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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 7118 of September 9, 1998

The President

America Goes Back to School, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

**A Proclamation**

Across America, millions of children are beginning a new school year with a sense of excitement and anticipation, taking another important step toward their future. As caring parents and responsible citizens, we must work together to nurture their love of learning and to ensure that the education they receive provides them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education is taking a leadership role in this important endeavor. The partners in this effort include the Department of Education and more than 4,000 schools, colleges, and universities; community, cultural, and religious groups; businesses; elected officials; policymakers; and the men and women of our Armed Forces. They have pledged to support our initiative, entitled “America Goes Back to School: Get Involved! Stay Involved!” Across the country, the Partnership is working to encourage family and community involvement in children’s learning and to create innovative solutions to education issues at the grassroots level.

I have set ambitious goals for America’s educational system, and we must pursue them with vigor if we are to prepare our Nation for the challenges and possibilities of the next century. We must have strong standards of achievement and discipline and well-trained, dedicated teachers in every classroom. We must work to reduce class size so all our children get the individual attention they need, especially in the critical early grades. We must build new schools, modernize existing ones, and expand public school choice by strengthening Federal support for charter schools. We must bring computers, communications technology, and the latest educational software into the classroom so that every American student is technologically literate and can take advantage of today’s information revolution.

My Administration is also committed to making our schools safe and orderly places where teachers can teach and children can learn. With the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, we have supported schools and communities that offer antitruancy, curfew, school uniform, and dress code policies. We have strictly enforced the policy of zero tolerance for guns. Last year alone, more than 6,000 students had guns taken from them and were sent home. This month, we will begin distributing a guide—*Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*—to help all schools prevent violence before it starts. At my direction, the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General developed this guide to help school officials recognize and respond to the early signs of student violence. Later this fall, we will hold the first ever White House Conference on School Safety to develop effective strategies to keep our schools safe, disciplined, and drug-free.

My Administration also supports legislative initiatives that encourage literacy and learning at every age—from expanding the Head Start program for preschoolers to providing trained reading tutors to elementary school children to offering college aid for low-income students. We are working with the Congress to fund the Administration’s proposal to strengthen teacher training programs and provide scholarships to 35,000 well-prepared teachers who commit to teaching in underserved urban or rural schools.

The quality of America's educational system will determine the shape of our children's future and the success of our Nation. As America's students go back to school this year, let us renew our commitment to ensuring that the doors of every classroom open onto a future bright with possibility for every child.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, 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 September 6 through September 12, 1998, as a time when America Goes Back to School. I encourage parents, schools, community and State leaders, businesses, civic and religious organizations, and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities expressing support for high academic standards and meaningful involvement in schools and colleges and the students and families they serve.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".