



American Education Week, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Education is a lifelong process of growth and discovery that, for each child, begins within the inimitable shelter of the family and extends through years of schooling and experience. During American Education Week, we pause to reflect upon the importance of a strong educational system to our well-being as individuals and as a Nation.

America's schools play an important role in nurturing our children's intellectual and social development. By helping their students grow in knowledge, skill, and reasoning ability, teachers not only open the doors of opportunity for them, but also help them to become responsible, productive citizens. Giving young people a greater understanding of our Nation's history and preparing them to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens, America's schools help strengthen our system of self-government.

Our Nation's Founding Fathers clearly understood the vital connection between liberty and learning. They knew that only an educated and informed public can keep a free and democratic government. Like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, our fourth President, was a strong advocate of public education. "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance," he once wrote, "and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

Two hundred years after our Nation's founding, we can be grateful for the dedication to learning that is so deeply ingrained in American tradition. However, standing on the threshold of the 21st century also compels us to examine the state of American education and consider what it holds for our future. A good education is a lasting treasure in its own right, but is also essential to keeping the United States strong and prosperous in an increasingly competitive world.

In September, I met with the Nation's Governors in an historic Summit to discuss the challenges facing us in working toward excellence in education. The President's Education Summit with the Governors brought forth unanimous agreement on the significance of this issue to the future of the Nation and to the quality of life for every American. We will build upon the vision of our Founding Fathers in establishing national education goals and in mobilizing a state-by-state effort to restructure our educational system.

Improving our Nation's education system is not a job for its chief executives alone, however. The challenge and responsibility for the Nation's future must be met by each citizen in every walk of life. It will require the sustained involvement of parents, teachers, local school administrators, business leaders, elected officials, and the public at large. It will require recognizing the value of lifelong learning, raising our expectations, holding ourselves accountable for results, and never settling for the minimum. Every American can help ensure that young people receive the quality education they need and deserve. We can do so by participating in parent-teacher organizations; by serving on our local school boards; and by supporting private institutions, adult education, and literacy programs. We can also lend our support to our local libraries and museums, and encourage our children to take advantage of these valuable educational resources.

This year, as we observe American Education Week and reflect upon its theme, "Learning and Liberty: Our Roots, Our Future," let us renew our determination to improve America's educational system. Strengthening our schools is one of the greatest investments we can make in our Nation's future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week beginning November 12, 1989, as American Education Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George Bush".