

was to argue the state's case before the appeals court today. "It threatens the wide range of speech and activities that are available at universities.

dd"Having the speech by all these different groups is a very important part of what the university is all about."

ddScott Southworth, the lead plaintiff, said that he and co-plaintiffs Amy Schoepke and Keith Bannach sued the university because they are Christians with conservative views who oppose being forced to support liberal causes.

dd"As the system is set up, if you don't fund these groups, you can't graduate and you can't receive your grades," Southworth said. "It's morally wrong and it's unconstitutional."

ddUW Students pay roughly \$330 in fees each year. Less than 10 percent is used to support student groups and services, according to the university. Any one organization receives from 10 to 30 cents per student.

ddThe U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the University of Virginia could not deny a religious group money if other groups on campus receive it, but it has not ruled directly on whether the fees violate First Amendment rights.nyxddd

Publication#W\ P#P# 60. Associated Press"Publication" #:\ P&P#06-03 8:06p
Category: Local

Headline#\ P#P# State says rate continues to declineHeadline #:\ P(P#
ddSACRAMENTO (AP) - The dropout rate in California public schools continues to decline, falling below 4 percent in the 1995-96 school year, state Superintendent Delaine Eastin says.

ddThe Education Department said in a report for release Wednesday that last year's dropout rate for students in the ninth through 12th grades was 3.9 percent, down from 4.4 percent in the 1994-95 school year.

dd"This good news makes me confident that we should increase standards and call for higher graduation requirements; there is no reason to believe that when we

raise expectations, more students drop out," Eastin said. "Students need to feel that going to school is worth their time and that they are gaining the knowledge they need to be successful in the future."

ddThe rate reflects the early departure of more than 58,000 of the state's nearly 1.5 million high school students. Eastin said more needs to be done to reduce

dropout rates, particularly when the one-year rate, if applied over four years of high school, means one out of every six freshmen drops out prior to graduation.

ddSchools are offering programs aimed at keeping at-risk students in class, including classes for pregnant teens, Eastin said.

dd"Dropping out has enormous economic implications," she said, citing reports suggesting dropouts will earn \$200,000 less over their lifetimes than students with high school diplomas, and \$800,000 less than students with college degrees.

ddThe dropout rate is one of several factors collected through the school year and used to assess district and school performance.nyxddd

Publication#W\ P)P# 61. Los Angeles Times"Publication" #:\ P*P#* 06/04/97; Edition: Orange County Edition; Section: Metro Desk; Page A-3 Category: Local

Headline#\ P+P# High School Dropout Rates Down 25% in State : In Orange Cou

nty, numbers follow the trend with Tustin and Anaheim Union districts showing the most

dramatic reductions.Headline #:\ P,P#

By TINA NGUYEN

TIMES STAFF WRITER

ddHigh school dropout rates have fallen by about 25% over five years, according to a state report to be released today, with Orange County figures reflecting that trend.

ddAccording to data from the California Department of Education, the statewide rate dipped from 4.4% in the 1994-95 school year to 3.9% in 1995-96, the most r

ecent numbers available. Orange County's dropout rate remained the same between the two years. Even so,

the county's dropout rate is more than 25% lower than the statewide average and has been falling over the past several years.

ddThe decrease has been particularly noticeable in Anaheim Union High School District, where the dropout rate was nearly cut in half within one year, falling to 0.8% last year. That rate also is one-fourth the district's dropout rate of five years ago.

ddTustin Unified School District posted even more dramatic numbers. The dropout rate fell in 1995-96 to one-fourth of what it had been the year before and one-sixth of the rate in 1991-92.

ddBut that good news was offset somewhat by increases in three districts: Huntington Beach, Fullerton and particularly Santa Ana, where the dropout rate incre

ased by more than 40% in one year and reached nearly double the state average.

dd"They've gone up rather markedly," Santa Ana Unified Assistant Supt. Alfonso Davies said. "We will investigate and try to ascertain why this happened and try to prevent this."

ddUnder state regulations, a student who misses 45 days of school and does not re-enroll in school, either in the same or a new district, is classified as a dropout. If a district loses track of a student after he or she moves, that case is also considered a dropout.

ddIn some Orange County districts with declining dropout rates, administrators credited the trend to a variety of alternative education programs and advanced technology that has helped track student attendance.

ddThe Anaheim district invests about \$35,000 annually into trying to ensure its students go to school.

ddFor instance, Anaheim parents receive an automated telephone call when their

children are absent from school. If the situation worsens,
a district outreach
worker visits the family at home.

ddThe dropout rate in the Los Angeles Unified School District fell about 13% in
1996, marking the first significant improvement in three
years. But at 9.3%, t
he rate is still more than twice the statewide average.

dd"You will not hear that we feel good about it yet," said Assistant Supt. Sall
y Coughlin. "We're still losing far too many kids."

ddStatewide, the dropout rate was 6.6% for African American students and 5.6% f
or Latino students. For white students, the rate was
2.4% and for Asian America
ns it was 2%. In all categories, females were less likely to drop out than male
s.

dd"We can be proud of the gains we have made," said state Supt. of Public Instr
uction Delaine Eastin. "At the same time, we still need
to do more . . . partic
ularly when you realize that the one-year rate carried out over four years mean
s that one out of six freshmen will not
graduate from high school with his or h
er class."

ddEducation experts say dropping out generally is related to poverty, to famili
es that move frequently, to poor academic performance and
to the lack of a stro
ng bond with a caring adult"whether it's a parent, a teacher or someone else. S
tudents seem to respond well to high
expectations and to opportunities to get i
nvolved in sports or other activities.

ddTimes staff writer Richard Lee Colvin contributed to this report.nyxdddy

Publication#W\ P-P# 62. Los Angeles Times"Publication" #:\ P.P#* 06/04/97; Ed
ition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-1 Category: Local

Headline#\ P/P# Dropout Rate for L.A. School District Fell 13% in 1996 :
Decl
ine is called first major improvement in three years.
But figure is still more
than twice the statewide average.Headline #:\ P0P#By RICHARD LEE COLVIN TIMES
EDUCATION WRITER

ddThe rate at which students drop out of the Los Angeles Unified School Distric
t fell about 13% in 1996, marking the first significant
improvement in three ye
ars, according to new figures to be released by the state today.

ddThe district's one-year dropout rate is still more than twice the statewide a
verage, and about four in 10 of the district's ninth-graders can
be expected to
eventually leave school without graduating.

dd"You will not hear that we feel good about it yet," said Assistant Supt. Sall
y Coughlin. "We're still losing far too many kids . . . and we're
not resting o
n our laurels."

ddThe district estimates its one-year dropout rate at 9.3%, down from 10.7% the
previous year. The figure reported by the state
Department of Education

for Los Angeles Unified was slightly lower than that, but district officials said it was inaccurate because it did not include all schools.

Other Los Angeles County districts reporting significant improvement included Pasadena, Bassett, Bonita, El Rancho, Paramount and Rowland. The countywide rate for Los Angeles, Ventura and Riverside counties improved, while San Bernardino County's dropout rate went up and Orange County's held steady.

The statewide rate went from 4.5% to 3.9%, continuing a decade-long positive trend that has reduced the percentage of students who drop out by half. Even so, more than 58,000 California students leave each year without a diploma, which the Educational Testing Service estimates can cut their lifetime earning potential by an average of \$200,000.

The one-year rate covers the 1.5 million California students in grades nine through 12. Dropout rates also are frequently projected over four years, to show the likelihood of ninth-graders dropping out before graduation four years later.

Statewide, the rate was 6.6% for African American students and 5.6% for Latino students. For white students, the rate was 2.4% and for Asian Americans it was 2%.

"We can be proud of the gains we have made," said state Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin. "At the same time, we still need to do more . . . particularly when you realize that the one-year rate carried out over four years means that one out of six freshmen will not graduate from high school with his or her class."

Education experts say dropping out generally is related to poverty, to families that move frequently, to poor academic performance and to the lack of a strong bond with a caring adult—whether it's a parent, a teacher or someone else. Students seem to respond well to high expectations and to opportunities to get involved in sports or other activities.

Therefore, many schools are trying to foster relationships between individual students and teachers.

"It's that human connection we all look for," said Mary Weaver, an administrator in the state Department of Education's safe schools program. "If you're just a number, you don't feel connected."

The state also is promoting a wide range of programs tailored to pregnant teenagers, newly arrived immigrants, students who have gotten in trouble with the law and other groups. "If we didn't have strategies directed toward them, those populations would have incredibly high rates of failure and dropouts," said Gabriele Cortina, the state deputy superintendent for specialized programs.

Another leading cause of dropping out is a lack of academic skill, which causes students to flunk required classes and eventually give up.

ddThat's where officials in Long Beach hope to make a difference.ddThe improved dropout picture in Los Angeles Unified and Paramount left Long Beach with the highest rate in Los Angeles County, although it was down from 11.1% to 10.2%.

ddNext fall, the 400 eighth-graders in the district who failed two or more subjects this year will be required to enroll at a new school where they will brush

up on basic skills, work on their study habits and be assigned a mentor before being allowed to enroll in high school courses.

dd"The stage [for dropping out] may be set in middle school," said district spokesman Richard Van Der Laan.

ddWithin Los Angeles Unified, the dropout rate varied widely. The rate at Crenshaw High School, 24%, was the highest among the district's 50 schools with traditional ninth- through 12th-grade student bodies. Three of those schools"Reseda

, Taft and Garfield"reported dropout rates lower than the statewide average.

ddCoughlin said the Los Angeles district has worked hard to improve daily attendance, provide counseling for students with problems and, perhaps most significantly, follow up on students who stop coming to school.nyxddd

Publication#W\ P1P# 63. The Washington Post"Publication" #:\ P2P# 06/04/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page B06 Category: Local

Headline#\ P3P# Some U.S. Lawmakers Revive Voucher Idea; Bill Would Offer Private-School Tuition Aid to Needy D.C. ChildrenHeadline #:\ P4P#

By Debbi Wilgoren

Washington Post Staff Writer

Some members of Congress are again trying to set up a tax-funded scholarship program to help low-income D.C. children attend private or parochial schools.

ddHouse Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-Tex.), Sens. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Dan Coats (R-Ind.) and others have

planned a news conference for today to announce legislation that would authorize spending \$7 million to \$10 million a year in D.C. funds

through 2002 for such scholarships. The money, an aid to Lieberman said, would be part of the District's congressional appropriation but would not come from funds for public schools.

ddA board of D.C. residents would administer the program.

ddA similar measure passed the House last year but was defeated in the Senate. The legislation was strongly opposed by President Clinton,

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), national teachers unions and PTA groups.

ddThe legislation would authorize students whose family income is below the federal poverty guidelines to apply for \$3,200 in aid starting in fiscal year 1998

. Those whose families make up to 185 percent of the federal poverty rate would be eligible for scholarships of \$2,400

or three-quarters of the tuition at school.

ools they wish to attend " whichever is less.

ddThe legislation would authorize funding about 1,800 such scholarships a year, plus 1,800 smaller grants for public or private school

students to pay for tra

nsportation or after-school instruction received on school grounds.

ddThe sponsors of the bill will hold their news conference with District community leaders and parents who support the plan.

ddSponsors also will release the results of a poll commissioned by an education reform group that supports vouchers. It said 40 percent of District residents

consider a scholarship program an "excellent" or "good" use of public funds, compared with 18 percent who consider

it "only [a] fair" use and 33 percent who c

onsider it a "poor" use of public funds.

ddThe question was prefaced with this statement: "Some experts have said that Washington, D.C., has one of the worst public school systems in the country."

ddMilwaukee and Cleveland have publicly funded voucher programs, and about 30 jurisdictions across the country " including the District " have privately funde

d scholarship programs to help children from low-income families attend private or parochial school.

ddBut the proposal for tax-funded vouchers in the District sparked bitter debate in Congress last year, delaying passage of the city's budget for months.

ddCritics said Congress should work to improve the city's struggling schools rather than provide a way for some of its poorest youngsters to leave the system.

nyxddd

Publication#W\ P5P# 64. Los Angeles Times"Publication" #: \ P6P#* 06/04/97; Edition: Orange County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-2 Category: Local

Headline#\ P7P#

Policing Program to Expand DistrictwideHeadline #: \ P8P#

By JOHN POPE; JENNIFER LEUER

ddAnaheim Union High School District has decided to expand its nationally recognized community policing program to all 16 campuses.

ddDistrict trustees asked staff members to research grant opportunities and set program goals, school board President Harald Martin said.

ddThe current program, a joint effort between the district and the Anaheim Police Department, is credited with reducing campus crime by nearly 50%.ddTrustees

said they want to see the program, which now consists of two officers and a district employee, expanded to eight officers, each assigned to a high school and its feeder junior high.

dd"Most people did agree that we as a school district and as a community would benefit from more community policing," Martin said.

"It is the consensus of the

board that it is a good program that's working well and that expansion is a good idea."

ddBecause the district has campuses in several cities, the Anaheim, Cypress and La Palma police departments would be involved in the

expansion, Martin said.

ddHe said he expects the new program, which the district hopes to have in place by the 1998-99 school year, to include more than just gang violence prevention

dd"We want the officers to become someone who the kids recognize is there to help them," he said.nyxddd

Publication#W\ P9P# 65. Los Angeles Times"Publication" #:\ P:P#* 06/04/97; Edition: Ventura County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-1 Category: Local

Headline#\ P;P# Low Dropout Rates Earn Local Schools High Marks :

Report shows

decline from 3.5% in 1995 to 2.9% in '96.

Officials are especially pleased with

h results in

low-income communities.Headline #:\ P<P#

By ROB SELNA

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

ddVentura County high schools had the lowest dropout rates in the county's history last year, according to a report to be released today by the State Department of Education.

ddBetween 1995 and 1996, the county dropout rate fell from 3.5% to 2.9%, and eight of nine school districts in the county had rates lower than the state's 3.9% average.

ddEast county schools had especially good numbers, including 1.4% in the Conejo Valley district and a minuscule 0.4% in the small Oak Park Unified School District.

ddThe lone exception to the county's good report card was Ventura Unified, which reported a 4.7% dropout rate.

dd"This is a tremendous accomplishment. These are the lowest rates I've seen since they began keeping track in 1948," said county schools Supt. Charles Weis.

ddHe was particularly impressed with the low dropout rates in districts with proportionately large numbers of poor residents.

dd"Fillmore, Santa Paula and Oxnard have the highest number of poor kids, and their dropout rate was still well below the state average," Weis said. "Oxnard did

id a yeoman's job and set the tone when you consider the range of socioeconomic status in that community."

ddOxnard's dropout rate declined from 4% in 1995 to 2.9% in 1996.

ddOxnard schools Supt. William Studt said the rate was as high as 11% as recently as 1989. According to Studt, the district took action in 1990, including hiring

ing "attendance callers," who phone a student's home on the day of an absence, and "dropout recovery" workers, who visit students' homes when absences become frequent.

ddStudt also requires monthly dropout statistics from each high school principal in his district.

ddWith dropout rates at 3.2%, the Santa Paula and Fillmore school districts also rated well in comparison to the state average.

ddLocal educators said the number is particularly impressive in light of those districts' large Latino populations. Statewide, Latino students dropped out at a rate of 5.6%.

ddJane Kampbell, assistant superintendent of Fillmore schools, attributed her district's favorable dropout rates to an emphasis on bilingual education programs and academic support for economically disadvantaged students.

dd"Seventy-five percent of our district is Hispanic, so bilingual education is really important for us," Kampbell said.

dd*
ddThe Ventura Unified School District's rate actually dropped from 5% in 1995, but its current 4.7% was still the county's highest and the only local rate to exceed the state average.

ddThe small decrease was not much consolation to Ventura school officials, who plan to ask the school board for additional resources to combat the dropout problem.

dd"We realize that we need to do a better job of providing students with programs that are appropriate for their needs, so that they don't drop out," said Assistant Supt. Pat Chandler.

ddOjai schools recorded the largest improvement, with their rates dropping from 3.9% in 1995 to 1.7% in 1996.

ddAssistant Supt. Pam Martens attributed the decrease to better record-keeping rather than new programs.

dd"In '93 and '94, we did not track people down properly and find out where they went after they left our district. Last year, we found out that many of our dropouts

were enrolled in other districts and in adult education," said Martens.

dd*
ddMartens also said it is likely that a program for "at-risk" youths at the high school helped keep some students enrolled.

ddThe remaining school districts in the county registered very low dropout rates:

ddConejo Valley Unified, the county's third-largest district, went from a 1.8% to a 1.4% dropout rate.

ddMoorpark Unified dropped from 1.9% to 1.4%.ddOak Park's rate rose slightly from 0.1% to 0.4%.

dd* Simi Valley, the county's second-largest school district, saw a small increase of 1.8% to 2.1%.

ddDropout rates are calculated annually by the Department of Education, which divides the number of dropouts in grades 9 through 12 in each district by the enrollment.

Headline#\ P?P# Voters OK Education Bonds for 2 Districts, Elections:
Ventura

and Ocean View school measures pass, and
Camarillo returns Morgan to council.

Turnout called

'embarrassing.'Headline #:\ P@P#

By CARLOS V. LOZANO

TIMES STAFF WRITER

ddShowing a strong commitment to finance school improvements, voters in the Ven-
tura and Ocean View school districts approved

separate school bond measures in

Tuesday's special election.

ddIn Oxnard, a similar measure was winning with a margin of about 40 votes in u-
nofficial returns, but with 292 absentee and provisional

ballots yet to be coun-

ted, election officials said the race was too close to call.

ddIn the Camarillo council race, former Councilman Mike Morgan ran away with 60
% of the vote"overwhelming another former

councilman, Ned Chatfield, and high s-

chool student Chris Valenzano in a race to fill a vacant seat on the council.

dd"It's heartwarming," Morgan said of the victory, "and I will continue to do m-
y best to be responsible to my constituents to the best of
my ability."

ddWith all precincts reporting, the vote in Ventura was 11,362 in favor of Meas-
ure M and 3,825 against, giving the ballot measure a

74.8% victory margin. The

\$81-million school bond measure was the largest local bond initiative ever to a-
ppear on the county ballot.

dd"I think the people of Ventura spoke loud and clear: They support education,"
said district Supt. Joseph Spirito, who joined supporters

at a victory celebra-

tion at a local restaurant Tuesday night.

ddThe vote in the Oxnard School District was 4,792 in support of Measure L and
2,334 against, barely scraping above the two-third votes

required for passage.

ddIn the Ocean View School District, the vote was 1,022 in favor of Measure N c-
ompared to 224 opposed"providing a resounding 82%

support.

dd"We are thrilled," said district Supt. Nancy Carroll. "We're exhilarated. We k-
new the community and parents would support Ocean View.

It's a great vote of co-

nfidence in Ocean View and we believe the children deserve this."

ddAnd across the county in Santa Paula, 91% of voters approved a measure that w-
ould allow the community library to spend property

tax money set aside for its

operations.

ddBruce Bradley, county elections chief, said that voter turnout ranged from 17
% in Oxnard to 22% in Ventura.

dd*

dd"Nobody voted," he said. "It's really quite embarrassing. . . . People compla-
in about taxation without representation, but here we have
bond measures throug-

hout the county with no one attending. It really is disconcerting."

ddStill, Bradley said that the low turnout probably boosted the chances for pas-

sage of the school bond measures.

dd"The theory goes that the lower the turnout, the better the chances of the bond measure," Bradley said. "The people who do vote are strongly in favor of the measure, and the people who are opposed"unless they are rabidly opposed"don't turn out."

ddVentura, Oxnard and Ocean View school officials were banking on the recent success of three other local school bond measures by placing their own initiative on Tuesday's special election ballot.

dd*

ddVentura Unified School District's \$81-million bond is needed to help build two elementary schools, a middle school and a magnet school by 2010 as a way to ease overcrowding in the 16,773-student district.

ddCatherine Mathis, a teacher at Juanamaria Elementary School who voted yes on Measure M, called the bond money crucial to helping the district meet its class

-size reduction goal of 20 students for every teacher.

dd"We really need the space," she said.

ddBut retiree John Duprie said he voted against the bond measure because only property owners"and not the general population"would be picking up the bill.

dd"To me it's just unfair as a taxpayer to have to do that," he said.

ddOxnard School District officials, who narrowly lost their bid for a similar school bond measure in March, were seeking \$57 million in

Measure L for construc

tion of two elementary schools and financing of other school improvements in the 14,288-student district.

ddIn the nearby Ocean View School District, school officials proposed a \$4-million bond that appeared on the ballot as Measure N.

Property tax revenue generat

ed from the measure was needed to pay for portable classrooms as well as upgrading and renovating of school facilities in the 2,405-student district.

dd*ddAt least one other school district, Ojai Unified, is considering placing a school bond measure on the November ballot. Later this month, school trustees

are expected to consider placing a \$15-million bond measure on the ballot to pay for campus renovations.

dd"Many of our schools in the county are facing deteriorating conditions, so we're very hopeful that the community decides to root for us," said Gwen Gross, district superintendent.

ddMeanwhile, the three Camarillo City Council candidates were vying for a seat left vacant by the death of Councilman Ken Gose last January. There are 17 months remaining of Gose's four-year term.

ddThe campaign generated little acrimony since the candidates agreed on most key issues, everything from conversion of Camarillo State Hospital into a four-ye

ar public university to development of a 16,000-seat amphitheater and 18-hole golf course on county land just south of the city.

ddBoth Morgan, 50, and Chatfield, 78, said their previous government experience and active involvement in the community made them best qualified for the council job.

ddMorgan, who lost his bid for a county supervisor seat last year, previously served on the council from 1980 to 1996, while Chatfield was a councilman from 1964 to 1974.

ddFor his part, Valenzano, 18, cited his firsthand experience with issues facing the city's schools, the proposed university and the area's young adults.

ddTimes staff writers Kate Folmar and Rod Bosch, and correspondents Dawn Hobbs and Regina Hong also contributed to this story.nyxdddy

Publication#W\ PAP# 67. The New York Times"Publication" #:\ PBP# 06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 5, Column 1 Category: Local

Headline#\ PCP# Principal in Elizabeth Presses Crackdown on School TruantsHeadline

dline #:\ PDP#By ROBERT HANLEY

ddELIZABETH, N.J., June 3 " One ninth grader at Elizabeth High School has missed 139 days of class this year, another has been absent 131 days and a third for 97 days.

ddThey are three of the most chronic truants among about 150 students who regularly skip classes at the high school, New Jersey's largest, with 4,300 students

. And the principal, Yoland S. Walton, has started a novel counterattack against their high rates of absenteeism by hauling the parents of the 10 teen-agers with the worst attendance records into town court here. "I'm fed up with kids beating the system and beating us," Mr. Walton said today.

ddUnder a compromise "sentence" arranged with the Elizabeth Municipal Judge, Daniel J. Russell, parents of the 10 were ordered in early May to sign their children

children into school each morning and sign them out when classes end at 3 P.M. Seven were required to do so for seven days, and the three others for every day until the school year ends on June 20.

ddMr. Walton said today that the crackdown has had mixed success. He said parents of three of the teen-agers were complying with the judge's order, three were

honoring it sporadically and three others were totally ignoring it. The 10th student dropped out of school legally on her 16th birthday on May 23, he said.

ddInitially, Mr. Walton, with the blessing of the Elizabeth School Board, filed criminal complaints accusing the parents of the 10 teen-agers with violating a

New Jersey law that requires parents to insure that their children from age 6 to 16 receive regular schooling.

Violations carry fines of \$25 for a first offense.

nse, up to \$100 for a second offense and sentences of up to six months in jail.

ddTo spare parents a possible criminal record, school officials and the town prosecutor, Richard Obuch, took a softer approach several weeks ago. The parents

and children went before a mediator and signed agreements to attend classes regularly.

ddBut those agreements were ignored, Mr. Walton said today. "What the kids were doing was laughing in the judge's face," he said.

ddSchool officials responded by accusing the parents of the 10 of violating a catchall type of local law that prohibits residents from

performing an illegal function, Mr. Obuch said.

ddAgain, the intention was to spare the parents a criminal record by charging them with violating the local ordinance instead of a state criminal law, Mr. Obuch

said. Most of the parents pleaded guilty, and the others were found guilty, he said.

ddOn May 5 Judge Russell ordered them to perform "community service" penalties attending class with their children. Seven of the parents were required to

do this for seven days, and the three others for the remainder of the school year.

ddMr. Walton said he modified that sanction to the sign-in, sign-out penalty because some of the parents worked and the presence of

others in the classroom was

an "imposition on the teachers." Also, he said, there were questions about liability and insurance coverage if

parents tripped and hurt themselves while walking to and from class.

ddToday, Mr. Walton said he was disturbed about the three parents who he said had made no effort to comply with the sign-in, sign-out

order. On Friday, he said

he will send the judge a status report on them.

ddOne of the three, Valerie Kay Young, who said her daughter had missed 92 school days this year, insisted that school officials had never

formally notified her

of when to start her community service. Ms. Young, who said her daughter was in the hospital, said it was unfair

to penalize parents if children cut classes.

s. nyxddd

Publication#W\ PEP# 68. The New York Times"Publication" #:\ PFP# 06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 1, Column 2 Category: Local

Headline#\ PGP# Few Who Took an 11th-Hour English Test at Hostos Pass ItHeadline

#:\ PHP#By KAREN W. ARENSEN

Only 13 of the 104 students who were forced last week to take a last-minute English proficiency exam to graduate from Hostos

Community College passed the test,

adding to the furor over City University standards and prompting harsh criticism of Chancellor W.

Ann Reynolds.

sage of the school bond measures.

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dd"Many of our schools in the county are facing deteriorating conditions, so we're very hopeful that the community decides to root for us," said Gwen Gross, district superintendent.

ddMeanwhile, the three Camarillo City Council candidates were vying for a seat left vacant by the death of Councilman Ken Gose last January. There are 17 months remaining of Gose's four-year term.

ddThe campaign generated little acrimony since the candidates agreed on most key issues, everything from conversion of Camarillo State Hospital into a four-year public university to development of a 16,000-seat amphitheater and 18-hole golf course on county land just south of the city.

ddBoth Morgan, 50, and Chatfield, 78, said their previous government experience and active involvement in the community made them best qualified for the council job.

ddMorgan, who lost his bid for a county supervisor seat last year, previously served on the council from 1980 to 1996, while Chatfield was a councilman from 1964 to 1974.

ddFor his part, Valenzano, 18, cited his firsthand experience with issues facing the city's schools, the proposed university and the area's young adults.

ddTimes staff writers Kate Folmar and Rod Bosch, and correspondents Dawn Hobbs and Regina Hong also contributed to this story.nyxd

Publication#W\ PAP# 67. The New York Times"Publication" #: \ PBP# 06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 5, Column 1 Category: Local

Headline#\ PCP# Principal in Elizabeth Presses Crackdown on School TruantsHeadline

dline #:\ PDP#By ROBERT HANLEY

ddELIZABETH, N.J., June 3 " One ninth grader at Elizabeth High School has missed 139 days of class this year, another has been absent 131 days and a third for 97 days.

ddThey are three of the most chronic truants among about 150 students who regularly skip classes at the high school, New Jersey's largest, with 4,300 students

. And the principal, Yoland S. Walton, has started a novel counterattack against their high rates of absenteeism by hauling the parents of the 10 teen-agers with the worst attendance records into town court here. "I'm fed up with kids beating the system and beating us," Mr. Walton said today.

ddUnder a compromise "sentence" arranged with the Elizabeth Municipal Judge, Daniel J. Russell, parents of the 10 were ordered in early May to sign their children

into school each morning and sign them out when classes end at 3 P.M. Seven were required to do so for seven days, and the three others for every day until the school year ends on June 20.

ddMr. Walton said today that the crackdown has had mixed success. He said parents of three of the teen-agers were complying with the judge's order, three were

honoring it sporadically and three others were totally ignoring it. The 10th student dropped out of school legally on her 16th birthday on May 23, he said.

ddInitially, Mr. Walton, with the blessing of the Elizabeth School Board, filed criminal complaints accusing the parents of the 10 teen-agers with violating a

New Jersey law that requires parents to insure that their children from age 6 to 16 receive regular schooling.

Violations carry fines of \$25 for a first offense.

nse, up to \$100 for a second offense and sentences of up to six months in jail.

ddTo spare parents a possible criminal record, school officials and the town prosecutor, Richard Obuch, took a softer approach several weeks ago. The parents and children went before a mediator and signed agreements to attend classes regularly.

ddBut those agreements were ignored, Mr. Walton said today. "What the kids were doing was laughing in the judge's face," he said.

ddSchool officials responded by accusing the parents of the 10 of violating a catchall type of local law that prohibits residents from performing an illegal function, Mr. Obuch said.

ddAgain, the intention was to spare the parents a criminal record by charging them with violating the local ordinance instead of a state criminal law, Mr. Obuch said. Most of the parents pleaded guilty, and the others were found guilty, he said.

ddOn May 5 Judge Russell ordered them to perform "community service" penalties "attending class with their children. Seven of the parents were required to do this for seven days, and the three others for the remainder of the school year.

ddMr. Walton said he modified that sanction to the sign-in, sign-out penalty because some of the parents worked and the presence of others in the classroom was an "imposition on the teachers." Also, he said, there were questions about liability and insurance coverage if parents tripped and hurt themselves while walking to and from class.

ddToday, Mr. Walton said he was disturbed about the three parents who he said had made no effort to comply with the sign-in, sign-out order. On Friday, he said, he will send the judge a status report on them.

ddOne of the three, Valerie Kay Young, who said her daughter had missed 92 school days this year, insisted that school officials had never formally notified her of when to start her community service. Ms. Young, who said her daughter was in the hospital, said it was unfair to penalize parents if children cut classes.

s. nyxddd
Publication#W\ PEP# 68. The New York Times"Publication" #:\ PFP# 06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 1, Column 2 Category: Local

Headline#\ PGP# Few Who Took an 11th-Hour English Test at Hostos Pass ItHeadline #:\ PHP#By KAREN W. ARENSON

Only 13 of the 104 students who were forced last week to take a last-minute English proficiency exam to graduate from Hostos Community College passed the test, adding to the furor over City University standards and prompting harsh criticism of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds.

ddDr. Anne A. Paolucci, the new chairwoman of the City University trustees, who oversee the community college, said the results of the test provided further evidence that the college standards were unacceptably low, and placed the blame squarely on Dr. Reynolds, the administrator of the 21-campus university. "This is a deplorable showing," said Dr. Paolucci, who was appointed last summer by Gov.

