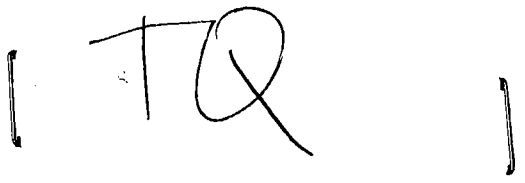

OCT 19 1998

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Thirty Years of Collective Bargaining in Public Education:

Taking Stock of its Promise for School Reform

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August, 1998

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This is a draft of a paper to be presented at the conference, "Teacher Unions and Educational Reform," sponsored September 23-35, 1998 by the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University. Please do not cite or quote from the draft paper without the explicit permission of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

As school reformers work intently to repair or rethink public education in the U.S., there are conflicting calls to eliminate or to expand the influence of teacher unions. Those opposing collective bargaining and unions typically contend that teacher contracts unduly regulate schools and unwisely constrain teachers' best professional efforts (Lieberman, 1993; Wise, 1979). Those endorsing a broader role for unions stress the key part that teachers must play in school improvement, and they point to the early successes of progressive unions in districts such as Rochester or Cincinnati (Kerchner, Koppich, & Weeres, 1997; Rosow & Zager, 1989).

Given the current demands of school reform, should the role of unions be enlarged or diminished? In answering this question, it is important to consider both what is known about teacher unionism as well as what is known about the demands of school improvement today. For, unless the direction of union activity is consistent with the best educational practices, creating a greater role for collective bargaining would be unwise. Yet, if unions can work to effect constructive change and if collective bargaining can provide a forum where such progress can be achieved, there is good reason to further support and invest in this policy and process.

There is a common belief among many in the U.S. that teacher unions have moved uniformly, powerfully, and steadily during the past thirty years to control public education. In fact, as this paper will show, the influence of teacher unions has been uneven—strong in some districts, weak in others—and the progress of union gains has been irregular over time. Despite researchers' early predictions that all districts would eventually have uniform contracts, replete with provisions favoring labor over

management, most districts never adopted such contracts and the unions' seemingly inexorable progress in securing greater rights and protections for teachers stalled unexpectedly in the mid-1970s. An analysis of a national sample of contracts currently in effect reveals that, rather than becoming more alike over time, negotiated agreements are now more varied in substance and in style than ever before.

In large part, this variation is the result of two distinctly different approaches to educational bargaining. The first, industrial bargaining, emerged in the 1960s when teachers won the right to organize and bargain about wages, hours, and working conditions. The states modeled their public-sector labor laws directly on the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, which regulates private-sector labor practices. As a result, legislation written with the needs of industry in mind ultimately defined the character of labor practices in education. Conventional industrial bargaining, with its ritualized pattern of demands, rebuffs, and concessions, was prominent in all districts until the 1980s and, even today, persists in many.

However, in the mid-1980s, union leaders and school administrators in a small number of districts across the country experimented with a second, very different approach to negotiations, that of reform bargaining. By recognizing their shared interests in working collaboratively for change, union leaders and administrators in these flagship districts moved beyond the adversarial process of the past and devised new ways to resolve their differences and to improve their schools. Some of the contract changes they made (such as moderating the force of seniority-based transfers) seemed modest on the surface, but had far-reaching, positive effects in schools. Other changes, such as

introducing peer review for teachers, were dramatic innovations that challenged basic union principles and, in doing so, advanced the interests of better teaching.

There have been, as well, two very different approaches to schooling in this century. One, the factory model, which emerged from the Efficiency Movement of the 1920s and became the standard in most large, urban districts, endures today in many places (Callahan, 1962; Tyack, 1974). In this tradition, district officials strive to effectively manage the operation of large, indistinguishable schools while teachers serve as workers in a production-line process, delivering uniform education to students. Although a second approach, the professional model, has existed in various settings throughout the century, it gained prominence in many places during the "second wave" of school reform in the mid-1980s. This approach recognizes that schools must be responsive to their students and communities and that, thus, the individual school's need for autonomy and flexibility often takes precedence over the school district's pursuit of order and uniformity. Rather than functioning like factory laborers whose work can be pre-planned by managerial experts, teacher in schools that promote a professional model are encouraged to regularly assess their teaching and adapt it to meet the needs of their students.

Many researchers and analysts have concluded that the factory model of schooling does not work (Callahan, 1962; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Fullan, 1991; Hill, Pierce, & Guthrie, 1997; Meier, 1995; Murnane & Levy, 1996) This long, strong line of research demonstrates that important decisions about how best to organize teaching and learning must be made at the school site rather than at the district office. Moreover, these researchers conclude, if teachers are to prepare students for success in today's (and

tomorrow's) society, they cannot deliver information and demand its rote mastery, but must draw from a rich repertoire of instructional strategies that develop students' technical, analytic, and social skills. Teachers must approach their work as a craft or profession rather than as routine labor (Kerchner & Mitchell, 1988), and schools must be organized to encourage them to do so (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Johnson, 1990).

While industrial bargaining enabled teachers in factory-model schools to gain some measure of control in their workplace and garner much-needed resources for public education, it failed to improve schooling for students in any fundamental way. Industrial bargaining defined participants as adversaries, favored uniform work rules for all teachers and all schools, and dealt with teachers as if they were interchangeable laborers. By contrast, reform bargainers began with the assumption that union leaders and school administrators share a genuine interest in making schools better. They recognized the wisdom of minimizing rules and maximizing flexibility for schools, and they regarded teachers as individuals and professionals. While industrial bargaining falls far short of what is needed to truly improve schools, reform bargaining offers considerable promise. As this discussion will show, however, the course of progress to real school reform through collective bargaining is neither obvious nor assured.

This paper explores both the shortcomings of industrial bargaining and the promise of reform bargaining. We begin by considering the tenets of industrial bargaining and their problematic legacy for public education. Next we appraise the first decade of collective bargaining in schools, a period marked by industrial-style negotiations and agreements. We contrast the practices and outcomes of industrial bargaining with those of reform bargaining. Next, we report on our analysis of current contracts, comparing them

with agreements from the same districts 15 or 20 years ago. Finally, we reconsider the role of collective bargaining in school reform and conclude with recommendations for policy and practice.

THE TENETS OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AND THE NEEDS OF SCHOOLS

Central to the process of industrial bargaining are three assumptions that were transported directly from industry to education in the 1960s and defined its profile from the start. First is the presumption that the interests of labor and management are at odds, that in a world of scarce resources, one side's gain is the other's loss. Kerchner and Koppich(1993) see this opposition as a key feature of industrial unionism in schools as well: "Industrial unionism assumes permanent adversaries. It organizes around vigorous representation of the differences between teachers and managers" (p. 15).

Second is the belief that standardized practice is desirable, that uniform operations across an organization make for better, more efficient, management, greater control over products, and more certain enforcement of company policy and union work rules. In education, teacher unions seek to establish through their bargaining the standards and regulations that apply equally to all schools in a district.

Third, is the assumption that similarly skilled workers are interchangeable and should be treated alike. This tenet holds that employees with similar qualifications are members of industry-wide classifications and that their identity as members of these generic groups takes precedence over distinctions about them as individuals with unique strengths or needs. In industry, this means that certain tasks are restricted to particular types of workers, but that those who qualify for the role can be reassigned to any comparable work setting in the company. In education, as Kerchner, Koppich, and

Weeres(1997) explain, this means that teachers' roles are undifferentiated and that all are to be treated uniformly: "Union power is threatened when the boundaries of existing job classifications are breached and when schools provide different treatment to teachers of the same classification. Thus unions have historically opposed differentiation among teachers in pay and privilege" (p. 39). These three assumptions—labor-management opposition, the value of standardized practice, and the generic treatment of workers—underlie the character of industrial unionism, which is at the historical core of teacher unionism.

Industry and schooling were once seen to be comparable enterprises. Early in this century, education's recognized experts enthusiastically touted the merits of factory-model schools, believing that school districts could be run effectively and efficiently, like good companies (Callahan, 1962; Tyack, 1974). Recently, these assumptions about the competing interests of teachers and administrators, the advantages of uniform schooling, and the wisdom of generic roles for teachers all have undergone close scrutiny and been met with serious skepticism. Today, reformers recognize the limits of those approaches.

What might once have been functional for factories is now widely understood to be dysfunctional for schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthey, 1996; Meier, 1995; Sizer, 1992). Increasingly, there is evidence that teachers and administrators share a deep interest in devising educational approaches that will effectively educate young people. And, while orderly, efficient operations are important to public schooling, standardized practice enforced by a large bureaucracy or union stifles innovation and discourages educators from responding to the varied needs of students and communities. Further, although individual teachers bring different repertoires of skills

and experiences to their jobs, the potential of this variety is often lost when teachers are assigned to restricted roles and treated like interchangeable components in an impersonal school machine. Given these differences between yesterday's factories and today's schooling needs, one could dismiss collective bargaining out of hand, arguing that it is an outmoded industrial process that might have helped teachers gain basic workers' rights and fair wages in the factory-model schools of the past, but that cannot adapt to current demands for responsive schools and responsible teachers.

However, the history of collective bargaining in public education is neither simple nor static (McDonnell & Pascall, 1988) (Kerchner & Mitchell, 1988). What began as an industrial process producing uniform work rules, has proven to be far more varied and responsive than many critics realize. It is a process that is capable of leading to either restrictive or adaptive practices. It can enshrine narrow self-interest or promote selfless professionalism. Faced with pressing problems, it can produce either stale responses or creative solutions. McDonnell and Pascal(1988), who studied educational labor relations over the course of 15 years, concluded: "Our research and that of others. . .clearly indicate that the collective bargaining process and the resulting contract can serve either as an efficient vehicle for shaping and implementing new approaches to teacher professionalism. . . or as a major hindrance to reform" (p. 54). The ten years of experience with school reform since publication of McDonnell and Pascal's report only reinforce that conclusion.

A DECADE OF INDUSTRIAL BARGAINING IN EDUCATION

During the first decade of collective bargaining in education, teacher contracts closely mirrored those in industry. For example, teacher contracts spelled out the rights of

management, set forth standardized pay scales, secured seniority-based layoffs, defined teachers' in-school work responsibilities, and established grievance procedures. Although the process of industrial bargaining was often rigid, scripted, and sometimes led to disruptive strikes, it served as a workable mechanism by which organized teachers could pursue certain compelling objectives, such as curbing administrative abuse and favoritism, defining reasonable expectations for their work, and establishing even-handed procedures for evaluation. One urban principal, commenting in 1980 on the extent and detail of the local contract, explained why it was necessary: "The thickness, the scope, of this phone book of a contract is, in my view, an indictment of how administrators ran their schools in the past" (Johnson, 1983, p. 108).

Negotiated Provisions Ensure Reasonable Expectations and Fair Treatment

It was the errors and excesses of that past that organized teachers sought to change with their industrial approaches to bargaining. Between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, teacher unions relied on collective bargaining to secure many contract provisions that were favorable to their interests and often made for better schools. But frequently those gains were accompanied by unintended consequences. Too often, the new job rules that ensured fair and reasonable treatment also restricted what teachers could be allowed to do, led to inappropriate teaching assignments, or made it unreasonably difficult to dismiss incompetent teachers. Several illustrations of these mixed effects are discussed below.

Teachers' Responsibilities: In establishing explicit hours and responsibilities for teachers' work, the early, industrial-style contracts effectively limited the demands that administrators could make on teachers and their time. For example, McDonnell and Pascal (1979) found that by 1975, 34 percent of the 155 district contracts they studied set

the maximum size of teachers' classes (p. 11). Johnson (1983) found that teachers in the six districts of a national sample had bargained shorter in-school work days and fewer non-teaching responsibilities. In some cases, where responsibilities had been unreasonable and the school staff was stretched too thin, that kind of union gain was a good thing for teachers and for students; but in others, it was problematic. For example, it seemed sensible not to require teachers to teach subjects for which they had no preparation or to use time designated for classroom preparation standing on bathroom duty. And it was only fair to guarantee teachers a half-hour of duty-free time to eat their lunch. It did not seem sensible, though, that teachers' work time could be prescribed to the minute or that they could only be asked to meet with parents twice a year. Often districts, particularly large, urban ones, defined minimal, narrowly-defined teaching responsibilities, thus making teaching more like labor and less like a profession (Kerchner & Mitchell, 1988).

Seniority-based Staffing

Although collective negotiations had no effect on hiring, for that right continued to be the prerogative of management in all school districts, decisions about layoffs, transfers, and often even promotions were frequently regulated by contract; seniority became the most common criterion used to make those decisions. Perry (1979) found that, over time, seniority played a greater role in promotion and layoffs in the nine districts he studied; in six, it was the sole criterion for layoffs. Johnson (1983) found that seniority within certification areas determined layoffs in four of six districts of her sample and, unlike many other provisions, seniority layoff and transfer rights were virtually always enforced.

Although seniority is objective and relatively easy to use as a criterion in making hard employment decisions, it is not necessarily appropriate for deciding who will teach in

a particular grade, program, or subject, especially when no distinctions can be made about the unique qualifications of individuals or the particular needs of programs. During times of severe enrollment declines in the 1980s, seniority-based transfer procedures repeatedly allowed more experienced teachers to displace, or "bump," less experienced, but highly qualified teachers, thus repeatedly decimating the staffs of many innovative programs. Sometimes the consequences were absurd, as in the case of a kindergarten teacher whose generic state certificate allowed her to bump a high school physics teacher even though she had never studied the subject (Johnson, Nelson, & Potter, 1985, p. 60). Some local districts carefully negotiated contract provisions to avoid such outcomes. For example, in Michigan, where state law rather than local contracts designated seniority as the sole layoff criterion, a district contract specified that teachers had to hold a major or minor in any subject they sought to teach: "No physics teacher, however junior in the science department, would be laid off unless there was another qualified physics teacher to fill the position" (Johnson et al., 1985, p.82).

In many cases, however, the effects of seniority-based decisions were not carefully anticipated or moderated. In 1980, a Midwestern principal anticipated serious problems: "I'm very concerned over this thing of seniority transfers, and I see somewhere down the road that seniority is coming into full blossom. I can anticipate the time when I'm not able to interview teachers if I have a vacancy in the building. Instead, the seniority list will determine who goes here and who leaves my building" (Johnson, 1983, p. 80). This principal's fears subsequently were realized in many large, urban districts. Ironically, it was often teachers who were most disturbed by the effects of their own union's success.

Evaluation and Dismissal: Many local contracts mandated evaluation procedures by the mid-1970s. For example, McDonnell and Pascal (1988) found that 42 percent of the 151 contracts they studied in 1970 specified procedures by which teachers could respond formally to administrators' evaluation; by 1980, 77 percent of the same districts did so (p. 61). Similarly, in 1980, Johnson (1983) found that four of six districts studied included procedures for observing and evaluating teachers; the remaining two incorporated similar requirements into board policies. Typically, these negotiated rules called for tightly prescribed observations and evaluations by principals and department heads. Non-tenured teachers received annual ratings, while their tenured colleagues were to be observed and evaluated every two or three years. Often administrators had to give advance warning that they would observe a class and, if they decided to rate a teacher negatively, had to suggest strategies for improvement and offer a chance for reassessment. Many contracts also imposed time limits on the process. For example, in one district, Johnson (1983) found that principals could not assign unsatisfactory ratings unless they gave teachers written reports within five days of the observation. Another contract required that any teacher receiving an unsatisfactory rating "must have been observed at least once a quarter for not less than twenty (20) minutes" (pp. 118-119).

These evaluation procedures, intended to curtail capricious and arbitrary assessments that were all too common, sometimes made it excessively difficult to dismiss incompetent teachers. The 40 principals whom Johnson interviewed disagreed about whether their district's procedures were "unreasonably burdensome." One said that the process was "so difficult that it tends to make us not want to go through it as much as we might or should." Others, however, thought that the procedures were "warranted and

workable" (1983, pp. 120-121). All principals agreed, however, that dismissing weak teachers took time, minimally two years.

By law, unions must represent teachers whose procedural rights are violated, particularly if decisions made in that process threaten their jobs. Notably, unions have a "duty of fair representation,"[1] and can be sued if they defend teachers in a perfunctory manner (Johnson, 1983, p. 124). Over the past thirty years, this legal obligation combined with strong state tenure laws, complex evaluation procedures, and administrators' lack of preparation to evaluate teaching, has meant that poor teachers often retained their jobs.

Teachers who had witnessed administrative abuse in the past saw great need for even-handed approaches to evaluation and they endorsed exacting procedures. Others, however, found the presence of "dead wood" peers in their schools so troubling that they wished their unions would bargain a more streamlined dismissal process or represent weak teachers less vigorously. One teacher from an urban district in Johnson's 1983 study said, "The Federation claims that they want to enhance the teaching profession. I believe that if they can identify a teacher who abuses the teaching profession, then there ought to be a kind of understanding between the administration and the Federation that the teacher deserves only minimal defense." (, p. 125). A principal in another district agreed: "They no longer should have to defend the riff-raff" (p. 151). Jessup (1985), who studied unionism in three small districts between the mid-1960s and late 1970s, found that one union had decided its role was "to protect teachers' right to due process—but not to protect incompetent teachers," while another took a hard line, vigorously defending any teacher whose competence was challenged (p. 79).

Teachers' Roles in Shaping Policy: Prior to collective bargaining, school boards and administrators were the ones who prescribed policy and practice, while teachers were expected to comply with district directives, use the chosen texts, and teach the designated curriculum. While individual teachers could always decide how to teach when they closed the classroom door, that professional space was not inviolable. At the extreme, administrators could change the report card grades that teachers assigned.

Collective bargaining explicitly changed the way in which certain policies and practices—those affecting wages, hours, and working conditions—were set and, in doing so, constrained the discretion of management to run schools as they liked. Critics of collective bargaining contend that labor laws granted teachers far too much control over educational policy. Yet, for most teachers, that influence could only be exerted by their elected representatives at the bargaining table. Few local unions won the right for teachers to play a decisive role in policymaking once the contract was signed, though often teachers were granted advisory roles in decisions affecting instruction, such as textbook selection.

McDonnell and Pascal (1979) found that 31 percent of the 151 contracts they studied allowed teachers to participate in curricular decisions. Eberts and Stone (1984) identified similar language in 39 percent of the New York State contracts in their research sample. Finch and Nagel (1984), found that 35 percent of the Connecticut contracts they studied included advisory roles for teachers. However, researchers virtually always found that teachers were to advise, not decide. What influence they actually exercised depended on how receptive and responsive their principals and superintendents were; in some cases, the negotiated rules reduced rather than enlarged their sphere of influence.

