On November 18, 2009, the Memphis City School Board of Commissioners voted to accept a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant for Memphis City Schools (MCS). The grant is valued at over $90 million and is to be used for teacher evaluation and dramatic salary increases, some pushing six figures for senior, experienced Memphis teachers. Memphis City Schools will need to provide an additional $20 million to “augment” the grant and supply $36 million.¹ The grant targets Memphis City School teachers to “dramatically boost student achievement and college-ready graduation rates.”² As appreciative as Memphians are for the financial boost that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant offers, they recognize it is a mixed blessing. It causes Memphians to reflect on what happened in the past of MCS that would require such drastic reform measures. What the Gates Foundation attempts to remedy now has been tackled by the city before, memorably in the 1992 Memphis 2000 Task Force Report. The report outlined nine goals for Memphis City Schools to accomplish by the year 2000. Twenty years after the task force and the report, Memphis continues to find itself unable to solve its own issues with the educational system. Even after modeling Memphis 2000 on the federal reports of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and especially Clinton administrations, in conjunction with federal guidance and grassroots attempts at reform, Memphis City Schools cannot seem to make the fundamental changes necessary to be an effective school system. The Memphis 2000 program made a valiant try as the area’s major push toward reform and incited positive change, but lacked

programs and strategies to combat the systemic drains on Memphis City Schools. Thus, the Memphis City School system made small gains under Memphis 2000, but not to the desired extent because the Memphis 2000 goals were met with varying levels of success. The success of Memphis City Schools in regards to each goal can be categorized into three degrees of efficiency: ends that MCS effectively met, goals that some progress was made toward, and ambitions that MCS endeavors had little to no impact improving on. Since progress toward each goal was not uniform, national and local educational reform initiatives in Memphis provide examples of both effective and ineffective methods of local reform.

The goals that MCS tried to reach according to the Memphis 2000 were actually products of national incentives to improve education, starting with the Reagan administration. On April 16, 1983, the Commission on Excellence in Education under the Reagan administration released the influential report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Reagan understood the importance of education in the national scheme of United States interaction in the world. The Strategic Defense Initiative program emphasized the pivotal role that education in general, but specifically mathematics and science education, can play in foreign affairs. With the focus on education in mind, Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell, called for the creation of a Commission for the purpose of “examin[ing] the quality of education in the United States and [making] a report to the Nation.” The report started by boldly claiming that “our nation is at risk [and Americans] have squandered the gains made in student achievement in the wake of the Sputnik challenge,” and proceeded to call American acceptance of academic mediocrity an “act

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of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.”\(^5\) It became apparent through reading the report that the Commission firmly believed in the direct correlation between academic prowess and national security, and used the Cold War as a case study for this conjecture. The report addressed harrowing statistics about the falling levels of student achievement in areas like math and science in addition to the 23 million adults that are labeled illiterate every day by tests administered in the United States.\(^6\) It also called to mind the projected increase in jobs that require advanced knowledge of mathematics, science, and technological skills as a reminder of the future of America. Overall, the report was a dismal account of the failures of the United States educational system, especially, acceptance of “the rising tide of mediocrity” by American schools and people that impeded international competition and crippled common American culture.\(^7\)

The way in which the Commission expressed these opinions is significantly telling of the severity of the issue. The strong diction and loaded, accusatory tone of the report is meant as a call to arms for the American people, which judging by the federal and local activity to improve education in the following years, it succeeded in doing. Overtly military terms to describe education, such as “disarmament” and “act of war,” impressed upon the reader the concept of education as a weapon. A weapon that was integral to the long-term international success of the United States.\(^8\) The report also referenced the role of education as “disenfranchisement and freedom” for the American people to stress the transcendent nature of education in America and the rest of the world. Furthermore, the report instilled guilt for the fact that “for the first time in history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal,

\(^{5}\) Ibid.
\(^{6}\) Ibid.
\(^{8}\) Ibid
and will not even approach those of their parents." The Commission seemed to blame the current generation of Americans for the state of disrepair that education was in during the 1980s. Consequently, the report painted a dim picture for the future of America without immediate reforms of the content of education, standards and expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support in America’s schools.

*A Nation at Risk* prompted further exploration into American education to recognize the main problems that plagued the success of students. George H.W. Bush conducted his own study of American schools when he convened the “Education Summit” between his administration and the governors of all fifty states. The Summit took place in Charlottesville Virginia, in September 1989, and focused on national educational failures and remedies for these shortcomings. Upon arriving to the Summit, Congressional Democrats, spearheaded by Senator George Mitchell and Representative Richard Gephardt, already had a set of goals to submit to the general assembly. The goals were agreed upon largely, although changes were made to the original goals that referenced recruiting qualified teachers and increasing college participation of students. After a late night meeting at Boar’s Head Inn, the president and the state governors hammered out the six lofty National Education Goals for the continued growth and prosperity of the United States:

1. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least ninety percent.

3. By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

4. By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

5. By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

6. By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.\(^\text{14}\)

The six National Education Goals borrowed from the ideas in and vocabulary of *A Nation at Risk*. Phrases like “global economy” and “responsible citizenship” were present in *A Nation at Risk* and resurrected in the National Education Goals. In addition, both reports presented specific themes about the international role of America and the duty of its citizens to educated and maintain the role of the United States in the global community and economy through math and science achievement and literacy. Thus, *A Nation at Risk* inspired the establishment of the six National Education Goals and consequently laid the foundation for future governmental endeavors to improve education by relating education to current international affairs and putting it into perspective for Americans.