George E. Pataki. "This means they're not getting the proper training. The whole situation up there needs to be reviewed to help the students get the proper training."

dd"I've never faulted the students, who were doing what they were told to do," she added. "It is a grave situation the Chancellor should have addressed."

ddDr. Reynolds, who has been Chancellor since 1990, has had a tense relationship with Dr. Paolucci and some of the other board members who were appointed by Governor Pataki and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani. Told of Dr. Paolucci's comments, she said: "I have carefully carried out the policies of the trustees all the years I have been here, and I continue to do so."

ddShe also said that an important thrust of her work has been to reduce the remedial work necessary at the colleges, and to improve students' ability to learn

English as a second language through language immersion programs.

ddThe trustees ordered the students to take the test last week after a dispute arose on campus over what measures were necessary to show their proficiency in

English before they graduated. In recent months both the Governor and the Mayor have criticized CUNY for what

they considered the lack of preparation of their students and the slow progress they made toward graduation.

ddBut some students and professors said the last-minute requirement was unfair to the students at Hostos, a bilingual college in the South Bronx, making them pawns in a political chess match.

ddThey also complained that the university's test was a poor measure of students' English proficiency. Some students were in court yesterday arguing that the trustees had no right to add the test as a last-minute condition of graduation.

ddThe college's president, Isaura Santiago Santiago, said she could not comment on the test results because the matter is being contested in the courts.

ddBut some Hostos professors said the results were not surprising.

dd"Of course, if you use an invalid, flawed and inappropriate measure, you're not going to get results that are indicative of anything other than the deficiencies

of the measure," said Henry Lesnick, an English professor at Hostos.

ddThe test asks students to write a short, persuasive essay answering one of two questions. The students last week chose between these: whether America is still

ll a land of opportunity and whether celebrities make good role models. The students were expected to make several points to support their position.

ddJudges take into account the strength and logic of the argument as well as grammar, spelling and usage. City University officials yesterday declined to release any examples of student answers.

ddThe test itself is used throughout the CUNY system to judge whether new students are proficient enough in English to take college-level classes in the subject. If they fail, they are placed in remedial classes. It was also used to judge whether students were ready to move out of remedial English classes and into freshman composition. Students must pass freshman composition to graduate.

ddHostos, where 77 percent of the students are of Hispanic background and many are recent immigrants, long used the CUNY test for both initial placement and assessment later. But last year, it began offering its own version of the writing test " which some called easier and some called fairer " that substituted a descriptive essay for the persuasive essay. Some students who planned to go on to four-year colleges still took the CUNY test.

ddIn the spring, in the face of student protest, Hostos stopped using the new test as the sole measure of students' English proficiency and began taking into account coursework and professors' evaluations. Under that system, dozens of students who failed the Hostos test were still being allowed to graduate.

ddIn fact, a memo by Dr. Reynolds prepared at the request of City University trustees said that of the students who were found not to have passed the CUNY writing test, only 23 had passed the Hostos version of the exam.

ddLast Tuesday, the trustees ordered Hostos to withhold the diplomas of any student who had not passed the CUNY exam. Of the 400 scheduled to graduate last Sunday, 140 had not passed.

ddStudents went to court Friday, arguing that the trustees had no right to change their graduation requirements at the last minute.

ddAn appellate judge permitted the university to withhold diplomas temporarily. Yesterday, a five-judge appellate panel of the court heard arguments about whether that hold should remain in effect. A State Supreme Court hearing on the issue is set for Monday.

ddThe proficiency test was offered Friday and Saturday, and 104 students showed up to take it. The papers were graded over the weekend. Graduation ceremonies were held Sunday, but diplomas will not be sent out until this summer.

ddRonald B. McGuire, representing the students, said that no one questions the trustees' prerogative to set requirements, but this situation seemed unfair to students.

dd"Not to receive their degrees would be an irreparable harm," he said. "The denial, delay or deferral of a college degree is a very serious

thing." ddTh
e university, represented by Paul A. Crotty, Assistant Corporation Counsel for
New York City, argued that students should not be
allowed to tell potential emp
loyers that they have graduated when they have not completed the requirements f
or a diploma.

ddMr. McGuire said the trustees had allowed other students to graduate without
passing the exam " in previous semesters at Hostos and
at two other colleges, B
orough of Manhattan Community College and La Guardia Community College.
ddCity University plans to offer free workshops in intensive English this summe
r to the students who did not pass the university writing
test.

ddCUNY officials said that among the 91 students who did not pass the writing t
est last week, nearly 50 fell only a point or two short.

dd"That is encouraging," said Elsa Nunez, a CUNY vice chancellor. "We can ta
ke them over the summer and work with them and can
really make a difference,"
she said.

ddHerman Badillo, vice chairman of the board and an adviser to Mayor Giuliani,
said, "The saddest part of all of this is that of 104 students
taking the test

, only 13 passed it. I would hope they will take it again and pass." THE ASSI
GNMENT: Students must write a persuasive
essay on one of two topics, such as "

Is America still a land of opportunity?" or "Do celebrities make good role mo
dels?" THE TEST:

Students have 50 minutes and they usually write about two pa
ges. THE GRADING: Each test is reviewed by two university-trained
readers and

scored on a scale of 1 to 6. The scores are added together, and 8 is passing. N
o reader knows what score the other reader has
assigned. THE CRITERIA: City U

niversity instructs its readers to pass a students if their essays at least mee
t the following requirements:

"The essay shows a basic understanding of the de
mands of essay organization, although there may be occasional digressions. The
development of ideas is sometimes incomplete or rudimentary, but a basic logic
al structure can be discerned. Vocabulary generally is
appropriate for the essa

y topic but at times is oversimplified. Sentences reflect a sufficient command
of standard written English to ensure
reasonable clarity of expression. Common
forms of agreement and grammatical inflection are usually, although not always,
correct. The

writer generally demonstrates through punctuation an understandin
g of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer spells common words,
except pe

rhaps so-called 'demons,' with a reasonable degree of accuracy." nyxdddy

Headline#\ PKP# Hartford Lawmakers Approve Weakened School Choice PlanHeadline

#:\ PLP#By JONATHAN RABINOVITZ

HARTFORD, June 3 " Faced with an order from the state's highest court to desegregate Connecticut's public schools, Gov. John G.

Rowland and top legislative l

eaders have agreed to let students choose to attend schools outside their district.

ddThe measure, one provision in a bill to end racial isolation in urban schools, is intended to permit black and Hispanic children from the cities to enroll i

n predominantly white suburban schools, if space is available.

TD But the proposal has been watered down from the school choice plan that began in the General Assembly earlier this year, and only

1,000 students will

be able to use it during the next two years.

ddAlong with school choice, the plan includes the following measures:

dd*A \$32 million program to expand access to preschool programs for poor 3- and 4-year-olds.

dd*A mandate that school districts provide opportunities for their students to interact with students from other racial and ethnic

backgrounds, and that the C

onnecticut School Board initiate remedial actions for systems that fail to comply.

dd*A 10 percent increase in school construction grants for projects that provide additional spaces.

dd*Financing to establish so-called lighthouse schools in the three largest cit

ies, Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven, that would have

special curriculums in

tended to attract students from outside the cities.

ddIn all, the state would spend as much as \$90 million on programs to address the Supreme Court order, about twice what Mr. Rowland

had in his budget proposal

in February, State Representative Cameron C. Staples said.

ddDean Pagani, a spokesman for Mr. Rowland, said the Governor would sign the measures, and leaders of both parties supported them.

ddBut the measure has lost some of the provisions that were approved by the Education Committee and that had been recommended by

a blue ribbon panel in January.

y.

ddThe committee had approved a bill that would have started school choice across the state in September 1998; the present measure delays

it a year. The earlier

version would have allowed the student to take 50 percent of state financing

with him to his new district, roughly

\$3,700. The new measure caps it at \$2,000

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ddThe latest proposal limits the number of students who may receive such aid to

1,000 starting in fall 1998, and makes no mention of

increasing funds in the following year.nyxddd

Publication#W\ PMP# 70. The New York Times"Publication" #:\ PNP# 06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final (New Jersey); Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk

; Page 1, Column 1 Category: Local

#i2POP# #:\ PPP#
Headline#\ PQP# New School Spending FiguresHeadline #:\ PRP#By TERRY PRISTIN

ddTRENTON " Education officials released figures yesterday showing how they intended to spend \$246 million for the 1997-98 school year to comply with an order from the State Supreme Court requiring the state to beef up its aid to its poorest school districts.
ddThe biggest increase prompted by last month's court ruling will be in Jersey City, the second largest district, The Associated Press reported. That district will get \$31.6 million more, on top of a \$34.1 million increase already slated under the new school financing law.
ddNewark, the state's largest district, had been slated to lose \$34.1 million in state aid. The court decision would restore \$23.6 million of that.
ddTwo school districts, Hoboken and New Brunswick, will not get extra money because they already spend as much as the richest districts. nyxddd

Publication#W\ PSP# 71. Associated Press"Publication" #:\ PTP#06-04 2:16a
Category: Local

Headline#\ PUP# Glum governor rips Senate leader, won't call special session
adline #:\ PVP#

ddCHICAGO (AP) - Making no effort to disguise bitterness among top state Republicans and his own disappointment, Gov. Jim Edgar pronounced his school funding bill "dead now" but signaled it could be revived.
dd"You never say never around here," Edgar declared Tuesday.
ddEdgar said fighting within his own party made it pointless to call a special legislative session to salvage the bill - the centerpiece of his program. He blamed Senate President James "Pate" Philip, a fellow Republican, for the wreckage of the plan he'd spent months campaigning for.
dd"I'm not going to call the legislature into session and waste the taxpayers' money if we don't have some agreement," the governor said on WGN radio's "The Bob Collins Show."
ddMajority Democrats in the House joined with Edgar to approve a 25 percent income-tax increase coupled with property-tax cuts. It was aimed at providing more state aid to low-income districts where local property taxes fail to produce enough revenue to meet the funding levels that experts recommend.
ddThe plan died over the weekend when Philip refused to call the bill for a vote in the Republican-controlled Senate and lawmakers then adjourned their spring session and went home.
dd"It's dead now," Edgar said in his WGN interview.
ddAt a Statehouse news conference hours later, though, Edgar denied that he had even used the word dead, apparently forgetting his

remark on the radio.

dd"This thing is alive," the governor said.

ddHe said he would call a special session if Philip would allow senators to vote on the House-passed plan or if there were an acceptable compromise.

ddEdgar claimed he had the votes to pass the bill in the Senate if only Philip had been willing to bring it to the floor.

ddPhilip spokeswoman Patty Schuh, however, expressed doubt that enough votes were available to pass the "largest tax increase in Illinois history."

ddEdgar said the strategic position of suburban DuPage County - home to both Philip and House Minority Leader Lee Daniels - worked against his plan.

dd"Their schools are not in as bad shape as some of the schools in the rest of the state that don't have the local wealth that comes from the property tax," said

Edgar, whose hometown is Charleston.

ddHe also acknowledged concern among many Republicans that joining with Democrats to pass an income-tax increase could make them primary targets.

dd"There is a certain segment in society, in the Republican Party, a kind of a right wing in the Republican Party, which I think does concern Sen. Philip and Rep. Daniels ..." Edgar said.

ddMinutes after Edgar claimed he had the votes to pass the bill in the Senate, Daniels was on the WGN program, expressing doubt.

dd"The overwhelming majority of Republicans in the House and Senate felt that increasing reliance on the income tax was unnecessary when Illinois was undergoing an economic boom," he said.

dd"... We felt very strongly that you shouldn't use the income tax," he said. "

Now when you talk about compromising, there was never any discussion of how you

should compromise to get away from increasing the income tax, and that's what caused the failure of this bill."

ddAfterward, Edgar was unable to resist a shot at Daniels. "If I had Lee Daniels' income, I'd probably be against the income tax, too," he said.

Publication#W\ PWP#72. Houston Chronicle"Publication"#:\ PXP#June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Headline#\ PYP#Career-oriented education spelling success for students Headline#:\ PZP#

By SARAH HORNADAY Associated Press

ddAUSTIN " The only thing Gabe Moncada knew about the law as a high school sophomore was that he was on the wrong side of it.

With the help of a career-oriented education program, Moncada is a high school graduate working toward a college degree in criminal justice.

ddMoncada, 18, of Austin, is a success story from the "Education That Works" program. It administers \$61 million in federal funds in Texas to programs such as career academics, school-based enterprises, apprenticeships and a revised version

ion of cooperative education.

dd"Honestly, the only reason I stayed in school was this program," Moncada said

ddHe graduated this year from Lanier High School and received a scholarship to attend Austin Community College. He plans to transfer to Southwest Texas State

University in San Marcos after ACC.

ddA school counselor told him about the Lanier criminal justice program that inspired him to return to school " after dropping out for more than six months

" and put behind his gang days which landed him in juvenile detention for car theft.

dd"I found the right side of the law is better than the wrong side," said Moncada, who has an internship with the Austin Police Department this summer and worked

with the Travis County Sheriff's Department last summer.

ddDropouts aren't the only ones benefiting from the "Education That Works" initiative.

ddHonor students Shana Mikels, who graduated from Austin LBJ High School's Science Academy, and Amanda McCollum, who will be a senior at Elgin High School, also have taken advantage of it.

ddThrough the program, Mikels participated in research projects while an intern at M.D. Anderson Center in Bastrop. McCollum has studied Pre-Vet Animal Science classes at her school in addition to internships.

ddProponents of the program say the classes and internships allow students to learn job skills from using those skills and not just reading about them. Opponents

say the curriculum based around job skills takes away from academics.

dd"I don't object to vocational education. I object to diluting the academic focus of academic classes," said State Board of Education member Robert Offutt of

San Antonio. "I'm a believer in academics. If you prepare a child academically for the world they will be able to assimilate and obtain job skills."

ddRuth Kane, Lanier High School principal and this year's Reader's Digest American Hero in Education, supports "Education that Works."

dd"There's a way to integrate industry and education, employers and students, curriculum that has to do with technology and curriculum that has to do with humanities," Kane said. "We don't have to throw out Romeo and Juliet."

nyxddd

Publication#W\ P[P# 73. The Washington Post"Publication" #:\ P\P# 06/04/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: OP-ED; Page A23 Category: Commentary

Headline#\ PJP# Stop Me Before I Give Your Kid Another `A'Headline #:\ P^P#By James B. Twitchell

This is the time of year when college students' attention turns to the matter of final grades. And, if you are their parents, your thoughts will be turning to

here too. When they come back from the mailbox, they'll probably be smiling, and so will you. Isn't it grand, you'll think, that Missy and Junior are such good

d students. Funny, they don't seem that smart, but somehow they are getting all A's where we had to struggle for C's.

ddHow come? We all know the answer. It's no dirty little secret " it's grade inflation gone amok. What you may not know is that it is almost impossible to control.

I know. I'm one of the people doing the inflating of your kids' grades.

ddThe upward shift started in the jungles of Vietnam, when those of us now at the full-professor level were safely in graduate school.

We were deferred by virtue

of being in school, which wasn't fair and we knew it. So when grading time came, and we knew that giving

a C meant that our student (who deserved a D) would

go into the jungle, we did one better and gave him a B.

ddIn the old days we would post these grades on the office door, and it was a sign of rebellion to have your grade sheet littered with B's.

You were doing your

part.

ddThen the war was over and we were moving like elephants to tenure. We still posted the grades, but even that stopped as the various

privacy acts forbade public

display of a student's personal life, even if only the Social Security number showed. We used to read the doors

too. Soon, however, you couldn't tell who

among your colleagues had reverted to taking grades seriously. As we were to learn, few had.

ddThe greatest inflator of grades was coming up. The student-generated teacher evaluations inched their way not just into the yearly

instructor's evaluation but

into the merit pay package as well. Your pay depended, or so you may have thought, on how well-liked you

were, and that depended, or so you may have thought

too, on how high the grades were. Many of us suspected that the causality was weak,

but no one really wanted to find out.

ddBy this time the school administrations were finding that, in the Ivy League at least, almost everyone was about to graduate with honors.

What to do? Administrators

tried to jawbone the faculty to return to normality. Then they started to remove certain grades to force averages

back down. At the school where I teach,

all the minus grades disappeared. The grades I can give now are A, B+, B, C+, C. The F got

reinstated, but no one gets it because students can always drop

or make up the grade later. These kids are not stupid. The only way to get a

non-F is not to complete an Incomplete.

ddNothing could stop the grade balloon. One after another, the ropes that tied grades to the real world snapped. The most recent one was a new development in the way we are paid: for lack of a better term, call it the beauty-contest method.

At the University of Florida it goes

by the acronym TIP, or Teacher Improvement

Awards. This money, a few thousand, is not a one-time bonanza but is added to your base

pay. TIP resulted from the legislature's deciding that it had to s
how concern about teaching, not just publishing, so this "pay adjustment"
is ba
sed on teaching alone. And how best to judge teaching? Why, by relying once aga
in on the student-generated forms.
ddOf course, at the same time all this was occurring, education in America has
become obsessed with student-centered learning. Every
child must be recognized
for trying. Gold stars are appearing on Pee-Wee's report card, bumper stickers
proclaiming "My child is an honor
student [sorry about yours]" ` are displayed
on bumper stickers. So it is only fair that Junior and Missy are also almost Ph
i Betes at State
College.
ddThe process can't be stopped. Recently I received a memo stating that the ave
rage grade in my department was B+. Many of my
colleagues are giving almost all
A's! The younger members of the department have never even known what a C was
all about " let alone
what a gentleman's C was. When I tell them that this kind
of grading is unfair to my good students, I'm told that graduate schools don't

know that my C is someone else's B+.
ddWhat to do? I'm afraid it's in your hands, parents. Faculties can't do it unl
ess they are convinced not just that their colleagues will follow
through but t
hat other faculties at other schools will also grow backbone. Administrators ar
e embarrassed, but they would never deign to
step deeper into the minefield of
teacher/student assessment. Good students are penalized, true, but they hardly
are able to insist that faculty
do their job and evaluate. You are the only hop
e. And, if you are like me, you aren't going to do anything. I love it that my
kids are doing
great at college.
ddThe writer is a professor of English at the University of Florida.nyxddd

Publication#W\ P_P# 74. Christian Science Monitor"Publication" #:\ P`P# 06/04
/97; Edition: ALL 06/04/97; Section: UNITED STATES; Page 1 Category: Commentary

Headline#\ PaP# How Some Schools Make a Success Of Character Ed.Headline #:\
PbP#
By Laurel Shaper Walters, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Posters on respect and responsibility dot the walls at elementary schools nat
ionwide. Teachers use "Charlotte's Web" to teach about loyalty
or discuss Helen
Keller to define courage.
ddAfter a 10-year boom in character education, children in thousands of America
n classrooms are now being taught values.
ddBut one question looms: Are they absorbing anything?
ddThe answer is a very qualified yes.
ddExperts warn against overblown expectations. And they say there's no such thi

ng as quick-fix character education. But with substantial effort, children can

start to assimilate values taught in school and begin applying them to their lives.

ddTake, for example, 50 kids in Oakland, Calif., who had intensive character education from kindergarten to eighth grade.

ddCompared with "nonprogram" children, they were more spontaneously helpful, friendly, and collaborative in the classroom. Their conflict-resolution skills were more advanced. And they were less "socially anxious" and less lonely in school.

ddBut all this comes only with hard work. "You really need to change the moment-to-moment, day-to-day experience of schooling for kids," says Eric Schaps, president of the Oakland, Calif.-based Development Studies Center, which tracked the kids.

ddThe Oakland program focuses on simultaneously nurturing students' intellectual, ethical, and social growth.

ddReading materials must offer positive lessons for students and class discussions revolve around moral and ethical issues.

ddTeachers are encouraged to be models of good behavior and seize opportunities in the regular curriculum to discuss common values, such as what it means to be helpful, caring, honest, and kind.

ddConnections between home and school are fostered through "Family Reading Nights" when students and parents join with teachers for an evening of stories and discussion at school.

ddEvery few weeks, teachers also assign "family homework." For example, parents and students may share opinions on household chores or research the family's ancestry.

ddThe project is continuing in about 50 schools in several school districts nationwide, including Louisville, Ky., White Plains, N.Y., and Cupertino, Calif.

ddWhat really makes a difference is the "hidden curriculum," Mr. Schaps says. "It's not just what the kids are told but whether they experience their schools as a caring community in which they feel they are valued, contributing members."

ddEffects tough to chart

ddBut even with extensive programs, it's tough to measure any effect on behavior.

ddSchaps warns that the evaluations are "slow and tricky."

ddAnother evaluator puts it more starkly. "Sometimes I feel like I'm trying to figure out if going to church makes people better," says Michael Grady, a St. Louis

University professor who is measuring a St. Louis program's success.

dd"There are a lot of churchgoers in jail, of course," he quips.

ddThe St. Louis program, Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP), involves 213,000 students in nearly 400 schools and 28 districts. Rather than a single

approach, this is a collection of programs that receive funding and training support through PREP.

Most of the school districts have reached consensus on the values their communities want to stress through character education. From there, individual schools

and districts come up with their own programs.

Getting an 'A' in character

Some emphasize community-service projects. One school began "catching" students on campus exhibiting a PREP quality - such as honesty or helpfulness - and sending home a postcard announcing that Johnny was caught being good.

Another school district has started a pilot program that grades students on their character. Rather than old-fashioned citizenship marks, these elementary schools

students now get graded on how well they live out the qualities most valued in their community.

Since its beginnings a decade ago, PREP has conducted formal evaluations at participating schools.

The findings suggest that cognitive development of character has increased. Students can better recognize character traits in stories and define them.

"In those districts which have taken it seriously and implemented it fully, character education has had some impact," says Professor Grady. "Students are certainly more aware of character education. But it's still an open question if it has affected behavior."

While the research is still too thin to determine whether character-education has a long-term impact on student behavior, researchers are reaching consensus

on the kinds of programs that are most likely to succeed.

One yardstick for success

Thomas Lickona, author of "Educating for Character," has developed a survey that helps schools measure success.

His "Eleven Principles Survey" asks school officials, teachers, parents, and students to document how well their school is implementing certain basic criteria.

These include the use of conflict resolution, providing good role models, making use of literature that teaches virtues, and including parents in the character-education process. (See box at right.)

This is a first step to the later hope of determining the impact on students.

"It's only to the degree that you know teachers are actually implementing quality

character education that you can make sense of student outcomes," Dr. Lickona says.

But the expectations for character education may be out of sync with reality, some say.

"If you read the rationale for character education, it says we have a drug problem, a crime problem, a sexual promiscuity problem, and if we'd only do character

education in our schools, we could fix all these problems," says James Leming, a professor of education at

Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

"We have to be realistic about what we can expect from these programs," he adds.

"It's naive to expect teachers to wave a magic wand and turn everyone into good little boys and girls by doing lessons in their

classrooms."

11 PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

These are summaries of criteria for effective character education programs developed by Thomas Lickona and the Alexandria, Va.-based Character Education Partnership.

Partnership.

1. Ethical values are defined as the basis of good character. Qualities such as "caring, honesty, fairness, and responsibility" set the standard by which the school and students are evaluated.

2. Students succeed in "thinking, feeling, and behaving" in line with these "core values."

3. Each activity and environment in school is geared toward teaching character.

4. School is a "caring community" that fosters caring relationships between students and adults.

5. Students apply what they learn by cooperating in groups and settling arguments.

6. The academic curriculum is intellectually challenging and helps students value themselves, and each other, as learners.

7. Rules promote a sincere interest in doing good - minimizing material rewards and punishments.

8. The school staff shares responsibility for, and lives by, the "core values."

9. Various committees are administered by staff and students who volunteer and are elected to serve as these groups' "moral leaders."

10. The school involves parents and the community in advancing "core values."

11. There is an assessment of the school's character, the staff's success in cultivating character, and the student body's character overall.

Publication#W\ PcP# 75. Minneapolis StarTribune"Publication" #:\ PdP#June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Headline#\ PeP# Commentary: High school "only if you earn it"Headline #:\ Pf P#

By Carol Jago

While watching friends' children applying to private high school and then waiting nervously for their acceptance letters, it dawned on me that this is what

public school students should be doing as well. Why is entrance to high school automatic?

If every eighth-grader had to demonstrate minimum competency in math, reading and writing before being allowed to enroll in high school, more students might pay attention in middle school.

Some might get the message that taking up space at a desk doesn't equal learning. A few might even begin to realize that free public education is a privilege.

e.

Seventy percent of any public high school administrator's time is spent tending to discipline problems caused by 10 percent of the students.

ddOne of the most obvious reasons teenagers disrupt class is that they simply can't keep up with the coursework. The troublemakers figure that it's better to play the fool and cover up what they don't know.

ddThese ninth-graders then bring home a bouquet of Ds and Fs on the first report card, setting a pattern for the next four years. It seems to me that screening and remediation does these students a greater justice than punishing them for acting out.

ddI am not suggesting that youngsters who cannot meet standards remain in middle school. If three years in an institution had little impact on their learning, a fourth is unlikely to either. Students who do not qualify for high school entrance should be offered two alternatives.

ddThe first would be the option to enroll in an accelerated program focusing on basic skills. Small, intensive classes would help students catch up, pass the entrance test and get on with their education.

ddThe second option would be for students who have no interest, at least at the moment, in education. These 14-year-olds would be able to enroll in apprenticeship programs where they could learn job skills in a field of their choice.

ddAttendance would be mandatory until they are 16, but once they demonstrate their worth to an employer, there would be no reason why they couldn't be paid as they learn. The option to go back for the accelerated program would always be open and from there the door to high school or community college.

ddBe prepared

ddHigh school is no place for students who don't know their multiplication tables. Can you picture a college prep high school accepting a student who didn't know fractions?

ddI believe it is a reasonable expectation that entering freshmen should be able to read and write. It also is reasonable to expect that students will carry books and pencils and paper. Depending on when you last visited a public high school, you may or may not be surprised to see how many teenagers don't. The problem with this stance is that, unencumbered by the accoutrements of a scholar, let alone his habits of mind, there is little incentive to behave like one.

ddEnglish teachers turn themselves inside out trying to figure out innovative ways of teaching a novel to students who won't read 10 pages for homework. Can you imagine reading all of "Lord of the Flies" aloud in class? No wonder both teachers and students are yawning.

ddRather than redesign curricula, let's first make sure everyone in class has the skills necessary to complete the work assigned. Once this has been ascertained, expect performance of each and every one. No coach would do less.

ddWhen eighth-graders apply for entrance to high school, they and their parents should be asked to sign a contract. The agreement would spell out both what the student can expect from the school and what the teachers can expect from the

student.

ddRepeated failure to meet these terms on the part of the child would end not with rancor and an ugly expulsion but with admission to the internship program.

If the evidence is that the teenagers aren't in the mood for school, they shouldn't be there.

ddA public education, while free, is expensive. We should start treating it as such.

dd "Carol Jago teaches at Santa Monica (Calif.) High School and directs the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA.

She wrote this article for the Los Angeles Times.nyxddd

Publication#W\ PgP# 76. Education Week"Publication" #:\ PhP#June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Headline#\ PiP# Is Accreditation Worth the Trouble? Headline #:\ PjP# By Selby Holmberg

ddSuppose someone were to walk into your office or classroom right now and say, "OK, stop what you're doing and spend the next week

reflecting on your work, t

alking to your colleagues, and writing about it." Admit it, once you got past t

he interruption of your routine,

maybe a few inconveniences, you might find the

exercise a great luxury, yielding new wisdom and enthusiasm for what you do. At its

heart, in my experience, that is what a strong accreditation program seeks to do for a school.

ddIn questioning the value of accreditation, an article in these pages recently focused on the accreditation processes of the six regional accrediting groups.

("Once Status Symbol for Schools, Accreditation Becomes Rote Drill," March 26, 1997.) It might be helpful to look

at parallel accreditation programs that have

been established by 14 independent school associations on behalf of their member schools.

ddFirst, a couple of definitions: Independent schools are distinct from other schools in that they are primarily supported by tuitions, charitable contributions,

and endowment income rather than by tax or church funds. These private schools are not-for-profit, are governed

by a board of trustees, and, to be a member

of the National Association of Independent Schools, must be accredited by a state or regional association.

ddThe independence of an independent school derives from the fact that each is a unique community with its own mission "a private

institution with a public purpose.

To serve these schools' needs, a number of state and regional independent school associations have

developed accreditation programs, based on a process

of peer evaluation, which honors the individual character of each school while

determining if schools meet the association's standards.

ddThere is another important layer. In 1989, at the request of its member independent school accrediting associations, NAIS established the Recognition Program, through which the organization observes, evaluates, and recognizes accrediting processes and demonstrates that accountability for accreditation extends beyond an accrediting association's own board of directors "a source of some concern in the Education Week article. That's where my experience comes in.

ddAs an observer and evaluator of a number of independent school accrediting programs, I have learned that they are interested above all in standards of educational excellence. One independent school group states as a goal "to ensure that the public interest is well served by member schools' adherence to the principles of quality education." But they also provide standards for areas of operation particular to independent schools, including governance, adherence to mission, admission policies, financial viability, and fund-raising practice.

ddTedious checklists, if they exist at all in the independent school accrediting processes, are far from central to the evaluation of schools. Of primary importance to the school and the evaluators are the self-study and the evaluation visit.

ddGuided by a good self-study instrument, a self-study provides more than a snapshot of the school's current status, or a laundry list of practices. Instead, it leads the school to look at its mission and purpose and to reflect on how it is meeting that mission, and where it wants to be in five years or more. In the view of one teacher I spoke to recently, the self-study process gave her an opportunity to come out of the classroom, to think more broadly about her work in the larger context of the school's educational mission, and to work collaboratively with colleagues across the curriculum and across school divisions in ways that the school day and school calendar do not normally provide.