Therefore, industrial bargaining yielded mixed effects for teachers and their schools. Teachers gained assurances of a fairer and more reasonable work environment, yet their contracts often contributed to a narrower definition of their roles and responsibilities, limiting not only what they could be required to do, but also what they would be allowed and encouraged to do. Contracts routinely ensured equity, but also reinforced the notion that all teachers were similarly skilled and, therefore, interchangeable, no matter what they had to offer. Although they sat down to bargain collectively every few years, administrators and teachers continued to occupy separate domains of the policy space—managers set policy and teachers advised, though more often they simply complied—thus ensuring that teachers' professional judgment would not widely influence the policy that determined school practice.

The Effects of Standardized Schooling

There was one far-reaching consequence of industrial bargaining in education that had been predicted by analysts, but was largely unanticipated by teachers and principals—the standardization of schooling. Because contracts were negotiated district-wide—in keeping with the industrial model of company-wide bargaining—their provisions were meant to apply equally to all school sites.

It was always apparent that unions favored standardized labor practice, but during the first decade of collective bargaining in education, it became clear that many superintendents did as well: "School superintendents often come to value teacher unions because they not only stabilize but also formalize administration" (Kerchner & Mitchell, 1988, p. 131) Collective bargaining, often criticized for undermining management, in fact, reinforced district bureaucracy and centralized school administration. Whether school

superintendents were assigning teachers to schools, reviewing requests for personal leave, or monitoring principals' supervision of staff, they could call upon the authority of negotiated regulations to ensure compliance. Kerchner and Mitchell conclude: "Managers often find that the new rules work in their favor and proceed to use them aggressively" (1988, p. 190).

The experience of principals, however, was different. Given the key role that individual schools play in determining educational success for students, the principal's role in negotiation and contract administration is crucial. Yet researchers repeatedly found that, during the first decade of bargaining, principals remained at the margins of the process, often choosing to keep their distance from an adversarial exchange that might put them at odds with their teachers. McDonnell and Pascal (1979) found that most districts included representative principals on their negotiating teams to "advise the district on the potential effect of contract items at the school-site and inform central administrators exactly what principals 'can live with'. . ." Yet, McDonnell and Pascal observe, these principals' role was "often ambiguous. Are they to be considered a part of the 'management team' or is their basic interest on the side of classroom teachers?" (p. 49). Johnson (1983) found that in four of the six districts she studied no principals participated in negotiations, and in some, they were not even consulted about the likely effects of possible contract changes. These principals "did not report that they had been refused a larger role in negotiations, nor did they suggest that they wanted one. Reluctant to participate in formal adversarial bargaining sessions with 'their' teachers, they asked instead that principals' interests be more fully represented and forcefully defended by the school board and district office"(p. 35).

By all accounts, collective bargaining for teachers meant that principals had less latitude in running their schools. It was not only that they could not tell teachers what to do, but that uniform, district-wide rules limited their management options and, thus, reduced their schools' responsiveness and variety. In one of the earliest studies of union effects, Perry and Wildman (1970) concluded, "[N]egotiations on 'working conditions' in the schools has to some extent substituted centralized decision-making for decentralized decision-making on the management side. School principals *have* lost significant discretion in this process" (p. 214) McDonnell and Pascal (1979)contended: "There is no question that collective bargaining has made the principal's job more difficult. . . ." (p. 83) Yet, these researchers concluded, as Johnson (1983) and Jessup (1985) subsequently did, that effective school leaders need not be hamstrung by negotiated rules:

> Truly effective principals usually accept collective bargaining and use the contract both to manage their building more systematically and to increase teacher participation in school decisionmaking. Less effective principals may view the contract as an obstacle to a well-run school and then use it as an excuse for poor management." (p. 81)

Johnson(1983) found that, although the principals' formal authority had been restricted while teachers' authority had been increased, "school site administrators in even the strongest union districts could manage their schools well. Principals were neither figureheads deferring to union representatives nor functionaries complying slavishly with the contract" (p 15).

Teachers and principals share an interest in making their schools work well, and often that shared interest prevailed even when the detail of written labor agreements became problematic. About some matters—meeting times, covering recess, taking an extra student in class—effective principals could encourage teachers to be flexible and

gradually win their support, thus ensuring that the school worked well and students were effectively served. But about other matters—seniority-based layoff and transfer rules, or class size caps that protected jobs—there was no room for compromise. Furthermore, in some districts, union members in one school could file grievances about alleged violations of the contract in another school. In some cases, the threat of such a grievance diverted a principal and teachers from fashioning sensible exceptions to unwise contractual restrictions.

Reaching the Limits of Usefulness

In retrospect, it has become clear to researchers what was not apparent at the time. By the late 1970s, this industrial model of unionism had nearly reached the limits of its usefulness in education. In many districts, the approach had enabled organized teachers to set reasonable boundaries for their work, establish useful procedures for making decisions once fraught with patronage, and ensure important protections that kept good teachers teaching. In others, however, industrial bargaining led to lower expectations for teachers, rule-driven school management for principals, and uninspired school practices for too many. Industrial bargaining was good for setting rules and dividing resources, but of little use in addressing the many educational challenges that educators faced, such as reorganizing school schedules, supporting interdisciplinary teaching, effectively integrating special needs students into regular classrooms, or engaging parents more actively in the education of their children.

During the first decade of bargaining, researchers who analyzed contracts predicted that unions would make steady gains until, eventually, all contracts would look alike. Like the general public, these researchers assumed that all local teacher unions had

the same goals in negotiations, that districts across the country bargained about the same set of issues, and that eventually they would adopt essentially the same contract provisions. In short, negotiated agreements would become ever stronger and more alike. In 1979, McDonnell and Pascal(1979) analyzed the 1970 and 1975 contracts from a national sample of 151 districts and reported that there was a "convergence of collective bargaining outcomes over time. As more and more school systems follow the lead of flagship districts, there is less variation among individual contracts" (p. 31). In 1984, Goldschmidt and Stuart analyzed 80 local contracts and compared them with contracts studied by McDonnell and Pascal ten years before. Based on these comparisons, they concluded that the extent of bargaining over noncompensation items continued to increase with time. Perry(1979) was the only researcher who, before 1980, noted the slackened pace of union gains. Returning to 9 of 24 districts he and Wildman had studied in 1970 , Perry found that, although class size was bargained in all of them, the unions had "made relatively little concrete progress in achieving definite, enforceable limits on class size or in reducing those limits where they exist" (p. 13).

The predicted convergence, in fact, never happened. Subsequent analyses of union contracts revealed that, with the exception of layoff and transfer provisions, collective bargaining did little from 1975 to 1985 to reduce teachers' obligations, further standardize practice, or extend job protections. When McDonnell and Pascal returned to their original sample of districts and analyzed agreements through 1985, they discovered that,"[w]ith relatively few exceptions, the improvements in working conditions unions had attained by 1975 were not enhanced in the 1980 and 1985 contracts." (p. vi) Their study showed "quite conclusively that there are real limits on what teachers can obtain through the

traditional collective bargaining process. Not only did the rate of gain for our sample slow in the 1980s as compared with the previous decade, but a majority of unions still cannot obtain key provisions such as strong class size limits, curbs on teachers having to teach outside their fields, and clear criteria for involuntary transfers" (p. 52). Similarly Jessup's (1985) longitudinal analysis of three small districts revealed that the "strongest" contract of the group was "essentially the same" in 1979 as in 1973 (p.144). Further, Johnson, Nelson, and Potter, who studied a national sample of 155 contracts in 1985, concluded: "[C]ollective bargaining agreements are neither as comprehensive nor prescriptive as some might believe. Many do not address key staffing issues. [And] although many contract provisions are intended to advance teacher interests, the contracts reviewed were not simply lists of union privileges. Much contract language about staffing specifies the prerogatives of management" (p. i.). Therefore, empirical research does not support the conventional belief that collective bargaining produces ever "stronger" union privileges and protections for teachers.

There is, therefore, convincing evidence that what seemed to be a steady pace of union gains came to a virtual halt by the end of 1970s, yet there is only speculation about why this occurred. One explanation is that management, who had been unprepared for early bargaining and often made unwise concessions to union demands, started to encounter the consequences of careless negotiation and resisted further union gains.(McDonnell and Pascal, 1984). Another related explanation is that declining enrollments and budget cuts in the1970s led to much more cautious, conservative negotiations by administrators and school boards. Jessup(1985) explains how hard times strengthened the hand of management in the districts she studied:

> At first, union leaders believed they could simply postpone negotiations on the unacceptable issues into future years, regarding collective bargaining as a long-term process in which each contract would represent a step forward. As the 1970s progressed, however, this possibility receded. The atmosphere of economic crisis, heightened by local tax revolts and declining student enrollments, led boards not to be more expansive, but to cut back on school financing. The atmosphere of public criticism and distrust led them to try to tighten, not loosen, controls over teachers. These situations pressed all three unions into far more defensive positions during the 1970s so that protection of existing staff positions and the contract took priority" (p. 196).

In many districts, deadlocked negotiations and subsequent union "give-backs" were common during this period.

In addition to these two explanations of the slowed pace of union gains, a third deserves attention. There is evidence that teachers, themselves, started to see the limits of industrial bargaining and to resent the inflexibility it sometimes imposed on them and their schools (Johnson, 1983). There can be no doubt that teachers appreciated their union's success in winning better wages, defining reasonable boundaries on their in-school responsibilities, and gaining assurances of fair treatment. Yet they also recognized that the realities of their schools were different from the realities of the factories. Children were not undifferentiated raw materials and good schooling should not be an impersonal process of mass production. Despite having similar credentials, all teachers were not the same, and seniority was not an invariably sound criterion for deciding who would teach where. In the view of many teachers, individual schools needed to retain (or regain) the capacity to make important decisions for themselves about how best to organize instruction and use the resources they have (time, money, and expertise) to support that instruction.

Educators also began to acknowledge publicly what many of them had privately understood: teachers' interests and management's interests were not necessarily at odds.

Often the process of adversarial bargaining, pitting teachers against administrators in a ritualized process of dissembling and bullying, undermined the possibility of collaborative work once the contract was signed. The dissension and disappointment caused by public blame and militant job actions damaged working relationships and dimmed the public's view of local educators.

Some who had experienced the cost of such combat began to moderate its effects. For example, in 1984, an urban superintendent who had bargained contentiously with the teachers union, spoke about the need for a new relationship--"We're in the same leaky lifeboat together"—while the union president asserted publicly: "The animosity which characterized labor/management relations last summer and fall must give way to a spirit of professional cooperation. To improve the quality of education, to restore public confidence in the school system, and to secure adequate funding for public education, such cooperation is not only desirable, it is vital" (Johnson et al., 1985, p. 68).

REFORM BARGAINING

With the publication of A Nation at Risk (Education, 1983), the political context of both public education and collective bargaining abruptly changed. Schools and teachers, widely ignored by the public, suddenly were surveyed and found to be lacking. Critics predicted that the shortcomings of schools would compromise the country's economic security, and teachers became easy targets of blame. Many state legislatures took the lead in responding to this report's disturbing alarm.

State-initiated Reforms

During the so-called "first wave of reform" (1983-1986), states set out to change teachers by monitoring and assessing their practices or offering state money to fund local programs that would identify and reward meritorious teachers and schools. Since these state reforms would affect some teachers' wages and working conditions, they were subject to local negotiation, and as local districts bargained about their impact, the scope of negotiations gradually increased to include direct discussion of instructional policy, long assumed to be the exclusive province of management. Over the next few years, the state-initiated reforms changed the substance of what labor and management saw to be appropriate topics for negotiation. In some districts, the prospect of getting more money or protecting the district from outside meddlers fostered a collaborative spirit among many who had always assumed that the people on the other side of the bargaining table were their enemies.

McDonnell and Pascal (1988) studied the role of teacher unions in such reforms and found that between 1983 and 1986 local union officials and their teachers sought to gain "material benefits (i.e., higher salaries, restrictions on class size, etc)" rather than pursue "strategies aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism (e.g. performance-based compensation, increased teacher participation in school-site decisionmaking)." And when local union leaders did advocate professional reforms, "many rank-and-file teachers reacted with skepticism and even hostility" (p. viii). In California, McDonnell and Pascal found that the state's mentor teacher program "was implemented in most districts as a classic pork barrel, with benefits allocated as broadly as possible and on criteria other than strict merit" (p. 42). In Pennsylvania, unions sought to "accommodate" the state's reforms

and "mitigate" the perceived negative effects on teachers of local curricular reforms triggered by state legislation (p. 45).

In 1985, Johnson, Potter, and Nelson conducted field work in five districts from a national sample, looking for evidence of staffing reforms. In two, major state initiatives were reshaping local bargaining much as McDonnell and Pascal described. California law called for local districts to negotiate the impact of a Mentor Teacher Program that would award $4,000 bonuses to outstanding teachers who supervised colleagues; offer financial incentives for increasing the length of the school day and year; establish a Classroom Teachers Instructional Improvement Program awarding grants to teachers who competed for project support; and require districts to provide remedial work for unsatisfactory teachers and dismissal procedures for incompetent teachers. (p. 36). Initially the local union resisted merit pay, but eventually acceded to a carefully fashioned plan that would side-step the very purposes that California legislators had hoped to achieve. One local union official explained, "We wanted input into the policy and the selection process. We wanted to help manage the process of the program. We wanted to protect our members" (p. 38). Pitner and Goldschmidt (1987), who analyzed contracts and documents regarding California's Mentor Teacher Program in the state's 11 largest districts, also found that the program had been "shaped through bargaining to reflect more closely the teacher union goals of deference to seniority" (p. 5).

Florida passed similar legislation including merit-based incentives; the Master Teacher Program was meant to reward excellent teachers, while the Merit Schools Program was designed to reward outstanding schools (Johnson et al., 1985). In one large district, the union and management devised plans to secure state funds without imposing

competition that might divide the staff or pit schools against each other. Many in the district thought that these state-sponsored programs would eventually disappear because of limited funding or faulty implementation. In the meantime, union leaders and school officials tried to garner the funds while protecting their schools from adverse effects. They did not see themselves as participants in school reform. As the union's executive director explained: "'What we're doing here is a whole lot of damage control.'" (p. 58).

Therefore, although the rhetoric of the day was reform, local teachers widely saw the reforming legislators to be ignorant outsiders offering money in exchange for ill-advised concessions. Often unions undermined the state policies during implementation, complying superficially while continuing business as usual. Yet there were far-reaching effects nonetheless. Labor and management, accustomed to highlighting their disagreements, discovered new reasons to cooperate as they explored how best to secure state funds without undermining their current programs. Inadvertently, through their new reform agenda, state officials reshaped both the scope and tenor of local bargaining practices.

Home-grown reform

While most local districts' attention was captured by the agendas of state legislators, key leaders in a few local districts began to review their own policies and practices, undistracted by the demands of state mandates or the lure of state money. In some places, union and school officials started to acknowledge that they shared an interest in creating and sustaining the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning. They also recognized that they would have to experiment with new approaches in order to find their way to better schools. In 1981, negotiators in Toledo signed a contract that

"pledged the parties to begin a program of teacher evaluation;" that program eventually would engage teachers in assessing their peers, a practice that most unions vehemently opposed (Gallagher, 1977, p. 158). After publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983, the union president and superintendent in Miami-Dade County, Florida met regularly about reform (Phillips, 1993, p. 120). And in Rochester, Superintendent Peter McWalters and Union President Adam Urbanski began to search for a better approach to unionism and schooling. Urbanski said, "[I]t was clear we needed a change in kind, not just a change in degree. We had reached the point where not taking risks was a greater risk than taking risks" (Koppich, 1993, p. 141).

In a large urban district dubbed East Port by Johnson, Nelson, and Potter(1985) labor and management agreed in 1982 to modify several contract provisions that had excessively favored teachers and shortchanged children. Relying on conventional bargaining practices, East Port's negotiators reached a settlement that included union concessions "most would never have anticipated three years before" (p.65). They eliminated sequential bumping, prohibited assigning teachers to program areas where they had not recently demonstrated competence, added an "excellent" rating category to recognize exemplary teachers, extended the school year, required that teachers attend extra meetings, and granted principals the right to choose from among the three most senior applicants for voluntary and involuntary transfers. Despite the many give-backs in this settlement, the union president called it "fair" (p. 66), and a district official said it was "a giant step toward professionalism in the teaching ranks. There's no way that one could perceive this as a management-imposed agreement" (p. 67). A union building representative observed that the "union is attempting to change its approach to unionism.

I think we realize that unionism, as we have known it in the sixties and seventies, is gone by the boards" (p.67).

As negotiators entertained new possibilities and experimented with practices unprecedented in educational bargaining, collaboration often emerged. McDonnell and Pascal (1988) point out that such risk-taking was possible only because teachers had already attained "traditional bread-and-butter items that regulate teachers' basic working conditions (e.g., length of working day, class size)" (p. ix). These researchers conclude that such basic guarantees serve as "enabling conditions that unions must attain before they can move on to questions of professional autonomy and full participation" (p. ix). In their view, industrial unionism had been a necessary precursor to the professional unionism that some districts subsequently undertook.

This attention to local change was augmented in 1986 when two influential publications, A Nation Prepared (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) and Tomorrow's Teachers (Holmes Group, 1986), initiated what would come to be called the "second wave" of school reform. The authors of these reports proposed approaches to reform that were fundamentally different from those the states had feverishly introduced just a few years before. Teachers, they argued, should be the agents rather than the objects of school reform. A Nation Prepared called for a "profession of well-educated teachers prepared to assume new powers and responsibilities to redesign schools for the future" (p. 2). Tomorrow's Teachers warned against continuing "to attempt educational reform by telling teachers what to do rather them empowering them to do what is necessary"(p.61).

Suddenly, local districts that had been exploring new labor-management approaches quietly found they had a special license to empower teachers. In Miami-Dade,

the superintendent and union president "talked about the whole professionalization movement that came out of Carnegie" and agreed to add to the contract a task force on the professionalization of teaching. (Provenzo, 1989, pp. 150-151) Later that year at the convention of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), President Albert Shanker urged local union leaders to experiment with reforms at the local level, and many seized the opportunity to do so. Cincinnati union president, Tom Mooney, who had already introduced in his district a union campaign called "Bargaining for Better Schools," explained that Shanker's authorization enabled him to promote his reform agenda among the rank-and-file: "The AFT gave us the sanction internally. That makes the stuff easier to sell" (Johnson, 1989, p. 128).