President Bush used the goals established by the Education Summit as the heart of his policy entitled *America 2000: An Education Strategy* that he presented to the American people on April 18, 1991.\(^\text{15}\) Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander compiled the educational strategy that was America 2000 with four innovations to meet the National Education Goals: national curricular standards, a voluntary examination system, school choice opportunities, and limited


federal support for the creation of New American Schools using “break the mold” practices and policies about education.\textsuperscript{16} The America 2000 policy also had four specific sections, which are better and more accountable schools, a New Generation of American Schools, a Nation of Students (a name that bears an uncanny resemblance to \textit{A Nation at Risk}), and communities that facilitate learning.\textsuperscript{17} To accomplish all of these reforms, the Bush administration called for $690 million to jump-start the program.\textsuperscript{18}

Through America 2000, Bush followed the tradition set before him by Reagan and \textit{A Nation at Risk}, but with renewed fervor. Bush intended America 2000 to be a revolutionary national strategy that left the power to the states through voluntary recommendations for action. He proclaimed “to those who want to see real improvement in American education, I say: There will be no renaissance without revolution” in defense of America 2000.\textsuperscript{19} According to some, the plan is revolutionary; “it [was] the first serious policy initiative in the nation’s history to address that issue [of how the government was serving the children].”\textsuperscript{20} Others found fault with the strategy on the grounds of school choice because under Bush it included private institutions.\textsuperscript{21} It was widely accepted that the point of school choice was to cause public schools to compete for students, and become better institutions to attract more students and parents. Many felt that the inclusion of private schools in schools choice would drain money from the public school system.

and fail to incite any true improvement.\textsuperscript{22} Regardless of the criticism, Bush pushed for the passage of the \textit{America 2000: Excellence in Education Act} of 1991, but it was never realized in Bush’s term as President of the United States.\textsuperscript{23} Essentially, America 2000 represented steps toward reforming education that many parties were uncomfortable with taking. The establishment of American Achievement Tests for all students as a federal mandate undermined the local control that states are given by the Constitution to determine educational standards. America 2000 encouraged colleges, employers, and parents to look at national test scores to determine the quality of student, employee, and institution. Opposition to the Bush national testing plan by influential organizations like the National Parent Teacher Association and the NAACP effectively killed the bill.\textsuperscript{24}

Where Bush failed to produce results, President Clinton passed educational reform by bearing in mind resistance to America 2000 and adapting his own plan accordingly. George H.W. Bush was not the only “Education President,” as proven by President Clinton’s educational undertakings.\textsuperscript{25} Bill Clinton was no stranger to educational reform; he initiated monumental educational reforms within Arkansas during his stay as governor to decrease the dropout rate among other reforms.\textsuperscript{26} Clinton was present during the Bush Education Summit and was, in fact,


\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{25}Ibid.

an instrumental player in the establishment of the National Education Goals. Clinton’s extensive background with educational reform brought it to the forefront during the campaign and his presidency. In conjunction with a friendly Congress, Clinton administration passed many educational reform objectives in 1993, like the Family Involvement Initiative, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, the Improving America’s Schools Act, and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. All of which were enacted with the hope of revitalizing American education.

However, the most comprehensive plan to come from Clinton was yet another millennium promise: Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Goals 2000, or H.R. 1804, sailed through the 103rd Congress on March 31, 1994, under the sponsorship of Representative Dale Kildee of Michigan. It passed with a 307-118 majority in the House of Representatives and a 71-25 majority in the Senate. The underlying premise of Goals 2000 was the more that people expect the more people will receive from students, faculty, and schools under the National Education Goals. Goals 2000 altered Bush’s National Education Goals by adding two goals to the list. Therefore, the goals addresses school readiness, school completion, student achievement and citizenship, teacher education and professional development, mathematics and science, adult literacy and lifelong learning, safe, disciplined and alcohol and drug free schools, and parental participation. Interestingly enough, the new goals resembled the original goals of the

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Congressional Democrats sent into the Education Summit. Goals 2000 “established a number of ‘firsts’ in national policy,” such as:30

1. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.
4. By the year 2000, the Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
5. By the year 2000, United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
6. By the year 2000, every adult America will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
7. By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
8. By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.31

What was once a national strategy under Bush became federal programming under Clinton, although the Clinton administration advertised Goals 2000 under the opposite premise to Congress. Clinton passed Goals 2000 through Congress by capitalizing on the voluntary nature of the testing and concentrating the testing on 4th, 8th, and 12th graders, unlike Bush. Clinton stated in regards to the difference between America 2000 and Goals 2000 that, “these would not be ‘federal’ standards… but ‘national’ ones.”32 Despite differences between the policies, Goals

2000 was an extension of the millennium centric language used by previous legislators and presidential administrations to apply to education. The educational initiatives dating back to *America at Risk* all reference the millennium—the national education goals started with “by the year 2000,” while the actual policies of Bush, Clinton, and Memphis incorporated the year 2000 into the title (America 2000, Goals 2000, and Memphis 2000 respectively). Mentions of 2000 invited interest about the significance of the millennium for policy makers of the 1980s and 1990s. Fear of the unknown impact of Y2K influenced the government to focus on what can accomplished before that time. In addition, a desire to start the millennium on top of the international educational pyramid was implicit in the titles of the educational initiatives. Honestly, the numbers fared nicely as well. A ten-year retrospective on improvements in American education would be a confidence boost for the dawn of a new era in 2000 amidst inevitable discussions about the future of America and its international role.

