

APRIL 25, 2000

SCHAKOWSKY TOURS OVERCROWDED BOONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF EDUCATION SCOTT FLEMING &

HOSTS WITH SALLIE MAE A FREE FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP FOR CHICAGO AREA COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) held two education events today in Chicago. Schakowsky began the day by touring Boone Elementary School with U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education Scott Fleming and Chicago Public Schools officials. Schakowsky had toured Boone last year to highlight the need for Congress and the federal government to help local school districts ease overcrowding and implement school modernization projects

"Too many students, in too many schools are forced to learn in overcrowded classrooms, in the hallways, and even in converted closets. That is why we must commit our resources to invest in our children's education and their future. Working together with people like Assistant Secretary of Education Fleming and the Chicago Public Schools we can achieve that goal," Schakowsky said.

During her visit last year to Boone Elementary, Schakowsky found, among other things, that some classes were being held in the hallways, students were learning in makeshift classrooms, like the teachers' lounge and cafeteria, and three different classes were being taught at the same time in the same room. Conditions have not improved. In addition to overcrowding, in Illinois, a staggering 89% of schools are in need of improvement.

Schakowsky called on Congress to pass President Clinton's school construction bill, introduced in the House by Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY). It would provide \$24.8 billion in interest-free funding over the next two calendar years for school-construction and school-modernization projects to school districts nationwide.

Later in the day, Schakowsky joined Sallie Mae in hosting a free financial aid seminar for Chicago area college-bound students and their families at Taft High School in Chicago. The workshop provided families and college-bound students with free information about applying and qualifying for financial aid; understanding financial aid reports; borrowing for college; and the differences in federal student loan programs.

"For many families and high school students, tuition remains the number one barrier to higher education. I believe that access to information about financial aid is a crucial first step to overcoming this barrier," Schakowsky said.