, or there aren't a set for a group of students. There are places where the physical conditions are so horrible that it's rather unreasonable to say that kids could learn in a place like that. But I really think that you have to look at what collective bargaining can do. If any local says

we're not going to go to collective bargaining unless _____ he says everything that we're going to need, get out all of the radio, TV, literature, _____ we wouldn't have any collective bargaining anywhere right now. Nobody ever had everything they need. A lot of people will use an opportunity to learn standards as a way of knocking out standards - basically saying, "until we have all the following things", and you make a list of lots of items, "we're not even going to try". And that's really a way of saying "Hey - we know you're not going to give us all the stuff, so that's obvious". You say, let's have high standards, we say we're not going to go for the high standards until you have the following expenditures. I believe very strongly that states _____ the finances together we say we have standards, we have assessments, we've got a curriculum, we are training and retraining teachers because a lot of them couldn't do the stuff right now, we're holding kids accountable, we're putting together _____, we're doing all this stuff, you do all that and you've got a much better chance of turning to people who right now are against putting additional resources in and say we are doing something different. In other words, don't say that we're not going to do anything different until you give us more. Because that will give you - we've heard that before. The school districts, the superintendents have been doing that for years. They're all saying that there's something different - right? So it's going to be better, it's going to be the answer. Here we are X years later, nobody has any confidence. So we now do the same thing. We turn around and say, give us this and you'll get that, the public's going to be pretty largely turned off. I think we've got to get into this a certain part of the way. Do the best job we can, like starting a campaign. _____ That's how the AFT funded a lot - we didn't take a local that wasn't doing a damned thing that came to us and said give us the money and we'll get collective bargaining - we didn't help them because we figured they weren't really serious. We took a local that had practically no resources. We'd get volunteers to come in in the afternoon, they would _____ they were calling press conferences, doing all sorts of things without anything, almost with smoke and mirrors and we'd say hey - those people really want - look at what they are doing - just think of what they could do if we put some money in it. I think you've got to view this thing the same way. It's not a question of _____ resources but it's a question of having credibility with the people who are going to provide right now, educators - and that includes school boards, superintendents, teachers - do not have public credibility if we say if you give us X we're going to use it for something you people are going to go right down into the same system. So we've really got to start something that's different, something that's new, in order to provide the motivation for them to come up with the resources.

Audience: I have two questions, the first one has to do with minimum standards - no matter how low, because we allow every child in the public schools no matter how low we set a minimum standard there would be some children that would never - can

never achieve to that level because we do let everybody in the public schools. So what should we peg that to, so what should we say to the public _____ well you need to know there will be a certain percentage that just can't take it, even this minimum standard and if we set it any lower it's not effective in the real world.

The second question is it would seem logically, if you had your druthers, you'd like to see this phased in from the early grades up. But it seems like the work that's being done out there in standards is mostly done by people with a high school focus, the elementary grades aren't doing anything out there that's real encouraging about setting standards for K-3, so that the kids would be getting the high standards constantly in the earlier grade and we won't see the terrible disappointing statistics that we're going to see probably at 7th - 9th grade on. We can see early kids get the help first and the entire standards will

AS: Well, you have to start with a top-down and at the bottom-up all at the same time. Ideally, four year colleges would set their admission standards and they would set them high. And then, the high school people would say well, what do we have to do three or four years of high school if you get a large number of young persons who meet these standards and then people would say well that's what you need to know in the 9th grade and that's what you need in the 7th grade - you start with where you want to end up and go back. Then you start with the kids in the earlier grades because obviously if you take an 18 year old kid in his last year of high school you're not going to undo all the previous years that the kid has missed and didn't have this program. Like all of a sudden he's turned into a scholar or something that last year. So you have to do it both ways - you start with grade 1 and up and figure out what are the steps to go up, but you take your steps from the bottom up. You sort of put the top rung into the ladder first and then figure out how many rungs going backwards you are going to need - how high people move their feet from one rung to the other without it being dangerous, and so forth. And then of course there's people who start climbing and coming up doing it from the bottom. So you've have to do it both ways. I don't know that very much is being done on the elementary school level right now. And I'm pretty sure that not very much is being done to get the common curriculum, that is to say, what should all kids in the 3rd grade know so the 4th grade teacher gets them knows that's what they've got, and I could move on. That's part of the discussion we have to throw in there. Now, a couple of years from now people will come back and say thank you, and they'll buy it, but we're just going to have everybody else on that right now.

Hi - I'm Kathy, I'm from Minnesota. It's not as much a question as it is to sort of talk about this for a while. I feel that what we're running into - and I'm very much in favor of this - but what we're running into is not so much that it's politically

incorrect as it is counter-American culture in a number of ways. And I sort of question this whole deal with this -- it always intrigues me that, where I come, Minnesota, that we do not prepare kids to go to college, that's sort of the goal. I think we need to quit talking about college and talk about higher education and we have to somehow get the idea across of a higher education and a vocational college is also to be honored, something of value. The strange part of it is that we don't necessarily award with money those who go to college. Very often people with vocational certification or whatever the right word is get paid more than somebody who graduates from college - in this country - that's not true in Germany or France. You are pretty much assured of your pay and your position according to that scale of achievement. So the whole thing just sort of bothered me. But, speaking on college, the other thing that bothers me about it is that we are hearing the argument that we have the best hybrid education system in the world. That we don't have standards for entering but we come out and we hear this often as an argument: this is why we should privatize our school system because we have this private higher education system, that we have the best higher education system in the world, people are coming here from all over the world to study at our colleges and universities. So, how do we deal with this factor?

AS: Good points. Well, the first one, that desire on the part of people who want to have their kids go to college is true in these other countries too, even though they have very highly respected programs in other countries - Germany, there's a lot of pressure from parents to get their kids out of a two-year training program....

tape ends in mid-sentence