



National Press Club Luncheon Series

Secretary of Education – Arne Duncan

May 29, 2009

Question (*Minutes 35:32-36:11*): “Why did you backtrack on allowing federal stimulus funds for school modernization?”

Duncan: “I don’t think we’ve backtracked there, we...money can absolutely be used to re-hab, and to fix schools that are in need of help. And **there’s so much you can do to make schools more energy efficient, to retrofit them, to make schools more accessible for early childhood programs, to make schools available for community programs. And we want our schools open much longer hours: 10, 13, to 14 hours a day. There is very significant capital money that’s desperately needed to have to schools think creatively about different uses for buildings.**”

Question (*Minutes 39:04-40:50*): “President Obama has stated, ‘To give our children a shot to thrive in a global information-age economy, we will equip thousands of schools, community colleges, and universities with 21st century classrooms, labs, and libraries. What is the DOE providing school libraries to accomplish this goal?’”

Duncan: “In the stimulus package, there are billions of dollars for capital infrastructure, and so whether again it’s retrofitting the building to make it more energy efficient so that over time you can spend more money on teachers, on textbooks, rather than on your gas bills, your heat bills, your electricity bills, whether it’s **making schools accessible to become community centers, whether it’s opening them up for early child hood programs, there’s a huge amount we’re doing. On the library side this is again part of our where, I think, our schools have to be community centers. Every school around the country has a library; they all have classrooms; they all have gyms; they all have computer labs; some have pools. These are great, great facilities that don’t belong to me; they don’t belong to local union; they don’t belong to the superintendent - they belong to the community.** And we want these facilities open 12, 13, 14 hours a day, 6, 7 days a week, 11, 12 months out of the year. And we have phenomenal schools where the library is a community library where folks are coming in to do GED classes, and ESL classes, and family literacy nights, and where you have parents come to school not just for their children’s education, but for their own. **So thinking very, very differently about the use of time, not just lengthen the day but lengthen the amount of time buildings are open, bringing the non-profits, bringing the community groups, using the library in different ways is something we are going to push very, very hard. One of the places where our students are at a competitive disadvantage is in the amount of time they go into school, and we want to really change the status quo there.**”

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