New Collaborative Approaches to Bargaining: In devising new reforms, local districts found that they first had to invent new approaches to negotiation. Conventional bargaining, with its dissembling, distrust, and deceit, could never create conditions that would inspire teachers and administrators to work on hard problems together. Moreover, the split-the-difference settlements that typically emerge from bartering were hardly the kind of creative solutions that schools needed to devise. Therefore, the parties in these flagship districts began to experiment with collaborative bargaining practices, variously called "win-win negotiations" or "principled bargaining" (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Rather than exchanging demands and counter-offers across the table, negotiators sat side-by-side in labor-management task forces, seeking solutions to challenging problems. Since union leaders and administrators in districts such as Miami and Rochester were long-time professional colleagues who had committed themselves to working together, their new

experiments were further supported by personal candor, a readiness to try new things, and an underlying trust in each other's good intentions.

The detailed accounts of these districts' efforts, the difficulties they encountered, and the reforms they devised are instructive, even inspiring, though perhaps overly optimistic about the outcomes(Kerchner & Koppich, 1993; Rosow & Zager, 1989). What is certain, however, is that the scope of bargaining, still technically restricted in many states to issues of wages, hours, and working conditions, had in practice greatly expanded beyond those formal limits. Local negotiators dealt with a wide range of issues, including teachers' role and responsibilities, professional accountability, curriculum reform, staff development, administrative practice, and parental involvement. Educational policy was at the center, rather than the margins, of their attention.

In some local districts, this shift from industrial unionism to "professional unionism" (Kerchner, 1993) led to contract provisions that directly challenged the three tenets of industrial unionism discussed earlier: adversarial labor-management relations, the virtue of standardized practice, and the legitimacy of generic roles for employees. Examples of these new approaches will be discussed briefly.

Joint Committees Promote Labor-Management Cooperation: Recognizing that the challenges of reform could not be met simply by negotiating and signing a contract, many districts instituted joint labor-management committees to promote on-going, collaborative problem-solving. Kerchner and Koppich (1993) report that such committees were "universal [among these reforming districts], although their configuration and mission var[ied] markedly" (p. 11). In Cincinnati, where there were at least 37 such committees (King, 1993), administrators joined union-appointed teachers in equal numbers to "address

a variety of issues, including curriculum reform, textbook selection, staff development, Chapter I. . .planning, and the school calendar"(p. 73). One of the most successful of these joint committees, the Teacher Allocation Committee, monitored enrollments and then assigned teachers from a surplus pool in order to reduce class size in overcrowded grades and schools. "The district agreed to leave decisions solely in the hands of this joint labor-management committee. The union agreed not to grieve the committee's decisions"(p. 73). In the past, class size would have been bargained contentiously and then enforced class-by-class and school-by-school, seldom solving the class size problem and rarely using resources creatively or efficiently. By creating a joint committee that would assess ever-changing needs and carefully assign surplus teachers, labor and management acknowledged and acted on their shared interest in staffing the schools as wisely as possible. They also recognized the need to continue their collaboration long after the contract was signed.

Peer Review and Career Ladders Challenge Teachers' Generic Roles: Industrial bargaining reinforces the generic definition of teachers' roles. Although some teachers have earned more academic degrees than their peers or may be paid better salaries as a result of that education, in fact, their jobs are much the same from the first day of employment to the last. There were two reforms introduced by several of these flagship districts that fundamentally changed that uniform conception of teachers' roles. Peer review, first developed in Toledo, identifies a small number of accomplished teachers who advise and assess both beginning teachers and experienced teachers judged to be in need of assistance. Typically, peer review is overseen by a joint labor-management committee that selects the consulting teachers and weighs their recommendations for reappointment

or dismissal. In Toledo, Cincinnati, and Rochester, this approach has won support among teachers because the peer reviewers bring real expertise to the task and make a genuine effort to be of help. The process has led to considerably more dismissals of incompetent teachers than administrators accomplished before the program began.

Several of these districts also introduced the basic elements of a career ladder with promotional steps that signaled individuals' increasing skill and rewarded them for assuming new responsibilities. Rochester's Career in Teaching Program created a four-step ladder that included new intern teachers, provisional resident teachers, tenured professional teachers, and competitively selected lead teachers. Lead teachers take on roles as mentors, peer reviewers, staff developers, curriculum designers, or adjunct instructors at local colleges or universities (Koppich, 1993, p. 145). Similarly, Cincinnati introduced a Career in Teaching Program, that was inspired, Union President Mooney reports, by ideas from A Nation Prepared (King, 1993, p. 71). In Cincinnati, as in Rochester, a joint committee was "formed to oversee the assessment process, credential lead teachers, and recommend additional roles and responsibilities for lead teachers" (p. 72). In these districts, therefore, teachers were recognized and compensated for having attained different levels of competence and for exercising different kinds of responsibilities.

Decentralization and School-based Management Challenge Standardization: Many reforming districts instituted some form of school-based management after 1986. Where in the past, the policies of the district office and union contract applied equally to all schools, this decentralized approach to governance was designed to empower local schools to hire staff, allocate the budget, select their instructional programs, and seek

waivers from union or district requirements. The point of this reform was to ensure that local schools could adapt their practices to meet the needs of their students.

Miami-Dade educators had been working on these ideas since 1973, though school-based management was not approved as a pilot program until 1986; the next year 32 schools participated in this experiment. Most had requested and received waivers from particular provisions of the contract. Provenzo (1989) observes that "despite all the hoopla" about innovation in Miami-Dade, "one does get the sense that a number of very important changes are taking place—ones that have the potential to be not only long lasting but of national importance" (p. 156-157) By 1993, school-based management had been instituted in over 160 schools (Phillips, 1993, p. 122) and had served as a model for similar initiatives across the country. Every school that successfully won control of its budget or gained the right to regulate class size despite contract language stood as a challenge to union and bureaucratic pursuit of standardized practice.

CURRENT CONTRACTS

When Rosow and Zager(1989) and Kercher and Koppich(1993) set out to study districts that were building labor-management alliances that explored the possibilities of professional unionism, the researchers planned to document what worked. Thus, they focussed on reformers and districts at the forefront of this new movement. The fact that four chapters in these two books describe events in the very same districts indicates that there were few such districts to choose from at the time.

As we took up this issue of reform bargaining a decade later, we wondered what we might find among a more representative sample of districts. Had more districts subsequently experimented with professional unionism and, if so, would their contracts

include provisions contrary to the tenets of industrial unionism? We collected the current contracts of eleven districts from two samples previously studied by Johnson and her colleagues and compared them with earlier contracts from 1979-80 (the first sample) or 1984-85 (the second sample). Although both samples were small—the first included six districts and the second included five—they had been deliberately selected to represent the range of negotiating districts in the U.S.. These eleven districts provide valuable information about how local districts responded to the possibilities of professional unionism.[2]

Before we began this contract analysis, we recognized that there is inevitably a difference between negotiated policy and actual practice. Implementing contract language requires more than good intentions, for changes—particularly the kinds of changes advanced by reform bargainers—call for new attitudes and approaches from everyone involved. Not only must principals and teachers who have had no part in negotiating the agreement behave in new ways, but school boards must fund the changes and central office administrators must develop new procedures to support them. Meanwhile, secretaries and clerks must make the new approaches work day to day. Often, therefore, contracts promise more than they can possibly deliver. Any effort to truly understand whether and how these school districts are implementing negotiated reforms would require extensive field work. However, there is still much to learn from comparing contracts before and after 1986. We can discover whether or not these districts moved beyond the conventions of adversarial bargaining and adopted provisions more consistent with the needs of schools and the goals of professional unionism. The very fact that these

provisions are bargained represents a type of labor-management collaboration that is critical to, and promising for, school improvement.

Wider Variation Exists Among Contracts Today

This analysis revealed that there is today even more variation among contracts than in 1988 when McDonnell and Pascal declared that the predicted "convergence" of collective bargaining agreements had not occurred. The current sample of eleven districts includes several that have redefined labor-management relationships and ambitiously negotiated about a wide range of topics. Those districts have adopted contract provisions that are consistent with the needs of school reform. They are distinctive in their clearly stated purpose and collaborative tone; they espouse shared responsibility for school improvement, encourage experimentation, and provide much-needed flexibility for schools and teachers.

By contrast, there are contracts in this group that are scarcely different from those negotiated in the 1970s. Their provisions assume that labor and management have opposing interests, that standardization is a virtue, and that teachers' roles should be restricted to instructing and supervising students. We were surprised to see that the few changes that had been made in these industrial contracts during the past 15 or 20 years usually favored management rather than the union.

Finally, there was a third group of contracts that we have labeled "modified-industrial." They lack the coherence and clearly stated purpose of the reform contracts, yet do include several new provisions that suggest the possibility of labor-management cooperation or expanded roles for teachers. The tremendous variation apparent in this sample of eleven contracts illustrates once again that negotiations can produce remarkably

different outcomes depending on a district's needs and priorities, its labor-management history and relationships, and its leadership.

Reform contracts: There were three districts with contracts we judged to be reform agreements in that, through their various provisions, they recognize the shared interests of labor and management, affirm the importance of flexible, non-standardized practice, and define differentiated, professional roles for teachers. One district (Metropolis) had been studied in 1979-80, and two (Citrus County and East Port) had been part of the 1985 study. Notably, these are the three largest districts in the current sample of eleven. Their earlier contracts had been industrial in tone and rule, emphasizing teachers' rights and protections, setting forth elaborate district-wide procedures for seniority-based staffing, and disregarding the needs of individual schools. They typified most people's notion of excessively restrictive union agreements.

Today, these same districts take a different stance. For example, the East Port agreement begins with a Preamble entitled, "A Shared Commitment to Educational Achievement," in which the partners dedicate themselves "to doing better," and explicitly acknowledge that a prior contract was "also intended to promote change" but "accomplished less than was hoped." Lessons learned from that experience are, the Preamble states, reflected in the new agreement, though the signers acknowledge that the intended outcomes will not follow automatically from signing the agreement:

> Change will not come of its own accord; it requires intensive, carefully planned, and skillfully executed implementation. Strong, consistent leadership and widespread training is needed to transform the traditional labor-management culture. To achieve real educational improvement, the parties and the community will have to work together collaboratively (p. 1) .

The Preamble further explicitly affirms the importance of school-based decision-making, flexibility, professional development, parent involvement, and "accountability for quality and performance." It describes the adversarial labor relationship of the past and candidly acknowledges the challenges the district faces to "overcome vestiges of a litigious and suspicious culture focused on work rules, hierarchical power and resistance to change by both parties" (p. 5).

In support of this spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility, the East Port contract includes provisions to establish an extensive professional development center and to create a Mentor Teacher Program administered by a joint labor-management committee. The contract sets forth a detailed plan for school-based management and shared decisionmaking, giving school site councils broad powers over curriculum design, budgeting, and staffing. Changes in specific provisions also signal the parties' recognition that individual schools need to handle their own affairs. For example, they explicitly give schools the right to decide how best to allocate time in a longer school day. More boldly, the contract creates an experimental in-district charter program where selected schools operate free of both union and district regulations.

The Metropolis agreement also includes new language that differs markedly from its 1980 contract. While the old contract specified emphatically what a teacher "shall" and "shall not" be required to do, the new agreement more broadly assigns responsibility for improvement. For example, it states:

> The Federation and the School District recognize that neither teaching nor learning can flourish in a disorderly, disruptive environment. Therefore, there is a need to become more pro-active in determining the cause of discipline problems as well as to isolate the distraction from the teaching and learning of the classroom (p. 43).

The contract establishes a joint committee to study discipline and safety and to create schools throughout the district for students "whose behavior interferes with the teaching/learning process."

Throughout the current Metropolis contract, guiding language explains the relationship between good schooling and the stated expectations for teachers' performance, such as: "The orderly planned opening of the school day is essential to the full and effective utilization of instructional time. Consequently, teachers should be in their classrooms at the contractual time and should remain in the classroom until all students are dismissed" (p. 36). Exemplary Metropolis teachers, like those in East Port, can assume new roles that reach beyond their classrooms, by serving as peer reviewers or administering that program as members of the joint Peer Intervention Panel.

Once a highly bureaucratized district that revered standardized practice, Metropolis, through its contract, has ventured to give schools and programs within schools, more autonomy. Where in 1980, Metropolis principals had to informally convince teachers to depart from union practices, today the contract provides for more flexibility and variation. For example, the staff and principal of an individual school or program may "jointly develop an Experimental School Improvement Plan which may require modifications of provisions of this Agreement, including but not limited to, class size, teacher rosters, teacher, student and administrator evaluations, grading, scheduling or trade-offs" (p. 41) All management powers are not relinquished, however. The contract states the Superintendent's right to "reconstitute an academically distressed school" by dissolving and reopening it with newly-assigned (or re-assigned) teachers and administrators.

Although Citrus County, the third district judged to have a reform contract, was characterized as once having had "the most contentious educational labor relationship in the state," (Johnson et al., 1985 p. 45) its contract was never quite as detailed or restrictive as those from East Port or Metropolis. Basic working conditions, essentially set by 1974, still form the core of today's agreement, but they are supplemented with programs and initiatives found in other reforming districts. For example, the contract outlines a school-based management program and encourages individual schools to devise approaches that will achieve greater instructional success: "The parties agree that local school and professional staff will be empowered to identify ways of improving the educational process and to determine alterations to this agreement necessary to implement those improvements" (p. 22)

Although the Citrus County contract includes no provision for teachers to evaluate their peers or to move up a career ladder, it does establish for them a role in policy making that is more than advisory. The parties agree, for example, that teachers "should continue to be a major source of development and innovations in improving the educational programs carried on in the schools" and "that it is important for the professional staff to participate in the overall coordination of studies, projects, and other activities directed toward the development, improvement, and implementation of such programs, toward the evaluation of existing programs, toward the devising, testing and introduction of new programs, and toward research in pertinent and educationally related areas" (p. 22). Thus, the contract affirms teachers' expertise and their readiness to do more than deliver the district's curriculum.

Therefore, each of these three contracts redefines the labor-management relationship, expands the role of teachers, and provides for varied, flexible practices within the schools. The parties express confidence in the promise of a collaborative relationship, declare their shared interest in providing better instruction, and acknowledge their interdependence in making progress day by day. The contracts still contain basic guarantees of teachers' working conditions—in-school work hours, duty-free lunch, restricted meeting obligations, evaluation procedures—but there is less focus on minimal job requirements and there are fewer practices prescribed in detail than in the past.

Industrial Contracts: In marked contrast to these three reform agreements that rejected industrial conventions and introduced new roles and programs, five contacts were distinctly industrial in tone, form, and content. Three of these districts—Mill City, Northwood, and Vista—come from the 1980 sample, and two—Harbor Mills and Midland Heights—from the 1985 sample. While, in this study, the reform districts are all large, these districts with industrial contracts are relatively small, ranging in size from 1000 to 15,000 students. The districts are very different demographically—two wealthy suburbs, a large rural area and two poor cities.

These industrial-style contracts are, overall, shorter and less detailed than the agreements that incorporate reforms. Unlike the reform agreements, these documents are formal and legalistic in tone, specifying rather narrowly what can, cannot, and must be done by the various parties. While the reform agreements explicitly consider the particular needs and programs of the district, these industrial contracts include a great deal of boiler-plate language, making them sound much like one another. They set forth

procedures for layoffs and transfers, class size limits, preparation time and teaching loads, with little allowance for school-based decisionmaking.

These districts' contracts continue to define teachers' roles narrowly and specify their responsibilities in surprising detail. For example, the Midland Heights contract lists the ways in which the teacher's in-service day "may be used"—"to attend an assignment-related conference, workshop or to make a school visitation,"—and requires teachers to document how they eventually use the time. Teachers in Vista are expected to sponsor one student organization or be a member of one building level committee. In Mill City, principals still can change teachers' report card grades "in unusual cases." Northwood teachers "may be asked by the Administration to cover for an absent colleague during assigned preparation time," but the contract also states that teachers "may decline such requests." And in Harbor Mills, the contract spells out precisely what constitutes an "unexcused absence": "A teacher who is absent before and after a school holiday is presumed to be absent for the holiday for the same reason as she is absent for the school days, unless excused by the Superintendent of Schools after presentation of a physician's certificate of legitimate incapacity of the teacher."

Notably, most of the changes that were apparent in the current contracts favored management over labor, contradicting once again the belief that unions gain ever-stronger contracts as they bargain. Whereas the old Vista contract included a section called "Rights and Responsibilities," the new one is titled "Recognition of Responsibilities and Rights," shifting the emphasis, if only symbolically, from the limitations on teachers' obligations to what should be expected of good teachers. In 1980, the contract said that teachers should be consulted about their preferred subject or grade level assignments and that the principal

"shall then develop a schedule based upon consideration of the teacher's stated preference, professional preparation, and teaching experience and qualifications." The current contract strengthens the principal's authority in this process by stating, "The principal shall develop the master schedule and make teacher assignments using input from department chairpersons and teachers." The changes in the Vista contract are few, but those that have been made offer evidence that management has reasserted formal authority.

Changes in the Northwood contract seemed to include concessions to both labor and management and to suggest a process more of bartering than collaborative problem-solving. In the current contract, seniority is not included as a criterion for voluntary or involuntary transfers, but teachers did win the right to "present [their] input to the principal regarding the effects of the involuntary transfer upon the students and staff," be given the reason for the transfer "providing time permits," and object in writing to the Superintendent. All of these are very modest gains by the union, if indeed they are gains at all.

Therefore, with the exception of layoff and transfer provisions added in response to the enrollment declines that hit many districts in the early 1980s, almost half of the contracts in this sample have remained virtually unchanged over the last fifteen or twenty years. Although the contracts were not hostile or contentious in tone, they were formal and prescriptive. Basic working conditions had been established long ago, and what adjustments in those provisions did occur appear to have shifted the balance of authority toward management.

Modified Industrial Contracts: Contracts from three remaining districts—Canyon Unified, Shady Heights, and Plantville—contained new elements of reform that seem to have been appended to the old agreements without changing their overall purpose or character. From simply reading the documents, it is impossible to know whether these additions are the first steps of a new labor-management relationship, or simply free-standing changes that will have little effect on larger labor or schooling practices.

