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Omaha2000 Project. National Education Goals Satellite Town Meeting. U.S. Department of Education.

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This teleconference was put on by the Omaha2000 project, which is billed as one of the first America 2000 communities. Before and after the broadcast a list of the 2,200 different communities participating was scrolled upon the screen. This is the eighth of such broadcasts, hosted live each month U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, as an interactive video teleconference for communities working to achieve the National Education Goals. <p> As the teleconference opened, Richard Riley, gave a greeting over the phone to the proceedings. The <cite>National Education Goals Satellite Town Meeting</cite> then began with an overview of their six national goals for the project. The presentation included a film clip from a local television station, in which the nightly news team explained how the project operated. Following this, the remainder of the hour was spent taking telephone questions over a toll-free, 1-800 number. <p> 1st question (FL): How will Omaha2000 implement outcome-based evaluations? <p> >> An offer was made to answer snailmail results to people's comments on the proceedings, if they would write them. The point was made that high school "graduation will be based on outcomes." Does this imply that the kids won't receive diplomas until they get a job or go to college? <p> 2nd question (CA): Will 2000 evaluations be conducted regionally rather than top down from a state-level? <p> >> Of course, they will be local. <p> 3rd question (NM): Where can we look for the additional administrative support that this project requires? <p> >> Resources have to come from the community, the private sector <p> 4th question (SC): What major obstacles did they encounter at the project's start? <p> >> They encountered liaisons between schools and community, and a lack of trust of a nonpartisan nature, that was not evident in the report card—which grades whole

communities, not just schools. <p> 5th question (TX): how does Omaha2000 plan to implement "success-by-six"? <p> >> They utilize the "parents-as-teacher" program, and the "hippie" program from arkansas. <p> 6th question (FL): Will you promise to teach responsibility to children? <p> >> Of course. The role of the family is integral. <p> 7th question (NB): How do you gain consensus on goals for schools? <p> >> The best way is to distribute a survey. <p> The next broadcasting of the <cite>National Education Goals Satellite Town Meeting</cite> will be 20:30 EST, on March 9, 1993. <p> ***<p> <cite>Assessment of the Town Meeting:</cite> Apparently, this was the eighth of these broadcasts. I have made a videotape of them, if anyone would like to consult it for more detail. In general, I found that the format did not impart much information about either U.S. Depart of Education projects, or the broadcast itself as a communication channel. The best information included was a briefly-shown map of the communities participating, most of which were located in the eastern half of the nation. <p> The production quality was fairly low. It appeared to be a two-camera studio, with the moderator and three panelists sitting at a coffee table. And, they had no coffee. The flim clip from the local news station contained a number of people, including kids, who held up numbers, which stood for each of the six national goals. This segment was the only value-added video work. The rest of the production could have been accomplished via radio as, overall, the video track was a flat, information burden. Politicians and teachers never come off very well in live video. <p> Calling this a "satellite town meeting" is wishful jargon, as it was conducted more like a talk radio program. None of the other participating sites have the option to beam up video. One is not given the sense that there are issues on the floor

to be decided by consensual participation—which is what we should expect at anything called a “town meeting.” I will tune in next month and see if anything has changed. I think whoever produces the program should concentrate on increasing its information delivery. This media provides a good opportunity to present visual data, especially people with content from the evaluation components of these programs are participating. This would be more convincing than the current format, of talking heads.

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