The process breaks down the isolation imposed by the classroom. ddWith a carefully assembled evaluating team, one that reflects the particular focus of a school (for example, for a progressive school, the team would include educators familiar with the values and practices of progressive education), and with a thoughtful team leader, the evaluation visit will enrich far more than interrupt the work of the school. The head of the school may share hopes for the future of the school with the visitors, asking them to apply a special lens to their observations, with the goal of nudging the school forward to new growth. The visit gives the school community an opportunity to exchange ideas with peers from other schools, who will often affirm the good work they are witnessing and offer in the final report suggestions for greater success.

dd

ddA common theme among all independent school groups is that an evaluation's primary purpose is to determine whether a school is adhering to its own goals: In the words of another NAIS member association, its purpose in accreditation is to "assist the school in better realizing its objectives, to support rather than inspect, and to enhance the school's unique character rather than impose a common design."

ddFar from being "rubber stamps," independent school accrediting programs serve three very important purposes. They have a gatekeeping function for independent school associations, they have an accountability function by certifying the quality of the school for parents and other institutions, and they represent the support we extend to one another, at our very best, as a community of educators.

ddWorth the trouble? Without a doubt.

ddSelby Holmberg is a vice president of the National Association of Independent Schools, with headquarters in Washington, and directs the NAIS Recognition Program.
nyxddd

Publication#W\ PkP# 77. Education Week"Publication" #:\ PIP#June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Headline#\ PmP# How Can Urban Schools Retain Young Teachers? Headline #:\ PnP#

By James Kelleher

ddDespite incentives such as college-loan forgiveness for top students going in to teaching in urban schools, many cities are still plagued by a low retention rate for new teachers. After finishing my undergraduate degree at Harvard University, I was excited about the chance to work with needy students in a beleaguered, economically depressed city in Massachusetts. But within months I was burnt out, an isolated newcomer in an unwelcoming staff, frustrated by a lack of administrative support and overwhelmed by my students' behavior and the responsibilities I faced during a typical day. Now that I have made a happy transition to teaching in a suburban high school, I look back upon my original expectations and wonder not only what happened but also what the school might have done to make my experience more positive.

ddBurnt-Out Faculty. Many of the teachers in my first school found little joy in their jobs, having been beaten down by a history of discord between the central office and their union; morale had never recuperated from a strike organized several years beforehand. Most had been on the staff for over 15 years, having survived the layoffs of the early 1980s. During this time, the city population had shifted dramatically

from middle-class factory workers to immigrants and welfare cases. Students coming to the high school were no longer coming from stable

families, and instead had a host of complex personal problems to deal with.

Teaching was no longer fun; some faculty members openly acknowledged that they

continued teaching only because they needed the money for their mortgage or their children's college tuition.

Discipline Problems. Having gone to a private high school, I really had no sense of how bad discipline could be in an urban school.

During my first few months,

students threatened me, swore at me, and hurled every insult imaginable at me; the students were so hostile

and my classes so large that it was hard to be

comfortable with more than just a handful of kids. To monitor students, the large school

had its own police force, and I often saw students being escorted

past my office in handcuffs. Also, teachers were given walkie-talkies and assigned

hall duty to break up fights and monitor students in the halls. Students needed a pass to go anywhere or do anything in the school;

it made sense that a

administrator wanted to know where students were, but it meant that I had to spend a good amount of class time writing

passes for students going to the bathroom or other destinations. Perhaps the worst part of the discipline code was that

the administrators

were inconsistent in enforcing it; one assistant principal

would take the hard line, doling out many suspensions, while another would take

a friendly approach, warming up to the kids, meting out only minor punishments for infractions.

Classroom Learning. Officially I was a Spanish teacher, but many of my students could not write or read basic English and had trouble

even sitting and paying

attention in class. Many of the lower-level students in this school took Spanish I and II twice in order to pass; a

good number of my students planned on re

turning during the summer to pass the course (when it would be taught by an uncertified teacher

who might not even know Spanish). Our outdated textbooks were

in tatters, but I still tried to make my lessons as creative as possible, developing

interesting interdisciplinary projects and using the limited computer technology we had available. But most of my students were not very

interested in school, and it

was almost impossible for them to come to class and put aside their overwhelming personal problems.

Absenteeism made it difficult to progress with my curriculum;

students were often absent, sometimes in court, often suspended. But with

30 or more students in each class, even having a handful absent did not reduce my workload very much.

Since I was one of the only young teachers on the staff, I was isolated and

id not have anyone with whom to share my frustrations.
 Some of my college class
 mates were already making nice salaries at consulting jobs, while I was coming
 home discouraged every day and
 making only \$26,000, less than the cost of a yea
 r's college tuition, wondering what happened to my plans to help needy inner-ci
 ty students.
 Instead of using after-school time to tutor students one-on-one, I
 often found myself processing the bureaucratic paperwork that had
 accumulated
 during the day. The school could have chosen from a number of different options
 to improve working conditions for new
 teachers such as myself, ranging from sm
 aller class sizes to cleaner working conditions, but it seems to have missed th
 e effective and
 relatively cheap solution of having a strong, well-organized me
 ntoring program.
 ddA good mentoring program pairs energized veteran teachers with new ones, orga
 nizing meetings not only at the beginning of the year
 but also throughout the y
 ear to monitor new teachers' problems and devise solutions. My department could
 not solve many of the administrative and bureaucratic issues I faced, but it co
 uld have done much more to make me feel like a member of the community.
 ddAdministrators need to build a team image; generally they touch upon this the
 me on the first day of school, but they must be consistent
 in acknowledging thr
 oughout the year that we are working together toward a common goal. This is not
 easy in an oversized urban high
 school, but it should be recognized as a cruci
 al step in inducting new faculty members. And the important role of the mentor
 teacher should
 be recognized by providing a small stipend rather than a few tok
 en points toward recertification or a simple "thank you." Schools have tried
 ha
 rd to attract qualified recent graduates to education, and they should not negl
 ect to put the same effort into welcoming new teachers,
 involving them as fully
 as possible in the school community.
 ddJames Kelleher currently teaches Spanish at Wellesley High School in Wellese
 y Hills, Mass. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in
 education at Boston College.nyxd
 ddy

Publication#W\ PoP# 78. Education Week"Publication" #:\ PpP#June 4, 1997 Cate
 gory: Commentary

Headline#\ PqP# Reading for Fun Headline #:\ PrP#
 By Morris Freedman
 ddIn his State of the Union Address in February, President Clinton proposed a m
 odern children's crusade. "Every 8-year-old," he declared,
 "must be able to rea
 d." Perhaps I can contribute to the effort by emphasizing that we should make r
 eading fun, something that not everyone
 believes.

ddFor five decades now as a teacher of English I've tried to get students to read for fun. My problem has not been with them so much as with those who believe that students are not supposed to enjoy serious reading. It baffles me when colleagues declare that literature is not supposed to delight.

ddMany parents fear, as I did, that their children will never start reading. I stopped pressing my children to read when I realized the more I pressed the more they resisted. My son tells me he began seriously reading books only after I established a track record of suggesting ones that he enjoyed. His sister, who was younger, got caught up in his fun.

ddIt helped to remember my own introduction to books. When I was 8 years old or so, my father took me to the public library. Because we did not speak English at home, he asked the librarian for advice. The books she recommended enchanted me and I kept returning.

ddSo I felt as a father that any reading Iris and Paul enjoyed would be better than none. Paul, now a newspaper editor, reminds me that I never told him any particular book or type of reading was good or bad for him "Tarzan, Huckleberry Finn, Gulliver's Travels, Tom Swift, Sherlock Holmes stories, assorted magazines. He thinks that if I had, I might have turned him off.

ddParents and teachers keep forgetting that fun is exactly what reading is supposed to give. Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, with their strong narratives and engaging characters, once provided the pleasures and, inevitably, the learning that film and television at their best do today.

ddIndeed, one way to find good reading sources is in the original texts behind good movie, TV, and stage adaptations: for example, Hamlet, Ivanhoe, Little Women, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, Pride and Prejudice, Anna Karenina, Hedda Gabler, The Importance of Being Earnest, A Farewell to Arms, The Maltese Falcon.

ddToo many believe that learning must always be solemn, formal, even uncomfortable, like medicine. No pain, no gain. I once proposed an anthology for college students containing James Thurber's charming spoof "The Macbeth Murder Mystery." "Students are not supposed to have fun with Shakespeare," huffed a consultant to the publisher. (Thurber's solution was that Lady Macbeth's father did it. It is worth rereading "Macbeth" just to get the full flavor of Thurber's joke.)

ddA U.S. Department of Education study found that about a quarter of 8th and 12th grade students rarely read for plain fun. It also reported that students who had the highest reading scores talked over the books they read instead of just answering workbook questions about them. Alert teachers know how animated classes

ses can get when they allow free discussion of reading.
 ddGood reading, like any satisfying work, produces fun. We whistle when we like
 our work. Tom Sawyer realized this when he conned
 his buddies into white-washi
 ng Aunt Polly's picket fence, turning a chore into fun. Like any effort, readin
 g a new text may at first be a labor
 but should also quickly change to pleasure
 . At least, this process is what has made the classics last over the ages and t
 urned difficult new
 works into classics, like the fiction of Henry James, James
 Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and the plays of Samuel Beckett.
 ddIn any good reading, one regularly finds satisfaction in epiphanies, moments
 of insight that leave lessons for a lifetime. An important
 one for my son occur
 red when David Copperfield thinks about what he had lost when he was 8 years ol
 d through his stepfather's cruelty:
 "God help me," David says, "I might have be
 en improved for my whole life, I might have been made another creature perhaps,
 for life,
 by a kind word at that season."
 ddLearning comes with realizing and absorbing truth. Reading that challenges in
 evitably teaches; it doesn't bore since it involves the
 reader. It helps one de
 al with everything from delight to disappointment and pain. It sets experience
 in perspective; it prompts a person
 to weigh familiar things and see some he ha
 s overlooked. It teaches us how to tell the difference between high quality and
 low. It makes
 us aware of moral and ethical conflicts, helps us distinguish be
 tween right and wrong, even provides the excitement of defying convention.
 ddReading helps with practical daily living "talking seriously, saying precisel
 y what you mean, sharpening a sense of humor, getting to
 the heart of matters.
 It can help develop sensitivity and tolerance. It deepens personal relationship
 s.
 dd
 ddProductive reading always gets the reader to commit himself to the text. Unfo
 rtunately, we often try to promote reading deceptively,
 by salesmanship, by off
 ering irrelevant inducements. "Read at least six books this summer," urged a lo
 cal library bulletin, "and you'll
 receive free books; discount coupons for CDs,
 tapes, and other merchandise."
 ddWe should commend the library and merchants for putting books alongside compa
 ct disks as sources of pleasure. But such projects may be self-defeating. Bernar
 d Malamud has a short story about a high school dropout who became a neighborho
 od hero when he
 announced that he was going to read 100 books over the summer.
 He read not even one and felt bitter shame in the fall.
 ddReading for fun requires that we attend and respond to the words on the page.
 Finding pleasure in reading rarely comes from busywork
 or from skimming a text
 . High school teachers in summer seminars I've taught used Robert Frost's "Birc
 hes" to assign research on trees,

canoes, the poet's biography, metrics, symbols, hidden meanings. They didn't read Frost for fun themselves or know how to teach their students to do so.

Everyone can have fun reading. Of course, we should not expect the same reward from everything we read. "Some books are to be tasted," wrote Francis Bacon, "others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

Some reading will surely disappoint us, just the way some movies and some gourmet meals will. But regular reading will repeatedly surprise and delight us, and that's always fun.

Here are some tips that should help students and adults alike get into the habit of reading for fun:

- Start with short works that hold your interest. Don't feel you have to read every item in a collection of stories or poems. Sample. Enjoy.
- Bring at least as much patience to a longer text as you might to a television series or a baseball or basketball playoff. Remember that many long books were the equivalent in their time of an ongoing television soap opera. They first appeared in installments.
- Keep reading a work once you start. Don't stop to look up every word or name you don't know or can't remember, but only do so if the word keeps recurring and the meaning doesn't become clear. Don't let an author's style or the thickness of a book put you off.
- Avoid summaries and outlines of famous works, "trots." Don't confuse reading with memorizing plots. If you do find summaries that intrigue you, by all means read the book itself.
- Avoid introductions to books. They can be misleading. You can always go back to an introduction after you've read the book.
- Don't worry about whether the book has a hard cover or a flexible one, is used or new. If you can, choose a copy that you can hold comfortably, with print that's easy to read. Try to get one with the original illustrations, like Sir John Tenniel's for Alice's Adventures in Wonderland or those drawn by Phiz (Hablot Knight Browne) for much of Dickens.
- Don't worry too much about the translation of a work. Most translations of Leo Tolstoy, Feodor Dostoevsky, Henrik Ibsen, and Anton Chekhov are serviceable. If the idioms are too old-fashioned and stilted, as in some translations of Guy de Maupassant, look for other editions. The important point is to enjoy your reading.
- Look for other books by authors you like or for books about them. Reading lots of works by one writer can be as much fun as reading works by lots of different writers. And remember, you may also enjoy books about writers whose works you've enjoyed. Richard Ellmann's biographies of James Joyce and Oscar Wilde, for example, can give pleasure the way the original works by these authors did.

ddMorris Freedman has taught at the City College of New York and the universiti
es of New Mexico and Maryland and has written
and edited textbooks for high sch
ool and college courses. He lives in Hyattsville, Md., and writes regularly on
education.nyxddd

Publication#W\ PsP# 79. Education Week"Publication" #:\ PtP#June 4, 1997 Cate
gory: Commentary

Headline#\ PuP# Raising the Caution Flag On the Standards Movement Headline
#:\ PvP#

By Paul Houston

ddStandards. Higher standards. World-class standards. Standards have become the
mantra of school reform. They have replaced apple
pie and motherhood as the on
e thing no educator can be against. On the surface this makes sense. A recent s
tudy by the New York

City-based nonprofit Public Agenda found that students tod
ay do not feel they are being held to a high enough standard of performance.
Th

e literature is replete with information on grade inflation, low expectations f
or minority students, and a raft of other subjects that would
indicate that hol

ding students to a much higher set of expectations for their work makes great s
ense. In my conversations with teachers,
school leaders, and with citizens, all
seem to agree that higher standards are a must.

ddYet, at the risk of pointing out that the emperor's clothes are a bit threadb
are, I must raise the caution flag on the standards movement.

Not because highe

r standards are wrong, but because the movement itself is flawed. If we ever ex
pect to reach a higher set of outcomes
for students, we'd better fix the moveme
nt that we expect to take us there.

ddLet's start with the assumptions undergirding the reform movement. It is wide
ly reported, and therefore believed by politicians and the
business community,

that American education has slipped badly in recent years. Starting with the pi
votal A Nation at Risk report of 1983,

it has been taken for granted that the g
olden era of American public education is behind us, that we have lost the comp
etitive edge over

the rest of the world, and that our economic future is threat
ened by a decline in the quality of education in America.

ddIt would take more than a few paragraphs to refute this claim. However, let i
t be known that there is a substantial body of evidence that
our schools have h

eld their own against a rising tide of social problems. Despite the dramatic de
cline in family life, and overall loss of social
capital supporting children, s

chools have maintained and slightly increased achievement. While most internati
onal comparisons are bogus

at best, because of different samples, curricular as

sumptions, and cultural variances, when comparisons are made with like groups,

the United States does just fine.

ddWe do need to improve what we are doing, though, and improve it dramatically, because incremental improvement will not suffice in an exponential environment.

. Expectations for all children have skyrocketed against the past, and we have not kept up with those expectations. So improvement is needed. But not for the reasons the critics assume. And if we have misdiagnosed the problem, we are quite likely to prescribe the wrong treatment. A blind call for higher standards without examining what children need to know how to do better could well lead to wasted time and resources.

ddThe second problem with the standards movement is that it fails to consider context as a powerful issue. Having served as a superintendent of a wealthy district, where most children came from two-parent families with high levels of parental income and education (not to mention expectations), and having served as a superintendent of a couple of urban districts with high levels of poverty and "broken" families, it is difficult for me to take the standards movement seriously absent a consideration of the contextual differences the children bring to school with them.

ddl am not for a moment suggesting that poor children should not have the opportunity to meet the same high expectations that wealthier children are expected to meet. In fact, it is our moral imperative to see that the trajectories of their lives have the same opportunity for liftoff. I am suggesting that a school reform movement that does not consider the problems presented by lack of equity "that suggests all students reach the same finish line, but does nothing to redress the fact that the starting line is further back for some "is a movement I have difficulty taking seriously. Thus far, I have seen nothing from the politicians of either party that would indicate that we can expect this issue to be confronted and addressed. Without dealing with context, the standards movement is doomed to fail.

ddThe fact is, we already have high standards for some children. Students who attend our highly selective and competitive magnet high schools in some of our inner cities "schools such as Stuyvesant and the Bronx High School of Science in New York, or University High in Tucson, Ariz., or the dozens of others all across America "meet and exceed the world-class standards that are currently being discussed.

Students attending many of our elite suburban schools also meet these standards. The consortium in the Chicago area that outstripped the world on the recent Third International Mathematics and Science Study is evidence of that

t. Our problem isn't that American students can't meet higher standards. The problem is that we lack the will as a people to do what we have to do to see that all students have the same opportunities that some of our children have.

ddAnother problem I have with the standards movement is that it is totally disconnected from everything else we do. Education is organic. It is fluid. It lives and breathes because, of all the aspects of our existence, it is perhaps the most human and the most dependent upon humans to carry out. Those acting and those acted upon are human. And as the old saying points out, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." You can lead a student to knowledge but you can't make him learn. That requires motivation, understanding, and sometimes compassion. It is the stuff of hopes and dreams. And it will take more than a mantra to fulfill. It will take fairness and equity. It will take strength and joy. It will take us acting toward each other in human ways. It will take our behaving in connected ways.

ddAnd finally, we must ask, "Higher standards for whom?" For if we want to have higher standards for students, we must also have higher standards for teachers. And if we want to hold teachers to higher standards, we must do the same for principals. And what is good for principals is good for district staff and superintendents. And that leads to higher standards for boards of education. Which naturally leads to parents, and community. For good measure, let's throw in business leaders and politicians. Children are at the bottom of the food chain. Blaming them for their problems, and not as adults taking responsibility for adding to their problems, is really blaming the victim. Yes, children need to reach high standards. So do adults.

ddIf the emperor wants to show off his new duds, he needs to make sure everyone else is dressed as well. When we can truly begin to understand what our kids need to know and know what to do to face an uncertain future, when we can see that all our kids have the same chance at success that is currently reserved for a few of our kids, when we can connect all the parts of education and join together "adults and children working toward the same end of higher achievement" then we can all start chanting the mantra together. It will be more than a mystical incantation "it will be a goal within our grasp."

ddPaul Houston is the executive director of the American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, Va.

Headline#\ PyP# Who'll run the testing program? Headline #:\ PzP#
ddGOV. PETE Wilson is in something of a showdown with the Democrats in the Legislature, and with much of the education establishment as well, about the timing and nature of a statewide testing program for all California elementary and secondary school students. It's a fight that, for the sake of educational standards and quality, he ought not to lose.
ddThe danger is that he could prevail in this battle, which will come during the next couple of weeks in the so-called Big Five budget negotiations with legislative leaders, and still lose the war. The key to that is who controls and administers the test. If the state Department of Education runs it, Wilson could well have won an empty victory.
ddOn the surface the issue is simple: whether to buy a standardized off-the-shelf test now " the kind of educational achievement test that thousands of California children already take " or wait for the development of a new California test, which in turn depends on adoption of a whole new set of standards. Such a test may take, literally, until the next millennium to get in place. After almost a decade of flying blind, California badly needs a testing program now to reliably evaluate its programs " and inform parents and others on how it's doing.
ddThe opponents of Wilson's proposal say that since teachers always teach to the test, the standardized test he proposes will drive the curriculum " presumably in a direction of which they disapprove " before the state's own standards are in place.
ddBUT BENEATH those objections, this is just another form of the debate between the curricular left and right " the phonics and math facts people on one side, the constructivist, whole language descendants of the old progressives on the other.
ddThere is no absolute right and wrong in that debate " good schooling is a mixture of both. But for the moment the national drift, both in the polls and in pedagogical scholarship, is very much toward tougher, less fuzzy standards. Most of the Department of Education, the teachers colleges and the California Teachers Association, on the other hand, still belong mostly to the party of fuzz, self-esteem and good feelings.
ddA little history should make that clear.ddIn the past few years, bureaucrats in the state Department of Education have tried to soften or derail a long line of hard-nosed proposals to reduce the mush quotient in testing, standards and curricular frameworks. They defended the old CLAS test, the last California effort to do its own thing, to the death, even after it was clear that it didn't measure what it purported to measure.

ddIt also took enormous outside pressure " from private citizens, from legisla
 tors and from dismal national test results " to force the
 department to produc
 e revisions in the state's reading and math programs, changes for which state s
 chools chief Delaine Eastin now claims
 credit but which she does little to impl
 ement. On the contrary, even though those changes were adopted and written clea
 rly into law and
 state policy, there have been attempts from within the educati
 on establishment to sabotage them. Eastin herself tried to block the
 confirmati
 on of Janet Nicholas, a Board of Education member who insisted that the state's
 math program include texts with a heavy dose
 of fundamentals. And, of course,
 Eastin strongly opposes Wilson's testing proposal.
 ddYet even if those things were only partially true, there is an inherent confl
 ict of interest in letting the California Department of Education
 run a high-st
 akes assessment system that could reflect badly on the things to which the educ
 ational bureaucracy is so deeply committed
 " whole language, bilingual educati
 on, constructivist math. Under Wilson's proposal, every student, every school,
 every district would
 be evaluated.
 ddHOW SUCH an evaluation is conducted " who gets excused, how scores are repor
 ted, how strictly test security is maintained "
 thus becomes highly important.
 In other places, there has on occasion been widespread cheating (by adults) or
 fudging of scores. Since
 the careers of principals and superintendents (includ
 ing, in this case, potentially Eastin's career as well) may ride on the results
 of the tests,
 there's plenty of reason for concern.
 ddBut there are fairly easy alternatives " and possibly an important precedent
 for other forms of assessment. Put the whole testing
 program " this one and t
 he one that the state expects eventually to develop for itself " in an indepen
 dent agency. The office of the state
 auditor general would seem the most obviou
 s candidate, though there could be others.
 ddIf that succeeds, a whole set of other performance audits, particularly in ed
 ucation, could usefully be moved to the same place. Such
 a change would require
 moving some people over and shutting some things down. But that would hardly b
 e a tragedy; on the contrary,
 it could set a wonderful precedent. No agency so
 subject to ideology ought to be evaluating its own programs.nyxdddy

Publication#W\ P{P# 81. Chicago Tribune"Publication" #:\ P|P#June 4, 1997 Cat
 egory: Editorial

Headline#\ P}P# CASTING FOR A SCHOOL DEALHeadline #:\ P}P#
 ddSenate President James "Pate" Philip was at his vacation home in the Upper Pe
 ninsula Tuesday, presumably showing more deftness

at bagging northern pike than

he did at finishing a school reform deal.

ddGov. Jim Edgar was at his Springfield office, presumably contemplating how Philip would look dangling from the other end of the fishing line.

ddWhen these two get back in the same state "some might say if they ever get back on the same planet "they have some business to do.

ddThey don't have to hold any press conferences; they don't even have to tell us about it. They just have to sit down together, with no one else in the room,

and talk about education.

ddThey'll probably have to work through a few things, such as why Philip buried the most important initiative Jim Edgar has ever put forth. And why Edgar tried

to foster a revolt in Philip's own caucus, rather than seek an accommodation with him.

ddBut if they can get past the ill feelings, they ought to be able to reach an accommodation on schools.

ddThe legislature isn't scheduled to go back to Springfield until October. If they follow tradition, the state's leaders will put school reform on hold for the

summer, maybe longer. "Wait 'til next year" is heard more often in Springfield than in Wrigley Field.

ddThis is the time to break tradition. Next year is not soon enough. This October is not soon enough.

ddThe governor should call a special session of the legislature for one purpose: education. But he should negotiate an agreement first.

It would be useless to

haul everyone to the Capitol under the notion that that would pressure the legislators to respond.

ddIf Edgar can reach an agreement with Philip, the rest of the deal should fall into place.

ddIt will probably mean a smaller increase in the state income tax than Edgar wanted, coupled with some consumer taxes. It will probably mean less in the way

of property-tax relief. But there's no reason Edgar and Philip can't reach the primary goal: a school plan that guarantees every child will have a reasonable minimum amount of money available for his education.

ddEdgar's plan is better than that, but let's be realistic. The people responsible for killing that plan "Philip and House Minority Leader

Lee Daniels "show no

signs of going anywhere. Edgar, though, might be going somewhere. If he decides this summer not to seek re-election, his influence will wane.

ddIt's Edgar's call to make, and time for him to make it. Heck, maybe Philip has room for him in his boat.nyxddd

Publication#W\ P}P# 82. The Christian Science Monitor"Publication" #:\ P}P#June 4, 1997

Headline#\ P}P# How Some Schools Make a Success Of Character Ed. Headline #:\ P}P#

Laurel Shaper Walters, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ddST. LOUIS " Posters on respect and responsibility dot the walls at elementary schools nationwide. Teachers use "Charlotte's Web" to teach about loyalty or discuss Helen Keller to define courage.

ddAfter a 10-year boom in character education, children in thousands of American classrooms are now being taught values.

ddBut one question looms: Are they absorbing anything?

ddThe answer is a very qualified yes.

ddExperts warn against overblown expectations. And they say there's no such thing as quick-fix character education. But with substantial effort, children can start to assimilate values taught in school and begin applying them to their lives.

ddTake, for example, 50 kids in Oakland, Calif., who had intensive character education from kindergarten to eighth grade.

ddCompared with "nonprogram" children, they were more spontaneously helpful, friendly, and collaborative in the classroom. Their conflict-resolution skills were more advanced. And they were less "socially anxious" and less lonely in school.

ddBut all this comes only with hard work. "You really need to change the moment-to-moment, day-to-day experience of schooling for kids," says Eric Schaps, president of the Oakland, Calif.-based Development Studies Center, which tracked the kids.

ddThe Oakland program focuses on simultaneously nurturing students' intellectual, ethical, and social growth.

ddReading materials must offer positive lessons for students and class discussions revolve around moral and ethical issues.

ddTeachers are encouraged to be models of good behavior and seize opportunities in the regular curriculum to discuss common values, such as what it means to be helpful, caring, honest, and kind.

ddConnections between home and school are fostered through "Family Reading Nights" when students and parents join with teachers for an evening of stories and discussion at school.

ddEvery few weeks, teachers also assign "family homework." For example, parents and students may share opinions on household chores or research the family's ancestry.

ddThe project is continuing in about 50 schools in several school districts nationwide, including Louisville, Ky., White Plains, N.Y., and Cupertino, Calif.

ddWhat really makes a difference is the "hidden curriculum," Mr. Schaps says. "It's not just what the kids are told but whether they experience their schools as a caring community in which they feel they are valued, contributing members."

ddEffects tough to chart

ddBut even with extensive programs, it's tough to measure any effect on behavior.

ddSchaps warns that the evaluations are "slow and tricky."

ddAnother evaluator puts it more starkly. "Sometimes I feel like I'm trying to

figure out if going to church makes people better," says Michael Grady, a St. Louis University professor who is measuring a St. Louis program's success.

dd"There are a lot of churchgoers in jail, of course," he quips.

ddThe St. Louis program, Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP), involves 213,000 students in nearly 400 schools and 28 districts. Rather than a single approach, this is a collection of programs that receive funding and training support through PREP.

ddMost of the school districts have reached consensus on the values their communities want to stress through character education. From there, individual schools and districts come up with their own programs.

ddGetting an 'A' in character

ddSome emphasize community-service projects. One school began "catching" students on campus exhibiting a PREP quality - such as honesty or helpfulness - and sending home a postcard announcing that Johnny was caught being good.

ddAnother school district has started a pilot program that grades students on their character. Rather than old-fashioned citizenship marks, these elementary students now get graded on how well they live out the qualities most valued in their community.

ddSince its beginnings a decade ago, PREP has conducted formal evaluations at participating schools.

ddThe findings suggest that cognitive development of character has increased. Students can better recognize character traits in stories and define them.

dd"In those districts which have taken it seriously and implemented it fully, character education has had some impact," says Professor Grady. "Students are certainly more aware of character education. But it's still an open question if it has [affected] behavior."

ddWhile the research is still too thin to determine whether character-education has a long-term impact on student behavior, researchers are reaching consensus on the kinds of programs that are most likely to succeed.

ddOne yardstick for success

ddThomas Lickona, author of "Educating for Character," has developed a survey that helps schools measure success.

ddHis "Eleven Principles Survey" asks school officials, teachers, parents, and students to document how well their school is implementing certain basic criteria. These include the use of conflict resolution, providing good role models, making use of literature that teaches virtues, and including parents in the character-education process. (See box at right.)

ddThis is a first step to the later hope of determining the impact on students.

"It's only to the degree that you know teachers are actually implementing quality character education that you can make sense of student outcomes," Dr. Lickona says.

ddBut the expectations for character education may be out of sync with reality, some say.

dd"If you read the rationale for character education, it says we have a drug problem, a crime problem, a sexual promiscuity problem, and if we'd only do character education in our schools, we could fix all these problems," says James Leming, a professor of education at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.
dd"We have to be realistic about what we can expect from these programs," he adds.
dd"It's naive to expect teachers to wave a magic wand and turn everyone into good little boys and girls by doing lessons in their classrooms."

dd11 PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

ddThese are summaries of criteria for effective character education programs developed by Thomas Lickona and the Alexandria, Va.-based Character Education Partnership.

dd1. Ethical values are defined as the basis of good character. Qualities such as "caring, honesty, fairness, and responsibility" set the standard by which the school and students are evaluated.

dd2. Students succeed in "thinking, feeling, and behaving" in line with these "core values."

dd3. Each activity and environment in school is geared toward teaching character.

dd4. School is a "caring community" that fosters caring relationships between students and adults.

dd5. Students apply what they learn by cooperating in groups and settling arguments.

dd6. The academic curriculum is intellectually challenging and helps students value themselves, and each other, as learners.

dd7. Rules promote a sincere interest in doing good - minimizing material rewards and punishments.

dd8. The school staff shares responsibility for, and lives by, the "core values."

dd9. Various committees are administered by staff and students who volunteer and are elected to serve as these groups' "moral leaders."

dd10. The school involves parents and the community in advancing "core values."

dd11. There is an assessment of the school's character, the staff's success in cultivating character, and the student body's character overall.