The most progressive of these modified-industrial contracts is Canyon Unified's, which establishes joint labor-management committees to evaluate the applications of teachers who seek assignments that are partially outside their field of certification. Another provision creates a joint committee to approve teachers' applications for new program development money. There is a pilot program for site-based decisionmaking allowing individual schools to adopt practices contrary to the contract, though that program is not explained in any detail. Responding to a state initiative, the district provides for the appointment of Professional Growth Advisors, who work as mentor teachers. Although this might suggest the teachers' roles have been expanded, the contract also allows individuals to resign from the district while holding these positions; elsewhere the agreement states that "unit members shall not be assigned to participate in the evaluation of other unit members." The contract also reveals some ambivalence about the labor-management relationship. It emphasizes the parties' shared responsibility for instructional improvement, an objective that "can be more readily achieved by a willingness on the part of both parties to assist all unit members, but especially less experienced unit members, in improving their professional skills." This collaborative

spirit, however, is quickly undercut by a subsequent statement cautioning that this provision is not subject to the grievance process.

In Shady Heights, too, the recent contract assigns some measure of new professional power to teachers. Where the 1980 agreement prescribed in detail how time should be used on Early Release days, the current agreement assigns this to a planning committee that includes teachers; final proposals require approval by the Administration and the Union. A joint labor-management committee is charged with reviewing current report cards if, and when, they are to be revised. In choosing department heads, two teachers now are part of a five-member selection committee, and seniority, which once was decisive in the department head's appointment, now is only one criterion to be considered.

Of the three districts with modified-industrial contracts, Plantville provides the least evidence of reform. It establishes joint committees to oversee mini-courses and to study "the problem of curriculum continuity on days of excessive pupil absences." It also requires that a committee of six, including two teachers, approve any plan requiring narrative report cards.

Therefore, although it is possible that these modified-industrial contracts are the precursors of more ambitious reform agreements, that does not seem likely. There is some evidence of broader, more collaborative ideas, but the contracts remain essentially industrial in style and detail. The changes seem only superficial adjustments to an otherwise adversarial, rule-bound way of doing business.

What the Variation in Current Local Contracts Reveals

Therefore, there is remarkable variation in collective bargaining agreements today. Some open the way for better schools by affirming labor and management's commitment to work together, establishing structures that make joint responsibility truly possible, guaranteeing the right of individual schools to manage their own affairs, and engaging teachers as professionals in the process of educational improvement. In stark contrast, there are other contracts that heighten distinctions between labor and management (subordinating the former to the latter), establish uniform practices district-wide, and specify in precise terms the rights and obligations of all teachers and administrators. This second group of contracts, industrial in form and content, are far more likely to inhibit than to advance school reform.

In this array of contracts, we can discern the limits of industrial bargaining and the potential of reform bargaining to improve public education. For, if a district retains and reinforces rigid distinctions between labor and management, it will not likely open discussions about a wide range of issues, including how to reconcile assurances about teachers' working conditions with anticipated reforms. By restricting the flexibility of individual schools and imposing detailed rules that apply to all schools, a district is likely to prevent those schools from adopting creative approaches that would serve children better. If a district narrowly limits teachers' roles and prescribes what they must do or not do, it will surely discourage professional initiative and forfeit the chance to draw upon the full range of teachers' commitment and expertise. By contrast, a district engaged in reform bargaining can consider a wide range of related issues and fashion coherent, consistent approaches to school reform. It can carefully decide which decisions affect the

well-being of the whole district and, therefore, must be centralized, while delegating decisions about school-based practice to the schools, where they belong. Reform bargaining can encourage teachers to think expansively about what they actually do and what they might do in their work.

LOOKING AHEAD

We return, therefore, to the original question: What role should unions and collective bargaining play in school reform? There are several options. First, of course, there is the possibility of settling for the status quo. Alternatively, collective bargaining could be eliminated entirely, a strategy that seems increasingly plausible, given the growth of charter schools and popularity of vouchers. Third, public schools could deliberately expand the role of collective bargaining in reform by adopting a collaborative approach to negotiations and keeping school improvement at the center of their deliberations. We explore each of these options briefly.

Maintain the Status Quo

For a small number of enterprising districts already engaged in reform bargaining, steadily following their current course will likely lead to productive change. However, in most districts, where industrial bargaining is the norm, continuing business as usual will only serve to reinforce problematic distinctions between labor and management and minimize teachers' engagement in change. As we saw in contracts from Harbor Mills, Northwood, and Mill City, many districts now routinely use negotiations solely to reach agreement on wages and benefits, while provisions addressing noncompensation items carry over without review from one contract to the next. Administrators in such districts may be so discouraged by the negative, stagnant character of conventional bargaining that,

if they decide to promote change, they do so entirely outside the bargaining process, without regard to the contract or the union. In some districts where politics and favoritism have historically held sway, teachers might well interpret such action as an effort to divide them from their union or undermine the rights that their contracts protect, and in response, they may actively or passively resist reform. If, on the other hand, teachers see good intentions and competence in such administrative action and, thus, choose to take an active role in shaping reforms, progress is possible. However, since many initiatives that are central to instructional change (peer review, career ladders, or school-based management) inevitably affect how teachers' work is organized or how their time is used, those proposals would ultimately reach the bargaining table anyway. There, the outmoded process of industrial bargaining would be of little use in helping the parties craft creative, locally appropriate changes. Many administrators today may never venture to recommend far-reaching reforms in teachers' work because they know that such proposals would be subject to negotiation, and they realize that the conventional bargaining practices used in their districts are not up to the difficult task of reform.

The force of institutional inertia and the lack of leadership by administrators and union officials will probably mean that most districts will settle for the status quo. However, this failure to choose a more challenging option is not as benign as it might seem, for over time relying on the status quo can only increase differences that already exist between the educational practices of reforming districts and those of stagnating districts. For children, those differences mean inequity in public education.

Eliminate collective bargaining

Some who call for an end to collective bargaining likely start from the assumption that administrators really do know best how to reform education, and they proceed to conclude that schools will improve once management reasserts its right to regulate the work of teachers. However, there is no evidence to support the notion that substituting administrators' judgment for teachers'—rather than incorporating both in decisions about policy and practice—would improve schooling. In fact, by discounting the value of teachers' contributions, schools would probably lose teachers' active engagement, their craft knowledge about what works in classrooms, and their leadership in effecting change within their schools. Despite frequent entreaties to let administrators to run their schools free from the constraints of unions, it is obvious that they cannot revitalize classroom teaching on their own.

Other advocates of this position may start from a very different place and assume that teachers and administrators already see the need to work together as professionals and will collaborate naturally once the restrictions of bargaining and contracts are removed. This belief is apparent in the considerable enthusiasm about the potential of charter schools to engage teachers as professionals and equals in a new approach to public education. Yet, it is not clear what the outcome of this movement will be. It is possible that charter schools could simply recreate the educational factory-model of the past, where administrators make all decisions about the school's organization and teachers either withdraw to the privacy their classrooms or leave education for jobs in more rewarding workplaces. Early research by Johnson and Landman (1998) suggests that deregulating public education will not diminish good teachers' interest in securing basic assurances about their work—setting reasonable boundaries on what they can be expected to do,

establishing their role in policy making, and ensuring a means by which they can voice complaints and resolve disputes. Individual schools may address and resolve these issues informally, but a few instances of administrative excess or abuse will likely provoke teachers to insist that their needs be formally addressed. One possibility, of course, is that they will exercise their rights to organize as a union and bargain collectively.

Enlarge the role of collective bargaining

There is considerable evidence to support selecting the third option, that of enlarging the role of collective bargaining in school reform. The analysis of past research and current contract data presented here documents the promise of reform bargaining. Rather than creating obstacles to improvement, collective bargaining can provide a legitimate, collaborative process for discussing educational challenges, exploring options for improvement, and tailoring strategies to meet local needs and realities. However, this discussion also documents how difficult this approach can be and what it would take to make it work.

First, reform bargaining requires that the parties embrace a broad range of issues, for it is virtually impossible to truly change schools with a series of small, isolated adjustments. Changes in one practice inevitably require changes in others. If discussions are limited to the traditional topics of wages, hours, and working conditions, participants will never face the important challenges about teachers' professional roles, school organization, and instructional practice. Second, participants from both labor and management must acknowledge their shared stake in improving education and adopt a collaborative approach to negotiation, one that encourages candor and creative determination, a readiness to rethink long-held beliefs, and a willingness to make difficult

concessions. Third, to ensure that their professional judgment shapes decisions and practices, a broad group of teachers—not simply the inner circle of union leaders—must inform contract deliberations from the start, and there must be a variety of key roles for these teachers to assume once the contract has been signed, for example, as members of joint committees or participants in peer review. Fourth, in negotiating and administering a contract, the needs of individual schools must be kept clearly in mind so that these schools gain the flexibility they need to make reform work for their students and communities. In the past, far too many contract provisions have been geared to uniform application rather than school-by-school adaptation. Kerchner, Koppich, and Weeres (1997) recommend that districts replace the "all-inclusive districtwide contract" with two documents—a "slender central agreement" (p. 104) that sets forth broad principles and district structures and a series of "compacts" negotiated at the school sites that lay out the details for a range of school-level practices. There is much to recommend this approach, though it could not be implemented easily and would likely be adopted gradually. Schools might initially bargaining about a small list of provisions, such as preparation time or professional development, and as they become practiced in establishing school-based policy, take on more challenging issues, such as the school schedule, tracking, or differentiated staffing.

Achieving the conditions that would support reform bargaining requires far more than having both sides agree to pursue a new approach, for the context in which public schools operate regularly imperils the stability of cooperative labor relationships. Many local reformers who set out to bargain collaboratively discovered that seeming teamwork vanished when budget cuts threatened teachers' pay raises or job security (Johnson et al.,

1985). Moreover, a signed contract, no matter how progressive, is only a beginning, for there is always a gap between what the contract allows and what actually transpires.

When practice falls short of what a contract allows or promises, participants and observers often express cynicism about whether the parties ever truly intended to make it work. In reality, the problem faced by districts engaged in ambitious reform is more likely to be one of limited capacity than lack of good intention. Other districts can provide models of new approaches and programs, from school-site budgeting to peer review, but each time a new program is introduced, a district must develop the capacity to make it work. Teachers do not yet know how to mentor their peers. School-site councils haven't learned how to allocate resources. Principals are not practiced in constructing flexible teaching schedules. Central Office administrators don't see the many ways that they might support a school's decision to recruit its own staff. Developing such capacity takes both time and "steady work"(Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988).

Increased capacity, though, will not be enough without consistent, strong leadership in support of reform from the superintendent and union president. It is informative but sobering to see how many of the advances in flagship districts grew out of long-term professional and personal relationships between the leaders of labor and management. Trust is not built easily and can be lost with the departure of key reformers. The arrival of an autocratic superintendent or the election of an antagonistic union leader can suddenly set back the pace of change. However, the longer that a district works at reform and the more that many participants are invested in its outcomes, the less likely it is that individuals can enter the scene and overturn accomplishments.

Also, with increased focus on instructional standards and accountability, superintendents and school boards are likely to feel pressure to re-centralize districts and reassert managerial authority. In the short run, exacting greater compliance from principals and teachers may seem the best response to the public's demands for quick results. However, school districts will not achieve high levels of instructional success by prescribing detailed practices for classrooms or for schools. In fact, the new higher standards for learning demand adaptive, creative teaching, not restrictive, assembly-line treatment of students. Uniform schooling is not good schooling. We have already learned that lesson, but perhaps not taken it to heart.

Therefore, of these options—maintaining the status quo, eliminating collective bargaining, or expanding the role of reform bargaining—we make a case for choosing the third. This approach would encourage comprehensive discussions, informed by the judgments of both administrators and teachers. Moreover, reform bargaining has the greatest potential for achieving systemic change, thus ensuring comparable opportunities for all students. However, achieving these benefits requires far more than simply making a choice and installing a program. Learning new approaches to collaboration, changing ingrained attitudes about one's adversaries, and reconsidering beliefs about what is possible all call for courage, imagination, and resolve. Changing central office procedures, building capacity for decision-making in the schools, preparing expert teachers to assume supervisory roles, and developing principals' confidence as educational leaders all take time, a tolerance for failure, and a determination to get things right. The work is hard, but the stakes are high, and collective bargaining still offers the best promise for success.

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ENDNOTES

[1] "This doctrine, which originated with U.S. Supreme Court decisions about railroad unions' discrimination against black workers, [Steele v. Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company, 323 U.S. 192, 65 Sup Ct. 226, 89 L.Ed. 173 (1944)] requires that the union must 'act for and not against those whom it represents.'" (Johnson, 1983, p. 124)

[2] The first sample, (Johnson, 1983) consisted of six districts ranging in size from 850 to 240,000 students There were urban, suburban, and rural districts located in four regions of the country. Three were affiliated with the NEA, three with the AFT, and they provided variation in labor histories, contract strength, and current labor relations. The second sample of five districts (Johnson et al., 1985) had been selected for field work from a stratified, random sample of 155 districts in eleven states. Again, we had deliberately selected these districts for their diversity on a number of variables—region, size, labor history, contract, and union affiliation.

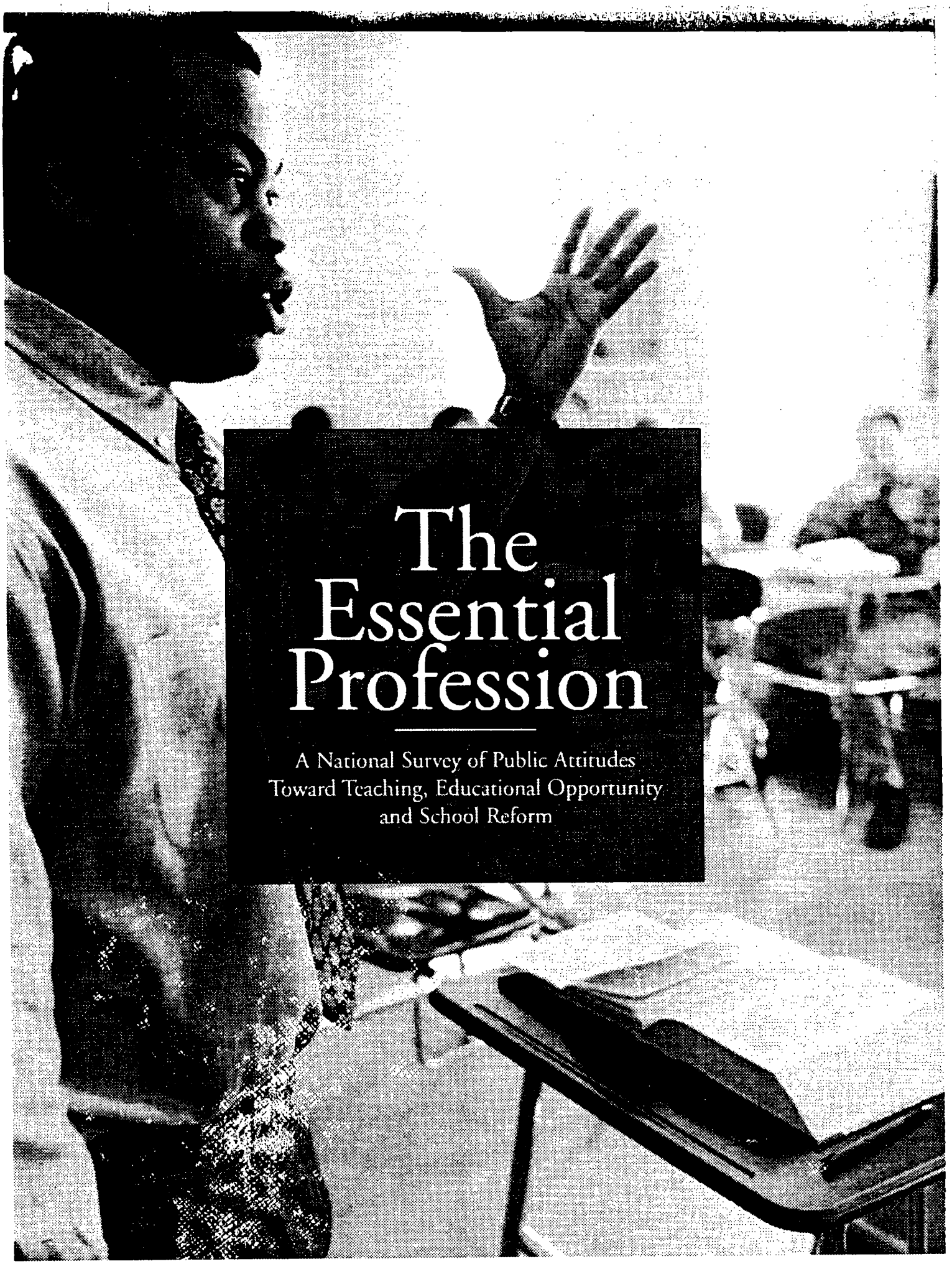
November 17, 1998

Cortney,

See the attached survey results released today by Recruiting New Teachers. Their data indicate that although 78% of respondents felt it would be good to recruit people with career experience into teaching, they soundly rejected allowing people with a BA degree and no teacher education preparation to teach. They also oppose lowering teacher licensure standards.

Some alternative licensure programs are quite good, but others are shoddy. Clearly the public wants someone (administrators, government, or others) to be sure that people entering teaching from other professions get the teacher preparation they need before entering the classroom.