Apart from continuing the millennial focus of educational reform and reaffirming the National Education Goals, Goals 2000 formed various governmental entities to aid states in the implementation of Goals 2000 principles. The National Education Goals Panel instituted in Title II, Part A, Section 201 of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* “built a national consensus for education improvement, reported on the progress toward achieving the National Education Goals, and reviewed the voluntary national content standards, voluntary student standards, and Opportunity-to-Learn standards certified by the national Education Standards and Improvement Council.”

The National Education Goals Panel contained eighteen members: two presidential appointees, eight governors, four members of Congress, and four members of state legislatures.
Another product of Goals 2000 was the National Skills Standards Board that facilitated the adoption of voluntary skills standards. Finally, Title II, Part B, Section 211 started the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) to attend to “the linkage of economic prosperity to educational achievement in an age of increasing global interdependence and competition.” It had nineteen members, all of which were appointed by the president after nominations by Secretary of Education, the Speaker of the House, the Majority Leader of the Senate or the National Education Goals Panel.

In addition to new government agencies, Goals 2000: Educate America Act founded opportunity-to-learn grants. NESIC upheld opportunity-to-learn standards in order to “help all students learn more than they do presently.” Since not all schools were funded equally, they could not be held to the same standards; therefore, “[where] the national goals clearly were meant to focus on excellence… opportunity-to-learn standards deal with equity.” Various programs, such as NESIC and opportunity-to-learn standards, instituted by Goals 2000 would not survive the amendments Senator Arlen Specter attached to the 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act passed on April 26, 1996, that trimmed the Goals 2000 budget down to $350 million for fiscal year 1996. Another important change to the legislation was the Alternative Submission option for states to bypass sending an application into Secretary Riley when seeking Goals 2000

36 Ibid.
funds. Instead, the state would send “assurances of a plan meeting Goals 2000 standards,” but be “accountable to the citizens of the state.”

In general, the legislation aided individual states to develop standards for students, while ensuring that overall student performance and achievement increased. Secretary of Education Richard Riley explained Goals 2000 as legislation that “provided the help that states and local communities need… in exchange for added resources, it simply asks for states to set their own rigorous academic standards and to develop their own approaches to improving education.” Goals 2000 supported voluntary measures, concerning academic standards, student performance tests, and national occupational skill standards, at the grassroots level. Again, Richard Riley commented that, “the federal government’s new role will be to support community and state education reform efforts by placing emphasis on flexibility rather than mandates, on comprehensive reform rather than narrow programs and on fundamental improvements rather than merely maintaining the status quo.” Goals 2000 built upon previous policies for educational reform, but represented a shift in the way the federal government approached public education.

One new approach was funding; initially, Congress appropriated $105 million for Goals 2000. Congress approved another $362 million for fiscal year 1995, $350 million for fiscal year

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40 Ibid.
1996, and $476 million for 1997, to implement Goals 2000.\textsuperscript{46} The legislation itself authorized the appropriation of $3,000,000 for the National Education Goals Panel, $3,000,000 for the National Education Standards and Improvement Council, $2,000,000 towards Opportunity-to-Learn Development Grants, and $5,000,000 for Assessment Development and Evaluation Grants for 1994.\textsuperscript{47} Goals 2000 was internally generous, as well as generous to the states. Seven months after Goals 2000 passed, upwards of thirty states had received over $70 million in federal seed money.\textsuperscript{48} The money had begun to reap rewards from the states. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act led to substantial gains in educational reform that previous policies had only taken small shaky steps toward achieving. The Goals 2000: Reforming Education federal report states, “state-by-state, at varying rates of progress, student achievement is increasing, and state and local education leaders agree that Goals 2000 has played a significant role in the process. The program clearly represented an important investment in helping all children achieve to high standards.”\textsuperscript{49} By 1998, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education stated that 47 states created Goals 2000 plans and that all fifty states developed ways to hold schools accountable for the performance of its students.\textsuperscript{50} In fact, once states realized that the federal government posed them no threat over education, federal funding for Goals 2000 shot up $247.3 million between 1994 and 1996. From 1996 to 1998, Goals 2000 granted more than $1.7 billion to states for

\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.
various reform projects. The increase in federal funding results from increased demand by the states for Goals 2000 funds.

Tennessee was one of the states that partook in the Goals 2000 funds available through the Alternative Submission provision to implement local programs to augment programs all over the state.

