

## **Message Points: Mitt Romney's Plan to Restore the Promise of America's Education System**

### **Top-Line Message Points: Education Reform That Gives Every Child A Chance**

- As president, Mitt Romney will pursue genuine education reform that puts parents and students' interests ahead of special interests. These reforms will ensure that every child has a chance.
- Governor Romney's plan creates incentives for states to give parents the information and choices they need to enroll their children in good schools. With this plan, schools must be held to high standards and be able to hire and retain the best teachers.
- On higher education, Governor Romney's plan focuses on giving students diverse and affordable options that will provide them with the skills they need to compete in the global economy.
- Recent graduates are struggling in today's job market. Mitt Romney is proposing meaningful reforms to help guarantee that every student can find a rewarding job and realize his or her full potential.

### **K-12 EDUCATION MESSAGE POINTS**

#### **Give Parents and Students Access to the Best Schools**

- Governor Romney's has a bold plan that gives low-income and special-needs students more choice.
- Romney would allow parents the ability to choose which school their child attends, bringing their federal funds with them.
  - Students will be able to choose from any district or charter public school, tutoring provider, or online course, as well as private schools (in accordance with state guidelines).
  - States will be incentivized to adopt open-enrollment policies for these students and to eliminate caps on charter and online schools.
  - Governor Romney would expand the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program to serve as a model for the nation.

#### **Promote High Standards, Transparency, and Responsibility For Results**

- Currently, there is little accurate information for parents about their child's school. With access to better information, parents will be empowered to hold districts and states accountable.
- Governor Romney's plan reforms No Child Left Behind by emphasizing transparency and responsibility for results.

- Rather than federally-mandated school interventions, states would have incentives to create straightforward public report cards that evaluate each school on its contribution to student learning.
- When combining high standards, responsibility for results, and transparency with Governor Romney's bold plan to increase parental choice, families will have more control over their children's education and future.

### **Welcome The Best Teachers**

- Governor Romney recognizes that a school is only as strong as its teachers.
- Too often, our most promising teachers find it difficult even to reach the classroom door or, once inside, receive recognition for their efforts and performance.
  - Governor Romney's reforms will encourage talented individuals to become teachers.
  - His plan will attract and reward outstanding teachers through increased flexibility and block-granting existing federal funds for states that attract and reward good teachers. Many states have taken steps in this direction and should be supported.
  - Governor Romney will eliminate unnecessary certification requirements that discourage new teachers.

### **Eliminate The Stranglehold Of Special Interests**

- Although President Obama has promoted some worthy ideas, he is forever indebted to the teachers' unions. Ultimately, their interests are held above the interests of America's students.
  - The largest teachers union – the National Education Alliance (NEA) – spent over \$50 million on behalf of President Obama and his Democratic allies in 2008.
  - They have already endorsed President Obama's reelection bid and have taken an additional \$10 out of teachers' paychecks to fund it.
  - The NEA contributes more to political campaigns than any other organization in the country – more than ExxonMobil, Wal-Mart, and Goldman Sachs combined.
  - Unions are a powerful influence, and we need a president who is not beholden to special interests in order to fix our education system and help our kids.
- President Obama bowed to union demands by getting rid of the D.C Opportunity Scholarship Program. This successful program gave low-income students an opportunity to attend better schools.
  - Governor Romney would reverse President Obama's efforts to eliminate this popular and effective program. He would push to increase funding and raise caps on participation to allow more families to benefit.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION MESSAGE POINTS**

### **Mitt Romney's Plan for Higher Education: Encourage Innovation and Competition**

- Governor Romney realizes that America's traditional community and four-year colleges are the heart of our nation's higher education system. But a flood of federal dollars is driving

costs out of control and burdening too many young Americans with substantial debt and too few opportunities. Romney's reforms spur the access, affordability, innovation, and transparency needed to address all of these challenges:

- Governor Romney's plan for higher education reform will:
  - Strengthen and simplify financial aid systems.
  - Welcome private sector participation instead of pushing it away.
  - Replace burdensome regulation with innovation and competition.
- Governor Romney realizes that more spending will not solve the problem of tuition increases – to the contrary, it has helped fuel the problem. When Washington puts more money into student aid programs to help families and individuals pay for higher education, colleges and universities raise tuition rates.
- Governor Romney has run a business and understands the economy. He knows that we must align higher education with today's job market, give students information to make good decisions, and make sure that there is a full portfolio of college options available to meet the needs of all students.
- College shouldn't be one-size-fits-all because there is no "typical" college student in the twenty-first century.

### **President Obama's Policies Have Failed To Alleviate The High Cost Of College Or Growing Student Debt**

- Even President Obama admits there is a problem. In the face of ever-increasing tuition, he said that the government couldn't just keep increasing student aid because we are going to run out of money.
- The problem is that President Obama's solution is the same answer that he has for everything: more federal mandates, more federal control, and more federal spending.
- What President Obama doesn't understand is that dramatic increases in grants and loans have benefited the system, not students.
  - Under Obama, the cost of a college education has risen by 25%.
  - Over 75% of Americans say college is not affordable.
  - Under Obama, total outstanding student debt has reached a record \$1 trillion.
  - Under Obama, the average debt burden for a graduate has reached a record \$25,000.
  - Only half of recent college graduates have full-time jobs – a figure that is declining during the so-called "recovery."
- President Obama does not understand what students need. His vision is heavy-handed and top-down, believing that regulation and more government spending is the answer.
- President Obama took ownership of the higher education crisis and has only made the problems of college affordability and student debt worse.