Penny



The Essential Profession

A National Survey of Public Attitudes Toward Teaching, Educational Opportunity and School Reform

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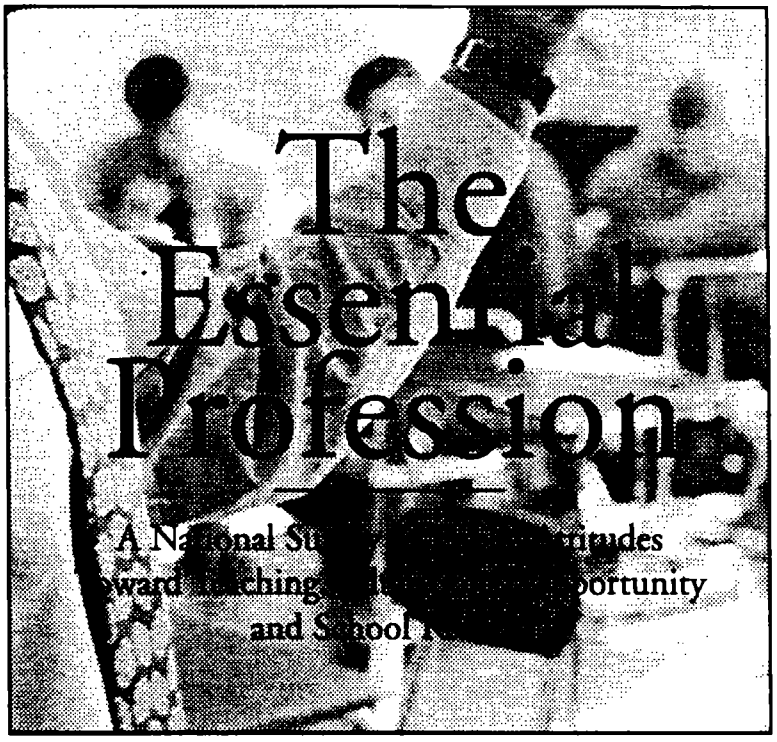

RECRUITING NEW TEACHERS, INC.

RECRUITING NEW TEACHERS, INC.

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (RNT) is a national non-profit organization which was formed in 1986 to raise esteem for teaching, expand the pool of prospective teachers, and improve the nation's teacher recruitment and development policies and practices. Based in Belmont, Mass., RNT pursues its goals through innovative public service outreach; action-oriented research; local, state and national advocacy; networking; technical assistance; and convening national conferences.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a time when Americans view improving the quality of education as the most pressing issue confronting the nation, an overwhelming majority of the public considers improving the quality of teaching as the most important way to improve public education. A landmark national opinion poll, conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. and public opinion analyst Louis Harris, shows the public strongly believes not only that quality teaching is the basic building block of better schools, but also that better teachers are the key to the American dream, particularly for the nation's most disadvantaged students.

According to the poll, which was funded by Philip Morris Companies Inc., roughly nine out of ten Americans believe the best way to lift student achievement is to ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom. Once the issue of student safety is addressed, the public believes that providing a qualified teacher in every classroom - not standards, tests, vouchers, privatization, or school uniforms - is the most important way to improve education today.

The quality and caliber of teachers was chosen as having "the greatest influence on student learning" by more than half (55%) of the American people, a choice that was favored over establishing a system of academic standards (30%) or requiring achievement tests in core academic subjects (14%).

When vouchers were pitted as a reform strategy directly against "doing what it takes to put a fully qualified teacher in every classroom," the teacher quality agenda won hands down by an 84% to 14% margin. Similarly, "doing what it takes to put a qualified teacher in every classroom" was preferred over allowing outside for-profit companies to run schools within the public system by a commanding 87% to 11% majority.

America's Teacher Recruitment Challenges

The nation's teaching force is at a demographic crossroads. By 2008, schools will need to hire more than 2.2 million teachers to serve growing student enrollments and to replace the considerable number of current teachers expected to retire in coming years. There is already a need for teachers in a broad range of subject areas, including math, science, bilingual and special education. Where education officials face high rates of attrition for beginning teachers, such as in urban schools, the recruitment challenge is even greater.

As national, state, and local policymakers consider new initiatives to meet these challenges, understanding the public's views on teaching is vital. Any proposal, whether designed to expand the pool of prospective teachers, improve the preparation and quality of teacher candidates, strengthen support

for novice teachers, or to improve the practice of all teachers at various stages in their careers, will require public support.

What Teachers Give to America

The survey shows that the public knows that teaching gives more back to America than any other profession.

When asked which of eight professions they felt "provides the most important benefit to society," the public put teachers first by more than a 3:1 margin, with 62% of the American people singling them out. (When the identical question was asked in 1996, fewer people (57%) put teachers over doctors. In 1988, even fewer people (35%) cited teachers in a closely comparable poll.)

Asked about a career they would recommend to a family member, people ranked teaching (39%) a close second to medicine (40%), despite the well-established differences in pay.

Another indicator of the profession's solid public esteem is that when asked how much influence different people had on their career choices, people placed teachers (24%) in second place behind their parents (48%).

Quality Gap: A Mandate for Focusing on the Disadvantaged

The poll findings demonstrate an awareness of the importance of teacher quality that cuts across all socioeconomic strata. Eighty-three percent of the public strongly agreed that "we should ensure that all children, including those who are economically disadvantaged, have teachers who are fully qualified, even if this means spending more money to achieve that."

An identical 83% also felt that "we must give a high national priority to recruiting and preparing teachers who can provide quality education for our children, especially those who are in most need to be helped to learn." Research indicates that unlicensed or underqualified teachers are most likely to be found in economically deprived districts. In the poll, low-income and minority Americans were more likely to rate teachers as unqualified than were non-minorities and higher wage earners. While only one in four Americans thought that the problem of poor quality teachers was "very serious and widespread," 36% of those surveyed earning between $15,001 and $25,000 felt that way. In addition, 38% of Latinos and 42% of blacks said the problem was "very serious and widespread." At the same time, respondents gave relatively high marks to the teachers in their own communities and states. However, the fact that a 79% to 19% majority favored "giving parents specific information at the beginning of the school year on how qualified their child's teachers are according to state standards required for permanent teachers," suggests that the public takes the teacher quality challenge seriously and wants to be assured that teachers are making the grade.

Time for Teacher Improvement

The survey found significant support for increased spending on two fronts: to ensure qualified teachers, especially in schools serving low-income and minority students, and to pay for extra time

spent in the school day and throughout the school year for professional development of teachers. Seventy-one percent agreed with the statement that "public schools should pay teachers for longer work days so they have time to stay up with new developments in their fields." Sixty-one percent were in favor of lengthening the school year and providing more time within each school day for professional development of teachers, compared with 36% who were opposed to such measures.

Keys to Improving Teacher Quality

The public believes that teaching requires special training and skills, not simply a good general education. More than three quarters of the people surveyed said they would oppose allowing people with bachelor's degrees to become teachers without requiring preparation in the field of education. The survey found strong agreement regarding the value of teacher education (93%), with the public rejecting the notion that "good teachers are born and not made" by more than 2:1.

The list of qualities the public felt are "very important for an excellent teacher to have" includes: "being well-trained and knowledgeable about how to teach effectively" (92%) and "being thoroughly educated in the subjects they will teach" (91%).

Six other top attributes were not far behind: "ability to establish good relationships with children and adolescents" (90%); "understanding how people learn" (90%); "ability to communicate well with parents" (86%); "basic sensitivity to each child as an individual" (83%); "at least one semester's experience in a classroom as a student teacher" (79%); and "in-depth understanding of child and adolescent development" (76%). Two credentials often considered as highly important: "a strong liberal arts education" and "a master's degree from an accredited school of education" were only cited as "very important" by 37% of the public.

Teacher unions came off with mixed marks in the study. While a 55% to 34% majority agreed that "teacher unions support setting high standards for teachers," a comparable 53% to 32% majority held the view that "teacher unions too often stand in the way of real reform."

The Making of a Teacher

To meet the expected teacher hiring demands, the public favored more stringent teacher licensing standards tied to standards for student performance, better pay, and more opportunities for teachers to learn while practicing.

More than eight out of ten said they would strengthen state teacher licensing standards rather than lower them. The public also particularly supported providing stronger mentoring for new teachers using able veteran teachers to offer them guidance and support (91%).

A federally sponsored loan forgiveness program for prospective teachers who agree to work in disadvantaged schools received a 67% approval rating. The public also overwhelmingly favored attracting more people currently working in other fields into teacher preparation (78%) and paying higher salaries to those who teach science or math (65%)—two areas experiencing shortages. However, the public was extremely skeptical about quick fixes to meet expected shortages, such as bypassing teacher education by letting bachelor's degree recipients become teachers without proper training (78% opposed vs. 20% in favor), or lowering state licensing requirements for teachers (84% opposed vs. 15% in favor).

The Issue of Pay

A majority (56%) of people surveyed indicated they themselves would consider becoming a teacher if guaranteed a $60,000 annual salary. Eighty-one percent said they would consider recommending teaching as a career to a family member if the pay was $60,000.

Nearly eight out of ten people said teachers' salaries should be raised over the next 10 years as a way to get more qualified teachers into the schools. Seven in ten felt that teachers were "just adequately paid" or "inadequately paid." Only a third believed teachers' pay should be tied to student test scores. All but a small percentage said that having a competent, caring and qualified teacher should be a national goal even if it means spending more money to achieve that end.

Rejecting Arbitrary Limits to Learning

The public also believes that public education remains the key to the American dream. The results showed a firm rejection of a "Bell Curve" approach to student performance. More than 68% of respondents felt "strongly" or "somewhat strongly" that most children are capable of learning demanding academic subject matter and should be required to meet the same academic standards. Minorities (79% for Latinos and 71% for blacks) were more likely than their white counterparts to feel "strongly" or "somewhat strongly" about the need for rigorous academic standards for all children.

More than 60% said that hard work primarily determines a student's academic performance, while only about 19% said that natural ability determines it.

Teachers Still Face Formidable Classroom Challenges

The public cited a whole roster of problems in the public schools that are "very serious and widespread": 68% viewed "student drug use" as a major problem in the schools; 65% cited "school violence," a reflection of deep apprehension over the threat of guns and other weapons widely available to children today; 64% saw "student drinking" as a serious problem; 59% cited "lack of parental involvement" as a major deficit in today's educational environment; 58% believed that "teenage pregnancy" is a serious problem; 51% felt that "students' lack of basic skills" is a deterrent to achieving a

first-rate education. Thirty-five percent scored large classes as a "very serious and widespread" problem; 26% rated "poor-quality teachers" that way. The "lack of choice about what school a child can attend"; "out-of-date subject matter"; and the "lack of up-to-date technology and computers" were all at the bottom of what the public deemed to be "very serious and widespread" problems. No more than 16% felt that "school uniforms" are an important way to make schools better.

Summing Up

The report provides an unusually in-depth view of the public's attitudes toward teaching, school improvement, and equal educational opportunity. The consensus that emerges from the findings is the need to place primary emphasis in school reform on teacher quality. The desire to "keep the guarantee of a free public education for every child" was affirmed by a nearly unanimous 98% of those surveyed in the poll as well. In the end, most Americans believe that the promise of top-quality education can be achieved in the public schools, but only if we recruit, train, and develop a teaching corps capable of doing the job.

A Word About This Study

This report summarizes the findings of a study designed to better understand Americans' attitudes about teaching, educational opportunity, and school reform. By most measures, education has become the number one domestic policy concern of the American people. This fact, combined with the substantial teacher recruitment challenges the nation faces over the next decade and the rise in calls to strengthen teacher quality as a critical component of educational improvement, provided the temporal trigger and context for the survey.

Thus, this study sought answers to some central questions: What do Americans feel must be done to ensure that the nation's schools become all they should be? What roles are teachers expected to fulfill in the quest for higher student achievement? How well do current and proposed reform efforts measure up to the public's expectations for its schools?

The survey tested a "quality teacher agenda" against such proposed reforms as new student standards, class size reduction, school uniforms, private school vouchers, and charter schools run by for-profit corporations. In addition, the survey tested public views about the importance of public schools themselves. Within the public school context, issues in urban education, diversity in staff composition, and access to equal educational opportunities for racial minorities and the disadvantaged were tested, as well. Finally, a central target of the inquiry was what the public believes constitutes a "fully qualified" teacher.

In all, cross-sections of 2,525 adults nationwide were surveyed. A cross-section of 1,504 adults nationwide was surveyed between August 12 and September 14, 1998, while a cross-section of 1,021 adults was surveyed in California between August 21 and September 12, 1998. Both studies employed probability methodologies which ensured that each in the universe sample had an equal chance of being represented in the sample interviewed. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2% in 95 out of 100 cases.

The survey questionnaire instrument was designed by Louis Harris and David Haselkorn, with the active consultation of Dr. Elizabeth Fideler. Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University; Dr. Joan Baratz Snowden, Deputy Director in the Educational Issues Department at the American Federation of Teachers; and Dr. Harvey Hunt and Margaret Gaston of The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning provided helpful comment and critique during the questionnaire's development. (N.B. Louis Harris and Dr. Darling-Hammond are members of the Board of Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. David Haselkorn is President and CEO of RNT. Dr. Elizabeth Fideler is Vice President for Research and Policy at the organization.) The authors also gratefully acknowledge the diligent assistance provided by Ms. Elizabeth Gross, policy assistant at RNT.

The interviewing, sample preparation, and computer processing of the data were conducted by an independent national research firm (Peter Harris Research Group). Louis Harris worked closely with the Peter Harris organization on the execution of the survey design in the field. All of the original computer runs and analyses are available upon request. A copy of the questionnaire is included at the conclusion of this report.

The survey was sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc. Funding for the California sample was provided by The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.

Background

For the second year in a row, a record number of students entered our nation's schools. By 2008, America will educate nearly two million more children than today—more than 54 million young people. These K-12 enrollment increases are occurring just as teacher retirements across the nation are beginning to accelerate due to the advancing length of service of many in the profession. As a result of these trends and other forces over the next decade, more than two million teachers will need to be hired to staff the nation's classrooms. This is a recruitment challenge that is equivalent to hiring every doctor in this country more than two-and-one-half-times over. Simply stated, if America's education goals are to be realized, our schools will need to recruit, hire, and develop the largest, best-prepared, and most diverse generation of teachers this nation has ever known.

Teacher shortages have already reached critical proportions in fields such as science, mathematics, bilingual education, and special education; in regions experiencing the greatest population increases (e.g., California, Nevada, and Texas, among others); in urban schools; and with respect to teachers from diverse racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.[1] In addition, attrition rates for new teachers in urban districts can often approach 30%-50% in the first five years of teaching—further adding to the demand side of the urban teacher challenge.

Business and the military spend billions on human resource development, recognizing its key role in effective organizational performance. Yet despite the nation's growing teacher challenge, the sad fact is that many districts lack the knowledge and expertise needed to identify new pools of prospective teachers and recruit the qualified and diverse teachers they require. Commenting on this state of affairs two years ago, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future scored scattershot teacher recruitment and slipshod selection and hiring efforts nationwide, noting that "recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools."

The survey which follows was undertaken by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. to gauge the public's understanding of the nation's teacher recruitment, development, and diversity challenges—and to assess public support for a variety of initiatives that have been proposed to address them. In a time of heightened political interest in education, the survey also explicitly sought to measure the potential impact on voters that the issue of teacher quality might have—especially when compared with other issues that have held a high place in education reform discussions in recent years (e.g., new student standards; tougher tests; class size reduction; school uniforms; private school vouchers; and charter schools run by for-profit corporations).

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[1] *A 1996 RNT survey of human resource officials in 47 of the nation's largest urban school districts found:*

- *Most districts (85%) had an immediate demand for special education teachers;*
- *About two thirds of the responding districts said they had an immediate demand for teachers in science (69%); math (67%); and bilingual education (64%); and nearly all districts (92%) cited an immediate demand for teachers of color.*

An Overview of the Findings

Recognition of the importance of quality teaching cuts across all groups and socio-economic strata.

The results provide an unusually in-depth portrait of public attitudes about teaching, one that reveals clear-cut appreciation of the difference that quality teaching makes to student outcomes and the nation's future. Despite myriad challenges facing education today, recognition of the importance of quality teaching cuts across all groups and socioeconomic strata. Once basic issues such as school safety and student well-being are addressed, the public concludes that qualified teachers are the heart of school reform and is willing to support a far bolder agenda to ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom.

Taken together, the findings show the American public:

- Understands the central role that quality teaching plays in school improvement;
- Appreciates the complexity and breadth of knowledge and skills required to be a fully qualified teacher;
- Supports a broader public investment in teacher learning by investing in extra time in the school year and the school day for professional development;
- Is skeptical of quick-fix solutions that propel unprepared candidates into the profession;
- Would like to be provided greater information on teacher qualifications;
- Acknowledges the vital role teacher training institutions must play in strengthening the profession and in preparing teaching's next generation;
- Recognizes the importance of public education and supports a broad-based commitment to it;
- Understands (and supports) the need to spend more money to ensure qualified teachers, particularly for low-income and minority school children;
- Supports putting a qualified teacher in every classroom as a more powerful reform strategy than providing parents public money for private schools;
- Endorses providing new teachers stronger mentoring and support by able veterans;
- Accords teaching a potentially higher attractiveness as a prospective career choice than is often assumed; and
- Recognizes the benefits that teachers and teaching provide society—outpacing all other careers polled (including medicine) by more than 3:1.

Key Findings

Negative Student Behaviors Top List of Concerns

The public understands that public schools today face a wide variety of challenges. Among those rated "very serious and widespread" are behavioral issues, such as drug use, school violence, student drinking, lack of parental guidance, and the like. Teacher quality stands lower in the list of the public's concerns. In fact, among those problems rated most severe (i.e., "very serious and widespread") poor quality teachers ranked 11th out of 14 possible choices, well behind core issues of student safety, discipline, and well-being.

However, while only one in four Americans overall thinks that the problem of poor quality teachers is "very serious and widespread," a greater 36% of respondents in the $15,001-$25,000 income category identify the problem this way. This variance tracks with the higher incidence of individuals teaching out of field or on substandard certificates in low-income communities.[2] In addition, 38% of Latinos polled, and 42% of blacks, scored the problem of teacher quality as "very serious and widespread."