Goals 2000 Funding Allocations to Tennessee, 1994-1998

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<tr>
<td>Total Number of</td>
<td>$92,400,400</td>
<td>$361,870,000</td>
<td>$340,000,000</td>
<td>$467,000,000</td>
<td>$466,000,000</td>
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<td>States and Outly</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Tennessee</td>
<td>$1,677,460</td>
<td>$6,508,803</td>
<td>$6,000,784</td>
<td>$8,432,741</td>
<td>$8,143,051</td>
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In West Tennessee in 1996, these included funding programs in various county schools districts, and Memphis City Schools. Goals 2000 funding went towards individual school endeavors in MCS system, such as Multimedia Production in Garden view Elementary School, “Tennessee Exploration 2000” in Hollywood Elementary School, “The Challenger Project” in Newberry Elementary School, “TOPS (Technical Opportunities for Participatory Studies)” in Oakshire Elementary Schools, the Craigmont Junior/Senior High School Curriculum Enrichment

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51 Ibid.
Project, “RET (Raleigh Egypt Television)” in Raleigh Egypt high School, “Computer
Equipment Repair Program, Level I and II” in Southwest Vocational Technology Center, and
“Technology and Geometry” in White Station, Sheffield, and Booker T Washington. The Goals
2000 grant also went towards the MCS system as a whole with funding for programs like
“HIPPY,” “Generations and Innovations: Achieving Internet and Computer Proficiency Through
a Community-Based, Intergenerational, Oral History Project,” and the “Unitus Bulletin Board
System.”55 Goals 2000 funding made all of these programs possible, thus proving the
significance of grassroots educational reform.

Even before the availability of Goals 2000 funds, Memphis launched a program to
remedy the failures of Memphis City Schools called Memphis 2000. It established its own set of
goals to accomplish by the year 2000 for the 19th largest school district in the country in 1993.56
The Task Force Report for revitalizing Memphis City Schools issued on December 8, 1992,
under the leadership of MCS Superintendent Gerry House, illustrated local efforts to meet the
national standards ordained by the federal government. The task force released the report to
show the improvements made to Memphis City Schools by way of the National Education Goals
and implementation of national efforts. Memphis 2000 established a set of nine goals, most of
which stem from the National Education Goals. The goals set forth in Memphis 2000 were:

1. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated
   competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science,
   foreign languages, civics an government, economics, the arts, history, and geography,
   and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so

56 Cornell Christion, “Citizens Get a Close Look at City Schools in Action,” The Commercial Appeal (Memphis),
1994.
they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.
4. By the year 2000, United States students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
7. By the year 2000, close the educational deficit for existing students.
8. By the year 2000, enable parents to accept educational responsibility for children.
9. By the year 2000, all students shall receive an education in the fine arts that fosters intellectual, aesthetic, creative, and emotional development and multicultural understanding.57

Some of the goals in Memphis 2000 differ from the goals edified in America 2000 and even Goals 2000. Memphis 2000 contained the six National Education Goals of America 2000 in addition to three goals that the Memphis 2000 Task Force identified as pertaining specifically to Memphis. Memphis 2000 targeted the educational deficit, parental responsibility and fine arts education because as Superintendent W.W. Herenton stated in “Preparing Our Youth for the 21st Century,” “the school system is not doing a satisfactory job in addressing the needs of a growing at-risk population. This at-risk group of students is largely black and poor.”58 Thus, the additional goals were established under the premise of combating the inevitable impact of the racial and economic divides of Memphis on the educational system. Goals 2000 later recognized that the problem of parental participation was a national epidemic. The Task Force plan also proposed seven strategies that targeted the needs of preschoolers, the decentralized management of schools, educationally captivating teachers and administrators, students who value hard work, responsible parents, business involved in education and literacy training, and a supportive

community to accomplish each goal. \textsuperscript{59} Memphis 2000 premeditated the Clinton administration’s focus on grassroots efforts to better the national educational system and confirmed the events of local efforts to improve education. Since local communities had their hands on the educational pulse of the area, they were presumably the most qualified parties to diagnose problems in the system. Memphis 2000 symbolized a cohesive partnership between the federal government and states that followed the pattern of American education reform efforts, according to the Department of Education:

> Historically, public education in the United States has been a decentralized system, with states possessing the primary constitutional responsibility for the provision of elementary and secondary education. But since the nation’s earliest days, the federal government has also played a critical role, recognizing that an educated citizenry is essential to maintaining a democratic government and promoting the common good.\textsuperscript{60}

Fortunately, Memphis had the guidance of the federal government’s National Education Goals in declaring the main issues within the MCS system, but because Memphis was on its own to implement solutions to the problems, three distinct categories of success emerged.

Of the nine goals, MCS system succeeded in accomplishing the second and fifth goals in relation to the remaining goals by far. Memphis 2000 addressed the second goal of increasing the number of students that graduate high school to 90\% with a clear-cut course of action to increase the number of high school graduates by decreasing the number of students who drop out of school. The Task Force Report for Memphis 2000 provided background on the dropout problem in Memphis high schools. Of the students that were supposed to graduate in 1991, 35\% of them dropped out before completing high school.\textsuperscript{61} The high dropout rate had many reasons, but the


most prolific causes are the bureaucracy of the school system, the failure to stress the importance
of the goal, and various environmental factors. All of these parts of the problem compounded to
deter students from graduating. The report recommended the creation of a school based Dropout
Prevention Database to collect information on the students who dropped and apply this
knowledge to efforts to keep students in school.\textsuperscript{62} However, no further discussion of the database
was available.