===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====

===== ATTACHMENT 3 =====

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Daily Education News



Wednesday, June 4, 1997

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Public Affairs
FB-10B, Room 2200 · 401-1218
Norman Greenberg, Editor

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15. New York Daily News
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17. Baltimore Sun
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Taking on teacher turnover
20. Denver Post
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21. Seattle Times
Senior project can put crimp in students' graduation plans
22. San Diego Union-Tribune
Children will need written permission to check out Internet at county libraries
23. \San Diego Union-Tribune
Wet suits donated to surfing class
24. San Diego Union-Tribune
School's gaffe adds to students' class time
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Omaha elementary schools get OK to use student uniforms
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Dropout rates fall in state, county
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Lawmakers examine funding problems for community colleges
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California, Pacific Rim Universities Form Alliance
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Half of DISD schools to get new leaders
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Bush indicates he'll sign admission-standards bill
38. Associated Press
Senate approves reform bill; adopts corporal punishment
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- Nelson signs school finance measure*
40. Philadelphia Inquirer
Student convicted in sex attack can attend other district school
41. Philadelphia Inquirer
Like others before her, she strove for a better life. Her surroundings doomed her.
42. Chicago Sun-Times
1 of 4 Chicago eighth-graders to be held back
43. Philadelphia Inquirer
The debate over gay rights is never more heated than when it has to do with school.
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Metro Detroit teacher retiring after half century on the job
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Few at Hostos College pass City University English test
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UW case involving student fees headed to appeals court today
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State says rate continues to decline
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High School Dropout Rates Down 25% in State : In Orange County, numbers follow the trend with Tustin and Anaheim Union districts showing the most dramatic reductions.
62. Los Angeles Times
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63. The Washington Post
Some U.S. Lawmakers Revive Voucher Idea; Bill Would Offer Private-School Tuition Aid to Needy D.C. Children

64. Los Angeles Times
Policing Program to Expand Districtwide
65. Los Angeles Times
Low Dropout Rates Earn Local Schools High Marks : Report shows decline from 3.5% in 1995 to 2.9% in '96. Officials are especially pleased with results in low-income communities.
66. Los Angeles Times
Voters OK Education Bonds for 2 Districts, Elections: Ventura and Ocean View school measures pass, and Camarillo returns Morgan to council. Turnout called 'embarrassing.'
67. The New York Times
Principal in Elizabeth Presses Crackdown on School Truants
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Few Who Took an 11th-Hour English Test at Hostos Pass It
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Hartford Lawmakers Approve Weakened School Choice Plan
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NATIONAL

1. The Wall Street Journal

06/04/97

White House, GOP Start Long Process On Budget Pact

By Jackie Calmes and Greg Hitt
Staff Reporters of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON — With new proposals on Medicare and education tax breaks, both White House and Republican congressional officials have begun the long process of compromising on the policies needed to implement their vague balanced-budget accord.

The Clinton administration yesterday altered its education tax-breaks package in a bid for support from skeptical lawmakers and higher-education groups. For its proposed "HOPE" tuition-tax credit, the White House dropped both a requirement that students earn at least a "B" grade average and a provision reducing the \$1,500 annual credit for low-income students by the amount of any other public education aid they receive.

Meanwhile, House Republicans and the White House neared resolution of a key Medicare conflict. Republicans proposed that as many as 500,000 of the nearly 37 million Medicare beneficiaries be permitted to opt for so-called medical savings accounts. The Clinton

administration, which has said widespread use of such accounts would benefit the richest and healthiest senior citizens at the expense of the poorest and sickest, said the new plan is a step in the right direction, but stopped short of endorsing it until reviewing the details.

Separately, GOP leaders are meeting with conservative groups to pare down the cost of a \$500-a-child tax credit from a cost of about \$105 billion over five years to \$73 billion to fit within the tight tax-cut cap set in the budget pact. The groups find themselves battling with business groups for tax cuts that fit within the negotiated \$135 billion five-year limit. Business groups face reductions in their favored tax cuts as well, as illustrated by a House proposal to deny the real-estate industry the full benefit of the GOP's capital gains tax-cut plan.

The latest changes to Mr. Clinton's education tax breaks aren't likely to fully satisfy opponents. The president wants to create a \$1,500-a-year tax credit for two years, for tuition and fees, or a deduction for as much as \$10,000 in such expenses. The White House eliminated the "B"

requirement under fire from critics, who said it would promote grade inflation as schools sought to keep students enrolled and would be an administrative nightmare for the schools, taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service.

To mollify Democrats, the administration would make more aid available to poor students by allowing them the full credit, rather than reducing it dollar for dollar by the amount of state or federal grants. But the changes would cost as much as \$6 billion over five years, so the White House must shave the tax breaks to fit within a \$35 billion education limit negotiated with GOP leaders.

On Medicare, GOP Rep. Bill Thomas of California said that with the House-White House compromise on medical savings accounts, "I don't believe there are any deal-breakers left out there."

The Medicare plan, which will be debated today in the House Ways and Means Committee, would provide a range of new preventive-care benefits, while cutting reimbursement for health-care providers. Beneficiaries would face a small premium increase. ■

2. Associated Press

06-04 10:33a

Clinton dropping grade requirement for scholarships

By SANDRA SOBIERAJ Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Clinton has abandoned a requirement from his proposed "HOPE scholarship" that students maintain at least a B-minus average to get a \$1,500 annual tax credit for the first two years of college.

Education Secretary Richard Riley and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin were to outline the revised tax incentives in meetings with key congressional Republicans today.

The new proposal, aimed at winning the support of the higher-education community, also would make low-income

"It seems to be moving in a very promising direction. What will now be

students receiving federal Pell grants eligible for the full \$1,500 credit. Clinton's earlier proposal would have deducted the amount of a student's Pell grant from the credit.

"The modification not only will improve the utility of HOPE scholarships for lower-income students but will also make it easier for colleges and universities to administer the program," presidential spokesman Mike McCurry said.

To qualify, students must meet the modest standards required by other federal aid programs - an eligibility level that is significantly lower than the original B-minus requirement.

To keep the overall cost of the possible is that low-income families will benefit more directly," said David

package at \$35 billion, which is stipulated in the bipartisan balanced-budget accord, Miller said the tax credit and a companion \$10,000 tax deduction for college tuition would be phased in more slowly than originally scheduled.

In early Senate hearings on the Clinton tax incentives, some Democrats questioned whether the package would really help low-income people gain access to college, or merely provide tax relief to families with students already in college.

College administrators, who also initially balked at the administration plan, said Tuesday they were encouraged by the revisions.

Warren, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and

Universities, which represents about 900 private, independent schools.■

3. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section A; National Desk; Page 15, Column 1

White House Offers to Alter Tax Package For Education

By RICHARD W. STEVENSON

WASHINGTON, June 3 — The Clinton Administration offered today to make changes to its proposed package of tax breaks for college expenses, dropping some frequently criticized elements and adding new ones in an effort to win Congressional support for an initiative that has generated little enthusiasm in either party.

Faced with the likelihood that their original proposal would be rewritten by Congress or cast aside entirely, Administration officials sought to reshape the plan while keeping its central elements, a \$1,500 per student tax credit for the costs of each of the first two years of college and a separate deduction of up to \$10,000 per family each year for college tuition and fees.

Administration officials said they were dropping their requirement that a student maintain a B-minus average to receive the credit for a second year. College administrators had warned that the requirement would create further grade inflation by putting pressure on professors to make sure that students did not lose the tax benefit because of low grades. Republicans had also complained that the requirement would be an

administrative nightmare, potentially requiring the Internal Revenue Service to review grades.

Responding to complaints from liberal Democrats that the plan did not do enough for low-income students, the Administration reversed itself and said it would allow the full \$1,500 tax credit even if a student were also receiving other Federal student aid under the Pell grant program. To make its plan more attractive to Republicans, the Administration added a proposal backed by the Republican leadership in the Senate to make interest paid on student loans deductible, a tax break that was repealed in 1986. Under the plan, interest payments of up to \$2,500 a year would be deductible for up to five years.

To pay for the changes to the plan, officials said the Administration would propose phasing in the tax credit over coming years rather than enacting it at the full \$1,500 from the start, as the White House originally proposed. Administration officials estimated that cost of the changes to its plan at \$5 billion over five years.

"We're doing this primarily to be responsive to the concerns people have raised and to do so while living within

the budget agreement," said David A. Longanecker, the assistant secretary of education for post-secondary education. "To those ends we have tried to come up with a package that is more progressive in structure and simpler and less intrusive."

Lobbying groups for colleges and universities said they were encouraged by the changes. But it was unclear how much support the changes would win from Republicans, who will begin drafting legislation next week to enact the five-year, \$135 billion, tax-cutting package agreed to as part of the last month's balanced budget deal.

President Clinton won a vague assurance from the Republican leadership during the budget negotiations that \$35 billion of the tax cut would be devoted to programs "consistent" with his college tax break plan. But the chief Republican tax writer, Representative Bill Archer of Texas, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, has made clear that he does not feel bound to any specific plan, and even Democrats said they were unlikely to fight for Mr. Clinton's plan. ■

4. The Washington Post

06/04/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A01

Medicare Plan Cuts \$115 Billion but Offers New Choices; GOP Accepts Test of Medical Savings Accounts for Seniors, Backing Off Wider Proposal

By Eric Pianin and Clay Chandler
Washington Post Staff Writers

President Clinton and House Republicans yesterday settled a key

In the face of stiff White House opposition, GOP leaders backed away from a proposal to allow any Medicare beneficiary to shift from the traditional health insurance program to a tax exempt medical savings account (MSA). Republicans, however, will be able to test their plan for a medical savings account

difference over a plan to preserve Medicare for the next decade by imposing the largest spending cuts in the program's history and offering the program under a pilot program that would be available for as many as 500,000 seniors.

At the heart of the GOP plan is an effort to save billions of dollars annually by opening the huge federal health insurance plan to intense competition from health maintenance organizations

nation's 33 million senior citizens a much wider choice of health insurance coverage.

and other private health providers.

The Medicare proposal also would offer a wide range of new preventive care services such as free Pap smears and mammography and prostate cancer screening. Colorectal cancer screenings will be covered by Medicare for the first time and Medicare will pay for blood

testing strips for diabetics, and for training courses on diet and other lifestyle changes.

Administration officials said they still disagree with some elements of the GOP plan, but view it overall as a "constructive step" toward translating their balanced budget accord into legislation that can win bipartisan support. "There really was a sense . . . we can get this done," White House spokesman Barry Toiv said after a meeting between Clinton and congressional leaders.

The majority of the \$115 billion of savings in the Medicare program, to be achieved over five years, would come from reductions in government payments to hospitals, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), physicians and other health care providers. For recipients, premiums would rise over the course of the agreement at least \$5 a month more than they would have under current law.

The Medicare savings are part of a broader effort to balance the federal budget by 2002 that was negotiated by the White House and GOP leaders last month. The success of that plan hinges on relatively swift passage of significant changes in the Medicare health insurance program for the elderly, as well as agreement on a large tax cut package acceptable to all sides.

Yesterday, Clinton responded to GOP criticism of his demand for nearly \$35 billion of education tax credits by agreeing to rewrite some key features in his proposal. Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin plans to brief lawmakers today on the details of those changes.

Following the White House meeting, Rep. Bill Thomas (R-Calif.), a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee, announced the GOP Medicare reform bill, including the medical savings account pilot program, similar to one favored by the "Blue Dog" conservative Democrats.

Conservatives have pushed medical savings accounts as one of several alternatives to the traditional fee-for-service Medicare system to ensure that seniors make efficient use of their health care dollars by allowing them to

Aides say Clinton is willing to support many of those ideas as long as they aren't financed with the \$35 billion they say is

keep in a medical savings account any money they save by avoiding unnecessary procedures and consultations now covered by Medicare. However, the White House and other opponents contend that only the wealthiest and healthiest beneficiaries will choose to take advantage of the MSAs, leaving behind a pool of mostly lower-income and infirm beneficiaries and driving up the per capita cost of the program.

Thomas said that unlike previous years, when Republicans sought to define their differences with the Democrats through confrontations with the White House, the GOP was determined to skirt controversy that would jeopardize the bill. He said he received "a very clear indication" from White House Chief of Staff Erskine B. Bowles and other White House officials that Clinton would accept a limited pilot project. Thomas added that he expects that the GOP Medicare bill will receive substantial bipartisan support in committee and on the floor. "I don't believe there is any deal breaker left out there," Thomas told reporters.

Clinton aides characterized the hour-long meeting in the Cabinet Room as cordial and productive in contrast to previous discussions on Medicare. "Some members who I've seen at each other's throats in the past . . . were being rather accommodating to each other," Toiv said. And, Rep. Fortney "Pete" Stark (Calif.), ranking Democrat on Thomas's health subcommittee and a frequent critic of the GOP, endorsed most of the plan.

One issue still looming is how to cut Medicaid, the health care program for the poor and disabled. The White House said it needs to squeeze \$16.1 billion out of the program that compensates hospitals for caring for the uninsured by the year 2002. The Congressional Budget Office says it may take considerably more, \$20.9 billion, to reach the Clinton target.

"That's a massive level of cuts," said Jennifer Baxendell, senior policy analyst for the National Governors' Association, noting it would slash 35 percent from that program over five years. "You can't come up with a . . . package that large without a lot of screaming and pain."

White House officials said Clinton's decision to modify his proposed \$1,500 set aside under terms of the budget accord for his proposals.

Staff writer Peter Baker contributed to

tax credit for students in the first two years of college was primarily aimed at winning support from the higher education community, which has been cool to the plan.

The changes included dropping the proposal's requirement that students maintain a B average to qualify for the credit and easing a provision that would have excluded low-income students receiving federal Pell grants.

To accommodate the additional cost of those two modifications and remain within the \$35 billion target established for education tax cuts in the bipartisan accord, Clinton now favors phasing in the credit and the deduction more gradually, White House officials said.

Education groups praised the changes yesterday. "I think it's a much improved package," said Stanley Ikenberry, president of the American Council on Education. "We now have a much stronger proposal to work with."

The revisions also may help blunt criticism in Congress, where Clinton's education tax plan has scant support. House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer (R-Tex.) had charged that the grade requirement would oblige taxpayers to file college transcripts with their W-2 forms, granting unwarranted powers to the Internal Revenue Service. Meanwhile, Rep. Charles B. Rangel (N.Y.), the Ways and Means Committee's ranking Democrat, had complained that Clinton's tax plan would heap windfall benefits on middle-class students likely to attend college anyway while offering little for financially struggling families in his Harlem district.

But Clinton officials acknowledged yesterday that the changes may not be enough to dissuade GOP tax writers from attempting to use a substantial portion of the \$35 billion to fund education tax proposals of their own. Among the alternatives preferred by the GOP: tax subsidies for employers who provide educational assistance to their workers, expanding rules for Individual Retirement Accounts to permit penalty-free withdrawals for education expenses, and tax breaks for interest on student loans.

this report. ■

5. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; National Desk; Page 8, Column 6

What Works In Education? Republicans Go Find Out

By ADAM CLYMER

LOUISVILLE, Ky., May 28 — When a group of Republican Congressmen travels the country to talk about education, the predictable topics include tuition vouchers, Federal paperwork and how the best decisions are always the local decisions.

But when the Republicans on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Education and the Work Force go on tour as they did last week (with only a single Democrat along), they hear other concerns — from the defense of Federal programs for children at risk to warnings against writing off all public schools because of grim conditions in some cities.

In hitting the road from Los Angeles to the Bronx, the inelegantly named panel has several clear goals. One is to contradict the Democratic argument, made tellingly in the elections, that the Republican Party doesn't care about education.

In the hearing here, Representative Van Hilleary of Tennessee cast his party as thoughtful reformers, unfairly attacked: "People who want to keep it the way it is say, 'They're against education.'"

But there is also genuine curiosity behind the hearings called "Education at a Crossroads: What Works? What's Wasted?"

The committee contends that there are 760 Federal education programs. But the hearings devote much more effort to

identifying successful reform programs in schools, than to some Federal efforts.

Representative Pete Hockstra of Michigan, the committee chairman, said he hoped to avoid "legislation by anecdote" and find ways the Federal Government's modest spending could be used to help states adopt proven educational techniques. He said he hoped to reach agreement with the Clinton Administration and House Democrats; otherwise, "it won't go anywhere."

One topic that gets a lot of attention is the Republican proposal to use vouchers to help parents send their children to private schools. In the Bronx last month, John Cardinal O'Connor came to a hearing at Cardinal Hayes High School to describe parochial school efforts to teach pupils "how to combat the downward deviancy in the world, how to combat drugs, how to make a decent living."

In Cincinnati, students at Mother of Mercy High School stood in line to ask about vouchers, the most controversial of the committee's proposals, even though Mr. Hoekstra warned the Mercy High School students that he didn't think the Government would be offering vouchers soon.

Also at the hearing, Nancy Schlemmer, secretary of the National Parent Teacher Association, said the subcommittee paid too much attention to parochial schools, while 90 percent of children go to public schools. Vouchers, she warned, "siphon limited public dollars away from public schools and are not accountable to the public."

Tom Mooney, president of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, felt vouchers were relevant, saying that at private schools, parents were more involved.

In Cincinnati, the committee seemed impressed with the state-of-the-art electronic capabilities of the Mayerson Academy, a teacher-training institute outside the school system — part of a business effort, led by the Procter & Gamble Company, to revitalize Cincinnati schools.

In Louisville, as in Cincinnati, there were pleas for more education money from Washington. Edward Reidy, deputy commissioner of education in Kentucky, said that even modest help was important because the "Federal Government is focusing on making sure that the youngsters who are least well-served in our society get help." He said that as a result, "poverty is no longer the primary determinant of what kids will learn" in Kentucky.

Kentucky is implementing a 20-year program to overhaul the education system. Representative Hoekstra said he could not understand how the state could wait so long.

Carolyn Witt Jones, of the Partnership for Kentucky Schools, a business group backing the overhaul, explained, "We didn't get to the pits as a state in education in five years and we can't fix it in five years."

Mr. Hoekstra said, "I find people much more patient with solving this issue than I think they should be." ■

6. The Financial Times

06/04/97; Edition: London Edition; Section: NEWS: UK; Page 8

Literacy summer schools planned

By Simon Targett, Education Correspondent

Nearly 900 children will be offered the chance to boost their reading skills at a literacy summer school, the government announced yesterday.

In an effort to solve the UK's literacy problem, which costs business GBP 10bn a year, the government is setting up 29 literacy summer schools.

Pupils aged 11 who have reading difficulties and who are about to start secondary school will be given 50 hours of tuition in July.

The money for the scheme — GBP 300,000 — will come out of the funds diverted from the Grant-Maintained School Foundation.

Teaching unions welcomed the initiative provided it remained voluntary and paid appropriately.

Mr Stephen Byers, the minister for school standards, said he expected the government would support thousands of summer school schemes next year.

Mr Tony Blair yesterday gave his full support to Mr Chris Woodhead, the controversial chief schools inspector.

The prime minister met Mr Woodhead

and Mr David Blunkett, the education and employment secretary, at Downing Street to discuss the government's education "crusade".

Mr Blair stressed his personal commitment to improving education standards and declared that this priority for government would be driven "from the top".

His public backing for the chief schools inspector comes after criticism last week of Mr Woodhead's inclusion in a new standards task force appointed by Mr Blunkett. ■

7. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; National Desk; Page 8, Column 1

Study on Education of Blacks Finds Problems

By WILLIAM H. HONAN

A new reference book devoted to the preschool and secondary-school education of black students offers less that is encouraging than an earlier volume about higher education. Both are part of a planned three-part series.

"The news in this volume is not as good as it was in the first," said William H. Gray III, president of the United Negro College Fund, which raised \$5 million to support the publications.

"The first volume showed things like the remarkable growth in the college graduation rates of black women," he said. "This study has more negatives. Our next task is to find out why."

The 370-page book, being released today in Washington by the college fund's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, compiles, but does not analyze, decades of information from 40 archives. The first volume was released in March and the third, to be published this summer, will focus on the transition of black students from high school to work or to college.

Michael T. Nettles, a professor of education on leave from the University of Michigan who has devoted nearly a year to the project, said there were a number of unexpected revelations in the latest volume, which used data gathered through 1994, including:

*Contrary to the widespread belief that black students are a dominant presence in urban public schools, Mr. Gray said, less than one-third of black public school students attend schools in large cities.

*Young black children participate in preschool programs at a higher rate, or 53 percent, than white students, who represent 44 percent.

*Black preschoolers display abilities comparable with those of white students in verbal memory, social behavior and physical development, but fall behind in vocabulary skills.

*Black students are more fearful of physical harm at school than whites, and must cope with more security guards, gangs, weapons and metal detectors. And more black students in suburban schools

worry about being harmed while traveling and from school.

*Although blacks are 12.5 percent of the population of the United States, they represent more than 16 percent of all public school students. The graduation rate of African-American students, however, is lower — 12.5 percent, in proportion with their percentage of the population.

*Black students represent a disproportionate 28.7 percent of students in special education schools.

The compilations were conceived by Mr. Gray, a former Congressman from Philadelphia who became the first black House member to serve as the Democratic whip.

"Congressmen, policy-makers and others can't do their jobs unless they have this raw material available to them," he said.

Sources in the book include the Department of Education, the Census Bureau and the National Science Foundation.

04:46 EDT June 4, 1997■

8. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 8, Column 1

Path to College Degree Is Lifelong for Some

By MARY B. W. TABOR

In the spring of 1931, emboldened by her father's confidence that she "could do anything," Edith Volin put on a dress and stockings, smoothed her dark hair and rode the subway to Manhattan to register for college.

But when she got there, the Baruch College registrar told her she could not enroll because she had not taken the right math course. It was an insurmountable problem: while the college was tuition-free, she would have to pay for a remedial semester, and this was the Depression. Edith went home, crushed, and in the end, went to work as a secretary. "I had to work. These were very bad times," she said.

She found a job at a law firm, met her husband, raised two children and for the next 50 years, set aside dreams of college.

But she did not abandon them.

Today, Edith Volin Ruth, now 81 and a great-grandmother, will graduate from Hunter College with a bachelor's degree in art history. She still works three days a week as a secretary at First Investors' Corporation on Wall Street.

"If I were 20 years younger, I would be considering doing something different," she said. "I'm just there because I love learning."

Mrs. Ruth is one in a fast-growing corps of elderly college students. Enjoying earlier retirements and healthier lives, they have quietly taken seats in lecture halls around the country, eager to make their golden years fulfilling ones.

"It is not something we formally track, but we know that adult learning is a growing trend," says Thomas H. Otwell, a spokesman for the American Association of Retired Persons.

From the University of Vermont to California State University at Fullerton,

colleges around the country report that it is no longer unusual to see students over 70 enroll and graduate. A number of such students were among this spring's graduates.

*Mary Fasano, 89, who left school when she was 14 to work at a sewing factory in Warren, R.I. She will become Harvard's oldest undergraduate degree recipient tomorrow when she graduates from the Harvard University Extension School, its adult program.

*W. W. (Ross) Rostet, 90, who just completed work for his bachelor's degree in accounting at the University of Tulsa, nearly 70 years after he dropped out to work as an accountant.

*Thomas Wigglesworth, 91, who graduated earlier this spring from the University of Georgia with a bachelor's degree in history. It is his second bachelor's degree.

*Mary Staples, an 85-year-old registered nurse who won 22 karate

trophies in her late 60's. She is now pursuing her third bachelor of arts degree from Caldwell College in Caldwell, N.J.

*Florence Klein, 75, who graduated with honors from an unusual City University of New York baccalaureate program. A cancer survivor, she created a degree program in the psychology of life-challenging illnesses. She plans to take courses in "mind-body medicine" at Harvard this fall.

The rise in students over 70 is in part a matter of demographics — the number of people over 65 has doubled since 1960 — and in part a result of the boom in adult education programs like Elderhostel, which brings thousands of senior citizens to college campuses each year.

But it is also a function of history.

Unlike generations before them, most Americans born between 1910 and 1927 were likely to have finished high school. And for those who did graduate, college opportunities were expanding. Many would have considered further education.

Many in this generation, however, reached college age during the Depression or World War II, and college dreams took a back seat to work and war. By the end of the war, unprecedented

Her parents, both immigrants from Eastern Europe, were "very disappointed that I didn't go to college. And I, well, it just seemed my life was not complete."

She did return and she has never missed a class — "never stayed out, never cut" — except for when she broke her shoulder in 1993 and then in 1996 when she went to Arizona to stay with her daughter, who had leukemia.

Mrs. Ruth, a slight, energetic woman whose class artwork has the colors and motion of Matisse, often stays awake until well past midnight in her modest East Side apartment, reading homework at an old vanity table in her living room or typing papers with a 37-year-old Hermes typewriter she drags into her foyer.

"Computers scare me," she said. "I feel so dumb. It's like the frustration you feel with that first child."

numbers of Americans were returning to college — mostly male veterans on the G.I. Bill. But others went straight to work to support themselves or their families. Women found it even harder to interrupt their lives to go to college.

College officials say that unlike many of the Generation X-ers who sit next to them, these senior students — many of them in their 80's and even 90's — are not just older and wiser, they are eager and more focused.

"Students over 65 are usually more interested in taking classes for fun or for the pleasure of learning more," said Roz Hiebert, a spokeswoman for the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges.

Some states, like Delaware, are encouraging older students to attend by offering tuition discounts and waivers at public institutions. At the University of Delaware, the number of students over 60 has risen to 107 undergraduates and 68 graduate students, up from 76 and 35 five years earlier.

"There is clearly a pattern of more nontraditional, including older, students returning to school," said Edward D. Gehres, a spokesman for the University Continuing Education Association. "And it is everyone from the 40-year-old

Sometimes, she has a little trouble hearing, and she refuses to wear "dungarees" like other students and still wears dresses. But she is not otherwise apologetic about being in class with mostly 20-year-olds, who she says are "very nice" to her. In fact, she says she is often bolder because of it.

"I never feel nervous about asking a question or answering wrong," she said. "I'm old enough to know that's the only way to learn. Besides, it's like the dance floor. No one wants to be the first one out, but once someone starts, everyone follows."

She has no regrets about having missed college the first time around. "I never would have met my husband and had these wonderful children and grandchildren," she said. One grandson graduated from Brown University last month.

master engineer who needs computer training to the retiree who decides he has the means and the mind to complete an art history degree." Or who, like Mrs. Ruth, find time for vocation and avocation. As a 17-year-old honors student in Brooklyn, she missed out on college because she had followed an uncle's advice to take accounting instead of commercial arithmetic. This meant she would have to pay for a semester of remedial math before she could formally matriculate at the tuition-free City University campus.

Just a few years before, business at her father's frame shop in Brooklyn had been brisk, so paying the tuition for the math class would have been easy. But the shop had gone out of business, and Abraham Volin was forced to work as a painter to support his wife and five children. There was no money for school.

Determined to get to college, she re-enrolled in high school and spent the next year taking algebra. But when she missed the required math Regents Exam the next spring, she gave up.

She always thought about going back to school. Her husband often teased her by suggesting she go to cooking school, but she paid little mind.

Mrs. Ruth's daughter, Leslie, died last year. But, when graduation day comes, "she will be with me," she said. "I know she will."

When she went recently to buy her cap and gown, she checked the sizes carefully, picked one and put it on as soon as she got home, modeling for her granddaughter in front of a mirror.

"I can't even describe to you the feeling that I had. I really loved putting it on. The hat looked so good," she said. "And then I put on the white tassel. It was really a thrill. I hope that every graduate — even the young ones — experience such a great feeling when they put on their cap and gown."

She has now signed up for graduate courses at Hunter College. "I'm having so much fun," she said. "I'm never going to stop." ■

TRADE

9. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Trade

Dual-Race Policy at Miss. School Target of Student, Parent Protests

By Ann Bradley

Hernando High School in DeSoto County, Miss., is a place frozen in time.

But forces within the community are now prodding the school to give up the desegregation-era policies that still govern it.

What began with a student's challenge to the school's student-council voting procedures has gained momentum. Several parents have filed complaints with the U.S. Department of Education, charging that the process separates students by race and fosters a racist mentality. A larger parents' group has begun to pressure the school to change. And the national spotlight illuminating the school has won the student who started it all the support of strangers.

The controversy started when a 17-year-old junior blew the whistle on election rules that assign some class offices to either white or black students.

But the school has clung to other traditions as well—including an unusual administrative structure of white and black co-principals that is a holdover

"We were looking for things to maintain the participation and the support from both communities—majority and minority populations—and it worked," Mr. Long said of the voting procedures. "Folks have been happy."

Far from being racist, the principal said, the policy assures minority participation at a time when people still vote in blocs. "It would be great some day to get away from that," he said, "but until I'm assured we are, I don't see anything wrong with making sure there's minority participation."

Harold L. Kinchelow, the school's black principal, disagrees.

"Actually, we should have gotten rid of it a long time ago," he said. "We hadn't thought of it until this young lady reminded us of it. It just worked so well, we never thought to change."

The Williamses and their supporters, including a 60-family group pressing for change called Parents for Better Schools, point out that the county's other three high schools have open student-council elections.

They argue that Hernando students can and do freely vote for black candidates, noting that one class elected three black representatives. Students also voted for a black prom queen this year.

"It's a separate-but-equal kind of

from the early days of integration.

The students also participate in rituals that aren't uncommon in the South, including nominating white and black candidates for class clowns, class favorites, and Mr. and Miss Hernando High School.

School officials defend these race-conscious practices as necessary to be fair to minority students. To some parents, however, they seem discriminatory. At the least, they argue, they are out of step in a growing county school system with 16,000 students on the outskirts of Memphis, Tenn.

"I just know in my gut this is wrong," Alison Williams said in an interview last week, a day after she appeared on ABC's "Good Morning America" program to speak out against the school's voting rules. "I've been getting e-mail from all over the nation from people saying, 'Go Alison. This is wrong. Fight it.'"

Alison, 17, the daughter of a retired military officer who has moved frequently, was recently elected executive thing," said Kelly Jacobs, the mother of two children in DeSoto County schools and a spokeswoman for the group. "Hernando High takes every opportunity to point out skin-color differences, which to me is racism."

The practices also leave little room for students who are neither white nor black, critics say. One year, an Asian-American student was given her choice about whether to run on the majority or the minority ballot, school officials said. She ran as a minority candidate and won.

Racial Rotation

The Williamses became concerned about the voting rules last year, when Alison wanted to run for co-president of her class but turned in her petition for office too late. They were shocked by the race requirements on the document.

At the time, Ms. Williams said, she protested to Principal Kinchelow and two district administrators, but got no satisfaction. Her complaints this year, she said, including an appearance before the school board, also were unsuccessful.

This year, Alison said, she would have liked to run for vice president of her senior class, but that spot was reserved for a black student. Instead, she ran for executive president of the student council and won.

A black friend, Alison said, wanted to

president of the student council. She and her mother, Beverly, have questioned the school's voting procedures to no avail.

Each class at Hernando High is required to have a white and a black co-president. The positions of class vice president and secretary-treasurer alternate between black and white students each year. Class representatives and executive officers of the council, however, aren't subject to race specifications.

"The only way to be fair is to take race off these petitions" for office, Beverly Williams said. "Kids should be able to run for what they want to run for, regardless of what color they are."