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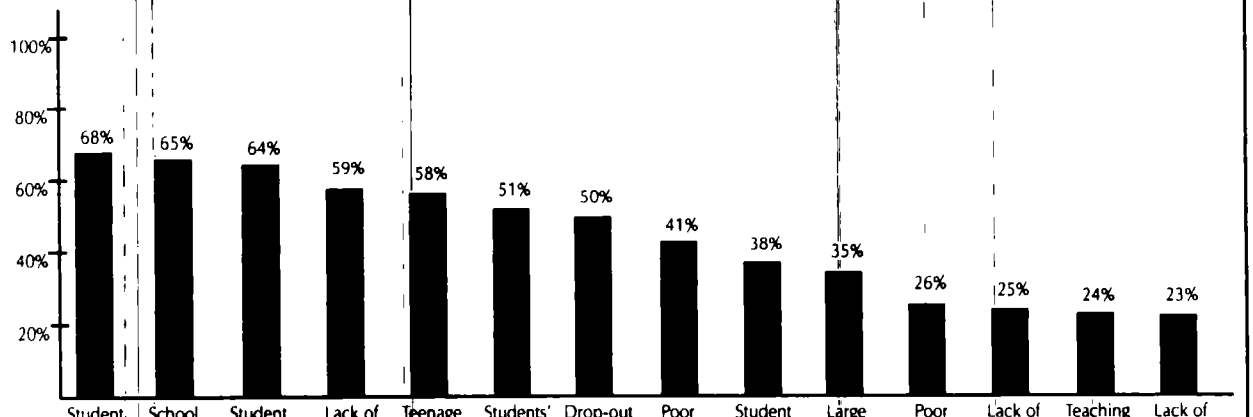
TABLE 1
PUBLIC SCHOOL PROBLEMS VIEWED AS VERY SERIOUS AND WIDESPREAD



* *More than one response allowed*

[2] *N.B. Among public secondary school students in high-poverty schools the problem of underprepared teachers is most severe: 19% of those in English classes, 26% of those in mathematics classes, and 14% of those in chemistry classes are taught by a teacher with neither a major nor a minor in the field. Source: NCES, "The Condition of Education, 1998."*

Qualified Teachers Seen as Most Important Rx for Student Improvement

In contrast, when asked to rate the importance of specific measures for lifting student achievement, the public rated "ensuring a well-qualified teacher in every classroom" second only to "schools safe from violence" (90% to 92% respectively). When the categories of "very important" and "somewhat important" are combined, ensuring a well-qualified teacher in every classroom (99%) comes out dead even with "schools safe from violence" (99%).

There was consistent agreement on this point across all demographic groups, education levels, and political affiliations. At the same time, the adoption of school uniforms—a favored nostrum of both the President and a number of prominent conservatives—gets low marks from the public: just 16% of respondents think it is a very important means of lifting student achievement, and fewer than 10% of those who are now or have been a teacher do.

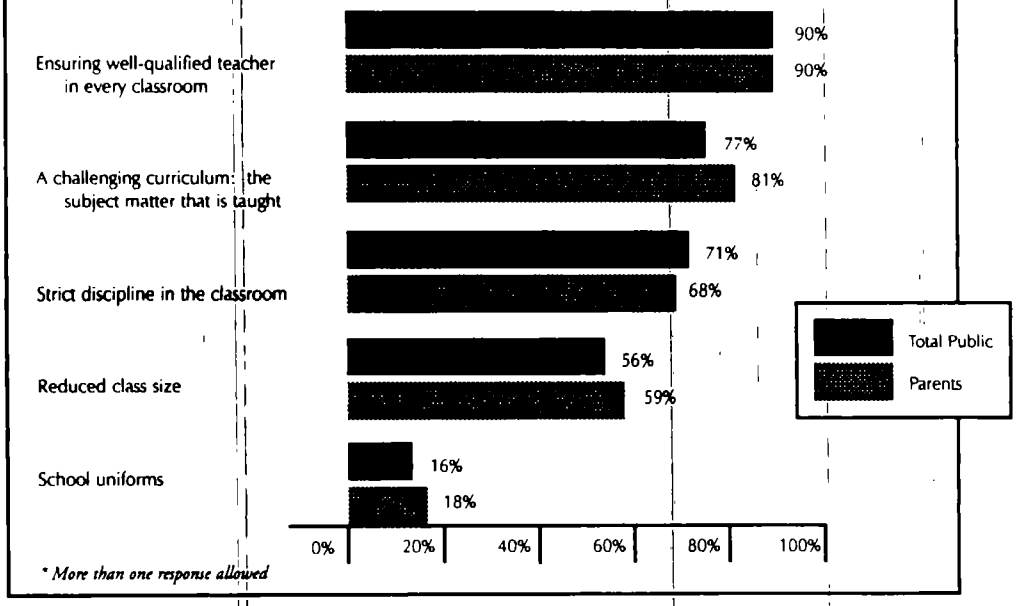
To narrow the field somewhat, people were asked bluntly to choose only one of the following three items that they thought had "the greatest influence on student learning":

a) Requiring achievement tests in core academic subjects;

b) Establishing a system of academic standards required to be met by all students; and

c) The quality and caliber of their teachers.

TABLE 2
SPECIFIC MEASURES TO LIFT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



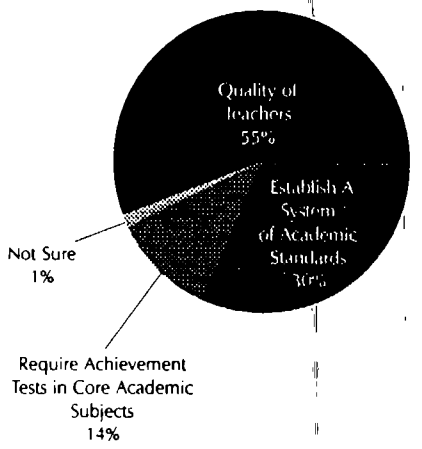
* *More than one response allowed*

The quality and caliber of teachers was chosen by nearly a 2:1 majority over the next closest education improvement strategy. Parents of school-aged children demonstrated an even stronger commitment to the quality teaching agenda.

In addition, a majority of Republicans and Democrats favored the quality teaching reform agenda, with Republican support even stronger than Democratic (59% vs. 52% respectively).

Interestingly, establishing a system of academic standards required to be met by all students finds its highest base of support among former and/or current teachers (34%), but is still substantially eclipsed by the issue of teacher quality.

TABLE 3
GREATEST INFLUENCE ON STUDENT LEARNING



A majority of Americans agrees that most children are capable of learning demanding academic subject matter.

High Standards Supported for All Students

At the same time, a 68% to 30% majority of Americans agrees that most children are capable of learning demanding academic subject matter and should be required to meet the same set of academic standards. Strongest support for this proposition is found among Latino and black respondents (79% and 71% respectively).

TABLE 4
AGREE OR DISAGREE: MOST CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF LEARNING DEMANDING ACADEMIC SUBJECT MATTER AND SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO MEET THE SAME SET OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

	Total Public %	White %	Black %	Latino %
Total Agree	68	67	71	79
Agree strongly	36	32	48	51
Agree somewhat	32	35	23	28
Total Disagree	30	32	26	18
Disagree somewhat	20	21	17	8
Disagree strongly	10	11	9	10
Not sure	1	1	1	1

* *More than one response allowed*

Similarly, the public strongly rejects the proposition that student academic performance is primarily influenced by natural ability rather than by hard work, as seen in Table 5.

The public strongly rejects the proposition that student academic performance is primarily influenced by natural ability rather than by hard work.

This rejection of a "Bell Curve" philosophy which bases student academic performance primarily on inherited ability is seen most clearly among Latino and black respondents and—not surprisingly—among those who indicated that they felt most students could learn demanding academic subjects. At the same time, those polled viewed the practice of dividing students into separate academic tracks with approval, too, agreeing that "tracking" is helpful to students placed in advanced tracks (79%); all students (67%); and students placed in slow tracks (65%). However, while 78% of current and former teachers feels the practice is helpful to those placed in advanced tracks, this segment of the cross-section feels less certain that the practice is either helpful to all students (53%) or helpful to students placed in slow tracks (52%).

Qualified Teachers Deemed Key to Unlocking Children's Learning Potential

The entire cross-section was asked to consider how important having a highly qualified teacher was to helping a child achieve his or her full learning potential. Ninety-three percent indicated that it was either "the most important element in education" (31%) or a "very important" (62%) element.

How the Public Defines Teaching Excellence

In its 1996 report, *What Matters Most: Teaching and America's Future*, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future noted that to be fully competent, teachers require strong academic preparation in the discipline they teach, deep understanding of how children learn, and an equally significant grasp of pedagogy—the way to organize instruction so that children can learn. Further, the Commission went on to recommend a range of quality assurance measures to strengthen teacher recruitment and preparation. What are the qualifications the public feels to be "very important for an excellent teacher to have?"

TABLE 5
STUDENT PERFORMANCE: PRIMARILY DETERMINED BY A STUDENT'S NATURAL ABILITY OR BY A STUDENT'S HARD WORK?

Primarily determined by:	Total Public %	White %	Black %	Latino %
A student's hard work	62	61	66	67
A student's natural ability	19	20	15	18
Both equal	18	18	17	14
Not sure	1	1	2	1

* *Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding*

The basic knowledge and skills the public feels are most important for an excellent teacher to have track strongly with the National Commission's recommendations with respect to teacher preparation. However, two qualifications that are often invoked by proponents of quality teaching were rated of less importance by the public, in a dead heat with each other:

- A master's degree from an accredited school of education (37%); and
- A strong liberal arts education (37%).

Ironically, those people rating a master's degree from an accredited school of education the lowest were those who had some postgraduate education and those who had been, or were currently, teaching. Among other qualifications deemed important for excellent teachers, the strongest support for teachers' knowing how to "speak and understand the language used in a student's home when it is other than English" came from blacks (59%); low-income individuals (48%); Latinos (40%); and single parents (50%).

Teachers require strong academic preparation in the discipline they teach, deep understanding of how children learn, and an equally significant grasp of pedagogy.

TABLE 6
TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS FELT TO BE VERY IMPORTANT

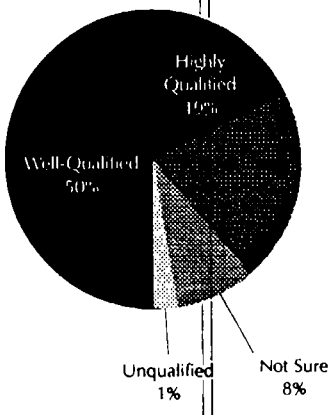
	Total Public %	White %	Black %	Latino %	High School or Less %	Some College %	4 Yr. College %	Post Graduate %
Well-trained and knowledgeable about how to teach effectively	92	93	91	91	92	93	91	88
Thoroughly educated in the subjects he/she teaches	91	91	94	87	92	91	86	87
Understanding of how people learn	90	90	93	89	90	91	89	87
Ability to establish good relationships with children and adolescents	90	90	89	91	90	89	88	88
Ability to communicate well with parents	86	85	93	87	89	84	83	73
Basic sensitivity to each child as an individual	83	83	85	85	84	82	81	82
At least a semester's experience in a classroom as a student teacher	79	80	78	77	81	77	76	74
In-depth understanding of child/adolescent development	76	74	82	79	81	74	66	62
Solid understanding of community in which he/she will teach	61	58	74	70	68	57	48	49
A master's degree from an accredited school of education	37	35	51	44	50	29	19	17
A strong liberal arts education	37	35	44	50	40	34	33	36
Knows how to speak and understand the language used in a student's home when it is other than English	36	32	59	40	43	32	22	21

* *More than one response allowed*

Teachers Get Passing Grades in Local Schools

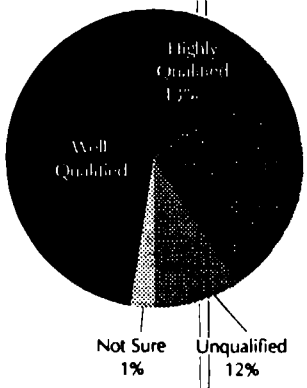
Respondents were asked to rate most teachers in the schools where they live.

TABLE 7
RATING OF TEACHERS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITY



Individuals in the lowest income bracket were more prone to rate their teachers "just minimally qualified" (30 percent), as were those who lived in rural areas (32 percent).

TABLE 8
RATING OF TEACHERS IN THEIR OWN STATE



* *Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding*

At first glance, the 69% who say teachers in their own schools are "highly" or "well-qualified" seem to provide a solid vote of confidence. However, although 50% of the public rate the teachers in their schools "well-qualified," this is only a second-place showing given the question's four-part rating scale. Only 19% say their teachers are "highly qualified," while a higher 23% rate their local teachers as "just minimally qualified" or less.

Individuals in the lowest income bracket were more prone to rate their teachers just minimally qualified (30%), as were those who lived in rural areas (32%).

Rating Across States More Mixed

There is a well-known phenomenon in polling that people rate the performance of schools in their own neighborhoods higher than schools nationally or at the state level. There is a natural psychological bias, particularly pronounced among parents, to give the school to which they send their own children the benefit of the doubt when it comes to judgments of quality—reserving more negative assessments for the schools (or teachers) of others. Therefore, when individuals were asked to rate most teachers in their home state, only a plurality (49%) rated them as "well-qualified." Moreover, twice the number rated their state's teachers as "just minimally qualified" than rated them "highly qualified."

On this question, those in the income category of $75,001 + were more likely to rate their state's teachers as "just minimally qualified" or "unqualified" (37%).

Teacher Workload Underestimated...

Obviously, many factors go into how individuals rate the teachers in their own community and state. Certainly, one factor is the perception of the total number of hours in a day respondents think the average classroom teacher puts in at work.

In this regard, the public clearly underestimates the number of hours the average classroom teacher works each day. Only a third peg their work day at nine hours or longer—consistent with the 9.2 hours per day the average teacher works, according to the NEA.[3]

TABLE 9
ESTIMATES OF HOURS A DAY THE AVERAGE TEACHER WORKS

	Total Public %	Total Parents %
6 hours	22	24
7 hours	14	15
8 hours	27	24
9 hours	17	17
Longer	18	19
Not sure	2	1
Median	7.5 hrs.	7.8 hrs.

** Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding*

...But More Time for Teacher Development Supported

On the other hand, the public strongly favors lengthening the school year by two weeks to allow more time for teacher consultation and planning (61% in favor vs. 36% opposed). Among blacks, 73% favored this measure (vs. 24% opposed), with comparably strong support among single parents (73%).

Another indication of the public's support for a more robust professional development agenda for teaching is that nearly 71% agree with the statement that "public schools should pay teachers for longer work days so they have time to stay up with new developments in their own fields." This proposition finds its strongest base of support among Latino parents (83%), those of the general public who indicated that education should be the top election issue (77%), and the significant majority of parents and single parents (72% and 84%, respectively).

The public clearly underestimates the number of hours the average classroom teacher works each day.

TABLE 10
LENGTHENING THE SCHOOL YEAR TO ALLOW FOR TEACHER PLANNING

	Total Public %	Total Parents %	Single Parents %	Whites %	Blacks %	Latinos %
Favor	61	62	73	58	73	64
Oppose	36	35	24	39	24	34
Not Sure	3	2	-	3	1	2

** Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding*
- Means zero response

[3] *NEA, "Status of the American Public School Teacher, 1995-96," 1997. N.B. This number combines the average length of the required school day (7.3 hours) with the average number of hours spent after the required workday on instruction-related activities, such as lesson preparation and paper grading (1.9 hours).*

Specific Information on Teacher Qualifications Desired

Many respondents reject out of hand the old shibboleth that "good teachers are born and not made."

The vast majority of Americans (79%) feel that parents should receive specific information at the beginning of the school year on how qualified their child's teachers are according to required state standards for teachers. Support for this measure was strongest among blacks and Latinos (both at 83%), as well as parents of secondary school students (90%). Individuals with a postgraduate degree, and those who are now teaching or have previously taught, felt less strongly about this measure (61% and 58%, respectively).

Mixed Views About Many Current Teacher Recruitment, Preparation, and Development Practices

The survey sought to find out respondents' agreement with a number of statements reflecting policies, practices, and perspectives on the teaching profession.

Their responses yielded a complex assessment of a range of issues that strike at the heart of the teacher quality challenge. For example, while almost three fourths of the cross-section agree that their school district hires fully qualified teachers, less than two fifths (37%) agree strongly that they do.[4]

TABLE 11
ATTITUDES TOWARD POLICIES AND PRACTICES AFFECTING TEACHERS

	Total Agree	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Total Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Most colleges and universities that prepare teachers are doing a good job	75	29	46	19	13	6	6
Your local school district hires fully qualified teachers	74	37	37	18	12	6	6
Standards for licensing a teacher in your state should be tied to standards for student performance in classes they have taught	71	36	34	25	15	10	5
Current teacher licensing standards in your state guarantee that teachers who are allowed to practice really know how to teach	66	36	30	28	19	9	6
Teacher unions support setting high standards for teachers	55	27	27	34	18	16	12
Teacher unions too often stand in the way of real reform	53	26	27	32	19	13	15
Teachers should be paid according to how well their students perform on tests that measure academic performance	33	16	17	66	27	39	1
Good teachers are born and not made	30	15	16	67	23	44	7
Teacher education is a waste of time	4	2	2	94	10	84	1

* *More than one response allowed*

[4] *N.B. In these crucial barometers of quality assurance, "agree somewhat" seems to be at best a lukewarm endorsement, given the question's four-part rating scale. Accordingly, we focus particular attention on those numbers of the cross-section in "strong agreement" as a better proxy for the strength of public sentiment on several key issues.*

Similarly, while more than two thirds (66%) agree that current teacher licensing standards in their states guarantee that teachers who are allowed to practice really know how to teach, only 36% of those polled strongly agree with this proposition. Skepticism rises along with income on this score, with only 26% of respondents in the $75,000+ income category strongly agreeing with the statement. Significantly, individuals who have taught or are teaching now are among the most critical of current state teacher licensing standards—with only 30% agreeing that current teacher licensing standards are rigorous enough.

On one important issue, the role of teacher education in quality teaching, the public rejects by a nearly unanimous 94% to 4% the proposition that "teacher education is a waste of time" (a view shared by some who advocate that any intelligent person can quickly become competent to teach without undertaking serious formal educational preparation in how to teach). In addition, a solid 67% to 31% rejects out of hand the old shibboleth that "good teachers are born and not made." Indeed, only 15% of the cross-section mustered strong agreement for this statement.

TABLE 12
POLICIES AND PRACTICES AFFECTING TEACHERS: DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

Total Agree Strongly

	Total Agree %	Under $15K %	$15-25K %	$25-35K %	$35-50K %	$50-75K %	$75K+ %	Former/ Current Teachers %
Most colleges and universities that prepare teachers are doing a good job	29	36	35	31	28	25	22	21
Your local school district hires fully qualified teachers	37	35	36	37	39	40	37	51
Standards for licensing a teacher in your state should be tied to standards for student performance in classes they have taught	36	42	39	42	35	35	29	24
Current teacher licensing standards in your state guarantee that teachers who are allowed to practice really know how to teach	36	41	39	40	37	34	26	30
Teacher unions support setting higher standards for teachers	27	30	37	32	27	23	24	28
Teacher unions too often stand in the way of real reform	26	29	25	22	23	29	31	26
Teachers should be paid according to how well their students perform on tests that measure academic achievement	16	22	13	18	15	12	15	9
Good teachers are born and not made	15	18	20	13	13	12	12	15
Teacher education is a waste of time	2	5	3	2	2	3	3	3

* *More than one response allowed*

At the same time, while three fourths agree that most colleges and universities that prepare teachers are "doing a good job," only 29% of those surveyed agree strongly on this point. Those who are teaching or have taught are among the least likely to be in strong agreement on this one (21%). As above, we believe the "agree somewhat" response indicates rather lukewarm approval for the status quo in teacher education.