The Memphis 2000 First Annual Report Card listed percentages for students who did and
did not complete high school in four years. While 52.5\% of students in high school graduated in
four years the 1991-1992 school year, 13.4 \% were still enrolled in school and 34.1\% were not
enrolled. The following school year, 53\% of students graduated in four years, while 15\% were
still enrolled and 32\% were no longer enrolled.\textsuperscript{63} However, the 1993-1994 statistics on high
school graduates complicated the promising increase in graduates. The Second Annual Report
revealed that in the 1993-1994 school year, the graduation rate was slightly lower at 51.4\% of
high school students graduated in four years. Of the remaining students, 13.3\% were still
enrolled in school while 35.6\% were not enrolled.\textsuperscript{64} The Tennessee Department of Education had
its own statistics concerning the dropout rate for Memphis City Schools compared to those of the
state of Tennessee. Although it varied year by year, the yearly dropout rate appeared to decrease,
according to the Tennessee Department of Education.

Event (or Yearly) Dropout Rate for Memphis City Schools from 1994-1998

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<tr>
<td>Memphis City Schools</td>
<td>36.77%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>35.20%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>29.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Tennessee</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
<td>17.93%</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Since high school dropouts were not entirely possible to eradicate, MCS also focused on General Educational Development (GED) testing to help those who dropped out of high school have the knowledge necessary to be competitive in the work field. Of the 1,879 participants in the GED examination of 1992, only 59.2% passed. The GED examination pass rate decreased in 1993 to 59.1% out of 6,497 participants and in 1994 with 58.9% out of 6,988 participants.

The results of the report prompted the commission of Memphis 2000 to confess a slight decline in achieving goal two based on these statistics, although there is a staggering increase in the number of individuals that took the GED test. Therefore, in one way or another, Memphis succeeded in bolstering the number of students who graduated high school, as well as the number of dropouts that engage in the GED test, partly due to the easily identifiable solutions to the problem. In addition, Memphis 2000 considered federal research, by citing the “Dropout Prevention: Current Thinking, Suggested Reading, Examples of Promising Projects” released in 1991 as a source of information in the planning process for this goal, which contributed to the success of this goal.

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68 Ibid.
Combating adult illiteracy was the fifth goal of Memphis 2000. Despite discouraging background information on illiteracy in Memphis, the task Force was able to institute a change for the better. In 1992, Tennessee’s adult literacy rank was 49\textsuperscript{th} in the United States. The low levels of adult literacy in Tennessee transfer over to Memphis, where approximately 148,000 Memphians would benefit from literacy training. Furthermore, 34.9\% of students recently accepted into Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) needed to be enrolled in remedial classes.\textsuperscript{70} Since Memphis experienced problems with illiteracy, it was natural that the Memphis City School system should team up with other organizations like the Literacy Foundation Memphis, Inc. to contest illiteracy. Illiteracy in Memphis stemmed from the lack of awareness of illiteracy as a legitimate concern, lack of resources and availability, and a lack of support from the community. After identifying the causes of rampant illiteracy in Memphis, the Task Force report offered courses of action to turn the tide of illiteracy in Memphis. Enlarging existing literacy programs in Memphis and establishing more programs reigned as the obvious methods of reducing illiteracy. The Task Force also mentioned financial support for those who are illiterate topped the list of suggestions as well as community awareness campaigns and research programs. Presumably, the establishment of a Community Task Force of local businesses and literacy organizations would provide the adequate support and research capabilities to dislodge the massive roadblock of illiteracy in Memphis.\textsuperscript{71}

The First and Second Annual Memphis 2000 Report Cards showed statistics on the effectiveness of literacy programs erected by Memphis City Schools. The report cards measured the number of adult participants in literacy programs in the Memphis area to determine the availability of helpful programs. Of the various literacy programs available in Memphis, the


MCS program had 6,277 participants for the year 1991. That number increased over a four-year period to 6,988. Overall, the various literacy organizations helped 8,266 people by 1994.\textsuperscript{72} Memphis City Schools succeeded in tackling the fifth goal in the early 1990s by simply recruiting more Memphians to participate in literacy training and finding the resources to accommodate all of them. Unfortunately, the study did not include a way to measure the quality of MCS literacy programs, only the quantity of individuals served. Even without these statistics, Memphis championed decreasing adult literacy with effective programs that cut to the heart of the issue.

Not all of the Memphis 2000 goals were solved completely. The majority of Memphis 2000 goals reached some level of success, but the lack of obvious solutions to the problem severely limited that success. Marginal progress was made toward achieving the first, fourth, eighth, and ninth goals. Since before Memphis 2000, school readiness had been a recognized concern for Memphis City Schools. While Memphis City School Superintendent W.W. Herenton held office, between 1979 and 1991, he stated in “Preparing the Youth for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century” that faulty early childhood education was a problem and proposed costly reforms.\textsuperscript{73} Taking inspiration from the Special Report, Memphis 2000 recognized school readiness as a high priority problem. The Task Force cited “physical deficits, delayed cognitive skills development and delayed socio-emotional development” as reasons that contributed to the lack of school readiness among Memphis children.\textsuperscript{74} Statistics on remedial classes, the number of teenage mothers, and the immunizations of children in Memphis proved the seriousness of these factors. A Memphis 2000 study conducted by the Task Force found that 10\% of the MCS entering first

\textsuperscript{73} W. W. Herenton, “Preparing Our Youth for the 21st Century: A Special Report from the Superintendent of Schools,” Memphis Room, Benjamin L. Hooks Public Library.
grade class were ill equipped and thus referred to pre-kindergarten classes. Furthermore, 15.25% of the children born in Memphis were born to teenage mothers, while less than half of Memphis’s two year olds had the recommended immunizations for toddlers.\textsuperscript{75} The best way to address the problems was to incorporate the findings of another study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching called \textit{Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation}. \textit{Ready to Learn} recommends a seven step agenda to “address the educational and health needs of children at an early age.”\textsuperscript{76} The use of a federally recognized report on school readiness improved the odds of achieving this goal greatly because instead of starting from scratch, Memphis could build off of a strong foundation for solving the problem.

