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DisplayFromDomain:
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DisplayDate_Time: 9:35:37 PM
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Report: Schools, 'Net To Join<< WASHINGTON (AP) _ Communities should

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55< ^AP-Schools-Internet<,0609<^Report: Schools, 'Net To Join<< WASHINGTON (AP) _ Communities should work now to scrape up themoney to connect their schools and communities to the informationsuperhighway by 2000, a presidential panel recommended. ``We know it's going to happen anyway in 15 to 20 years," saidEd McCracken, co-chairman of the U.S. Advisory Council on theNational Information Infrastructure. ``What we decided was, why not try to do it earlier? Thebenefits to the country would be great," said McCracken, who ischief executive officer of Silicon Graphics Inc. It would cost about \$11 billion to connect all public schools tothe worldwide computer network known as the Internet by 2000, thepanel estimated Wednesday. Finding the money is only the first challenge. Schools oftenhesitate, fearing they will buy the wrong thing or spend thousandson equipment that quickly becomes obsolete, the panel noted. Community leaders are key because federal grants pay for only a few pilot projects, said Carol Fukunaga, a Hawaii state senator onthe panel. Parents with technical knowledge often are a school's bestresource, the panel found. But it encouraged schools to seek helpanywhere: from corporations, state agencies or colleges or byswitching money in their own budgets. Poorer school districts and those in rural areas face specialproblems. Often, schools must do extensive renovations simply toget modern phone lines into buildings constructed decades ago. McCracken suggested schools scraping for money considerlower-cost, used equipment for starters. ``Even fairly low-poweredcomputers can be fairly good Internet access points," he said. Among success stories the panel cited: _Lansing, Mich., where a radio station formed a partnership withseven schools to help students e-mail questions about currentevents to the White House, the governor and people around theworld. _Rosa Parks Interparish Elementary in Baltimore, where a corporate grant helped students talk via computer with the school'snamesake, the legendary civil rights activist. _Taos, N.M., where students and adults use a university'scomputers to look for jobs, visit a virtual library, get healthinformation or send e-mail to lawmakers. The town, the state, localbusinesses and corporations help pay. _Chester Ridge School District in rural Fishertown, Pa., whereteachers each year seek corporate grants that provide free Internetaccess, then use the time to train colleagues and help students. Technical director Kathy Popp calls it ``the great equalizer,"providing teachers with the professional help and students thelibrary books the district can't afford. Connecting each public school to the Internet by 2000 would cost1.5 percent to 2 percent of schools' budgets, or about \$11 billion,the report estimated. That assumes putting about 25 computers perschool into a special

Body:
recstat: Record
DeliveryPriority: N
DeliveryReport: B
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