The nation will need to hire two million teachers nationally over the next ten years.

Finally, there is surprisingly weak public sentiment (just 33%) for paying teachers according to how well their students perform on tests that measure academic achievement. The public renders a split decision on whether teacher unions support setting high standards for teachers or whether teacher unions too often stand in the way of real reform (55% vs. 53%, respectively)—with a more positive assessment of unions winning out by a narrow margin.

The Pivotal Issue of Teacher Pay

Several questions focused on teacher pay: first, whether people felt that most teachers in their own community were "overpaid," "well paid," "just adequately paid," or "inadequately paid." Nearly seven in ten felt that teachers were "just adequately paid" and/or "inadequately paid." A similar assessment holds true for teachers in their home state (71%). Asked to identify the average teacher salary in the U.S., a plurality of respondents chose $38,000,[5] near the national average, with approximately equal numbers overestimating or underestimating average teacher pay in their state.

Meeting America's Teacher Recruitment Challenges: Steer Clear of Quick Fixes

Participants in the poll were told the nation will need to hire two million teachers nationally over the next ten years because of growing enrollments and teacher retirements. They then were asked to indicate whether they favored or opposed a number of strategies for meeting the nation's teacher recruitment challenges.

Significantly, establishing special programs for new teachers in which able, veteran teachers would serve as mentors to newly hired teachers garnered the strongest response. Equally significant, while eight out of ten Americans would favor strengthening state requirements for teacher licensure to meet the challenge, a nearly comparable 78% would favor raising salaries to address the unprecedented expected hiring demand.

Having the federal government provide loans to prospective teachers that would be "forgiven" on the condition that the teacher teach in disadvantaged schools (as called for in the recently Reauthorized Higher Education Amendments) is also given strong support (67%). The public also overwhelmingly favors attracting more people currently working in other fields into teacher preparation (78%), and paying higher salaries to those who teach science or math because qualified teachers are hard to find in those subjects (65%).

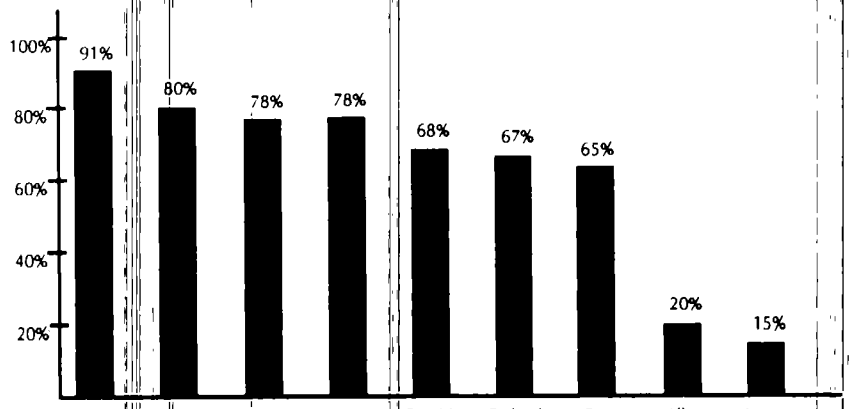
[5] *NEA, "Status of the American Public School Teacher, 1995-96," 1997.*

However, "allowing people with bachelor's degrees to become teachers without requiring preparation in the field of education" and/or "lowering state requirements for the training needed to become a licensed teacher" ranked at the bottom of what the public is prepared to support in meeting the nation's teaching challenge (20% and 15%, respectively).

Overall, these findings—combined with the qualifications for excellent teachers rated most highly by the public—should be heartening news for those who have supported the standards movement in quality teaching but have been concerned about the public's engagement on these issues, or its understanding of the complexities of teaching. Put into perspective, the findings indicate that the public 1) understands how critical top-quality teaching is to getting children to learn; 2) understands the complexity and breadth of knowledge and skills required to be an excellent teacher; 3) supports a broader public investment in teacher learning by granting teachers extra time in the school year and the school day for professional development; 4) is skeptical of quick-fix solutions that take high risks by accepting unprepared candidates into the profession; and 5) gives tepid approval of the job most colleges and universities preparing teachers are doing, while also recognizing the vital role that teacher training institutions must play in strengthening the profession and in preparing teaching's next generation.

The public is skeptical of quick-fix solutions that take high risks by accepting unprepared candidates into the profession.

TABLE 13
MEASURES TO MEET AMERICA'S TEACHER RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES



* *More than one response allowed*

Despite Quality Concerns, Parents Trust Their Children's Teachers By and Large

More and more school leaders and school reformers have realized the importance of establishing a strong bond of communication between parents and schools. Parents of school-aged children who responded to the survey (35%) were asked how many times in the past year they had met with their child's teachers. Two thirds said they had met three times or more with their child's teacher over the last year, a percentage that rose with the education level of the parent.

Almost one in three felt they got too little information about their child's education, a feeling most emphatically felt by low-income, black, and single parents.

Parents were also asked if they felt welcome in their child's school, and 87% indicated that they did, with a higher 97% of private school parents reporting that they felt welcome in their child's school.

Parents next were asked where they felt they got the most reliable information regarding their child's school. Over four in ten (42%) indicated their child's teacher as the source of the most reliable information. The media ranked rather low in this regard, with only 2% saying they get their most reliable information about their child's school from them.

Parents also were asked whether they felt the quantity of information they received about their child's education from school officials was adequate. Almost one in three felt they got too little information, a feeling most emphatically felt by low-income, black, and single parents. However, a 61% majority felt they got "the right amount of information regarding their child's education" (less than 3% of respondents felt they "get too much information").

TABLE 14
WHERE PARENTS GET MOST RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD'S SCHOOL

			Child In:						
	Total Parents %	Single Parent %	Pre-K-8th Grade %	Secondary School %	Public School %	Private School %	White %	Latino %	Black %
From the teacher	42	35	44	40	42	50	39	48	55
From your child	18	24	18	18	18	15	20	9	10
From the local school	12	12	12	14	14	7	12	15	7
From other parents	7	5	8	5	7	9	7	2	7
From the media	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	2
From school district	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	3	-
Other	8	3	7	13	9	9	9	5	8
Not sure/No answer	10	18	8	7	8	7	10	16	11

** Numbers may not add up to 100% do to rounding*
- Means no response

Parents were also asked whether their child's teachers were knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. A high 85% felt their child's teachers were knowledgeable (96% among Latino respondents). Parents also were asked whether or not their child's teachers know how to help them learn.

A full 80% answered that their child's teachers do know how to help their children learn. All in all, these results add up to a strong vote of confidence in their own children's teachers. As with the findings regarding how people viewed the teachers in their community vs. those across their state, greater direct familiarity seems to be linked to a more favorable rating by the public of the job that teachers are doing.

TABLE 15
WHETHER CHILD'S TEACHER IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT SUBJECTS TAUGHT

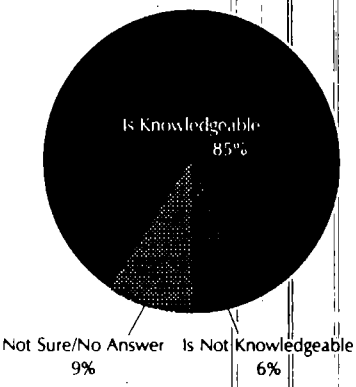
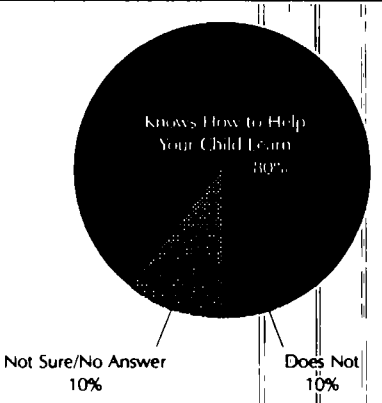


TABLE 16
WHETHER CHILD'S TEACHERS KNOW HOW TO HELP THEIR CHILD LEARN



Most respondents thought that it was "very" or "somewhat important" for students to have teachers from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds than their own.

In the public's perception of which profession provides the most benefit to society, teachers now outrank doctors by more than 3:1.

Diversity in Teaching Ranks Supported...

The entire sample was asked whether it is important that students have teachers from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds than their own, as well as whether they felt it was important or not that the racial composition of a school's staff reflect the ethnic makeup of the student body.

Nearly 60% thought that it was very or somewhat important for students to have teachers from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds than their own; a closely comparable 57% felt it important that the racial composition of the school's staff reflect the ethnic makeup of the student body. Not surprisingly, blacks, Latinos, current and former teachers were more likely to hold these views.

...But Same-Race Role Models Are Less of an Issue

The proposition that students have teachers who are of the same ethnic or cultural background as the students they teach—the "role model" or "cultural matching" arguments for minority teacher recruitment—receives only weak support (41%) from the public (40% among Latinos, 55% among blacks).

Influence of Types of People on Individuals' Lives

Next, people were asked how much influence different people in their lives had had on their career choice. Not surprisingly, parents led the pack (48% of the cross-section according them a "great deal of influence"), with teachers in second place, accorded a great deal of influence on their career choice by nearly a quarter (24%) of the American public.

TABLE 17
VIEWS ON IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY IN TEACHER RANKS

Very/Somewhat Important for:	Total Public %	Total Parents %	Single Parents %	White %	Latino %	Black %
Students to have teachers who are of different ethnic and cultural background from the students they teach	59	56	61	56	60	75
The racial composition of a school's staff to reflect the ethnic makeup of the student body	57	53	74	55	55	71

** More than one response allowed*

TABLE 18
HAVING TEACHERS OF SAME ETHNIC OR CULTURAL BACKGROUND AS STUDENTS

Very/Somewhat Important for	Total Public %	White %	Latino %	Black %	Current/ Former Teachers %
Students to have teachers who are of the same ethnic or cultural background as the students they teach	41	39	40	55	35

** More than one response allowed*

Teachers Top List of Professions Offering Most Benefit to Society

In 1996, Recruiting New Teachers conducted a survey with the Advertising Council that asked which professions were perceived by the American public as providing the "most benefit to society." Two years ago, people in all age groups and geographic regions chose teaching (57%) as the profession providing the "most benefit to society," 2:1 over its nearest rival. By comparison, doctors were considered to provide the "most benefit to society" by only one in four respondents (25%), while lawyers (1%), businesspersons, (3%), politicians (3%), and journalists (2%) lagged still further behind.

We asked the question again in the current survey. The responses are listed in Table 19.

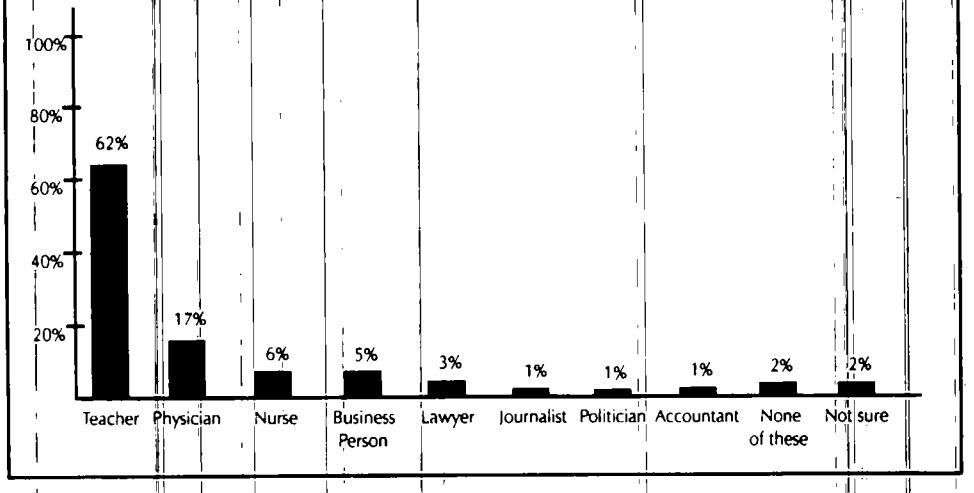
In terms of the public's perception of which profession provides the "most benefit to society," teachers now outrank doctors by more than 3:1, a figure that rises with the level of education—for example, people with a postgraduate degree identified teachers providing most benefit over doctors by more than 5:1 (71% to 14%).

Yet, despite the high societal value placed on teaching, medicine was the career that they would most recommend to a family member.

Clearly, the perception that teachers are not paid well takes its toll here. However, despite the obvious disparity in their average lifetime earnings (close to 5:1) doctors and teachers rank almost neck and neck (statistically in a dead heat). Teaching even edges out medicine as a recommended career choice among some sectors of public opinion (for example, women: 41% vs. 38%; current or former teachers: 48% vs. 30%; individuals with a post graduate degree: 46% to 43%; and individuals for whom education was a top election issue: 44% to 40%). Overall, these findings, (combined with the results of RNT's previous surveys and

Findings indicate that there has been a steady rise in esteem for the profession over the last fifteen years.

TABLE 19
PROFESSION THAT PROVIDES MOST BENEFIT TO SOCIETY

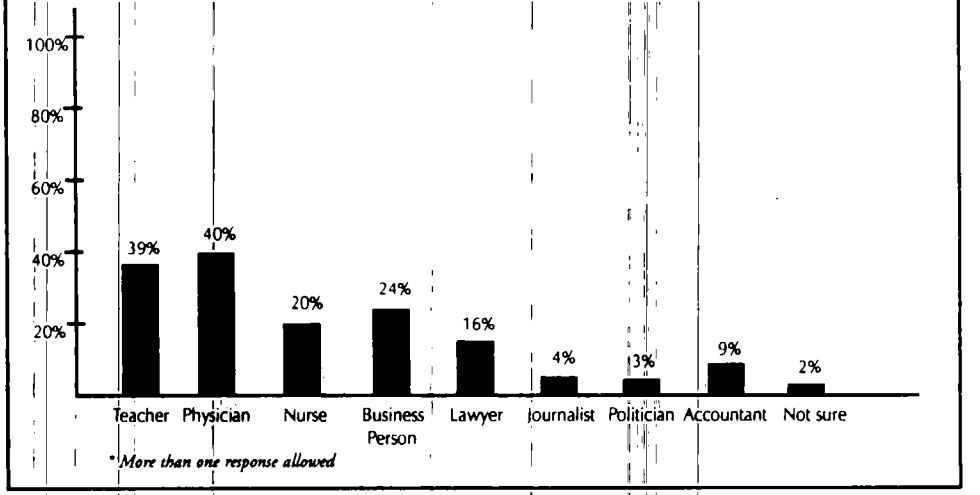


those of other organizations), indicate that there has been a steady rise in esteem for the profession over the last fifteen years,[6] a factor that could prove crucial in meeting the teacher recruitment challenges the nation faces.

Salary Still a Strong Influence in Career Choices and Among "Career Influencers"

The strong showing of teaching as a recommended career choice adds urgency to the need to find new incentives and reduce unnecessary financial barriers to individuals pursuing teaching as a career. This point is further underscored by another question which asked whether or not each person would consider becoming a teacher himself or herself if teachers were guaranteed an income of $60,000/year. A majority (56%) indicated that they would. Highest were 18 to 29-year-olds (64%). Asked if they would consider recommending teaching as a career to a family member if teaching guaranteed an income of $60,000/year, the response rises significantly: 81% indicate that they would encourage a family member to become a teacher if this kind of pay were in the offing. Thus, boosting teacher salaries might not only expand the pool of prospective teachers substantially among key demographic groups, but also increase the likelihood that key career influencers would recommend that family members pursue a pathway into teaching.

TABLE 20
CAREER WOULD RECOMMEND TO A FAMILY MEMBER



6 *Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools; Annual Survey of "The American Freshman", Higher Education Research Institute, University of California at Los Angeles; Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1996; Louis Harris & Associates, Inc., April, 1997.*

Strong Support for Educational Opportunity and Public Education

America faces some daunting educational challenges, and there have been some who have questioned whether the public's support for public education has weakened over the years. The American people were asked whether they favor guaranteeing a free public education—a question that has drawn worried concern by policymakers viewing the increasing pressure to privatize public education, in particular by voucher proponents. Notwithstanding such anxieties, support was nearly unanimous (98%) in favor of guaranteeing a public education for all children.

People were also asked to express agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about teaching and educational opportunity in America (particularly for disadvantaged and minority school children).

TABLE 21
FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE GUARANTEE OF A FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

	Total Public %	White %	Latino %	Black %
Favor	98	97	98	97
Oppose	2	2	*	3
Not sure	*	1	2	-

- Means zero response
** Means less than one percent*

Eight out of ten Americans believe that "we should ensure that all children, including those who are economically disadvantaged, have teachers who are fully qualified, even if it means spending more money to achieve that." More than eight out of ten Americans believe that "we must give a high national priority to recruiting and preparing teachers who can provide quality education for our children, especially those who are in most need to be helped to learn."

Support was nearly unanimous in favor of guaranteeing a public education for all children.

TABLE 22
PROPOSITIONS ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA

Agree Strongly	Total Public %	White %	Latino %	Black %
We should ensure that all children, including those who are economically disadvantaged, have teachers who are fully qualified, even if it means spending more money to achieve that.	83	82	81	90
We must give a high national priority to recruiting and preparing teachers who can provide quality education for our children, especially those who are in most need to be helped to learn.	83	81	86	91
The United States must give a much higher priority to kindergarten through high school.	79	77	80	86
In America, the same educational opportunities are available to minority and non-minority people alike.	33	34	33	28
In America, the same educational opportunities are available to children who live in poor neighborhoods as those who live in affluent neighborhoods.	24	24	24	22

** More than one response allowed*

TABLE 23
CAN AMERICA PAY MORE ATTENTION TO EDUCATING THE MOST DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN TO KEEP THE COUNTRY FROM GOING INTO A SERIOUS DECLINE?

	Total Public %	White %	Latino %	Black %
Will be possible to do	84	83	89	92
Won't be possible to do	13	14	10	7
Not sure	3	4	1	1

** Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding*

It is possible to summon the national will to educate our most disadvantaged children.