The 1993 Memphis 2000 Annual Report Card acknowledged various partnerships that emerged to tackle the issues listed in the four objectives. For example, WKNO developed a Ready-to-Learn programming directed at children aged 2-5 before and after school, peppered with parenting suggestions. Other efforts included an immunization drive, expanding local Head Start programs, and the founding of Partners in Public Education (PIPE) a non-profit organization to seek out private funds for the public school system.\textsuperscript{77} The immunization drive was particularly effective; the percentage of children having the required immunizations at age two jumped from 50% in 1992 to 56% in 1993.\textsuperscript{78} The percentage jumped again in 1994 to 67.3%.\textsuperscript{79} Memphis also made large gains in decreasing the number of pregnancies per 1000 female teens aged 15-19 from 135.6 in 1992 to 88.7 in 1993 within Shelby County, which lands...
under the state level. However, the same reports recognized numerous pitfalls in the efforts made by Memphis City Schools and the Memphis area. The percentage of students failing the first grade increased from 11.8% in 1992 to 12.6% in 1993. The Memphis 2000 Second Annual Report Card further commented on these statistics, by showing that in 1994 the percentage of children who failed first grade increased to 13%, far from the desired 5%. In general, progress made toward school readiness was not a universal success, but some components of school readiness improved, due to previous federal research and knowledge of effective local implementation.

The fourth goal of Memphis 2000 dealt with improving the mathematics and science achievement of students within MCS. The United States ranked 14th in mathematics achievement and 15th in science achievement based on results of an international competition. Likewise, Memphis tenth graders ranked in the 40th percentile in mathematics. The ineptitude of Memphis City School students in math and science came from low expectations, low student motivational levels, poor teaching credentials, and the lack of value placed on high math and science achievement. Apparent remedies to the problem were to increase the number of teachers competent in mathematics and science. The Task Force floated around the idea of creating a Memphis Council on Math and Science, though it never expanded on details to institute such a Council.

The Second Annual Report Card on Memphis 2000 used mathematics and science scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills of fourth and eighth graders to judge MCS student achievement in math and science.

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80 Ibid.
The national percentile rank for Memphis City School students consistently fell short compared to the state level, and experienced inconclusive growth and reduction in math and science achievement among Memphis fourth and eighth graders. In fourth graders, math achievement dropped, while science achievement rose. The opposite was true for eighth graders. The Task Force also considered mathematics and science ACT scores to gauge MCS math and science achievement, but found them lacking compared to the state level. MCS ACT scores trailed at least two points behind the state level in 1993 and 1994.\textsuperscript{85} The lack of major initiatives directed towards mathematics and science achievement was a result of the lack of serious program proposals. Although MCS mathematics scores were below state standards, \textit{Education Week} recognized Tennessee overall as making “significant gains between 1992 and 1996 in the percent 4th graders who scored at the ‘proficient’ level or above on the math portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress.”\textsuperscript{86} Therefore, the MCS Task Force made mixed progress

\begin{table}[h]
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\hline
\hline
\textbf{4th Grade} & & & & \\
\textit{Math} & 52 & 43 & 49 & 45 \\
\textit{Science} & 63 & 62 & 62 & 62 \\
\hline
\textbf{8th Grade} & & & & \\
\textit{Memphis City Schools} & 34 & 42 & 38 & 36 \\
\textit{State of Tennessee} & 54 & 58 & 56 & 54 \\
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\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
toward the fourth goal of Memphis 2000 because of the nature of the problem and evident solutions.

Enabling parents to accept educational responsibility for their children was the eighth goal of Memphis 2000 reform program. Before the Memphis 2000 Task Force could remedy the problem, it had to distinguish the reasons for the low level of parental responsibility. The sources of low parental participation in Memphis were two-fold—societal and school based. Negative attitudes of parents and school personnel, inadequate training and models to show parents how to become involved in the academic undertakings of their children, and a lack of policies directed towards increasing parental involvement caused parental evasion of responsibility for their child’s education. The First Task Force Report Card failed to configure how to measure parental responsibility, but suggested looking at the number of parents that participate in PTA, MCS site-based school councils, and volunteer at MCS, as well as reducing teenage pregnancies and surveying parents and teachers. Although the Second Annual Report Card promised a way to evaluate each of the indicators, the Task Force had still not found a way to measure the success of this goal. The failure of MCS to make substantial changes in parental responsibility was partly the fault of the nature of responsibility. MCS blindly grappled with how to get parents more involved on the school side of the issue.