'Folks Have Been Happy'

Theron E. Long, the white principal of Hernando High, vigorously defends the policy, which was instituted in 1970 when DeSoto County desegregated its schools. At the time, white students were in the minority at Hernando High; today, because of emigration from Memphis, 75 percent of the school's 725 students are white and 25 percent are black. run for secretary-treasurer but couldn't because the spot is designated for a white student this year.

Principal Long denies that any student has been discouraged from running for office on the basis of race. Because racially designated seats rotate every other year, he said, students have more than one chance at those spots during their four-year tenure at the high school.

"The board of education is in support of what we're doing," Mr. Long said. "If they were not, we would have had to stop it a long time ago."

After getting no satisfaction locally, both Ms. Jacobs and Ms. Williams wrote to federal officials to ask for an investigation. The Education Department's office for civil rights has received the complaints, a spokesman said last week.

The president of the school board did not return calls for comment.

Unless a student's rights are violated, said Jim Hemphill, a spokesman for the Mississippi education department, such issues are best left to local communities.

Dual Principals

In pockets around the South, there are still vestiges of segregation in the schools. Separate proms and dual homecoming queens are not unheard of. At Hernando High, each class selects a

black and a white student for the homecoming court, which is presided over by a black and a white queen.

What appears to be unique at Hernando High is its administrative setup, which also dates from 1970. That year, Mississippi school districts that hadn't already done so were ordered by the federal courts to draw up desegregation plans.

The DeSoto school board closed black high schools and merged them with white schools. The county's four high schools were assigned a principal of each race.

Elsewhere in the South, many black principals lost their jobs or were demoted when schools desegregated.

Over the years, the dual principalships

in DeSoto County dissolved at all but Hernando High, said Mr. Long, who has been principal for 29 years. Mr. Kinchelow, the school's third black principal, has been in his job for 24 years and plans to retire next year—which he said is likely to end the arrangement.

The principals said they do not divide their duties by race in any manner. They also emphasized that their school enjoys good race relations—a fact they feel has been lost in the negative publicity.

"Our kids get along together and work together and play together," Mr. Long said. "We've probably been freer of racial problems than any school in the country."

On that point, Alison Williams doesn't disagree. That's why the student-council

policy puzzles her.

"Deep down, they think this is creating harmony, but there already is harmony," she said. "There are no prejudice problems at my high school."

What seems like fairness to natives of Hernando, a town of 3,000, looks like segregation to Wendell Paris, the state director of the Mississippi branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"Perpetuating a system of segregation has always been the law of the land in Mississippi," he said, calling for increased federal scrutiny. "The local politicians, as well as state government, are not going to touch it, as long as it meets minimal requirements."■

10. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Trade

Labor Problems Roil the Waters at Edison School in Dade

By Mark Walsh

While the Edison Project has shown promising evidence of academic achievement and will more than double the number of public schools it operates next year, one of the private company's current 12 sites has had far more problems than the others.

At Henry Reeves Elementary School in Miami, the first year of Edison Project control has been marked by labor difficulties, with many of the school's teachers complaining about being overworked. The design of the Edison model calls for a longer school day and year and a contract that accordingly gives teachers more money.

As the school year nears an end, the principal of Reeves Elementary in the Dade County district has requested a transfer. At least 22 of the 61 teachers at Reeves also have sought transfers back to a regular Dade County school, a far higher rate of attrition than Edison has experienced at any of its other schools.

"We have definitely had some personnel issues at the school," said Marilyn Neff, the deputy superintendent for elementary and secondary education in Dade County. "It's a new school building, and a lot of things have converged in the first year."

The Edison Project is the privately financed, for-profit education experiment launched by Christopher Whittle, the creator of the Channel One classroom television network.

The growth next fall from 12 to 25 Edison schools is "almost exactly what our plan calls for," Mr. Whittle said in an interview last week. Eighteen of those schools will be operated through partnerships or charter arrangements with school districts, while seven will be charter schools approved by state agencies.

First-year difficulties are to be expected, Mr. Whittle said about the situation in Dade County.

"You've got a completely new staff and a new group of children there," he said. "You're not going to get every decision right straight off the bat."

Contract Renegotiated

Edison's contract in Dade calls for students to attend school about an hour a day longer than those in other schools and about 30 days longer per year. The arrangement encompasses the Edison design, in which students begin studying Spanish in kindergarten and receive extended, small-group instruction in reading and mathematics.

Edison's difficulties in Dade County started last spring when teachers at existing schools showed no interest in having the private company take control. The Dade County school board had planned to turn over one existing school and one new school—Reeves Elementary—to Edison.

Reeves teachers were already getting paid as much as 13 percent more than

other Dade teachers to cover the extra workload of the Edison plan, but they began to complain about their conditions last fall.

"I think that with some teachers the reality of the longer school year and longer school day didn't hit them until they got to the school," said Merri Mann, the director of the educational and professional issues department of the United Teachers of Dade, which represents the teachers.

"We went back to the table with Edison and they were very honorable," she added.

The contract was renegotiated to increase teacher pay an additional 4 percent this school year and 5 percent next year.

The Edison design calls for more professional treatment of teachers in return for increased accountability. In Edison schools, for example, teachers get time for classroom planning, telephones equipped with voice mail, and laptop computers.

Ms. Neff said that some of the 22 teachers who have requested transfers have cited long commutes or health concerns. The principal, Dyona McLean, cited health reasons in her transfer request. She could not be reached for comment last week.

Calls to several teachers at the school were not returned, but one teacher who plans to transfer, Zenith Gordillo, told the

Miami Herald that she thought the Edison school would be "challenging, new and different. Now, I wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole."

Ms. Neff said Dade officials can cancel the contract with 60 days' notice before the end of the fiscal year, but "there was no consideration of that this year."

Academic Gains

Meanwhile, Edison Project officials released data that give a more complete picture of the academic gains of students at its first four schools, which opened in the fall of 1995. Data released last fall

from reading tests showed clear gains for Edison students in the two schools for which there were well-matched control groups. ("Cautious Analysis of Edison Test Data Urged," Oct. 16, 1996.)

Last week, Edison released its analysis of state- and district-level testing data from the four first-year schools.

Students have shown significant gains on such nationally normed assessments as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Metropolitan Achievement Test-7.

At Dodge-Edison Elementary School in Wichita, Kan., for example, 5th graders moved from the 46th to the 59th

national percentile in reading from 1995 to 1996 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Fifth graders moved from the 35th to the 64th percentile in mathematics.

"The evidence we have so far is very encouraging," said John Chubb, Edison's curriculum director. "Student populations that began the project well below average are now at or above national averages. So we take that as an indication that the program is providing a solid foundation." ■

11. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Trade

ED Study Paints Portrait of Charter Schools

By Lynn Schnaiberg
Washington

Charter schools tend to be smaller than traditional public schools, enroll roughly the same proportion of minority and low-income students, and, on average, serve slightly lower proportions of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, according to a long-awaited study from the Department of Education.

Most charter schools were created to realize a specific educational vision or to gain greater autonomy, the study goes on to note. And many struggle with insufficient start-up money and planning time.

But the research released last week does not answer the pressing question of whether charter schools produce higher student achievement than traditional public schools do. To get an answer to that and many other difficult policy questions, educators and policymakers will likely have to wait until 1999, when the department concludes its four-year research project.

What the first-year report does provide is a descriptive snapshot of the 252 charter schools that were operating in 10 states as of January 1996. Nationwide, the total now approaches 500 schools; 25 states and the District of Columbia have passed charter school laws.

While last week's report contained few surprises, the department's research effort is being closely watched. The project has been billed as the most definitive look at charter schools to date.

Observers also have raised concerns in the past because some experts involved in the project are strong advocates of charter

schools. ("Under the Microscope," Nov. 6, 1996.) And the \$2.6 million project is sponsored by an administration that, starting with President Clinton himself, has vocally supported the concept of charter schools, which are public schools that operate free of many state and local regulations.

So far, observers said last week, the work appears objective.

"I'd get off the board if I felt it was a whitewash, frankly," said Robert L. Linn, a professor of education at the University of Colorado at Boulder and a member of the study's advisory board. "But they've been open to presenting what they have and the limitations in the information they've been able to collect so far."

No Explicit 'Creaming'

Teachers' union officials responded to the report by emphasizing that more research is needed. "It is vitally important to have data available so that U.S. taxpayers can judge the efficacy of the charter model," the National Education Association said.

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, while underscoring the administration's support of charters at a news conference last week, agreed that further analysis must be done.

"Charter schools are not panaceas. Like everything else they must be done right," Mr. Riley said. "Above all else, we must have a strong focus on supporting all of public education — charter schools and all other schools."

RPP International, a for-profit research company in Emeryville, Calif., conducted the study, along with the

Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and the Institute for Responsive Education, a nonprofit, Boston-based research group.

The results are based on a national telephone survey of charter schools — which had an unusually high response rate of 90 percent — and site visits to 42 schools. The authors underscored the difficulty in drawing generalizations about charter schools because they vary so much from state to state and from one another within any given state.

Among the findings:

Taken as a group, charter schools reported a racial composition that roughly mirrored their respective statewide averages. Massachusetts, Michigan, and Minnesota enrolled a higher percentage of minority students than public schools as a whole in those states. Researchers did not find evidence of explicit exclusionary practices or "creaming" of students, but the report notes that data were not yet available to determine if more subtle discrimination occurs.

Among the states studied, at least one in five charter schools served predominantly minority students; one in three served a diverse group of white and minority students; and one in two charter schools served predominantly white students.

About one-third of charter school students were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals — roughly the same as students in other public schools.

On average, charter schools served a lower proportion of students with disabilities, except for Minnesota and Wisconsin. Except in Minnesota and Massachusetts, they also served a lower proportion of students with limited English skills.

While nearly all charter schools face obstacles, their most frequently cited barrier was a lack of start-up money.

Out of Date?

In addition to the four-year project,

Mr. Nathan is one of the charter school proponents involved in the research project whose presence had

the Education Department plans to commission studies to take a more in-depth look at issues concerning charter schools and disabled students, at-risk students and equity, finance, and accountability.

Some charter school supporters criticized the study last week as out of date in a rapidly growing and changing movement, particularly since the study looks at only those schools open as of January 1996.

Some worried that the research would be less than objective. He has gone from being a consultant on the project to one

In addition, its racial data can be misleading, said Joe Nathan of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota. One reason Colorado, for example, does not have as high minority participation as some other states is that charter schools in Denver—one of the state's most racially diverse communities—have not been able to get off the ground.

of 10 members of the study's advisory board. ■

12. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Trade

IDEA To Give States More Leeway In Spec. Ed. Staff

By Joetta L. Sack
Washington

With the number of students in need of special education services increasing, many school districts are finding that their pools of certified personnel aren't keeping up.

Some educators were hoping the recent reauthorization of the nation's main special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, would help ease their problems.

But while the reauthorization—set to go into effect this week—will clarify guidelines for recruiting and training special education staff members, states will still carry the burden of finding and training qualified employees.

"It didn't do anything that's directly going to result in more certified teachers," said Jay A. McIntire, a policy specialist with the Council for Exceptional Children, a special education advocacy group in Reston, Va.

"We won't know until states apply the law" whether the modifications will help ease the shortages, he added.

Mr. McIntire and others agree, though, that the reauthorization includes some needed changes that will help school officials hire and train staff members to provide appropriate special education services.

A study of 39 urban school districts last year found that more than two-thirds cited an immediate need for special education teachers, and many resorted to hiring noncertified employees to fill the void. ("Urban Districts Pressed To Find Teachers, Survey Says," May 29, 1996.)

Rural districts often have the same

problems, educators say.

Personnel Elements

One reauthorization provision grants something of a reprieve to educators in regions with shortages by allowing schools to hire the most qualified people available who are making progress toward certification.

Those applicants would have a three-year window to complete training and receive state certification.

The method has been in practice in many regions, but has never been explicitly written into federal law, said Myrna R. Mandlawitz, the special assistant for government relations for the National Association for State Directors of Special Education in Alexandria, Va.

Knowing they are backed by federal law, school officials will likely feel more comfortable with hiring and training staff members whose certification is not yet completed, she added.

"It gives states something to fall back on," Ms. Mandlawitz said.

"Somebody's got to be in the classroom, or else students get nothing," Mr. McIntire added. "This seems like a rational way" to recruit and train personnel within a strict time line.

Under the IDEA reauthorization language, states also would be able to use federal discretionary state improvement money for special education to write certification standards consistent with those of other states.

Today, a major ingredient in schools' staffing problems is a lack of "portable" standards in the field.

Requirements for certification vary widely between states, making it hard for teachers and others to move across state lines without undergoing lengthy retraining.

Revamping the IDEA turned into a long, cumbersome process when advocates for the disabled clashed with educators over some central provisions.

It took lawmakers nearly two years to finally pass a bill that was palatable to every side. ("House, Senate Easily Approve Spec. Ed. Bill," May 21, 1997.)

After some debate, lawmakers chose not to drop the requirement that states have a comprehensive system of personnel development for special education employees. Instead, they attempted to simplify the legislative language on the systems.

Disability-rights and special education advocates had urged Congress to keep the personnel-development system mandate, saying that students would suffer without appropriately trained staff members in their classrooms. Such systems are designed to ensure that states have an adequate supply of qualified personnel.

"The CPSD requirements of the law are essential," said Stevan J. Kukic, the director of special education for Utah.

"Without ongoing, effective personnel development, students with disabilities will not receive a free, appropriate public education" as the law requires, Mr. Kukic added.

The measure also will expand the personnel standards to mandate that paraprofessionals be trained and

supervised in accordance with state law. President Clinton was scheduled to sign the IDEA reauthorization into law at

a ceremony this week.

Most of the reauthorization changes will go into effect immediately, according

to a spokesman for the House Education and the Workforce Committee.■

13. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Trade

Panel Faces Challenges In Drafting Blueprint For First National Tests

By Debra Viadero
Washington

Like infantry soldiers moving through a minefield, a national panel has cautiously begun unearthing the challenges that lie before President Clinton's proposal for voluntary new national student tests in reading and math.

The group, which met here for the first time on May 23, was pulled together by the Council of Chief State School Officers and MPR Associates, a California-based consulting firm. Its task is to draw up a blueprint for the assessments, which are expected to cost around \$22 million over the next two years.

The job is a big one because the United States has never before had a national assessment that yielded results for individual students. Some in Congress, in fact, have questioned the Department of Education's authority to launch such a program. ("Rep. Goodling Fails To Block Funding for New Tests," May 21, 1997.)

The exams, designed for 4th graders in reading and for 8th graders in mathematics, are to be given for the first time in 1999.

The Education Department, which is overseeing development of the tests, wants to model them on the subject-area tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a congressionally mandated testing program that has been in place since 1969. The results of the new math tests will also be statistically linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which tested students in 41 nations, so that individual American students can get an

idea of how they stack up against their peers.

But naep tests are given to samples of students who take different, 45-minute-long chunks of the total assessment. Also, students never find out how they scored. The new national tests, by contrast, will be 90 minutes long, and each participating student will take the entire test.

"One of the major challenges here is how do you make the transition from the NAEP design, in which students are sampled, to individual student tests?" said Gordon M. Ambach, the executive director of the CCSSO, which helped write specifications for two earlier NAEP tests. The Education Department contracted with the state chiefs' group and MPR Associates to launch the process of designing the new assessments.

The difference in the two test formats means, for example, that the new tests might not cover as much subject-matter content in one year as NAEP tests do now. One job of the panel is to decide how to parcel out the topic coverage in each subject.

Balancing Acts

The time limits also raise questions about the mix of quick-answer, multiple-choice questions and time-consuming, open-ended questions. The Education Department has proposed making 80 percent of the test multiple-choice and 20 percent open-ended—including one extended-response item.

Gary W. Phillips, the executive director of the voluntary national testing

program for the department, said teachers will receive a second booklet of extended-response items to use as they see fit.

The panelists will also have to decide how much weight to give individual test items when calculating students' scores. "Just think how you would feel if there were 10 items and most were multiple-choice and one was longer. Why waste a lot of time and effort if it counts the same?" Barbara Kapinus, the director of the curriculum and instructional-improvement program for the CCSSO, told the group.

Other issues before the panel include whether students should be allowed to use calculators on the mathematics exam and what the mix should be between easier and more difficult questions.

In other words, said Joan Baratz Snowden, the deputy director of the American Federation of Teachers' educational issues department: "What is the balance between what is being taught in America today and what we think should be taught in America today, and how do we do that without getting half the children in America weeping when they get the test results?" Ms. Snowden served as a substitute panelist at the recent meeting.

The panel, which includes academics, policymakers, and representatives of major national education organizations, started work last month at the Department of Education's request. Its final specifications, due in August, will be given to a test developer to be named by the department in September.■

14. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Trade

Federal File

'Radical' Republican

Republican leaders are accustomed to

Democrats complaining that GOP

budgets don't have enough money for education. But last month they had to silence one of their own.

In debate over the five-year budget outline, Rep. Frank Riggs, R-Calif., proposed shifting \$17 billion from the military and into schools. Mr. Riggs, who chairs the Early Childhood, Youth, and Families Subcommittee, wanted the money dedicated to school technology and construction.

"I think that would have been a better expenditure," Mr. Riggs said at a recent hearing. "You could argue that it would be just as important for our nation's defense."

Mr. Riggs contended that his plan would have given the Department of Defense increases to cover inflation. But he offered a pointed explanation of why his leadership cut off his plan from debate.

"It would have been too radical of a notion to allow a Republican to bring that to the floor," Mr. Riggs said the day after the Rules Committee rejected his proposal. Mr. Riggs eventually voted with the majority of his colleagues to approve the five-year budget blueprint when it came up for a final vote on May 22.

Amendment round-up

Meanwhile in the Senate, Republicans thwarted an amendment by one of the chamber's most liberal members to up the ante for education by \$20 billion over the next five years. Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., wanted the money to go to Head Start, school construction, and child-nutrition programs.

Sen. Paul Coverdell, R-Ga., however, offered a substitute that would raise school funding by \$50 million. Unlike

Mr. Wellstone's amendment, the GOP plan calls for the money to be spent on vouchers to pay tuition at private schools for victims of violent crimes on public school property.

The Senate adopted his plan, 51-49. If the voucher plan survives a House-Senate conference committee, it still must be approved by appropriators and pass both the House and Senate before the money becomes available.

By then, Democrats likely would have the 40 votes they need to sustain a filibuster against a voucher plan.

Because of Senate rules, Mr. Wellstone's amendment was never put to a vote, and Democrats were not allowed under the chamber's rules to filibuster against the budget resolution, which the Senate approved on May 23.

—DAVID J. HOFF ■

LOCAL

15. New York Daily News

May 22, 1997 Category: Local

Entangled in a reading web Spider-Man spins a new world of books

By Raphael Sugarman, Daily News Staff Writer

THE ULTIMATE web-slinger became a book-slinger this week, showing up to honor a Bronx school and enmesh kids in a national summer reading program.

Spider-Man and a few of his Marvel Comics pals thrilled kids at PS 100 in Castle Hill Monday with their brightly colored costumes and tales about the importance of reading.

"Who has a library card?" Spider-Man asked the several hundred students crammed into the school's auditorium. Most raised their hands.

"I am going to give each of you something that is going to help you sharpen your reading skills over the summer and learn about nutrition," said scores. PS 197 in Brooklyn was the other city school so honored.

"We went from 42% of our students reading at grade level five years ago to 69% last year," said PS 100 Principal Kenneth Wilkoff, a five-year veteran of the job. Many credit Wilkoff along with teachers and the school's active parents association with the boost in scores.

Nearly 87% of the students at PS 100

Spider-Man.

The webbed one joined Rep. Jose Serrano (D-Bronx) and U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley at the school to kick off "Read, Write, Now!," a nationwide program that is part of the federal Education Department's "America Reads Challenge."

Designed to help "fight the summer reading drop off," the program encourages

kids in poor neighborhoods to read for at least 30 minutes once or twice a week with an older reading partner. It also urges kids to get a library card and learn a new vocabulary word every day.

To help, the federal agency and National Dairy Council presented each live below the poverty line, according to Board of Education statistics. But that didn't prevent them from racking up a whopping .91.6% average daily attendance rate there last year, one of the highest of any Bronx school.

"The principal and teachers just keep telling the kids, 'You will succeed; you will do well,' " said one parent. "If

student

at the school with a summer workbook, complete with a picture of Spider-Man on the cover.

The workbooks will be handed out to more than 120,000 school children before the end of the school year, said Robby Koeppel, spokeswoman for the American Dairy Association.

Launching the reading program at PS 100 wasn't happenstance; the District 8 school was one of only two city schools out of 100 schools nationwide honored recently by the Department of Education for improvements in standardized reading

you create that kind of atmosphere and make sure the kids are getting what they need in the classroom, eventually they will start to believe in themselves no matter what other difficulties they have in life."

Fourth-grader Jessica Jusino said the school's focus on reading has taught her to use her free time more carefully.

"Instead of watching television, I spend

more time at home reading," said Jessica, 10. "It will help me when I grow

up. Anything that I don't know I will just be able to look up."

said. ■

16. Baltimore Sun

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

New computer at city libraries takes 'quantum leap' to future

Free access will bridge gap between information 'haves' and 'have-nots'

By Stacey Patton SUN STAFF

When the doors of Enoch Pratt Free Library opened yesterday, the public saw the results of what Pratt Director Carla D. Hayden described as "a quantum leap into the 21st century."

The Pratt unveiled a computer system that allows library patrons all over the city to reach the World Wide Web, search the library's collection of 2.1 million books and other resources, and find information from colleges, universities and 3,000 community information providers.

Early reviews were positive.

"I like the new system," said Miguel Diggs, 18, of Rosedale. "It's fast and easy."

Beverly Carter, 15, a student at Southwestern High School, said her school doesn't have many computers and the new system will let her write papers

and do research after school.

For nearly 20 years, the library used three information systems, requiring staff and patrons to perform multiple searches to get the information they needed. The system also was so old that it frequently broke down.

In response to those problems, the library's board of trustees raised \$350,000 in private funding and the city provided \$550,000 to purchase a state-of-the-art library system.

"This new system has been long overdue," said patron Erik Boone, 32, of Baltimore. "With the old system you had to wait around for a long time for someone to help you. Sometimes they couldn't even help because the system was broken down."

The library's 200 new computers use a sophisticated information software system supplied by SIRSI Corp. of

Huntsville, Ala.

Hayden made the brief ceremony a blend of thanks and reflection.

"Our staff has been hard at work for almost two years on the careful preparations necessary," Hayden said. "We're ready now to present this gift to our customers, and we are confident they are going to enjoy and benefit from using it."

Hayden and her staff hope that by offering free access to electronic resources, they will bridge the gap between the information "haves" and "have-nots."

"There is no place that you can't go online in this library," Hayden said. "With one simple click you can even go to Australia."

■

17. Baltimore Sun

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Catholic, Jewish conferees disagree on school vouchers

By John Rivera SUN STAFF

Catholic and Jewish speakers at a conference on the role of religion in politics and society found yesterday that

"If there is a societal will that the urgencies of the inner city are such that they need to be addressed, one can and ought to work together in the local community to find a constitutionally agreed way to exploit the resources of the Catholic schools that remain open in those communities," said Eugene J. Fisher, director of Catholic-Jewish relations for the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

But Richard Foltin, legislative director and counsel of the American Jewish Committee, noted that the Jewish community has opposed such governmental funding of religious

many of their ideas mesh, but they diverged on one major issue: school vouchers.

At the conference in Baltimore, a institutions.

A line separates government accommodation of religion, allowing for its free practice, and governmental promotion of religion, Foltin said. Using government funds to support religious institutions, especially schools, which tend to proselytize, crosses that line, he said.

Foltin noted that it is the constitutional protections of the free exercise of religion and the prohibition on establishment of religion "that as much as anything else have made this nation a blessed nation for religious minorities and has contributed as much as anything else to the religious vitality in this country."

representative of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops advocated the use of vouchers to send African-American children to inner-city Catholic schools.

But this does not mean religion should not have a voice in society, he said.

"We certainly don't think that there ought not to be religious voices in society and that those voices ought not to be heard. Separation of church and state is not the same thing as separation of religion and society," Foltin said.

Fisher noted that the U.S. bishops were denounced by conservatives during the 1980s when they issued pastoral letters on peace, war and the economy. During the 1990s, the bishops have drawn fire from the left as they have spoken out against abortion and doctor-assisted suicide.

Fisher said that throughout the history of the bishops' conference, and

particularly in the past two decades, it has been common to criticize the conference and religious leaders in general for speaking out on political issues and

advocating legislation.

The conference, held at St. Mary's Seminary and University, was sponsored by the Baltimore Chapter of the

American Jewish Committee and the Baltimore Jewish Council.■

18. The Virginian-Pilot and The Ledger-Star, Norfolk, VA

05/31/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: LOCAL; Page B1 Category: Local

FEDS INVESTIGATE ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS PROBES ROLES OF STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES

By ALETA PAYNE, STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights is investigating charges of discrimination against African-American students and employees in the Virginia Beach Public Schools.

The complaints were made last fall by Curtis Harris of Hopewell, president of the Virginia chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, against the schools at the Beach and in Prince George County.

Investigators from the Office of Civil Rights have been in contact with the local school division for several months, trying to determine what information was available. Federal representatives came to Virginia Beach to meet with school administrators for the first time a month ago.

According to a Roger Murphy, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Education, the investigation is focused on charges that:

Black students are underrepresented in gifted and talented programs, are disproportionately disciplined and are discriminated against in the assignment to classes, ability groups and academic

At the middle-school level, black students comprised 23 percent of the overall population but were 48 percent of the shorter, out-of-school suspensions and 44 percent of those suspended long-term or expelled.

At the middle-school level, black students were disciplined most often for behavior problems; they made up 58 percent of those expelled or suspended long-term for this offense. They comprised 52 percent of students disciplined for possession of a weapon other than a gun and 33 percent of those disciplined for assault.

When offenses for which students were suspended long-term or expelled are broken down by category, African-American high school students

tracks.

Black teachers and administrators are neither hired nor promoted on a proportionate basis and are transferred inappropriately.

Murphy provided few details of the complaint, citing confidentiality requirements. He did say the investigation was ongoing and that school officials were being "very cooperative."

Superintendent Timothy R. Jenney said he could not speak to allegations that predate his February 1996 arrival because of a lack of knowledge, but that since he joined the division there have been "no overt actions" that would support the claims.

The school district has not been able to provide all of the data that the federal officials have requested because it does not have the technology to collect it, Jenney said. For instance, the division could not provide the number of out-of-school suspensions for specific types of behavior broken down by race, grade level and gender over a period of years. Jenney also said the charges were so broad and vague that a response was difficult.

made up 72 percent of those disciplined for assault and 52 percent of those disciplined for behavior. Those are considered the two most subjective categories because their definitions depend on the observer. Some might consider a push in the hallway an assault, and others may not.

White high school students made up the largest group of those disciplined for offenses for which the division has a "zero tolerance" policy, including possession of guns (67 percent), drugs or drug paraphernalia (69 percent) and alcohol (77 percent). For those offenses, a recommendation by the school for long-term suspension or expulsion is supposed to be automatic.

Harris said he contacted about five

"I'm the first one to respond to a specific problem," he said. "(But) we are literally looking for a needle in a hay stack."

Officials in Prince George have also disputed the allegations in a published report in the Petersburg Progress Index.

Harris said he was already pursuing concerns about the treatment of students in Prince George County when he saw media accounts of disproportionately high discipline rates among black students in Virginia Beach.

A group of African-American parents in the Beach came forward almost a year ago to complain about disparities they saw in the treatment of their children. Discipline figures later compiled and released by the division showed that black students in the city's middle and high schools were disproportionately likely to be suspended or expelled.

According to 1995-96 data released by the school district last year:

African Americans comprised 23 percent of the students in high school, but 35 percent of those suspended for one to three days and 40 percent of those put on long-term suspension or expelled.

local residents before contacting the Office of Civil Rights about the Virginia Beach schools.

"We had enough information to file a complaint with the Department of Education," he said. "We did that."

Harris said he has now spoken to about 25 Beach parents and employees, all of whom wish to remain anonymous because they fear retribution. Harris acknowledged that he does not have hard numbers to back up his complaint, but said it's up to the federal government to collect that information.

"We don't have the statistical data," he said. "The Department of Education is doing that kind of study."

But Harris also said he believes the concerns are valid.

"I've been doing this for 40 years," he said. "It's not difficult to smell a rat."

Jenney said he had concerns, however, with such a complaint being generated by someone from outside the area.

"I have major problems with someone who's not even of our community, not even giving us one fragment of documentation or fact, making accusations," he said.

Since concerns were raised last year, the division has made changes in the way

it collects disciplinary data so that it is easier to interpret and made it mandatory that such numbers be kept on computer by individual schools. In addition, a position called coordinator of student conduct was added in the office of student leadership to help ease parents through the disciplinary process.

And, changes are being made within the computer technology, and new technology is being added over time to help the division more accurately collect

and report numbers.

Murphy said the Office of Civil Rights investigates all nonfrivolous complaints it receives, although the depth of an inquiry may vary. If a division is found to be out of compliance with civil rights statutes and refuses to come into compliance, it could lose federal funding, he said. The investigation in Virginia Beach, however, is not close to nearing a determination, Murphy said. ■

19. Baltimore Sun

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Taking on teacher turnover

Program aims to add experience, stability

By Marego Athans SUN STAFF

"Math, gone. Science, gone. English, foreign language, music, Gym, gone," says Randallstown High's student government president, Jerrill Adams.

Of all his freshman-year teachers, only one is still at the school.

"It's like a family being broken apart every year," he said. "I've seen a lot of new teachers. A lot of them don't stay more than two years. And the new teachers are less effective. They persist with busywork, they give you dittos till you die."

Adams is describing the most fundamental problem for a county with widely disparate performance among schools. Students don't have equal access to experienced teachers — the factor that, along with teacher education, has

And the county's problem is politically thornier — threatening to create a two-tier school district within county borders.

The one remedy put into action so far, a \$3.4 million mentor program slated for expansion, is helping the new teachers. Organizers hope it will keep teachers with missionary zeal in troubled schools.

But even the school superintendent acknowledges that the program is unlikely to erase the disparity.

Itzerny Joseph, (standing, right) a first-year fifth grade teacher at Winfield Elementary, conducts his class as Chris Struben, a mentor with 30 years teaching experience (seated far right, back), sits in on his class. Kim Hairston/staff.

Critics call it a politically expedient Band-Aid that creates another layer of employees and requires the county to hire even more new teachers as replacements.

been shown to affect achievement more than any other school resource.