At the same time, only one in three Americans agrees strongly that the same educational opportunities are currently available to non-minority and minority students and less than one fourth of all Americans believe that the same educational opportunities are available to children who live in poor neighborhoods as those who live in affluent ones. Yet, notwithstanding all of the challenges facing education, more than eight out of ten Americans believe that it is possible to summon the national will to educate our most disadvantaged children and to prevent the country from going into serious decline. In sum, the American people strongly support the continuance of public education and see quality teaching as the key to unlocking the promise of equal educational opportunity and achieving the American Dream. As seen elsewhere in the survey and below, these convictions permeate the public's response to a range of proposed education reforms.

Quality Teaching vs. Vouchers and Charter Schools

The quality teaching agenda was pitted head to head against two emerging trends in school reform—allowing parents to take public money for private school education, and allowing new public schools to be started by outside for-profit education companies.

When people were asked if they favored "allowing parents to take public money for private school education" or "doing what it takes to get a fully qualified teacher in every classroom," a decisive 84% vs. 14% favored "doing what it takes to get a fully qualified teacher in every classroom" as the better way to make schools what they ought to be. Support on this issue was strong among all groups and political affiliations, but strongest among those with incomes under $25,000, and blacks.

Among those with an income under $15,000, 88% would favor doing "what it takes to get a fully qualified teacher in every classroom," while only 8% would favor taking public money for private education in such head-to-head comparisons. In the next income bracket ($15,001 - $25,000), 89% would favor what it takes to get qualified teachers in every classroom over the 8% supporting allowing parents taking public money for private school education. Among blacks, 94% would favor "doing what takes to get a fully qualified teacher in every classroom," compared with only 6% who would favor providing public money for private school education.

These findings stand in stark contrast to the views of private school voucher proponents who claim widespread support for their policies in low-income and African-American communities. When pitted head to head against strengthening the teaching profession and putting a qualified teacher in every classroom, support for vouchers pales startlingly by comparison. Indeed, for those who rated education as a top election issue in November, 88% would favor "doing what it takes to put a fully qualified teacher in every classroom" vs. just 10% who would favor "allowing parents to take public money for private school."

Another strategy advanced to "shake up the system" in education is to allow new public schools to be started by outside for-profit education companies. Once again, in head-to-head competition with "doing what it takes to put a fully qualified teacher in every classroom," such proposals received only wan support (87% vs. 11%). Here again, support for qualified teachers was highest among low-income groups and blacks as well as those for whom education would be a top election issue in 1998.

TABLE 24
PIVOTAL CHOICE: DO WHAT IT TAKES TO GET A QUALIFIED TEACHER IN EVERY CLASSROOM OR ALLOW PARENTS TO USE MONEY SPENT ON THEIR CHILD'S PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR A PRIVATE SCHOOL EDUCATION?

	Total Public %	White %	Latino %	Black %
Doing what it takes to get a fully qualified teacher in every classroom	84	83	83	94
Allowing parents to use money spent on their child's education in public schools for a private education	14	15	15	6
Not sure	2	3	2	-

- Means zero response

TABLE 25
PIVOTAL CHOICE: DO WHAT IT TAKES TO GET A QUALIFIED TEACHER IN EVERY CLASSROOM OR ALLOW PARENTS TO GET TOGETHER TO HIRE OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS TO SET UP AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM?

	Total Public %	White %	Latino %	Black %
Doing what it take to get a fully qualified teacher in every classroom	87	87	87	95
Allowing parents to get together to hire an outside organization to set up an independent school as part of the public school system	11	12	10	3
Not sure	2	2	3	2

** Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding*

Education Ranked High Among the Public's Electoral Concerns

November's vote underscored the importance of educational issues to the electorate. The results of this poll, which sampled public opinion in August and September 1998, clearly suggested that such would be the case.

A majority would vote against a candidate with whom they agreed on most issues but disagreed on education issues.

Two questions were asked to gauge the significance of education as a cutting edge electoral issue:

- How important a candidate's position on education would be to people in the November elections;
- Whether they would vote for or against a congressional candidate with whom they agreed on most issues, but with whose stand on education they disagreed.

TABLE 26
INFLUENCE OF A CANDIDATE'S POSITION ON EDUCATION POLICY ON THE VOTE

	Very Important Influence %
Total Public	57
Men	50
Women	64
Under $15,000	64
$15,001-25,000	61
$25,001-35,000	62
$35,001-50,000	59
$50,001-75,000	52
Over $75,000	46
White	53
Latino	59
Black	81

Fifty-seven percent said that a candidate's position on education would be a very important influence in the November elections. A higher 64% of women indicated that it would, and a higher still 81% of blacks indicated the importance of this issue (compared to 53% and 59% of whites and Latinos, respectively). Seventy-two percent of single parents and nearly six in ten of all parents (59%) say that a candidate's position on education would be a very important influence on their vote. Less than 6% of all respondents said that a candidate's position on education would not be a very important influence or no influence at all in the November elections.

Income does make a difference among respondents as well—poor and middle-income respondents place the highest premium on a candidate's position on education; upper-income respondents the lowest. A more significant showing of the importance of this issue was the fact that a majority would vote against a candidate with whom they agreed on most issues but disagreed on education issues, a figure that rises to 60% of women, 62% of blacks, and 61% of those in the 50-64 age bracket, (among the most likely voters in any election). Indeed, one of the most striking findings to come out of the survey is the strength of the teacher quality agenda as a potential cutting edge issue in Election '98.

* * *

What's the bottom line? The single most important way to make education what it needs to be in this country is to put a qualified teacher in every classroom. The public knows it. This poll shows it. Policymakers concerned with education reform at the national, state, and local levels would do well to mark its lessons with care.

RECRUITING NEW TEACHERS, INC.
NATIONWIDE SURVEY ON TEACHERS

1. I would like to read you some things that people have said are problems with public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious. Keep in mind that a problem may be serious, but "very serious" means a problem is both serious and widespread. Would you say (ITEM) is very serious and widespread, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious?

1. Students' lack of basic skills
2. Student absenteeism
3. Drop-out rates
4. Student drug use
5. Student drinking
6. Teenage pregnancy
7. School violence
8. Lack of parental involvement
9. Poor quality teachers
10. Poor student motivation
11. Lack of up-to-date technology/computers
12. Large classes
13. Teaching out of subject matter
14. Lack of choice about what school a child can attend

2. Please tell me how important you think each of the following measures is to lifting student achievement: very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?

1. The availability of high-quality textbooks and other instructional materials
2. A challenging curriculum—the subject matter that is taught
3. Ensuring that school buildings and facilities are in good condition
4. Student access to computers in school
5. Reduced class size
6. Ensuring a well-qualified teacher in every classroom
7. Greater parental involvement in children's education
8. Strict discipline in the classroom
9. School uniforms
10. Schools safe from violence
11. Promoting/graduating students solely based on their academic performance
12. Raising per-pupil expenditures
13. Increasing time spent on homework

If you had to choose only ONE of the following items, which ONE do you think has the greatest influence on student learning:

1. Establishing a system of academic standards required to be met by all children
2. Requiring achievement tests in core academic subjects
3. The quality and caliber of their teachers
4. Not sure

4. *Tracking* is a phrase used in education that describes how some schools place students in more-or-less advanced classes. Do you think such practices are helpful to (Item)?

1. Students placed in advanced tracks
2. Students placed in slow tracks
3. All students
4. No students

5. Now I want to ask you whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly that most children are capable of learning demanding academic subject matter and should be required to meet the same set of academic standards?

Agree strongly
Agree somewhat
Disagree somewhat
Disagree strongly
Not all are capable, but should meet same standards
Not sure

6. Based on your own experience, do you feel that student academic performance is more strongly influenced by natural ability or hard work?

Primarily determined by student's natural ability
Primarily determined by student's hard work
Both equal
Not sure

7. How important do you feel it is to have a highly qualified teacher who can help a child achieve his or her full learning potential—do you think it is the most important element in education, a very important element, somewhat important, or a not very important element?

The most important element in education
Very important
Somewhat important
Not very important
Not sure

8. I want to read you some qualifications that some people feel are important for an excellent teacher to have. For each item, please tell me if you think that quality is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important.

1. A strong liberal arts education
2. Thoroughly educated in the subjects they will teach
3. In-depth understanding of child/adolescent development
4. Well-trained and knowledgeable about how to teach effectively
5. A master's degree from an accredited school of education
6. At least a semester's experience in a classroom as a student teacher
7. Ability to communicate well with parents
8. Solid understanding of the community in which he/she will teach
9. Basic sensitivity to each child as an individual
10. Ability to establish good relationships with children/adolescents
11. Understanding of how people learn
12. Know how to speak and understand the language used in a student's home when it is other than English

9. How would you rate most teachers in the schools where you live: highly qualified, well-qualified, just qualified, or unqualified?

Highly qualified
Well-qualified
Just minimally qualified
Unqualified
Not sure

10. Based on your own experience and impression, how would you rate most teachers in your state—highly qualified, well-qualified, just minimally qualified, or unqualified?

Highly qualified
Well-qualified
Just minimally qualified
Unqualified
Not sure

11. If you had to estimate, how many total hours in a day do you think the average classroom teacher puts in at work—6 hours, 7 hours, 8 hours, 9 hours, or longer? [choose one]

6 hours
7 hours
8 hours
9 hours
Longer
Not sure

12. Would you favor or oppose lengthening the school year by two weeks to allow more time for teacher consultation and planning, with students having more study periods?

Favor
Oppose
Not sure

13. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Public schools should pay teachers for longer work days so they have time to stay up with new developments in their own fields.

Agree
Disagree
Not sure

14. Do you feel or not that parents should receive specific information at the beginning of the school year on how qualified their child's teachers are according to state standards required for permanent teachers?

Information on teacher qualifications should be provided
Information on teacher qualifications should not be provided
Not sure

15. When was the last time you were inside a public school—was it this year, 2-5 years ago, 6-10 years ago, or longer ago than that?

This year
2-5 years ago
6-10 years ago
Longer than 10 years ago
Not sure

16. Now let me read you some additional statements about policies and practices that affect the teaching profession. Based on what you have heard or impressions you may have, tell me if you agree strongly with that statement, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each of these statements.

1. Standards for licensing a teacher in your state should be tied to standards for student performance in classes they have taught
2. Current teacher licensing standards in your state guarantee that teachers who are allowed to practice really know how to teach
3. Most colleges and universities that prepare teachers are doing a good job
4. Teacher education is a waste of time
5. Good teachers are born and not made
6. Teacher unions support setting high standards for teachers
7. Teacher unions too often stand in the way of real reform
8. Teachers should be paid according to how well their students perform on tests that measure academic achievement
9. Your local school district hires fully qualified teachers

17. Let me ask you about teacher pay. Do you feel that most teachers in your community are overpaid, well paid, just adequately paid, or are inadequately paid?

Overpaid
Well paid
Just adequately paid
Inadequately paid
Not sure

18. In your state as a whole, is it your impression that most teachers are overpaid, well paid, just adequately paid, or are inadequately paid?

Overpaid
Well paid
Just adequately paid
Inadequately paid
Not sure

19. Now, among the following salary levels, which figure do you think represents the average salary of teachers in the United States?

$54,000
$26,000
$38,000
$42,000

20. It is now estimated that we will need to hire two million teachers nationally over the next 10 years because of growing enrollments and teacher retirements. Yet, almost half of all people who are prepared by schools to teach do not enter the profession. To staff our schools, would you favor or oppose (ITEM)?

1. The federal government providing loans to prospective teachers that would be "forgiven" on condition that the teacher teach in disadvantaged schools
2. Allowing people with bachelor's degrees to become teachers without requiring preparation in the field of education
3. Providing tax credits for teachers who work in high-poverty areas
4. Attracting more people currently working in other careers into teacher preparation
5. Lowering state requirements for the training needed to become a licensed teacher
6. Raising teacher salaries
7. Strengthening state requirements for becoming a licensed teacher
8. Establishing special programs for new teachers, in which able, veteran teachers would serve as mentors to newly hired teachers
9. Paying higher salaries to those who teach science or math because qualified teachers are hard to find in those subjects

21. Are you the parent or guardian of a child who attends pre-school, kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, junior high, or high school?

Parent of a child in those grades
Not a parent of a child in those grades
Not sure

22. Do your children attend a public school, an independent private school or a religious private school?

Public school
Independent or private
Private religious school
Both public and private schools
Home schooling (volunteered response)
No answer
Both private and religious

23. What is the grade of your oldest child: still in pre-school, elementary or secondary school?

Pre-school
Kindergarten
First grade
Second grade
Third grade
Fourth grade
Fifth grade
Sixth grade
Seventh grade
Eighth grade
Ninth grade
Tenth grade
Eleventh grade
Twelfth grade
Other

24. How many times in the past year have you met with your child's teachers?

Once
Twice
Three times
More than three times
Not sure

25. Do you feel welcome in your child's school?

Feel welcome
Not feel welcome
Not sure

26. Do you feel that you get too much information, the right amount of information, or too little information from school officials about your child's education?

Get too much information
Right amount of information
Too little information
Not sure

27. Where do you get the most reliable information about your child's school?

From your child
From the teacher
From the local school
From school district
From other parents
From the media
Other (specify)
Not sure

28. Are your child's teachers knowledgeable or not about the subjects they teach?

Knowledgeable
Not knowledgeable
Not sure

29. Do your child's/children's teachers know how to help your child/children learn or not?

Knows how to help your child learn
Does not
Not sure

30. In your opinion, how important is it that (ITEM) -- very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?

1. Students have teachers who are of the same ethnic or cultural background as the students they teach
2. Students have teachers from different ethnic/cultural background from their own
3. The racial composition of a school's staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body

31. I want to ask you how much influence different possible people may have had on what you do as a career or spend most of your time on in your life. On a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 meaning "no influence" and a 5 meaning "a great deal of influence"—please rate each of these on how important they were in helping you decide what you wanted to become. You may use any number between "1" and "5."

1. Your parent
2. A teacher
3. A member of the clergy
4. A fellow student or friend
5. Another relative

32. Now let me read you a list of possible professions. If you had to choose, which ONE do you feel provides the most important benefit to society?

Lawyer
Accountant
Teacher
Business Person
Nurse
Journalist
Doctor (physician)
Politician
None of these
Not sure

33. Again, if you had to choose, which ONE OR TWO of these careers would you recommend most highly for a member of your family?

Lawyer
Accountant
Teacher
Business Person
Nurse
Journalist
Doctor (physician)
Politician
None of these
Not sure

34. Now let me ask you, suppose a teacher were guaranteed an income of $60,000 a year. Would you then consider being a teacher yourself, or not?

Would consider
Would not consider
Not sure

35. And if a teacher were guaranteed an income of $60,000 a year, would you encourage a member of your family to consider a teaching career, or not?

Would encourage
Would not encourage
Not sure

36. Now let me read you some statements people have made about teachers and education. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly that

1. In America the same educational opportunities are available to minority and non-minority children alike
2. In America the same educational opportunities are available to children who live in poor neighborhoods as those who live in affluent neighborhoods
3. The United States must give a much higher priority to kindergarten through high school education
4. We should ensure that all children, including those who are economically disadvantaged, have teachers who are fully qualified, even if it means spending more money to achieve that
5. We must give a high national priority to recruiting and preparing teachers who can provide quality education for our children, especially those who are most in need to be helped to learn

37. Do you feel convinced that if America made up its mind that we have to pay far more serious attention to the education of our most disadvantaged children to keep the country from going into a serious decline, we can find the will power and the financial resources to get that job done, or do you feel that just won't be possible to achieve?

Will be possible to do
Won't be able to do it
Not sure

38. Every state in America now guarantees that every citizen's child will have a free public education. Do you favor keeping that guarantee of a free public education, or not?

Favor keeping
Oppose
Not sure

39. Some people are proposing to allow parents to take the money the public education system provides for their child's education and use it to attend a private school. Others say to do that would take much-needed funds from public education. Which of the following two choices do you favor most as the better way to make our schools what they ought to be: (1) allowing parents to take public education money and use it to send their child to a private school or (2) doing what it takes to put fully qualified teachers in every public school classroom in America?

Allowing parents to take public education money for private school education
Doing what it takes to get qualified teachers in every classroom
Not sure

40. Some people are proposing to allow parents to get together to hire outside profit-making education companies to create and run whole new independent schools that are part of the public school system. They say these schools will be better than existing schools. Others say a more important goal is to put qualified teachers in every public school classroom. Which of the following two choices do you most favor as the better way to make public schools what they should be:

Allow new public schools to be started by outside education companies
Do what it takes to put a fully qualified teacher in every classroom
Not sure

41. Now, as you think about the upcoming elections in November, will a candidate's position on education be a very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important influence on your vote for Congress?

Very important influence
Somewhat important influence
Not very important influence
Not at all important influence
Not sure

42. Now, suppose a candidate is running for Congress in your district with whom you agree on most issues, but with whose stand on education you disagree. Would you vote for or against that candidate?

Would vote for
Would vote against
Not sure

FACTUALS

F1. Sex
Male
Female

F2. How old are you?

18-to-20	45-to-49
21-to-24	50-to-54
25-to-29	55-to-64
30-to-34	65-to-75
35-to-39	Over 75
40-to-44	Refused

F3. Is the head of this household presently single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated?

Single
Married
Divorced
Widowed
Separated
Other
Refused

F4. Which of the following categories best describes your total 1997 household income?

$15,000 or less	$75,001 - $100,000
$15,001 - $25,000	$100,001 - $150,000
$25,001 - $35,000	$150,000 and over
$35,001 - $50,000	Refused
$50,001 - $75,000	

F5. What was the last grade or level of school you completed?

Eighth grade or less
Some high school
High school degree
Some college, junior college, community college
Four-year college graduate
Postgraduate degree

F6. Are you, or have you ever been a teacher in grades from kindergarten through high school, or not?

Teaching now
Have been a teacher
Have never been a teacher
Not sure

F7. Regardless of how you vote, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?

Republican
Democrat
Independent
Not sure

F8. What is your religion?

Protestant
Catholic
Jewish
Other
Refused
No religion

F9. Are you of Latino descent, or not?

Latino descent
Not of Latino descent
Refused

F10. Do you consider yourself white, black, Asian, or what?

White
Black, African American
Asian or Pacific Islander
American Indian, Native American, or Alaskan Native
Other
Refused

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