Since the concept of parental responsibility was ambiguous, it became difficult to manufacture methods of increasing parental responsibility. One effective way to increase parental involvement was an aggressive public relations campaign to show parents that schools

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88 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
welcomed active roles in educational progress at school.\textsuperscript{91} Under the guidance of Superintendent Gerry House, Memphis City Schools invited parents to an open house for their child’s school in an attempt to raise parental responsibility and involvement. On May 3-7, 1993, MCS allowed parents to sit in on their child’s classes from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM. This measure permitted parents to see their child’s daily routine and gave MCS a good reputation for inducing parental participation.\textsuperscript{92} Where the public relations campaign succeeded, other Task Force plans, such as a “Parents Bill of Rights” and an Office of Parenting and Race Relations, lacked any implementation whatsoever or federal guidance for these objectives.\textsuperscript{93} Thus, Memphis progressed some toward the eighth goal in a complicated combination of positive and negative.

The ninth goal of Memphis 2000 stressed the importance of the fine arts to one’s intellectual and creative development. Although some fine arts programs were available to MCS students, there were not nearly enough to ensure that all students had the opportunity to participate in the fine arts. The MCS elementary schools shared six arts specialists, and many teachers placed in charge of fine arts at individual schools lacked artistic training. A partnership between MCS and the Memphis Arts Council provided artists and teacher training, but the Task Force believed that “the programs should compliment rather than substitute for an adequate arts curriculum in the Memphis City Schools.”\textsuperscript{94} The lack of resources correlated to the lack of importance put on the arts, faulty teacher training and the pitiful arts curriculum. The Task Force realized that a healthy appreciation of art within MCS would increase student interest in art projects. Teacher training in the arts and the availability of teachers were paramount to ensure

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
that all students had exposure to the fine arts. Consequently, the Task Force assumed that well trained teachers would invite the fine arts to be more visible in the MCS curriculum.

The Task Force relied on the number of fine arts specialists within MCS and the number of high school theater programs to indicate the progress toward the ninth goal. In 1993, there was one arts specialist for every 650 students and only nine high schools had theater programs. Only a year later, there was the same number of arts specialists, but 11 high schools with theater programs.\textsuperscript{95} The increase in high schools with theater programs proved that the fine arts increased to meet the rising demand. However, the fact that the Task Force did not recognize that many genres of art existed under the moniker of fine arts complicated the version of success that the Task force boasted. Additionally, the number of fine arts specialists remained unchanged, indicating either a lack of progress or the failure of proposed plans to train more arts specialists. Yet again, an unclear idea of how to achieve the goal and useful ways to calculate the progress made toward achieving the goal kept the Task Force from accomplishing impressive progress on the ninth goal, possibly because of the lack of federal research and enactment of practices to increase fine arts education at the time.

Whereas the ninth goal made some progress, attempts to remedy the third, sixth, and seventh goals were dismally ineffective and embarrassingly executed, if at all. The third goal addresses academic competency and its connection to civic duty for Memphis students. The Task Force identifies the causes of rampant incompetency within Memphis City Schools as faults of the curriculum, lack of citizenship and participation, low expectations and morals, lack of parental support, and inadequate funding and distribution of funds. The recommendations of the Task Force contain flowery phrases like “emotional, ethical, and personal growth of individual child,” without substantial program initiatives in place to resolve the lamentations of the Task

Force. The Task Force listed strategies applicable to the eradication of incompetency in MCS: decentralized school management, development of captivating curriculum, fostering the desire to work hard in students, parental responsibility for education, local business involvement in education, and community efforts to improve education. The Task Force referenced “What Work Requires of Schools: A Scans Report for America 2000” published in June 1991 and based its diagnosis of the problem upon its research. However, it failed to build specific programs or policies on these strategies, which contributed to the lack of progress in achieving the third goal.

The First Annual Report for Memphis 2000 used statistics about the median national percentile rank for Memphis City School students in the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills for grades 4 and 8 to show the level of competency for MCS students.

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<tr>
<td>Memphis City Schools</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Tennessee</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memphis City Schools</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Tennessee</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
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Competency scores remained significantly below state levels. The Task Force looked into ACT scores in addition to the Comprehensive test of Basic Skills, and found that ACT composite scores for Memphis City Schools went from 18.1 in 1992 to 17.8 in 1994.\textsuperscript{100} Another study of ACT composite scores between the years 1996 to 2000 revealed that in 1996 ACT scores averaged at roughly 17.2 and ended up in 2000 at approximately 16.4, indicating no progress towards increasing scores.\textsuperscript{101} The Task Force investigated TCAP scores as a third way to measure competency and was equally disappointed. TCAP test results are consistently below state standards as well.\textsuperscript{102} Overall, test scores for the Comprehensive test of Basic Skills and the ACT for students in the Memphis City School system indicated a downwards trend in competency and led the Task Force to conclude that, “no progress was made in Memphis toward achieving goal 3 and there was, in fact, significant deterioration in the eighth grade.”\textsuperscript{103}

The sixth goal listed in Memphis 2000 was to make MCS drug and violence free. MCS had become increasingly more dangerous for students. In fact, some administrators and commissioners debated whether Memphis should invest in more middle schools or junior high schools to curb teenaged violence.\textsuperscript{104} The Task Force concluded that MCS were violent and drug ridden because of inconsistent enforcement of drug and violence policies, a lack of adequate intervention and prevention programs for students, and the inability to identify the roles for parents and educators in the anti-drug and violence campaigns of schools. The fact that schools did not have the resources to acquire state-of-the-art training and materials to deter violence

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Cornell Christion, "Board Rethinks Changing to Middle Schools," \textit{The Commercial Appeal} (Memphis), February-March 9, 1994
contributed to the problem too. The Task Force wanted to make MCS safer for students by following preordained policies while adopting newer ones. Other ideas were a public awareness push of the Memphis City School Drug Free Schools Program and the creation of an Employee Assistance Program. The Task Force never offered further details on certain plans of action mentioned in the main reports, or tried to decipher the data they already collected. Overall, to promote the sixth goal for Memphis education involved increased parental involvement and mentoring programs.

