



AN EXCEPTIONAL VOICE FOR THE PEOPLE—Amiri Baraka, left, noted author, poet and playwright, was a special guest at a Miller Brewing Company-sponsored reception at the DuSable Museum in Chicago, which kicked off the National Newspaper Publishers Association's (NNPA) 50th annual convention. Virgis Colbert, Miller vice president for materials manufacturing, presented a crystal appreciation plaque to Baraka for his appearance. During the reception, NNPA members had an opportunity to view Miller's 1990 Gallery of Greats art collection which features Baraka and 11 other noted black authors. The touring art collection also will be on display in New York City and Atlanta later this year.

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**NEA Lauds Report Calling For
Better Preparation of Students
And Adults In Job Market**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Education Association recently praised a new study by the National Center of Education and the Economy as a landmark and significant report signaling the need for drastic changes in preparing students to enter the U.S. workforce.

"This report further supports the need for greater commitment by the business and education communities to improve productivity and raise our standard of living," noted NEA President Ed Geiger.

"The NEA stands ready to become a stakeholder in this initiative and contribute to the development of new tools to meet the demands of our economic well-being," he added.

The report, issued by the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, calls for profound changes in the way U.S. employers organize work and the way our nation educates and trains workers.

The report makes five major recommendations to improve U.S. competitiveness and productivity in a new era of the high skilled and technical workplace.

It calls for establishing a comprehensive system of professional educational certifications for students and adults who do not pursue a baccalaureate degree, for employers to allocate at least one percent of their payroll to the formal education and training of their workers, and for the creation of a system of employment and training boards to organize and govern a new high performance education and training system proposed by the commission.

The commission also calls for setting national educational performance standards for all students.

"This recommendation is consistent with our membership's concern for establishing more realistic methods of evaluating student achievement," said Geiger. The NEA sponsored Mastery In Learning initiatives have developed student assessment models that go beyond the pencil and paper method. Under the Mastery program, teachers working in teams experiment with new ways to improve and measure student achievement.

Another significant recommendation outlined in the

report calls for the establishment of state and federally supported alternative learning environments for those who cannot meet the newly proposed national student standards.

Gary Watts, senior director of NEA's National Center for Innovation, sees this suggestion as consistent with the need to provide appropriate learning experiences for all students, including those who need additional incentives and assistance.

"If we are truly going to be successful in establishing a new economic order in the United States, we must identify ways to recapture those who currently drop out of schools and involve them in learning experience consistent with the needs of American business and industry," said Watts.

"Our public school system can provide the basic infrastructure to develop and implement approaches that serve all students," added Watts.

While the report suggests fundamental changes in the way we build our future workforce, it fails to put a price tag for implementing the proposed recommendations, Geiger pointed out.

"Clearly, we have an excellent opportunity to challenge the business community to support this concept in spirit and deed by calling its members to help identify the financial and in-kind resources, from the public and private sectors, to begin immediate implementation of these recommendations," he said. "The provision of equal economic and educational opportunity for all of our students deserves no less," he added.

The two-million-member National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization.

Words of Wisdom

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