Baltimore County's greenest teachers are in the schools with the neediest children, the lowest test scores, the highest poverty rates and, in many cases, also the heaviest minority populations, a Sun computer analysis of elementary schools shows.

For example, although a new principal has helped stabilize Randallstown's staff, 67 percent of its teachers had less than five years of experience in county schools. To the north, at Towson High, only 12 percent of teachers had that level of inexperience.

"It's a mixed-up system, completely backward," said Laura Zimmer, 22, a first-year teacher at Winfield Elementary in Randallstown, the school with the Until veterans are spread more evenly across its schools — an administrative power limited by union contracts — the problem is likely to continue, they say.

Major studies have concluded that teacher expertise is the most important factor in student achievement, says a 1996 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future — a privately commissioned group of governors, legislators and corporate and education leaders.

A recent study of more than 1,000 school districts found that every additional dollar spent on more highly qualified teachers yielded greater improvements in achievement than did any other use of school resources, the report says.

Another study, comparing New York City schools, found that differences in teacher qualifications accounted for more

biggest proportion of rookies last year. "So some schools keep improving and improving, but it's really hard for a school like Winfield that's achieving so low on the [statewide performance test]. We're trying to build each year, but we keep starting all over again."

City school systems have long struggled with high teacher turnover, as experienced teachers seek better pay and working conditions in the suburbs.

Turnover

But county teachers also are fleeing schools with "challenging" students for middle-class areas where it's easier to teach, or where they are closer to home. The county's turnover rate was 8 percent last year, close behind Baltimore's most recent 11 percent.

than 90 percent of the difference in achievement in reading and math.

'Blame the kid'

The research contradicts assumptions that poor performance is mostly the result of poverty and parent neglect, a philosophy snidely dubbed "blame the kid."

But in Baltimore County, where new teachers can apply to transfer after two years, the disparity in experience is glaring.

At Winfield, 89 percent of the teachers had less than five years' experience last year and 55 percent of the students received subsidized meals. At Gunpowder Elementary, 11 percent of the staff had less than five years' experience and 5 percent of students were on subsidized meals.

"There are youngsters in our county who could go through elementary, middle

and high school and never once in their career have a teacher with more than five years of experience," said Mary Jacque Marchione, head of the county's teacher training and mentor programs, and the wife of Superintendent Anthony G. Marchione. "That's staggering."

Howard County, by contrast, shows greater balance: Most elementary schools had relatively similar proportions of novices this year — teachers with less than five years of experience made up 15 percent to 30 percent of the staffs.

Baltimore County's mentoring program, which began with two schools in 1995, was expanded after a report on the achievement gap between whites and minorities set off a racial tempest. The plan puts veteran teachers in schools with lots of rookies and frees the veterans of classroom duties so they have time to coach.

The program, funded with \$1 million for 28 mentors in 20 schools this year, expands to \$3.4 million for 69 mentors in 49 schools next year.

So far, the program is showing both promise and first-year struggles. A case study is at Winfield, where two mentors now work with 11 nontenured teachers.

On a recent afternoon, first-year teacher Iterny Joseph, 24, stood before 28 fifth-graders as his mentor, Chris Struben, sat to the side, taking notes.

"I was disappointed in the quantity and quality of your writing," he told the class, critiquing their autobiographies. "The pictures are beautiful. But we have enough experience to write in complete sentences."

Elsewhere, well-designed mentor programs have cut the number of teachers who quit in their first three to five years, from a nationwide average of about 30 percent to 5 percent, and boosted teachers' proficiency, said Linda Darling-Hammond. She is executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and a professor at Columbia University's Teachers College.

However successful the mentors are, many think Baltimore County needs an additional strategy to balance its staffs.

Some politicians, board members and educators say the district should assign teachers where they're needed, and limit transfers out of the tough schools.

"When I worked at Beth Steel they didn't ask me where I wanted to work," said Del. John S. Arnick, a Dundalk Democrat. "The end solution is to make sure all the schools have experienced teachers, not that school A has cleaner

He pointed to a picture with the caption: "Me at three years old." What's wrong with that?

"It's not a full sentence," said Kiasha Bennett, wearing a T-shirt that said WHATEVER.

More confidence

Last fall, Joseph wasn't nearly as confident, wading into a world that distinguishes among goals, outcomes, objectives and indicators: a maze of report cards, parent meetings and children with troubles at home. And 28 kids reading on four different reading levels, grade two through grade five.

Struben, he said, helped rescue him, observing, advising, demonstrating and team-teaching. He went to her house on weekends and discussed strategies over dinners of pepper steak and wild rice. He calls her "Mom."

"I honestly don't know how I could have made it through this year without Chris," he said.

Such relationships strengthened many other classrooms; mentors overhauled lesson plans, reorganized reading instruction and fetched books the schools lacked.

But some veterans said their input was brushed aside when it conflicted with that of the mentors. And initially, there was widespread suspicion among teachers at Winfield and some other schools that the mentors were reporting flaws to the administration — hindering the needed trust.

One eight-year teacher was told she's being administratively transferred because of conflicts with the mentor, she rooms, better scores, richer students than school B. There shouldn't be in a public school system the A team and the B team."

But a move to limit transfers would likely prompt protests by the teachers union.

Ray Suarez, outgoing president of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County, says that forcing teachers to be "prisoners" in a school would weaken morale and spur more flight from the district. He says the problem should be attacked by improving conditions at struggling schools — such as reducing class size and boosting parent participation.

Others want financial incentives to entice veterans into the tough schools, perhaps as master teachers who act as mentors with a reduced class load.

"We should be saying, hey, this is a more difficult school, here are the bonuses that come with it," said Tanya

said. Once teachers complained, administrator made it clear that mentors were not there to "evaluate."

"It seemed that they became a conduit to the administration of perceived weaknesses of everyone on the staff," said Dan Sievers, a seven-year teacher at Winfield.

School officials plan to monitor test scores of schools with mentors. But as the program expands, the district has set up no systematic way to track the key problem of school-by-school teacher turnover.

No one keeps statistics on the number of teachers who left each school each year, or the experience levels of teachers. And while school officials conduct exit interviews with teachers leaving the district, they don't interview teachers to find out why they're transferring among schools.

"After you get all this money, you can't show where the teachers are moving?" asked school board member Dunbar Brooks. "This is what you do when you want to know what's going on."

Even the superintendent, when questioned by skeptics on the county council, acknowledged that the mentors are only an interim solution.

But with the graying of the county's teachers and 8 percent turnover, the county has hired more than 3,000 teachers in the past four years. At this rate, 30 percent to 40 percent of the teaching staff in the year 2000 could have fewer than five years of experience, and they need help, he said.

Success

Douse, mentor at Southwest Academy. "Just like with any business. Treat teachers like professionals."

More than mentors

Darling-Hammond, of the national teaching commission, says both sides of the debate have merit. To properly train teachers, she said, all districts should link new teachers with highly qualified mentors. But districts with widely divergent teaching forces need more than mentors, she said.

In Rochester, N.Y., and Toledo, Ohio, she said, mentor teachers must return to the classroom after two or three years so they can't make it a career. Some districts carefully manage placement of new teachers so that no staffs have too many novices. In Rochester, the best teachers receive extra money to start innovative programs in failing schools. In New York, faculties and principals have created more than 100 small, redesigned schools that provide more personal

relationships, and teachers are eager to work in neighborhoods they once fled.

"Part of the staffing problem is not that teachers are running away from the kids who are disadvantaged, but they're

running away from the school that's not effective. And when you address the problem of schools that are ineffective, you also address the problem of staffing."

Electronic News Editor Michael

Himowitz contributed to this article.

Originally Published on 6/04/97

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20. Denver Post

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Denver is testing better

By Alan Gottlieb Denver Post Education Writer

June 4 - After years of flat or declining reading scores, Denver Public Schools at last has some reason to celebrate.

Although elementary and middle school students in DPS still read at levels below the national average, their standardized test scores took a notable upward turn this spring for the first time in the five years the district has tracked the reading data.

"We're not raising up a flag and saying victory is ours, but we are encouraged," Superintendent Irv Moskowitz said Tuesday as he released results of the reading portion of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. "We're doing better than we have in many years in the district in reversing the trend of very limited growth." Math, science and social studies sections of the test still are being scored, and results are expected in a couple of weeks.

Reading test results are encouraging in two respects. First, they show gains in all grades except seventh since last spring. Second, they show that, with the

At six southeast Denver elementary schools - Asbury, Bromwell, Cory, Ellis, McKinley-Thatcher and Slavens - students in all grades scored above the national average in reading. Magnet programs at Denison, Knight and Traylor elementary schools also posted above-average scores.

Meanwhile, schools in the poorest neighborhoods - Mitchell, Ebert, Harrington and Hallett in northeast Denver and Fairview and Fairmont in west Denver had the lowest scores.

Encouraging to DPS officials, however, was the number of low-income schools that posted big gains in at least some grades. Those big gains still left students reading significantly below grade level, but they are starting to close the gap.

exception of eighth-graders, second-through ninth-grade students have made significant progress in reading since taking a pretest last September. Students in those grades now read at closer to the national average than when the school year began.

Moskowitz credited teachers and principals for placing added emphasis on literacy. He also said the school board's decision to give more money to schools with large numbers of poor kids is bearing fruit. In particular, he lauded the decision to spend \$1.7 million to put reading assistants in all first-grade classrooms at low-income schools.

This year, for the first time, DPS had some first-graders take the Iowa test to gauge the effectiveness of the reading assistants. As a group, Moskowitz said, the first-graders were reading at the 50th percentile nationally.

"That gives us a lot of hope for the future," he said, adding that he is confident the new district-wide results

Schools in lower-income areas that made particularly significant gains included Bryant-Webster and Centennial in northwest Denver, Cowell in west Denver and College View and Doull in southwest Denver.

Moskowitz said gains in reading are especially encouraging given that the DPS student body, as a whole, has become more low-income each successive year. Educational research shows that low-income children generally enter school significantly behind more affluent children.

DPS launched the fall pretest this school year to increase accountability. Moskowitz said he prefers the fall-spring test score comparison to the more traditional spring-spring method because it allows teachers, principals and

mark the beginning of an upward trend.

DPS this year used an updated version of the Iowa test for the first time. Moskowitz said the test, if anything, was more difficult than its predecessor. But Steve Dunbar, one of the test's co-authors, disagreed.

Professor of measurement and statistics at the University of Iowa, Dunbar said the reading portions of the new version are equivalent to the old and should yield scores that correlate smoothly with previous years.

That alone should spell good news, Dunbar said. "Those gains are real gains. They are not the result of switching tests," he said.

In the first year of DPS' postbusing era, the test results also reveal huge disparities in reading ability between schools in middleclass southeast Denver and poorer neighborhoods to the northeast and northwest.

administrators to chart the progress of individual students and classrooms over the course of an academic year.

Schools or classrooms within schools where students stagnate become the targets of special attention. Last month, DPS decided to re-staff two elementary schools in which student achievement has lagged over the years.

The new test results give Moskowitz the data he needs to begin the second round of intense scrutiny of schools where performance continues to lag.

"This will give review teams a chance to go in early (next school year) for some close-in analysis," Moskowitz said. "They'll create profiles of the school, ask questions about what they are doing and why."■

21. Seattle Times

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Senior project can put crimp in students' graduation plans

by Katherine Long Seattle Times Eastside bureau

DUVALL - Rachel Hill already had her dorm-room assignment, her first tuition bill and her class schedule from Arizona State University when the high-school senior received a certified letter saying she wouldn't graduate this spring.

Hill, who expected to graduate from Cedarcrest High School with a 3.5-grade-point average, had failed a research paper. Suddenly, she was facing summer school.

She wasn't alone. At one point this spring, about 10 percent of the Cedarcrest senior class - 12 students - had failed some portion of a new requirement called the senior project. Since then, many students, including Hill, have gone before an appeals board or the Riverview School Board, pleaded their cases, rewritten their papers, repeated presentations before an audience and received a passing grade.

But the shock waves are still echoing through this small community.

"Don't they get it? They're dealing with kids' lives here," said Linda Smith, whose son Travis also got a failing mark on his research paper. "You just can't do this."

Increasingly, senior projects are being

The Cedarcrest senior project has three elements: a research paper, a project and an eight-minute presentation before a panel of teachers and community members. Students pick a topic, find a mentor in the community and spend 18 weeks on research and preparation.

Students must pass all three elements of the project. A failing grade in any one area means they cannot graduate and must go to summer school, unless they successfully appeal the decision and redo the work. Twelve students failed the paper, and three failed the presentation.

"What we're attempting to do, frankly, is not easy stuff," Ernst said. "It's a fairly high standard, and we know that. Once they've done this successfully, they'll be able to do this in the future."

required at schools around the state; the Edmonds School District is considering making it a districtwide requirement. But Riverview's experience underscores the backlash that can occur when a school tries to beef up graduation requirements for seniors as part of a statewide push to raise standards.

This is the first year Cedarcrest students must pass their senior project to graduate. Administrators concede they may have made errors in explaining to students the standards and expectations.

"To be fair, when you're processing new curricular ideas, you're learning a little bit, too," Superintendent Jack Ernst said. "We are learning to be more clear about expectations earlier."

School Board member Carol Van Noy said the senior project needs "a little bit of tweaking."

But Riverview educators also say the senior project makes students stretch and grow to meet the same kinds of high standards they'll be required to meet in college or as an employee. They say students must take their senior projects more seriously and not succumb to "senioritis," that affliction that causes seniors to kick back and do as little work

Ernst said he thinks all the students who are making a good effort to redo their projects will graduate on time.

Cedarcrest librarian Bob Davis, chairman of the senior-project committee, said there are a series of safety nets in place that should prevent students from failing. "We nurture the kids, believe me," he said. "I think we're doing the right thing. It's just really tough for those students that don't measure up."

Karen Hill said she watched her daughter "go through hell" for two weeks while she reworked her paper on AIDS, then waited for the results.

Other families were experiencing the same anguish. Travis Smith, who has a 3.2-grade-point average and was a member of the baseball and football

as possible between January and graduation day.

Two other schools that have adopted senior projects as a graduation requirement say they haven't failed any seniors at the last moment. Principal Kathy Siddoway of Eastlake High School in Redmond said 21 students were told their project was inadequate this year. The students were allowed to keep working until they got it right, "like a law exam," she said.

Fewer than 10 students have failed their senior project in the three years it has been a requirement at Mountlake Terrace High School, said Timothy Moynihan, applied-learning specialist in the Edmonds School District. The ones who failed were in jeopardy of not graduating anyway because they also had failed courses or skipped classes.

The senior project is meant to pull together many of the skills a student has learned and apply them to a career-oriented subject. At Cedarcrest, this year's projects included restoring a car, felling a tree and making a table from scratch, and learning how to apply acrylic nails.

teams, had earned enough credits by December to graduate but failed his senior research paper twice in May. An appeals board gave him a second chance to rewrite it, and he now will graduate.

"Just because of the senior project it's been the worst year of high school for me," said Smith, who said he was trying to balance numerous other demands from teachers and also figure out what to do after graduation.

"It's totally wrong how they can weigh a paper against 12 years of education," said his mother.

"The whole thing is just insane," Hill added. "This has got way too much power."■

22. San Diego Union-Tribune

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Children will need written permission to check out Internet at county libraries

By Karen Kucher STAFF WRITER

Children will have to get written permission from their parents before they will be allowed to use computers hooked up to the Internet in the 31 branches of the county library system.

That was one of several recommendations approved by county supervisors yesterday designed to prevent young library users from accessing pornography with library computers.

The board also directed library staff members to supervise Internet use, either by moving the computer stations closer to librarians' desks or by assigning a volunteer or employee to monitor them.

County administrators will draft a formal policy on use of the Internet in county libraries that will apply to all patrons, young and old.

"What this proposal is doing is drawing the line on the Internet to prevent minors — our children and our youth — from crossing into the world of pornography through accessing the Internet through our libraries," said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, who co-authored the proposal with Supervisor Pam Slater.

"We believe it is absolutely wrong to use publicly funded libraries to access pornography."

Much of the board's action will "I cannot imagine a situation where we are going to have somebody who is in

reinforce what library staffers already have been doing since the library branches in the system were hooked up to the Internet two years ago, County Library Director Marilyn Crouch said.

Alpine is the only branch where a computer will have to be moved to allow staff supervision of Internet use. In the other libraries, volunteers or staff members already supervise the terminals.

Crouch said there has only been one reported case of a child accessing inappropriate material on the Internet. That case involved an 11-year-old boy at the Vista branch.

"We have had the Internet for over two years, and the only complaint we are getting is why don't you have more Internet stations," Crouch said.

But she applauded the establishment of the parental consent forms, which she said could prevent future problems and would remind parents that there are "things on the Internet that they probably wouldn't see in the library otherwise," Crouch said.

After a consent form is signed, library users under the age of 18 would be given a special sticker to affix to their library cards, allowing them access to computer terminals. The new policy could go into effect by the end of July, she said. serious pursuit of something that is really offensive. We will work with them and

Crouch said library staffers who find children accessing inappropriate material would offer them assistance in learning to use the Internet as a research tool. Violators would not be banned from the library branch or lose borrowing privileges, she said.

"We try to find a way to help people," Crouch said. "That is the stance we will continue to take. We will work with the kids."

Other public library systems — including those in Carlsbad, Coronado and Escondido — have chosen to install filtering software to try to block access to questionable sites.

Slater said she preferred the county's finding a "lower tech" solution rather than relying on software, which she said is not very effective.

For the past two years, the library has dealt with Internet-related problems on a case-by-case basis, Crouch said.

Library staff members who see something they believe is inappropriate or offensive — or who receive a complaint from another patron — offer to help the Internet user with their computer search.

"Surfing the net you can stumble across things," Crouch said. "I think that most likely is what would occur. help them to use the Internet and find the good stuff."■

23. \San Diego Union-Tribune

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Wet suits donated to surfing class

OCEANSIDE — Starting in the fall, students in the surfing class at Oceanside High School will have 10 new wet suits thanks to the Downtown Business Association and a public-spirited manufacturing company.

George Cheadle, a longtime member of the Downtown Business Association, read an article about the surfing class in

The San Diego Union-Tribune last month and suggested the organization pass the hat for donations.

The article said some students surf in shorts and torn T-shirts because they can't afford the proper equipment.

George Corbett, business association president, runs a beach-apparel shop and contacted Moomai Wetsuits of San

Clemente, which offered to provide 10 wet suits at about half the usual retail price of \$125 each.

Lamb Screen Printing of Oceanside volunteered to put both the association and high-school logos on the suits for free.

"This is our way of giving back to the community," Corbett said this week.■

24. San Diego Union-Tribune

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

School's gaffe adds to students' class time

By Daniel de Vise STAFF WRITER

VISTA — It is a scheme more fiendish than the cruelest senior prank: Students at Rancho Buena Vista High School must sit in class for an extra 1,331 minutes over the next week and a half or

their school district loses half a million dollars.

School officials learned Friday of an auditor's report that found the school's class schedule lagging more than 22

hours behind the minimum yearly instructional minutes required by state law.

They will close the gap by starting school 15 minutes early at 7:15,

dismissing 38 minutes late at 2:46, shortening lunch and wiping out a midmorning nutrition break. Three days that had been thoughtfully shortened to accommodate grueling final exams will be lengthened again.

And the final insult: The last day of school will be moved back from Thursday, June 12, to Friday the 13th.

"It's really bad," said Teresa Trude, 16, a junior. "The fact is, we have nothing to do. We've been taught everything."

The pay-back began yesterday. Students sat through block-schedule classes that had been stretched from 90 minutes to more than two hours each, with only one 30-minute break for lunch.

"It was horrible. It was long," said Melissa Clark, 17, a senior. "We watched a movie in one class, and then we sat there, because the movie was over and there was still half an hour left in class."

The Rancho schedule hasn't changed in two decades and has never before been called into question by the auditors who conduct annual reviews of the Vista Unified School District. But the district changed auditors this year, and the new firm found fault with Rancho's numbers.

Auditors invalidated the optional seventh period that Rancho had counted toward its daily instructional time. The extra period, scheduled at the end of Rancho's six-period day, allows about 450 of its 2,800 students to take extra classes in core and elective subjects.

State law dictates that for an extra period to be counted as instructional time, it must be fairly comprehensive and cover a range of academic offerings.

The audit also disallowed Rancho's practice of adding three minutes to the usual seven-minute passing period at lunchtime, a concession to bathroom and locker needs. Auditors contended that all

passing periods must be of equal length.

Previous audits have allowed both the seventh period and the 10-minute passing period at Rancho.

With a seven-period day and a generous lunch break, Rancho came in well over the state-mandated minimum of 64,800 annual instructional minutes for high schools. Without the seventh period and with a daily three-minute deficit to correct, the school wound up with 63,469 minutes this school year.

Rancho must make up the time or face a penalty of about \$500,000.

Administrators sent home letters to parents yesterday explaining the gaffe and the 1,331 minutes, time that will likely pass as slowly for teachers as for their students.

"It's like running a marathon," said Principal Alan Johnson. "And when you get to the finish line, someone says, 'You've got to run another two miles.' "■

25. Associated Press

06-04 0:01a Category: Local

Omaha elementary schools get OK to use student uniforms

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - Elementary school students in the Omaha School District may soon be wearing uniforms. That is, if their parents let them.

Under a policy approved by the Omaha school board Monday, each school must have the backing of at least 75 percent of its student's parents before it can require school uniforms.

So far, one school - Belvedere Elementary in north Omaha - is considering introducing uniforms by next year.

Other local elementary schools have dropped the idea after failing to get parental support. Four schools recently asked parents if they wanted to adopt uniforms and only one came close to the 75-percent mark with nearly 71 percent. The others had nearly a 60-percent approval rating.

The uniforms would be part of a broad effort to stress the importance of learning, Belvedere Principal Carol Ellis said. They would help set school apart from home life or playtime, conveying the idea that the classroom is about hard work.

Belvedere students already have endorsed the uniform plan. About 86 percent of those students returning to the school next year voted in favor of wearing matching shirts. If their parents are as supportive, Ms. Ellis said, the students could be donning uniforms by the end of the year.

The school board decided that the financial responsibility for buying uniforms lies with the school and its families, not with the district.■

26. San Diego Union-Tribune

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Dropout rates fall in state, county **But neighbor counties post better numbers**

By Sharon L. Jones STAFF WRITER

California's high schools are reporting fewer dropouts, thanks to new alternative programs that keep students on campus and heightened efforts to track students who change schools or move out of state.

According to a report released today by the state Department of Education, the statewide dropout rate for 1995-96 was 3.9 percent, down from 5.2 percent in

1991-92.

In the same period, the countywide rate fell from 3.6 percent to 3.0 percent. San Diego County still posts a higher rate than neighboring Orange (2.7), Imperial (1.9) and Riverside (2.8) counties.

Sweetwater Union High and Mountain Empire Unified school districts tied for the dubious distinction of having the

county's highest dropout rate — 4.4 percent. Borrego Springs, Julian Union and Warner Unified had the lowest — zero.

Mountain Empire Unified School District's dropout rate marked the greatest increase; it more than tripled, rising from 1.4 to 4.4. Oceanside Unified School District posted the most significant

decrease, falling from 7.5 to 1.8.

While cheering the overall decline in the dropout rate, school district administrators caution that the numbers tell just part of the story, and can be deceiving.

"It would be nice to know that the data is universally reported the same way," said Ed Brand, superintendent of the Sweetwater Union High School District. "I don't think that's possible."

A dropout is defined as any student under 21 years of age who left a secondary school for 45 consecutive days without receiving a diploma or its equivalent or enrolling in another school.

Educators say some districts post higher dropout rates because their students are highly transitory. Large

"We've done a disservice to the young people who go to our schools and the people who educate them by not being more aggressive and energetic in this domain," he said. "That might sound melodramatic, but it's the truth."

Sweetwater's dropout rate has been fluctuating over the past five years. In 1991-92, it was 4.1 percent. It grew to a high of 5.1 in 1993-94, and then began to decline.

Like Oceanside, it has a highly transient student population, with more than a third of its students changing addresses each year. Many students live in families that move back and forth across the border.

To reduce dropouts, Sweetwater offers a variety of extracurricular activities for students and classes for their parents.

urban districts often have high percentages of low-income families who move frequently.

Sometimes districts may not realize that a student who disappeared from one campus re-enrolled in another.

San Diego County's proximity to Mexico also plays a role in its dropout rate. If a student moves to Mexico with his or her family and the new school never requests a transcript, the former U.S. school may label the student a dropout. Districts such as Sweetwater, San Diego and Oceanside, where many students are Hispanic, are making greater efforts to track these families.

"You really have to make it a high priority to communicate with those families, to stay in touch with those District leaders are talking about creating night schools, Superintendent Brand said.

"I'm encouraged by the fact that the trend is downward," Brand said of the district's 4.4 rate. "We're ultimately not satisfied with the rate."

He believes San Diego County districts may more closely follow state dropout rules than districts in other areas, due to a recent residency controversy.

State auditors reviewed attendance procedures in several districts, including Sweetwater, following public outcry over some 200 residents of Tecate, Mexico, attending school in the Mountain Empire district. Allowing those students to enroll in the East County schools cost the district \$900,000 in fines and lost revenue.

"We spend a lot of time in this area,"

families," said Dan Armstrong, spokesman for Oceanside Unified, which is 39 percent Hispanic.

Oceanside Unified started paying more attention to these factors in the wake of a devastatingly high dropout rate of 11.9 percent in 1993-94, and its dropout rate immediately began to improve.

The district also expanded its academic programs, creating a more nurturing environment in comprehensive high schools for ninth-graders and independent study opportunities.

Armstrong believes that Oceanside's dropout rate was inflated by its failure to track down students who had enrolled in schools elsewhere.

Brand said of attendance. "I am confident that our figures are accurate."

Mountain Empire Superintendent William Wong questioned the accuracy of his district's attendance reporting in previous years, noting that there was a lot of confusion during the residency crisis.

He believes Mountain Empire's dropout rate is inflated by students who move back to Mexico.

The overall lower dropout rate is good news for children, even if it reflects better tracking of their whereabouts, educators say.

"The cracks through which students used to drop are getting narrower and narrower and narrower," said J.R. Tarvin, former principal at La Jolla High. "A lot better records are being kept on kids. It's much more difficult to neglect them." ■

27. Associated Press

06-04 0:05a Category: Local

Lawmakers examine funding problems for community colleges

By HEIDI RUSSELL Associated Press Writer

HARRISBURG (AP) - Student fees have become a crutch for community college budgets, because of waning local support and an ongoing dilemma of colleges having to return state funds, members of the state Board of Education said.

The state's 15 community colleges are doing business based on a "fragile" funding system and need a better guarantee for their uncertain budgets, said board executive director Peter Garland.

"It's like dancing on the head of a

pin," he told House lawmakers.

A special House subcommittee is expected to issue a final report to the Legislature on solutions by January. Recommendations drafted during the past 18 months by members of the state education board were presented to the subcommittee Tuesday.

Earlier this year, lawmakers tried to address funding concerns to the community colleges by increasing funding for 1997-98 from \$152 million to \$155 million. But college officials say the increase is deceiving because there is no guarantee the schools will actually see all the funds.

State law allows community colleges

to collect one third of their budgets from the state, one third from counties or school districts and one third from students' tuition.

Although the state meets its one-third obligation, the money is doled to the community colleges by enrollment projections. If a college's projections fall short for the year, it has to pay back to the state any funds it received.

This year, the colleges stand to lose about \$5 million of the \$152 million they received from the state, said Dan Stark, assistant director of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

By contrast, the 14 state-owned universities and the four state-aided

universities receive lump sums that are not based on enrollment projections.

"It's smoke and mirrors, and it's a shame, because it doesn't allow for quality planning and predictability of resources - at least on an annual basis," said Helen Caffrey of the state education board.

In addition, local county governments and school districts are not meeting their one-third obligation, college officials say.

Local support averaged 20 percent statewide in 1993-94, the latest data available. There is nothing in state law that penalizes the local communities if they do not meet the one-third requirement.

Doug Hill, executive director of the

Laura Eppler, spokeswoman for the Lehigh Carbon Community College, said the school had to cut an automotive technology program because of the

County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, said all but two counties are no longer collecting personal property taxes - taxes on stocks and bonds - that amounted to about \$100 million statewide. As a result, resources are tight, he said.

"We are voluntary participants in the community college system. The issue for a lot of counties is personal priorities. We have other services that are required of us that are putting pressure on our budgets," Hill said.

The burden inevitably comes back to the students.

Tuition is capped by law so that it only pays for one-third of the budgets, but the colleges are levying student fees tighter budget.

"No longer can we go to high school and assume we're set for life. One of Pennsylvania's strongest assets is a

to make up for the void left by the lagging local support. Some students also pay double tuition if they are not residents of the community college's territory.

As a result, on average, community college students paid 41.5 percent towards their college budgets through tuition and fees in 1993-94. The annual average tuition statewide this year was \$1,900, Stark said.

Compounding the funding dilemma is the community colleges' expensive, specialized curriculum that prepares Pennsylvanians for highly technical jobs, college officials contend.

trained workforce. Community colleges are the cheapest way the public can do that," she said. ■

28. Associated Press

06-04 0:26a Category: Local

Additional taxes may be needed to deal with school system budget woes

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (AP) - Pascagoula school officials were hoping additional cuts would not be necessary to meet their budget after slicing \$760,000 from the school district.

Cuts included a third-grade teacher aid program and proposed computer labs at Pascagoula and Gautier high schools.

Assistant Superintendent David Snowden said he hoped the computer labs could still be funded with funds from the Adequate Education Act, which does allow a percentage of funds to be used for technology.

Other cuts included reduced raises for administrative and non-teacher staff, a \$30,000 request to pay for new and uniforms, and the elimination of one administrative position.

Prior to the votes, preliminary figures

showed a possible \$1 million budget deficit.

Additional tax dollars will likely be required to finance the school system.

The board now must decide whether it wants to raise taxes to cover the deficit or take money from a dwindling reserve fund, which could add more problems for the district in the years ahead.

The reserve fund currently has \$4.1 million, but has been repeatedly used in the last few years. If the reserve dips below 5 percent of the district's operating budget, the state Department of Education could take over the district's operations.

The board has not raised taxes for nine years.

A public hearing on the proposed budget is planned June 23,

Board member M.R. Cole said he

thought taxes would have to be raised to solve the deficit problem.