An accurate way to measure the amount of violence in MCS was to tally the number of suspensions and expulsions every year, although there was no definitive way to distinguish the reasons for each suspension and the nature of punishment, according to the Tennessee Department of Education.

Number of Memphis City School Students Suspended and Expelled from 1991-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>Total Number of Suspensions:</th>
<th>Total Number of Expulsions:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>7,842</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>7,942</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>8,069</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-1995</td>
<td>8,514</td>
<td>605</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>8,153</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>8,226</td>
<td>1,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>8,557</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>8,079</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of suspensions and expulsions had risen erratically year by year. However, the jump in the number of students expelled from 798 in 1995-1996 to 1,338 in 1996-1997 was a considerable increase and indicated an increase either in violence or in stricter policy

106 Ibid.
enforcement by schools. The Task Force conducted yearly surveys of how safe students in fourth, eighth and eleventh grade in the MCS system felt in school as another measure of school safety. The survey was first included in the Second Annual Report. The findings concluded that 72.4% of fourth graders polled felt that their schools was most safe, while 20.8% felt moderately safe, and 5.3% felt least safe at school in 1995. Though no comparison data existed for the safety poll, the amount of students that felt unsafe at school was a staggering and unacceptable figure on its own that emphasized the problem of violence in MCS. The Task Force also did not have examples of federal programming showing effective programs to decrease the amount of violence and drugs in schools, limiting the success of the sixth goal from its planning stage. From the poll, it was obvious that The Task Force failed to make schools any safer by not knowing the best way to communicate to students about the problem.

Communication was not the only hitch in achieving the seventh goal. The seventh goal of Memphis 2000, to close the educational deficit for existing students, was a combination of sorts of the first educational goal of school readiness and the eighth goal to increase parental responsibility. The seventh goal lacked any real focus how to combat the educational deficit and how to determine what the deficit actually was. Specific and concrete programs to combat the educational deficit were absent from the Task Force’s initial report and follow up report cards. The Task Force spouted theories on the nature of the educational deficit, but never concluded on an accurate way to conclude how many children suffered from the it or what measures can be taken to close the deficit. The only information the Task Force provided on the educational deficit was references to the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills scores from the third and fourth goals. Since no definition or clear understanding came from the Task Force on the educational deficit, no progress could be made toward closing it.

Progress made to close the educational deficit is essentially nonexistent. The Task Force stated that educational deficit stemmed from some children start schools without the necessary early childhood developmental skills. Five reasons for the educational deficit were established and broken down to basic skills deficits, urban, environmental, and social deficits, teaching methodologies, support system deficits and racism.109 Specific solutions were adopted according to each individual cause for the educational deficit, but none of them were feasible for Memphis, let alone any national programs.110 Overall, the ambiguity of the education deficit and the lack of a method of measurement impeded Memphis from curbing the deficit with specific programs and policies. The magnitude of the educational deficit overwhelmed the Memphis 2000 Task Force and rendered unable to make any progress. A main component of the inability to isolate and solve the problem of the educational deficit stemmed from a lack of federal research into this subject because it was a Memphis centric educational reform goal.

Thus, Memphis City Schools experienced some progress toward the standards set for the millennium, although enacting the proposed initiatives did not last until the year 2000. Records of Memphis 2000 progress indicated a decline in action after 1995, with the Second Annual Report Card for the Memphis 2000 program. Similarly, the 1999 Appropriations bill ended of the authority of Goals 2000: Educate America Act, but George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act completely crippled Goals 2000. Residual funds for local programs continued until Goals 2000 was disestablished officially in 2002.111 Although disestablished, Goals 2000 successfully improved the national education system by targeting smaller local areas, such as Memphis City Schools. However, the effectiveness of Memphis 2000 was debatable. Not even the Memphis

2000 Task Force appeared to have faith in reaching the goals because the Second Annual Report Card in 1995 was the last progress report issued on Memphis 2000. Fissures within Memphis 2000 had emerged already in the separation of success into three categories of triumph, intermediate achievement and failure. The stratification of results taught valuable lessons about collaboration between federal and local governments over education. The goals that Memphis 2000 best reached were those goals that had extensive federal government input into the root causes and good implementation practices. From a deep examination of the goals, the role of the federal government in leading and supplementing educational reform was codified. The pattern in successes and failures of Memphis 2000 goals related back to which goals had the most comprehensive level of federal guidance. Whereas, when Memphis created its own goals, they were poorly defined and lacked initiative. Thus, federal guidance is the key to effective educational reform, coupled with local implementation efforts. Taken together, Goals 2000 and Memphis 2000 are evidence of what works and what does not work in the continued struggle for quality education and are essential to any plans for educational reform in Memphis.