"I just don't think we can avoid a tax increase," Cole said. "We haven't had a tax increase in nine years, that's part of the reason we're in this position. I'm raising my taxes too."

Cole said he thought taxes would have to be raised 4 percent, which he said would raise about the \$700,000 necessary to cover the deficit.

Other board members have said raising taxes should be a last resort.

"Right now we've got to crunch all the numbers and see where we are," said board member Freddy Jackson. "I think it's a bit early to be talking about raising taxes. Of course, tax raises are a last resort." ■

29. Associated Press

06-04 0:57a Category: Local

School boards presses court victory in Kiryas Joel case

By JOEL STASHENKO Associated Press Writer

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - The case of a Hasidic Jewish school district is back where it has spent so much time this

decade - in court.

The state School Boards Association filed papers Tuesday asking state Supreme Court Justice Victoria Graffeo to put into force the latest decision against the Kiryas Joel school district, made last month by the state Court of

Appeals.

That court, the state's highest, was the sixth in five years to rule that the district created specifically for disabled Hasidic youngsters in Kiryas Joel in 1994 violates the constitutional separation of church and state.

The 1994 law creating the school district was designed to circumvent a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that declared unconstitutional an earlier attempt to set up a district.

The president of the Kiryas Joel school board, Abraham Weider, said village officials will ask Graffeo to make sure they get time to implement an order closing the district.

Ideally, he said, the village will get until the regular 1996-97 school year ends on June 30. Weider said by that time, Kiryas Joel leaders hope the state

There are about 200 children in the Kiryas Joel special education district. The community educates another 5,000 non-disabled children in private yeshivas, or religious schools. Leaders of the Satmar Hasidic sect say its disabled children do not learn well in non-Hasidic schools.

According to Grumet, ideas being kicked around in the state Legislature to

Legislature will pass a law of "general applicability" to allow the village to recreate its school district and which will not be struck down again by the courts.

Louis Grumet, head of the schools' association, lashed out at Weider and other Kiryas Joel leaders.

"If they don't have a plan on how to serve the children, shame on them," he said. "They don't need more time. They have lost again and again and again and again. They just don't want to hear the facts."

Grumet contended that village try to legitimize the Kiryas Joel district include turning the village of Kiryas Joel into the state's 63rd city and allowing the new city to form its own district. There is also a thought of letting Kiryas Joel set up its own charter school under the new initiative for semi-independent schools advanced by Pataki, Grumet said.

Both plans would be illegal, he warned. A better plan would be to serve

officials have tried to retain a degree of control over their district that is incompatible with the constitution in instances where schools receive public funding.

Grumet said the ultra-Orthodox community has been encouraged in its belief that it can legally set up its own district by many officials in Albany, including Gov. George Pataki.

If the state tries legislation a third time, and it is struck down again, Grumet said he would seek punitive damages in his next suit.

Kiryas Joel's disabled youngsters through the nearby Monroe-Woodbury School District, letting the local Board of Cooperative Education Services run the district or by making the special education school private, Grumet said.

Some 300 schools operate privately in the state but still receive public funds.

Kiryas Joel is about 45 miles northwest of New York City. ■

30. San Francisco Chronicle

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Schools Win In South Bay

Peninsula 10 local bond measures easily coast to victory

John Wildermuth, Chronicle Peninsula Bureau, page A16

Peninsula and South Bay voters came through for their local schools yesterday, with heavy support leading to easy victories for all 10 school finance measures on the ballot.

In the area's lone municipal city race, Jim Lawson beat a pair of challengers to hold on to the Milpitas City Council seat he was appointed to last year. Lawson will complete the 17 months remaining in the term of Mayor Henry Manayan, who resigned last November after being elected mayor.

An improving Bay Area economy and growing concern for the quality of public education received the credit for the success of nearly \$600 million in new school bonds, which all needed two-thirds of the vote to win.

The night's biggest winner was the San Jose Unified School District, where a \$165 million bond measure easily won approval. The district held off on a bond election last year, but decided to put the bonds for school renovations on the ballot this time around, a decision that paid off handsomely.

The Santa Clara Unified School

District plans to use its \$145 million in new bonds to upgrade schools and classrooms and build new science wings at Santa Clara and Wilcox high schools. The bond measure passed by a comfortable margin.

Saratoga voters easily approved a \$40 million bond measure that will provide money to refurbish 82 classrooms and add another 36 to local schools.

The area's only parcel tax was on the ballot in the Los Altos School District, where it won by a substantial margin. The measure would increase the current \$168-a-year parcel tax to \$264, the first boost since 1989.

In San Mateo County, the biggest bond measure was in the San Mateo-Foster City School district, where voters passed the \$79 million measure. Most of the money from the bonds will go toward reopening Beresford School and buying 120 portable classrooms.

Soaring enrollment in the Belmont-Redwood Shores District forced the district to put a \$12 million bond on the ballot, where it got the nod from voters. Money will be used to add eight

classrooms to the new Sandpiper School, rehabilitate the reopened Cipriani School and do other work in the district.

The \$44 million bond that won in the Redwood City Elementary School District will be spent for about 120 new classrooms and improvements to existing schools.

The San Carlos School District approved \$22 million in bonds that will go to add new classrooms and libraries at every district school and reopen Terra Linda School as a middle school.

In Pacifica's Laguna Salada Union School District, the \$27 million in bonds backed by voters will be used for basic repairs to the district's badly deteriorating schools.

New classrooms were about the only things that weren't on the list of projects for the South San Francisco Unified School District, where a \$40 million bond measure won by a wide margin. Just putting on new roofs and getting heating and electrical equipment in shape will take all the money from the bonds. ■

31. Associated Press

06-04 1:15a Category: Local

Bush, White reflect on session

By PEGGY FIKAC Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN (AP) - Gov. George W. Bush says if he runs for re-election, it will be for two "compelling reasons:" continuing work on education and welfare reform.

"I think people are going to say this is a man who set a very bold agenda and acted boldly. That's what Texans want in their leaders," he said. "We delivered the largest tax cut in the state's history."

Bill White, head of the Texas Democratic Party, disagreed, portraying Bush as an ineffectual leader.

"He started too late on tax reform and failed to deliver the votes," said White. "I think that Texans would prefer a governor who's effective."

While Republicans had a majority in one legislative chamber for the first time in more than a century, the GOP-dominated Senate failed to back a Bush-backed tax plan to cut local school property taxes by about \$4 billion over the next two years. The money would have been replaced with new state taxes, budget cuts and savings.

While acknowledging he didn't get all he wanted, Bush said the state made progress in addressing education funding.

The state share of funding is increasing compared with local property taxes, he said. In addition, voters later this year will decide on a plan to spend

Turning aside questions about whether he also has his eye on the presidency, the Republican governor said Tuesday he doesn't think his failed effort for an ambitious school tax overhaul will work against him with voters.

\$1 billion left over from the last two-year budget to increase homestead exemptions, cutting taxes for homeowners roughly \$140 annually.

For real change to be made, Bush said, "I think it's important for people to understand that the voice of the people must resonate loudly to overcome the voices of the people who are hired to maintain the status quo."

"I can't tell you how many members (of the Legislature) came into my office and said, 'Property taxes are not an issue in my district.' Some of them came into my office saying that, and I knew full well it wasn't true. They just didn't want to listen."

Bush said some business interests that would have faced new taxes were intent on preserving the status quo, and added, "There wasn't overwhelming enthusiasm during the process from some educators and some education groups, which frankly amazed me."

Whether he runs for another four-year term, Bush said, will depend on whether he and his wife believe it would be best for their family. They have twin

He said Texans want a governor with a strong agenda and will appreciate the tax cut that was approved by lawmakers with his support.

15-year-old daughters.

"I can already think of two compelling reasons why" to run, Bush added.

"One is to keep the focus on education and not lose the momentum of education reform that we've had in this state," he said. He cited the 1995 overhaul of education laws designed to return more control to local school districts and this year's passage of a measure to give students more choices in the public schools they attend.

In addition, Bush said he wants to continue pushing for more changes in the welfare system.

After the state was stymied by federal officials in a far-reaching effort to let private companies run welfare programs, lawmakers approved a bill to provide for development of an alternate plan. It would give priority to more efficient automation of the system, and federal approval would be sought as needed.

Bush also said he wanted to rally private, faith-based organizations to become part of the welfare delivery system after bills were passed to pave the way for more involvement. ■

32. San Francisco Chronicle

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

California, Pacific Rim Universities Form Alliance

Pamela Burdman, Chronicle Staff Writer, page A19

As the Pacific Rim emerges as an economic and technological force, U.S. universities are reaching out to sister institutions across the region. And many of the ties are being forged in California.

At the University of Southern California, for example, more than 10 percent of students hail from Asian countries.

Many college presidents now travel frequently to Asia for fund-raising trips, and none is as frequent a traveler as University of California at Berkeley Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien.

This spring, the first Internet teleconference ever held between China and the United States brought together

three university leaders: Tien, UC system president Richard Atkinson, and Wang Dezhong, the president of Qinghua University.

Yesterday, to help solidify the networks that are forming, several California university leaders met at USC with their counterparts from the top research universities in the United States and 12 other nations to initiate the first international association of research universities in the Pacific Rim.

Called the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, the organization hopes to bolster the role of universities in shaping the economic, scientific and cultural advancement of the region.

"It's really a full plate," said Tien after returning from yesterday's meeting. "The time is ripe for us to increase a dialogue with our neighbors both in Latin America and the Asia Pacific region."

Tien joined USC president Steven Sample, UCLA Chancellor Charles Young and California Institute of Technology President Thomas Everhart in convening the meeting. Governor Pete Wilson and Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan also attended.

The new organization will bring together university chief executives to discuss the role of universities in educating world leaders, in the development of primary and secondary

education, and in promoting economic and technological development. Countries as diverse as Mexico, the Philippines and Australia were represented.

The association known as APRU is to

be for universities what APEC — Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation — is for nations. During their three-day meeting, the university presidents drafted a confidential policy statement to present to APEC leaders when they meet this fall.

"We want to facilitate more than influence," said Sample. "Higher education must be a very important part of the emergence of the Pacific Rim community."■

33. Associated Press

06-04 1:16a Category: Local

Program educates students for job opportunities

By SARAH HORNADAY Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN (AP) - The only thing Gabe Moncada knew about the law as a high school sophomore was that he was on the wrong side of it. With the help of a career-oriented education program, Moncada is a high school graduate working toward a college degree in criminal justice.

Moncada, 18, of Austin, is a success story from the "Education That Works" program. It administers \$61 million in federal funds in Texas to programs such as career academics, school-based enterprises, apprenticeships and a revised version of cooperative education.

"Honestly, the only reason I stayed in school was this program," Moncada said.

He graduated this year from Lanier High School and received a scholarship to attend Austin Community College. He plans to transfer to Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos after ACC.

A school counselor told him about the Lanier criminal justice program that

inspired him to return to school - after dropping out for more than six months - and put behind his gang days which landed him in juvenile detention for car theft.

"I found the right side of the law is better than the wrong side," said Moncada, who has an internship with the Austin Police Department this summer and worked with the Travis County Sheriff's Department last summer.

Dropouts aren't the only ones benefiting from the "Education That Works" initiative.

Honor students Shana Mikels, who graduated from Austin LBJ High School's Science Academy, and Amanda McCollum, who will be a senior at Elgin High School, also have taken advantage of it.

Through the program, Ms. Mikels participated in research projects while an intern at M.D. Anderson Center in Bastrop. And Ms. McCollum has studied Pre-Vet Animal Science classes at her school in addition to internships.

Proponents of the program say the classes and internships allow students to learn job skills from using those skills and not just reading about them. Opponents say the curriculum based around job skills takes away from academics.

"I don't object to vocational education. I object to diluting the academic focus of academic classes," said State Board of Education member Robert Offutt of San Antonio. "I'm a believer in academics. If you prepare a child academically for the world they will be able to assimilate and obtain job skills."

Ruth Kane, Lanier High School principal and this year's Reader's Digest American Hero in Education, supports "Education that Works."

"There's a way to integrate industry and education, employers and students, curriculum that has to do with technology and curriculum that has to do with humanities," Ms. Kane said. "We don't have to throw out Romeo and Juliet."■

34. Dallas Morning News

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Half of DISD schools to get new leaders

Posts demand 'high-energy leaders' with high expectations, Gonzalez says

By Nora Lopez and Alexei Barrionuevo / The Dallas Morning News

More than half of Dallas schools have new administrators - principals, assistant principals, deans of instruction or all three - in an unprecedented turnover in the district.

"I expect high-energy leaders who have high expectations for their students," Superintendent Yvonne Gonzalez said of the moves. "If you are not totally committed to the task at hand, then you need to look for a job elsewhere."

Dr. Gonzalez transferred 155 administrators on 112 campuses. Several schools got complete administrative makeovers.

She defended the high number of moves at a news conference Tuesday, stressing that the reassignments were based on performance.

The moves will affect 60 percent of the high schools and middle schools and 30 percent of elementary schools. A total of 77 principals, 60 assistant principals and 18 deans of instructions were moved.

The moves did little to change the ethnic makeup of school administrations. The district's campus leadership this fall will be 49 percent black, 25 percent Hispanic and 25 percent white. Last school year, campus administrators were 51 percent black, 23 percent Hispanic

and 26 percent white.

Dr. Gonzalez said the assignments were still being reviewed, and she expects to make more changes as she begins overhauling her central administrative staff. Several principals are expected to be moved into administrative posts.

District officials would not categorize the changes as demotions or promotions.

But the most obvious demotions were those affecting two former high-ranking central administrators - Shirley Ison-Newsome and Rina Garza-Davis.

Ms. Ison-Newsome, currently an area superintendent, will be principal at Carter

High School. Dr. Garza-Davis, a director in the testing and campus support department, will be assistant principal at Browne Middle School.

Ms. Ison-Newsome, who could not be reached for comment, and Dr. Garza-Davis each will continue to receive a \$97,000-a-year salary, making them the highest paid campus administrators.

The salaries will continue until each administrator's contract is complete, and district officials could not say Tuesday when that will be.

Dr. Gonzalez said the moves were not made lightly. Top district officials spent several weeks scrutinizing the reassignments before finalizing the list.

"This is unprecedented in terms of the number of principals moved at one time," said Robert Payton, associate superintendent for schools and accountability.

Ms. Ison-Newsome and Dr. Garza-Davis were among central administrators moved into schools.

Ms. Ison-Newsome is the former chief of staff. Dr. Garza-Davis was at one time the district's highest-ranking Hispanic administrator in charge of the bilingual program.

Former Superintendent Chad Woolery created the chief of staff position for Ms. Ison-Newsome last June, partly to appease black protesters. When Dr. Gonzalez was named superintendent in January, black leaders lobbied to keep Ms. Ison-Newsome in her post.

Instead, Dr. Gonzalez demoted her to an area superintendency.

"I believe in what she [Dr. Gonzalez] is attempting to do, and I support her," Dr. Garza-Davis said. "I just wish she had included me as part of her team."

As deputy superintendent, one of Dr. Gonzalez's first assignments from Mr. Woolery was to revamp the bilingual department, which was then overseen by Dr. Garza-Davis.

Dr. Gonzalez wouldn't discuss the demotions of Ms. Ison-Newsome and Dr. Garza-Davis.

"The decisions were grounded on what is ethically sound rather than politically correct," Dr. Gonzalez said.

Trustee Yvonne Ewell worked with Ms. Ison-Newsome when the trustee was an administrator. She said she is concerned about the move.

"She is an exemplary administrator," Ms. Ewell said of Ms. Ison-Newsome. "I don't know if it is a vendetta or something else. I just don't know why this was done."

Trustee Hollis Brashear, whose district includes Carter High School, declined to speculate on the reason for the change but said he was satisfied with all the moves in his area.

"My objective is to make sure we have top quality leadership in our schools," Mr. Brashear said. Ms. Ison-Newsome's "leadership qualities far exceed that."

Carter was among those schools that had its top leadership overhauled. The school will have a new principal, assistant principal and dean of instruction.

Ms. Ison-Newsome will replace

"You cannot take away what Shirley and I have given to this district. This is not how you treat an employee who has given 24 years to this district."

popular principal Joseph Brew, who was promoted to an area superintendent position.

Outgoing Carter PTA president Ronald Jones said parents are sad to see Mr. Brew go. "'Oh no, no!' has been the reaction from most parents," Mr. Jones said. "However, we are all excited for Mr. Brew and happy that he has this opportunity."

Tuesday's moves held some other surprises.

Gone from Cary Middle School is popular principal Joy Barnhart. Cary has been consistently honored for its students' improvement.

Ms. Barnhart said she is taking a one-year leave of absence to join her husband, a consultant, in New York. She said she hopes to return to the Dallas district as a principal.

Principal Judy Meyer also was promoted. She leaves Herbert Marcus Elementary, a high-ranking district school, to replace Robert Munoz at the helm of North Dallas High School. Mr. Munoz was among several principals expected to be given central staff posts later this summer.

"I was surprised," Ms. Meyer said of her new post. "I am sure there will be many challenges for me, and I am sure I have lot to learn. But I am looking forward to it." ■

35. Cincinnati Enquirer

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

School funding proposal revised

Ohio budget chief soft-pedals tax hike

BY SANDY THEIS Enquirer Columbus Bureau

COLUMBUS- Republican leaders Tuesday backed off their earlier assertion that Ohio is poised for a multibillion-dollar tax increase, saying the school funding crisis can be remedied through belt-tightening and a smaller tax hike.

State leaders also suggested that businesses should pay up to half of the new taxes for schools, although none put a price tag on the reform package. <

Office of Budget and Management Director Greg Browning called for belt-tightening and new taxes as part of 10 "policy assumptions" that he believes

should be used when crafting a new formula. He presented the plan to his fellow members of the Governor's School Funding Task Force, a seven-member panel charged with recommending a new school funding plan.

While short on detail, the list showed Republican leaders want to increase funding and accountability for public schools, balance new taxes between businesses and individuals and ask voters - rather than legislators - to approve any new taxes.

"This is a good first step, but the devil is going to be in the details," said Donald

Berno, president of the non-partisan Ohio Public Expenditure Council (OPEC).

Gov. George Voinovich appointed the task force in response to the Ohio Supreme Court's ruling that declared the current method of funding public schools inequitable and unconstitutional. The state has until March 24 to devise a new plan.

One day after the court ruling, Mr. Voinovich warned that a "multibillion (dollar) tax increase" would be needed to comply with the court ruling.

Absent from Mr. Browning's list, however, is any mention of such a tax hike.

The list calls for a "net increase in school funding," but does not say how much it should be increased. It also calls for the state to define the cost of providing a basic, adequate education and stresses that any locally raised property taxes should remain in local school districts.

When asked about the governor's insistence that a multibillion-dollar tax hike would be needed, Mr. Browning said, "We're not talking about (a) multibillion-dollar tax increase now."

What's changed?

"We've been doing an analysis," he said, and policy-makers hope to craft a new formula by "re-prioritizing the budget," minimizing tax increases and phasing in the new plan over several years.

Among the more controversial items on the list is a plan to place any tax increases before voters in November.

Senate Minority Leader Ben Espy, D-Columbus, asked Mr. Browning what

the state would do if the ballot issue failed.

"Is there a Plan B?" Mr. Espy asked.

"Senator, we don't have a Plan A yet," Mr. Browning replied. Despite the lack of a plan, it already has opponents.

The National Taxpayers Union, a conservative organization, is on record as opposed to tax increases.

The Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council is vowing to oppose any issue, miffed that the governor signed a new law that exempts school construction projects from prevailing wage laws.

Mr. Browning said it is too early to determine what business taxes should be raised, and some business leaders have been privately complaining they fear the burden will fall disproportionately on them.

"There is not going to be a perfect plan, regardless of what they do with the taxes," said OPEC's Mr. Berno. "But they do need to be real careful to make sure Ohio remains competitive."

He noted that task force members stressed the need for "stable and

predictable" funding for schools, but apparently are not planning to recommend elimination of the taxes that businesses pay on their inventories. The bulk of such taxes help fund local schools.

"I see inconsistencies in what they've done already," Mr. Berno said. "The biggest contributor to the lack of stability and predictability are some of the business property taxes - the inventory taxes."

Ohio is one of two states with such taxes, and Mr. Berno pointed to a series of studies that single out inventory taxes as the state's main competitive disadvantage.

Mr. Berno has already singled out the state sales tax - now at 5 percent - as the most likely to be increased. Mr. Browning confirmed that a sales tax hike and expansion are among the options under review. A 1-cent sales tax increase would bring in about \$1 billion annually. Mr. Berno said he doubted that the corporate franchise tax would rise significantly because Ohio's rate is 10th in the nation right now. ■

36. Houston Chronicle

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

School officials try to calm residents' fears

Facility will cater to students with troubled histories

By MELANIE MARKLEY

Representatives of a private school opening Monday in southwest Houston are working to quell neighborhood concerns about the students who will attend the facility.

The Southwest Houston School for Accelerated Learning at Fondren and Beechnut has contracted with the Houston Independent School District to accept 100 students with behavioral and academic problems in its summer school program, and 450 students beginning next fall.

The school, run by Community Education Partners, also has a contract with the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program for up to 500 students who have been expelled from their home schools.

Some neighborhood residents, who only recently learned of the school, are

not thrilled with the idea that some 950 students with trouble-prone backgrounds will be attending the facility, now under renovation in a building that once was a Wal-Mart.

"None of the people I have talked to are happy about it," said Joe Keliher, who lives in the neighborhood. "I'm trying to focus our energies on how we can make it an asset instead of just merely resigning ourselves to the fact it is going to be there."

John Danielson, vice president of Community Education Partners, said he believes the school will be an asset for the neighborhood. He said the school will be architecturally attractive, and the students will be closely monitored.

The school's philosophy is based on the premise that academic failure is the root of many discipline problems.

"This is an educational setting," Danielson said. "It is not a correctional setting. It is not a juvenile detention facility. I think that is one of the biggest pieces of misinformation that is out there."

For the past year, the school has had more than 300 students at two leased facilities — one in the Heights and one at the Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church.

In January, Houston Superintendent Rod Paige announced plans to send 450 academically struggling middle and high school students to the school at a cost of \$7,500 per student per year.

In return, school officials guaranteed that the students would progress two grade levels for every year they had them or they would be re-educated at no cost to the district. ■

37. Houston Chronicle

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Bush indicates he'll sign admission-standards bill

Gov. George W. Bush said Tuesday he likely will sign a bill, described by an aide as "largely symbolic," that would require universities using grade-point averages to determine admissions to use the same standards for athletes and non-athletes.

However, Bush said he did not believe the measure would have a major impact on athletic programs at state universities.

"I'm satisfied that it's not going to completely overturn the athletic world as we know it," he said.

Bush also said there was justification for allowing athletes into schools at different academic standards from other students.

"I can justify it if the students get a degree and learn something and do well," he said.

Bush said at a Tuesday meeting with reporters that he intends to sign the measure into law but hasn't fully

analyzed it. When he turned to policy director Vance McMahan for an opinion, McMahan made the comment about it being "largely symbolic."

"It sends a signal that it's important for athletes to get a good education," the governor said.

Lawmakers have offered conflicting opinions about which schools would be subject to the bill.

Rep. Ron Wilson, D-Houston, the House sponsor of the measure, said the state's biggest public universities — the University of Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech — would be required to adhere to the legislation.

Rep. Tom Uher, D-Bay City, a member of the Senate-House conference committee that came up with a compromise on the bill, said those schools wouldn't fall under the measure.

Wilson declined to return telephone calls Tuesday to comment on the bill.

Meanwhile, athletic directors at Texas A&M and the University of Texas downplayed its potential impact.

"We really aren't considering it, because we use a lot of different criteria for admission to A&M," Texas A&M athletic director Wally Groff said. "Even if it is signed (by the governor), I think the only thing it might do is cause the school to make eligible for enrollment any student who has the same GPA as an athlete."

Said DeLoss Dodds, Texas' athletic director: "It won't really affect us, because we don't use grade-point averages."

Bill McGillis, acting athletic director at the University of Houston, did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

Staff writers Clay Robison, Jonathan Feigen and Terry Blount contributed to this report. ■

38. Associated Press

06-04 1:22a Eds: May be led Category: Local

Senate approves reform bill; adopts corporal punishment

By JON SANCHE Associated Press Writer

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) - The Senate's final passage of an education finance reform bill has put Wyoming on the road toward centralized school administration that would dilute local control, a critic said.

Senators on Tuesday voted 18-12 for a measure supporters said would comply with a 1995 Supreme Court decision mandating that all Wyoming students be given equal access to a uniform, high-quality education.

The final vote came amid concerns the bill would not meet the court's test for equality or help improve education.

Sen. Charles Scott, R-Casper, said he was concerned that certain provisions, including specification of the knowledge and skills students must have to graduate high school, would reduce local school boards' control over their schools.

"If we had been doing what we didn't do for the last 10 years we wouldn't be here today," said Sen. Jim Twiford, R-Douglas.

Senators killed Scott's proposal 21-9.

They also approved an amendment to

"In my judgment we haven't funded the schools adequately," he said. "I'm concerned we're likely to wind up as a result with a system that costs more and isn't as good."

The Senate's final version of the measure would add \$31 million to the state's education budget and give school districts the option of levying a tax to raise more money.

Today, the Senate will decide whether to accept amendments the House added to its version of the bill. A House-Senate conference committee will meet later this week to iron out differences.

The original version of the measure would have provided an additional \$42 million to schools. Scott unsuccessfully proposed raising that amount to about \$60 million.

"This amendment says we ought to be spending significantly more on schools and buying a significantly better education," Scott said. "It will significantly lower the class size, and it allow school districts to choose whether to allow reasonable corporal punishment of students."

Sen. Vince Picard, R-Laramie, said the authority to inflict physical punishment should lie only with parents.

will therefore provide a better education."

Opponents said it would be a mistake to accept Scott's proposal in favor of an earlier amendment that would allow school districts to levy taxes for redistribution by the state. The amendment would ensure that no district that chooses to levy the tax would see funding levels lower than the 1995-96 school year.

Some also questioned whether adding more money into the mix would improve education. Opponents also questioned how the Legislature would pay for Scott's amendment.

"I want everything we can get for education, but we have to fund it," said Sen. Rich Cathcart, D-Carpenter. "We can't get into a deficit-spending mode."

Supporters said if more money had been spent on schools earlier, the state may have avoided the litigation that led to this week's special session.

But supporters said such action is sometimes necessary and helpful.

"Our schools would benefit immensely from a paddle hanging in the principal's office if it's used reasonably," said Sen. April Brimmer Kunz, R-Cheyenne.

Under the amendment, which passed 22-8, school employees and officials who exercise reasonable corporal punishment against a student would be immune from civil lawsuits. The House had initially approved an identical amendment but later removed it.

"I thought we were here to discuss

school reform, not reform school," said Rep. Nancy Berry, D-Casper.

Senators also decided to keep intact a \$500,000 appropriation to defend the state against any further litigation in education finance reform.

The Senate initially agreed to cut that amount by half, but members changed

their minds and voted 13-17 against it.

Sen. Tom Kinnison, R-Sheridan, said he understood the plaintiffs in the lawsuit were already preparing to go back to court over the issue.

"We don't know what it's going to cost us," he said. ■

39. Associated Press

06-04 11:03a Category: Local

Nelson signs school finance measure

By J.L. SCHMIDT Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Gov. Ben Nelson said he couldn't afford not to sign a bill that sends more state money to public schools and changes the way it is distributed.

Nelson said Tuesday that without the school finance formula (LB806) and a measure (LB806A) to add \$110 million to current state aid, some small school districts would have had no money and most schools would not have been able to set budgets for 1998-99.

"Some suggested that I should veto this bill and return to the LB1059 formula for distribution of state aid in the future," Nelson said. "I did not have the luxury to play politics with the measure."

Nelson's signing the school finance formula bill culminated several weeks of contentious debate over the measure, which is seen by proponents as a way to head off the projected \$200 million loss of property taxes when the levy lid of \$1.10 per \$100 of assessed valuation takes effect next year.

Opponents argued it will force smaller, rural schools to close while funneling more money to larger districts.

"My decision has been difficult knowing that some schools will not receive the level of funding they desire," Nelson said. "As with any compromise, there are areas that remain open for review and discussion and I will accept the offer by legislators to work on solutions that improve areas of concern."

Education Committee member Curt Bromm of Wahoo said the bill was introduced and advanced to the full Legislature in response to levy limits imposed on political subdivisions.

"The combination of the levy lids and loss of state aid will have a profound impact on some rural schools across this state," he said. "It is my belief that LB806 is not fair and equitable to all areas of the state."

Education Committee Chairwoman Ardyce Bohlke, who guided the bill through 35 hours of debate over three rounds, said she believes it still represents the fairest solution that could be crafted.

"I always knew the support of the school family was out there," she told an audience of school officials and reporters.

Kearney Superintendent of Schools Gary Hammack said "this law will lead to a higher quality education and access to better programs for students."

Gretna Superintendent Gale Kopplin said the law will help his rapidly expanding district. "We deal with the kids before we see the tax income from the houses they are living in," he said.

Sutton Superintendent Brad Cabrera said he appreciates that Nelson has listened to the concerns of small schools and tried to come up with something equitable.

"I am hopeful that we can continue to work in the future to refine LB806," said Cabrera who also is legislative

representative for the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association.

In a compromise earlier this month, senators agreed to change the bill to cut off excess aid to schools that would otherwise receive more than 100 percent of budget needs from combined state aid and local property taxes. The excess aid would be sent to certain small schools adversely affected by the formula.

The state Department of Education has said 58 small schools would come out better financially under the latest revision.

The bill would change the school finance formula by looking at population density, poverty and the number of students needing instruction in speaking English.

The formula would send more money to the districts that need it most, preferably low-spending districts with a small property-tax base.

Opponents say that unfairly penalizes small rural schools, which often have to spend more per pupil because of their size and location.

Per-pupil cost is the benchmark for measuring efficiency. It is figured by dividing the budget by the number of students. When student numbers drop, costs rise.

State aid based on per-pupil costs decreases with fewer students. Less aid means greater reliance on property taxes, which will be capped. Without sufficient revenue, a school could be forced to close or merge with another school. ■

40. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Student convicted in sex attack can attend other district school

By Stephanie Brenowitz INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

CHERRY HILL — The 16-year-old athlete convicted of attempting to sexually assault a female student will be

allowed to attend Cherry Hill East next year, after the board voted this week to expel him from West.

The father of the 16-year-old victim said yesterday that he was "furious," while the young woman herself said she was not upset by the school board's decision Monday. "I did not want to completely ruin his life," she said.

The sophomore was sentenced in April to three years' probation, 100 hours of community service, and counseling after he was found guilty of attempting to sexually assault the girl in an empty West auditorium in January.

The Inquirer is withholding the names of the juveniles because of their age.

The father of the young man said that he would not comment on the matter, on the advice of his family's attorney. Speaking publicly for the first time, the girl said she was pleased that the court

had supported her story and that the boy would not be at her school anymore. She said she did not set out to "punish" the young man but only wanted him to "feel sorry" for what he did. "I just wanted him to see what he did to me and my life," said the young woman, who is a junior. "It's changed everything for me — I will never be the same, my family will never be the same, and I wanted him to feel that." Keith Herman, president of the school board, said the court's psychological evaluation of the young man indicated he was not a threat to anyone. "The court decision said we need to continue to educate him," said Herman. "Home-schooling is highly expensive. This was his first offense and his student record does not indicate that he is a discipline problem." The family criticized the district when they allowed the student to remain at West after she

reported the incident to school officials and the police. The boy was home-schooled, allowed to attend East, and then ultimately suspended from the district following the court's guilty verdict. He will now be able to finish his last two years at East. Only one board member, Norman Rosen, opposed the board's decision. "I believe the punishment should fit the crime," he said, but would not elaborate. It's too early to gauge reaction to the board's decision. "There certainly will be concerns on parents' parts," said Kathleen Haughwout, president of the East Home School Association, "but I think this young student deserves the chance to turn his mistake around . . . I'm sure the administration will make sure that all students are safe."■

41. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Like others before her, she strove for a better life. Her surroundings doomed her.

A teen's resolve to change is silenced

By Lea Sitton Stanley INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The bullet finally got her.

Gunfire popped on a North Philadelphia corner Friday night, and Lisa Carrasquillo was caught trying to run away.

But she'd been trying to get away long before that.

Carrasquillo, 18, had been handed a Russian roulette kind of life. Just walking out the door is the click of a chamber in a place like Fairhill, where drug-dealing is a day job.

"To me, they're my heroes," Louise Marchetti said of Carrasquillo and other

Carrasquillo was 7 1/2 months pregnant. She had quit going to clubs because she thought the excitement was bad for the baby, her cousin Julio Lugo said. And she was usually inside by 9:30 p.m.

But on Friday, she was still out after 11 p.m., eating ice cream and visiting, when two masked gunmen showed up at Franklin and Indiana.

To shoot the guy she happened to be talking to.

Click.

Time's up.

Carrasquillo, struck in the chest, was

neighborhood teens she has taught at The Community High School, a private, last-resort school for hardened truants. Her students "experience what I hear on the news, what I read in the papers."

Carrasquillo's mother had moved her from the neighborhood, but they were back almost every day because the family was there.

That was home.

So she wouldn't have been anywhere else Friday. That morning she had wrapped up her last final at Community High, in Fairhill. The school, financed by dead on arrival at Temple University Hospital. Doctors delivered Carrasquillo's baby by caesarean section. Last night, the premature boy remained in critical but stable condition. The gunmen's target, Felix Varcas, 25, was also killed in the blaze of automatic-weapons fire. Police have made no arrests.

Without the "miracle baby," the story would have been a Philadelphia tale that's deep into reruns: Good kid gets killed in bad neighborhood.

Maybe, the tale is one of bad timing, as in Carrasquillo's case.

the Philadelphia School District, takes in some of the district's worst cases and makes them care or kicks them out.

Carrasquillo had cared, and was going to graduate June 10. After the exam, she dropped off her prom picture for principal Joseph Proietta. On the back, she scrawled: "Thanks for making these the best three years of my life. It's been fun."

It was time for the sassy girl, who had once cut class with abandon, to celebrate.

With an ice cream.

And as it was several years ago, when a Community High salutatorian just happened to cross the street in front of a motorist who was high, principal Proietta said. That one had a full scholarship to the Community College of Philadelphia.

Maybe, it's a look given a man with a gun, as in the case of another Community High student, shot waiting in line for Chinese food.

Click-click-click.

Proietta said that since 1990, the school has seen six of its graduates die, all violently. Before that, since its founding 17 years ago, three had died, all

of natural causes.

"She didn't do a thing," the principal said of Carrasquillo. "People were there to kill him, and she got killed."

This is a pretty wonderful girl," he said. "At 11 o'clock that morning, she had completed her last exam. She had struggled quite a bit to get to this point."

Carrasquillo, he said, was a typical Community High student.

She had arrived after fouling up ninth grade at Mastbaum Technical High School. She did ninth grade again at Community, felt good about herself, and moved onto Olney High School for 10th grade.

"They have a kind of a thing — 'I got cured,'" Proietta said of his students.

By her 11th-grade year, Carrasquillo had returned to Community.

"When she came back to us . . . it was [with] a realization that she was wrong," he said.

"Last year, she went from being at the bottom to being an honor student," said Marchetti, who taught Carrasquillo science and had her in homeroom. Her grades had dropped off this year because of the pregnancy, Marchetti said, but her determination to graduate never flagged.

"She was bright. She was hardworking," Proietta said. "She was typical of our kids. The kids who make it

here are kids who have figured out that they want to change."

Carrasquillo did more than change herself — she used her strong will to make fellow students shape up. Marchetti and other teachers told about 100 students who filled the school's lunchroom for a memorial yesterday that Carrasquillo had demanded respect for the teachers.

If Marchetti called for a clean room, Carrasquillo acted.

"She would move the desks, mop the floor, work up a sweat while the boys watched," said Marchetti, who added that her student was known as T.P., for teacher's pet.

History teacher William Fitzgerald sketched a salty young woman who cut no slack for rude students. She'd turn to the cutup, tell them to quit (which they did), then turn back to Fitzgerald: "Go ahead, honey. Go back to teaching."

"She never called me Mr. Fitz or Mr. Fitzgerald," he said. "It was honey or babe."

And she "always had your back," he and the other adults said. Meaning she was always looking out for others.

"You ever around Franklin Street," she told Fitzgerald once, "just drop my name and you'll always be all right."

One of the last things she did for

Marchetti was appoint a new T.P., someone who would help the teacher keep the students in line, someone who would have her back.

"She was all heart," Fitzgerald said to the students at the memorial. "God bless Lisa and God bless all of you."

As he stepped away from the podium, he stopped to kiss Adalaida Perez, one of Carrasquillo's closest friends, who sobbed softly through the service.

Two slender white candles and a votive candle flickered on a student's desk that had been draped in a white tablecloth. A golden cross with Christ stood between the two white candles.

On the blackboard behind the desk, someone had written, "In Loving memory of Lisa Carrasquillo," a sentiment scrawled on the rear windshields of cars throughout Fairhill.

The pain in the room was palpable as the children cried. Most wept quietly, a few sobbed.

Proietta had said before the service that his students were grieving not just for Carrasquillo but for themselves.

As students sat waiting for the service to begin, one voice could be heard, soft and plaintive:

"Ice cream. She died eating ice cream."

Click. ■

42. Chicago Sun-Times

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

1 of 4 Chicago eighth-graders to be held back

BY ROSALIND ROSSI Education Reporter

A quarter of Chicago public school eighth-graders have been told that they will not graduate on time this year, based on a tough new promotion policy that is raising howls of protest from some

Principals say mandatory summer school isn't the problem. Some parents are upset that their low-scoring eighth-graders will not participate in graduation ceremonies.

Last year, during the first-year of a policy that ended "social promotions," low-scoring eighth-graders were allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies but received empty envelopes instead of diplomas. Social promotions advance students to keep them with their peers without regard to academic standards.

But Schools and Regions Chief Blondean Davis said principals complained that the mock presentations had sent "the wrong message," so they were banned.

parents.

Nearly 7,400-eighth graders missed the cutoff score on a test of basic skills. They are among 42,700 third-, sixth-, eighth- and ninth-graders to be notified

At Von Humboldt School, counselors were called in to handle "a lot of crying" when eighth-graders received their test scores, Principal Christ Kalamatas said. At Burley School, a woman wept during an office conference when she learned that her son couldn't graduate on time, even though his sisters had flown in from South America for the event.

Sandra Jennings-Smith said she wants to pull her eighth-grader out of the school system because of the policy. "One test should not determine an entire academic career," she said.

Paul Vallas, the school system's chief executive officer, said the policy is needed to end the "academic disaster" of social promotion and to return some

that they must attend summer school this year.

Nearly half the ninth-graders — 48 percent — missed their promotion level.

value to an eighth-grade diploma.

Even the cutoff gives kids a break, he said. It requires a score of 7.0, or an entering seventh-grade level, in both reading and math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Grade level would be 8.8 — the eighth month of eighth grade.

"We're not sending them to the gas chamber," Vallas said. "We're giving children additional instructional help so they are not moving to the next level until they are ready."

This year, 7,392 eighth-graders missed the 7.0 cutoff in either reading or math, or 26.6 percent of all eighth-graders. That's only fractionally higher than the number of eighth-graders who missed last year's cutoff, which was even lower and

was imposed only for subpar reading.

But Jennings-Smith said the policy puts too much emphasis on one test, and that she's walking proof high-stakes testing is wrong. She says she had a 12th-grade reading score and a fourth-grade math score when she graduated from elementary school, but that she took honors classes in high school.

"Everybody is not going to do well on both tests," Jennings-Smith said. "We're just talking a test. One test isn't enough proof. That one test outweighs everything? I can't buy that."

Jennings-Smith said her daughter, Ashley Smith, 14, worked extremely hard this year at Wirth Elementary to earn an A in math.

Ashley's math scores rose from a 3.9 to a 6.8 —only two months shy of the summer school cutoff.

Ashley got all A's on her last report card and she made the honor roll. So, Jennings-Smith wondered, who is she supposed to believe: Ashley's teachers, who say she's doing A work and just doesn't test well, or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills? Jennings-Smith said she's not sticking around to figure it out

because "I'm afraid that down the road the same thing will happen again."

Also for the first time this year, third-, sixth- and ninth-graders —like eighth-graders —must pass summer school to be promoted to the next grade.

In addition, students in all four grades go to summer school if they flunked reading or math classes. So the final mandatory summer school number should be higher than the 42,700 students who missed their test cutoffs. Also yet to be calculated is the number of students granted waivers from the promotion policy. ■

43. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

The debate over gay rights is never more heated than when it has to do with school.

By Jennifer Weiner INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Kevin Jennings has a story to tell — about being beaten up and shunned, teeth knocked out and bones broken, about suicide attempts and the shame he endured — all because he was gay. Now, as a Harvard graduate, a former history teacher, and national director of the Gay/Lesbian/Straight Teachers' Network (GLSTN), Jennings is pushing openness and tolerance for gay teachers and gay students. "I want this to be the first generation that isn't taught to hate," he says.

William Devlin has a story to tell, too — about late-night phone calls full of obscenities and death threats, about how his own teenage daughter is harassed in public high school — all because she's a

And so there are battles, in schools and school districts, all over the country. Should there be support groups for gay kids? Gay/straight alliances? Can a teacher talk about what he and his partner did over the weekend? Can school districts pass resolutions in favor of traditional families, and forbid teachers from "promoting" homosexuality? And what can teachers teach about gays in history, or about homosexuality in general, in a world where many people believe that homosexuality is wrong?

Kevin Jennings never had the option of staying in the closet. He was outed in eighth grade, by a sadistic gym instructor who noticed him looking at one of the other boys in his rural Southern high school.

" [The coach] stopped in mid-sentence, fixed his gaze on me, and

vocal Christian and chaste. Devlin, director of the Philadelphia Family Policy Council, father of five, believes that homosexuality isn't destiny. It's a choice, he says — a bad one. "People make bad choices all the time," he says.

Where Kevin Jennings sees the fight as tolerance and understanding versus repression and fear, Devlin sees a different clash of opposites: a hedonistic, autonomous view of the world that teaches young people that they can do "whatever feels good," versus what he sees as the Judeo-Christian values of actions and consequences, where people are "accountable and responsible to God."

These days, the topic is everywhere. said very slowly and clearly, "Stop looking at his legs." As my classmates slowly turned to look at me amidst the dead silence of the wrestling room, I felt as if a stake had been driven through my heart

I never went back to being the person I was before that moment

I never felt like I belonged in school," Jennings wrote in an essay called "I Remember."

"When you're a young gay kid, all the normal sources of support are cut off from you. When something's wrong, kids are told to tell a teacher, tell a counselor, tell someone in their family or someone in their church. Well, what if all of those people will condemn you, or throw you out? The very thing you're taught to do — ask for help — is the very thing that gets you in trouble."

Enter an arena, find a clash over gay rights. There are debates over gays in the military, gays in the clergy, gay marriage, gay parents, and gays on sitcom TV.

But there aren't many places where the debate is as heated as it is when the subject is gays in school.

Want to make a conservative see red? Mention Heather Has Two Mommies, a children's book written for the 10-and-under set, and available in some school libraries, about a little girl and her lesbian parents. Want to drive liberals crazy? Tell them their child has a teacher who believes that lesbian mothers shouldn't have custody of their children.

He recites the litany of his childhood abuses: "I attempted suicide two times. Had a tooth knocked out. Had my right hand broken." And then, what rings saddest and most true for anyone who's ever had to survive high school: "I ate lunch alone for four years. From seventh to 10th grade. No one would eat lunch with the gay kid."

He survived by becoming what he calls "the best little boy in the world," with grades good enough to get him into Harvard, making him the first one in his family of 64 first cousins to go to college.

He became a teacher, first at a high school in Rhode Island, then at a prep school in Massachusetts. And he struggled with what to tell his own students about himself, as he watched some of them coming to terms with their own homosexuality.

Jennings eventually came out, in a speech to the student body at his second school as a teacher.

And his disclosure ended up helping even students who weren't gay. During PrideFest in Philadelphia, Jennings read a speech by a student in the school: an upper-class, heterosexual, Jewish girl who talked about overcoming bulimia and dealing with past abuse, after Jennings' speech, and courage, inspired her.

You might wonder, Jennings told his rapt audience of about 90 — many of whom were teachers — what a girl like this has to do with his own story. You might wonder what to say to parents who "think we're promoting something that's a threat to their children."

His suggestion? Tell them it's not a struggle about gay versus straight, but about liberation — "a brighter future in which we can all win."

"If you make it easier for one group of people, you make it easier for everyone," he said.

William Devlin says he's not afraid of gay people.

"I really wouldn't know about homophobia," says Devlin, settling his lanky frame at the dining-room table of his Olney house as his children zip in and out, one on Rollerblades.

"I'd not know about homophobia because I certainly don't practice it. I've corrected my children when they've come home with pejoratives. I tell them, 'You're not allowed to use that term anywhere. We want to speak positively about human beings, because we all bear

And while there is agreement that the adoption process, and the fights, caused deep and lasting rifts within the community, there's no clear understanding of what the resolution will change. The superintendent told a local newspaper that he's still working out the particulars of what it means to "promote" homosexuality.

Board members concede that district teachers were not promoting or encouraging homosexuality, so they can continue doing their jobs just as they had been. A copy of Newsweek with a gay-marriage cover was still available in the school library. And, thus far, the biggest question seems to be whether the school band can still perform a standard by the flamboyantly gay Village People — "YMCA."

In Philadelphia, the language about tolerance and non-discrimination is clear.

In the section on adolescent sexuality, the school board lists its policy objectives

the image of God."

Devlin thinks about homosexuality as something akin to adultery: a temptation that can be resisted, a sin that one can choose to avoid.

"The homosexual view of the world is based on autonomy: There are no laws, there are no rules, you aren't accountable to anyone but yourself."

Ask him about Jamie Nabozny, the 21-year-old Wisconsin gay man who successfully sued his school district for allowing him to be harassed and beaten for years, and Devlin counters with the story of Greg Louganis, who was, Devlin says, seduced into homosexuality by the first male father figure to show him love. "Greg made a bad choice. But you can recover from bad choices," he says. "It's tragic what happened to Jamie Nabozny. No one — regardless of the choices they make — should have that kind of abuse."

But that doesn't mean there should be gay/straight alliances, or openly gay teachers, in public schools. "Recruitment tools," Devlin calls them. And he holds up a list of topics from Central High's drop-in center: a video on teens with AIDS; a speech by members of the University of Pennsylvania's Gay and Lesbian Alliance; a film on teenage parenthood. "I don't see anything here about being pro-life, or how to be a virgin at Central."

That was the problem that Concerned Women for America saw. In fact, the half-a-million-member conservative group saw the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, actively promoting gay and "in order to promote a healthy lifestyle for all children."

First among them: "to enable and encourage students to abstain from sexual intercourse until ready to enter marriage or another mutually monogamous relationship."

And, third, "to assure a safe, equitable and positive school experience for lesbian and gay students."

The district's equal employment opportunity policy says that it is committed to providing equal opportunity to everyone "without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, handicap, disabled or Vietnam era veteran status."

However, according to Kathy Fleming, head of the Philadelphia chapter of GLSTN, which has 130 paying members — gay and straight — there aren't many teachers who are "out" to their students.

lesbian history month, flying in the face of their own Christian values.

"We know that homosexuality is a chosen lifestyle, and it is one that has severe repercussions healthwise, and to our society," said Carmen Tate, the group's vice president and spokesman. "For those of us who are Christian, and of faith, we know that our standard, which is from God and from the Bible, directly talks against homosexuality. As parents, that is how we've raised our children: to know that it is a lifestyle, that is chosen, and that is wrong."

So the CWFA authored a sample school-board "pro-family resolution," reading, in part, "Whereas the traditional family, of one man married to one woman and their children through birth or adoption, has been the norm in all civilized societies throughout history . . . be it resolved that (insert your school district here) hereby endorses this pro-family resolution and affirms that pro-homosexual concepts on sex and family . . . will never be tolerated or accepted in this school."

Tate says the group isn't keeping track of how many districts have adopted the resolution, which she characterizes as an attempt for families to take their schools back from "outside labor organizations, and from government."

One school district that did adopt it is in Elizabethtown, Pa., near Harrisburg. It took \$6,000 in legal wrangling, and long, tense, standing-room-only meetings, but in February, the district adopted CWFA's resolution.

"There's a lot who won't tell you. It's normal for teachers not to come out to their colleagues. In the way schools are run, it can be a political weapon," Fleming said.

Fleming herself is out to her colleagues, but not to her students. "It's not very comfortable, and I don't want to lie," she said. But she teaches elementary school, and thinks her students might be too young to understand.

The way Fleming describes it, GLSTN's aims have less to do with indoctrination, more to do with comfort — and safety. GLSTN encourages gay adults to write to their old schools and talk about what happened there, as a way of making the issue more real. They make resources and videos available. If young people or parents call with reports of abuse or harassment, GLSTN will help them — but won't fight their battles for them. And, if there's a school where students are interested in a gay/straight

alliance, GLSTN will offer a sponsoring teacher, information and strategies. But it won't come to schools promoting those organizations, Fleming said. "We're about grassroots change within every school."

And so, here is what the Concerned Women are so afraid of, and here is what GLSTN members long for: about three dozen students sitting in a circle in their classroom, eating potato chips and drinking pineapple soda, talking about Spanish tests and summer plans and where to spend the money they earned at their bake sale.

This is Central High School's Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Bisexual Alliance —

the only such group, so far, in a Philadelphia public school.

Its members — mostly girls, mostly juniors and seniors — operate on a don't-ask, don't-tell philosophy, so no one has to say whether they're gay or straight or still trying to figure things out. Unless they want to. And, this afternoon, one girl does.

They go around the circle, each one taking a turn to speak, and most of the speeches are complaints about finals, or troubles with teachers. One girl talks about a gay male friend getting in a fight, and there's some discussion about who started it.

There's talk about the prom, and

whether same-sex couples are allowed. There's talk about how public same-sex couples can be (the consensus is that girls can be more obvious than guys).

One girl mentions her brother coming out to her. Another tells casually of having a crush on another girl, and how her guy friend reacted to the news — not with condemnation, but with leering, Howard Stern-style interest: "It was, like, the two girls he liked, together!"

And then one girl sat up straight and smiled broadly. "I came out to my mother this morning, and she didn't freak out!" She sat back, still smiling. And all the kids applauded.■

44. Associated Press

06-04 2:32a Category: Local

School supes say kindergarten without construction aid won't fly

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) - Time is running short for House and Senate negotiators to find an answer to the state's kindergarten impasse. But school superintendents in the southern region of the state say voters in their districts will reject any plan lacking money for classroom construction.

"The bottom line is anything less than the original proposal is impossible for Derry," Superintendent David Brown said, noting that Derry already has 20 portable classrooms.

Shaheen has said she will veto the Senate's plan to give \$1,000 vouchers to allow poor families to send their children to private kindergartens.

The superintendents said the Senate plan will prove more costly than Shaheen's because there is no money for

"The original paid 100 percent of the building cost and \$1,000 per student with the 25-cent cigarette tax. It's the only one I would even think of presenting to the School Board," Brown said.

House lawmakers have approved Shaheen's plan, though they chose a 20-cent rather than a 25-cent-per-pack cigarette tax increase. But Senate Republicans have a plan of their own and approved a 12-cent increase.

Shaheen's plan contains \$30 million to pay 100 percent of the construction cost in districts without kindergarten and 75 school buildings and less earmarked for teachers.

Most southern region superintendents also believe Shaheen's plan has a better chance with voters, who make the final decision whether to start up kindergarten in their communities.

percent for renovations or additions in districts with kindergarten. Her plan also gives districts \$1,000 for each kindergarten-age child.

Senate Republicans have objected providing buildings to some communities after others paid for their own. No construction aid is included in the Senate plan.

Under the Senate plan, all communities would get the \$500 per pupil now in state law. Poorer ones would get \$750, and the poorest would get \$1,000.

"The governor's plan is more attractive because of the building aid. The (GOP) plan gives more money up front, but I've seen start-up seed money disappear fast," Salem Superintendent Henry LaBranche said.■

45. Associated Press

06-04 2:39a Category: Local

Governor, lawmakers continue to negotiate budget

By EVAN BERLAND Associated Press Writer

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) - Gov. John G. Rowland late Tuesday said he would veto a \$21.1 billion budget passed hours earlier by Democrats, but agreed with lawmakers to a 24-hour window for compromise before the legislative session ends.

"We will have an opportunity to make the fixes so that we can have the

spending reductions, so that we can have the tax cuts, but right now it's obviously coming up short," Rowland said at a 10:30 p.m. news conference outside his Capitol office.

Earlier in the day, Democrats without Rowland's blessing passed a budget that increases education spending and offers income- and property-tax relief.

Democratic leaders said the tone of negotiations has been amiable, and said they will continue meeting with the

governor.

"This process could easily crash and burn and could easily have crashed and burned days ago," said Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin Sullivan, D-West Hartford.

The session ends at midnight Wednesday. A veto of the two-year taxing and spending package would likely force lawmakers to extend their six months of work.

The major sticking point is the

governor's plan to privatize state computer systems. Democrats want to ensure employees do not lose their jobs in the deal.

Republicans contend the Democrats' plan to have legislative oversight of the multi-year, \$1 billion computer contract could negate the \$50 million in savings Rowland expects in the second year of the budget. Also, they say legislative approval of the contract would strip the governor's office of powers it traditionally has enjoyed.

The House approved the budget in the early morning hours Tuesday. The Senate approved both the spending and tax plans by 19-17, party-line votes Tuesday night. Negotiations with the Rowland administration were expected to continue into the early morning hours.

The Democrats' budget plan offers \$243 million in new property and income tax relief, ending income-tax payments for 311,000 lower-income state residents in two years. It also would cut the gas tax 3 cents in July, and another 3 cents in July 1998.

Democrats plan to increase funding for colleges and universities, local government, rental assistance and transportation programs for people losing family welfare benefits.

Republicans contend the budget, which would spend \$600 million more than the governor's plan, spends too much and offers too little in tax breaks.

Legislative leaders said they feared an

Next year, joint-filers who earn up to \$100,500 would be able to receive up to \$215 in property tax credits. The following year, the credit would expand to \$275. Joint-filers who earn more than \$190,000 would receive the minimum tax credit, \$100.

Democrats also are offering \$126 million in income tax breaks, which would reduce the 4.5 percent tax rate to 3

erosion of public confidence if they have to convene a special session - something done when then-Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. vetoed three budgets during the 1991 income tax debate.

"The public will equally be mad at all of us," said House Minority Leader Robert Ward, R-North Branford.

Republicans and Democrats also are at odds over an early retirement plan for state employees. The GOP lawmakers are upset that Democrats want to prevent Rowland from laying off workers if too few retire. Democrats claim their plan would save \$188 million, which Republicans consider an inflated amount.

"What this plan does is it says to the governor, 'Honest, you can get these savings ... but when you fail using our plan, we're not going to give you the ability to get the savings another way,'" said Sen. Robert Genuario, a Norwalk Republican and ranking member of the budget-writing committee.

He said false savings plans could create as much as a \$359 million budget deficit over two years.

"We create a problem that I believe this General Assembly must reject and that I believe the governor must veto," Genuario said.

Democratic leaders said their early retirement plan would not prevent layoffs and said it is not an issue.

A competing Republican budget, which failed in the House, also failed 19-17 along party lines in the Senate. percent for a portion of a taxpayer's income. For example, joint-filers currently are taxed at 3 percent for their first \$9,000 of income. That rate would expand to the first \$15,000 of income next year, and the first \$18,000 of income in the second year of the budget.

The Democrats' budget increased the current state aid given to communities from a fund paid for by revenue from

That plan would spend \$375 million less than Democrats and offer \$535 million in income tax cuts over two years.

While it may not be productive, a veto could score political points both for Republicans and Democrats, lawmakers said about each other's parties. Rowland would be able to make a strong stand against a Democratic drive to protect labor unions, and Democrats would prove their loyalty to the unions that are crucial to winning elections, lawmakers said.

Ward said he doesn't see a clear winner or loser with a veto. Democrats would be able to show unions they wanted to protect employees, and the GOP may even score higher tax cuts, although Democrats would want to share credit, he said.

Senate Majority Leader George Jepsen, D-Stamford said a veto is not needed, but conceded it would be a strong statement for Rowland to make.

"Governors tend to look good when they look strong," he said.

The Democrats' budget would total \$10.46 billion in the first year, and \$10.64 in the second for a total spending increase of 3.7 percent over current spending.

The Democrats' plan provides residents with \$117 million in new property tax relief by expanding an existing \$100 credit on income taxes given people who have cars.

Indian casinos. The so-called Pequot fund would increase from \$85 million in each year of the budget to \$135 million.

Also, communities would receive an additional \$22 million over the course of the budget through increased state payments to towns that have hospitals and colleges that do not pay property taxes. ■

46. Portland Press Herald

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Umaine parries inequity complaint

By Barry Svrluga Staff Writer

Three years ago, when Ann England-Maxim took over as head coach of women's cross country at the University of Maine, she couldn't lure top distance runners to Orono by offering them scholarships.

During the 1996-97 school year, things changed. Suddenly, England-Maxim had \$10,000 to offer

prospective athletes. Next year, she'll have \$45,500.

"Going from never having any to having some is a good thing," she said.

Tuesday, school officials pointed to examples like England-Maxim's to defend their approach and commitment to attaining equity for women athletes.

The defense comes a day after a national women's rights group filed a

federal complaint against UMaine and 24 other schools, claiming the schools discriminate in awarding athletic scholarships.

The figures used by the National Women's Law Center in compiling the list were from the school year 1995-96, the first year in which UMaine began a gradual implementation of a three-year gender equity plan for the athletic

department. UMaine officials argued Tuesday that the figures were outdated, saying progress has been made.

The university, however, did not argue with the crux of the complaint - that the school is not yet in compliance with a 25-year-old civil rights law that prevents sex discrimination in education.

"We're not saying we're doing a great job on this," said Joe Carr, UMaine's assistant director of public affairs. "No, we're not there yet. No, no, no."

"We're not where we want to be," said Dr. Suzanne Estler, UMaine's director of equal opportunity. "But I'm comfortable with where we're headed, and I'm comfortable we're making progress."

The basis for the complaint is Title IX, a 1972 federal law that has been credited by many with changing the face of women's athletics.

In the complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, the law center alleges that UMaine offers an average of \$1,991 more financial aid to each of its male athletes than to their female counterparts, a number Estler said the university has never tried to figure out.

But the center and the university agree that in 1995-96, 40 percent of UMaine's athletes were female, yet only 26 percent of the scholarship money went

As of Tuesday evening, UMaine had not received a copy of the law center's complaint, copies of which were being faxed to schools throughout the day. The university now has 135 days to show the Office of Civil Rights that it is making progress in this area. If that does not happen, government officials will begin an investigation.

to women. That, in large part, is what got UMaine on the list, said Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the law center.

"A 14 (percentage-points) gap is a very large gap," Greenberger said. "And if you take that figure that's close to \$2,000 and project it over all sports, that adds up to a very substantial total for female students at UMaine."

But university officials said things are getting better. In May 1995, the university unveiled its gender equity plan because, President Frederick E. Hutchinson said at the time, "Gender equity is an institutional philosophy as well as a federal mandate."

The plan, authored by Estler, says the percentage of scholarship money spent on women eventually should equal the percentage of women participating in athletics.

In addition, it says the ratio of female athletes to male athletes should mirror the ratio of female undergraduates to male undergraduates. This past year, women made up 46 percent of students.

So far, the university says it is meeting its goals.

In 1996-97, this past school year, the plan called for 67 percent of scholarship money to go to men, 33 percent to women. Actual figures provided by the

"We are hopeful we won't even have to wait for the Office of Civil Rights," Greenberger said. "We have the option of litigation ourselves. Our hope was to focus attention on the problem. We hope the schools come into compliance. We would expect the schools to adjust their scholarship and financial aid programs."

England-Maxim, the women's cross

country coach, is convinced that her school already has.

university say that 67.1 percent went to men, 32.9 percent to women. That compares favorably with the numbers for participation. In 1996-97, 38.3 percent of the university's athletes were women, meaning the gap between participation and funding is only 5.4 percentage points. That's well below the figure of 14 used by the law center.

"Given the financial constraints of the 1990s," Estler said, "we can't do it all at once. We're moving systematically toward that plan. We're doing it in the context of that plan. We certainly are addressing the issue."

Estler's plan says women should get 40 percent of all scholarship money in the next school year.

Greenberger said plans are all well and good, but her group is interested in seeing action.

"We're looking at, 'What is the plan?' " she said. "How much progress have they been making? How long are they giving themselves? If they're saying they'll take three years and they will be there, then that's good. But that may be a different set of facts than if they've promised to come to compliance but are lagging behind. And (UMaine) sure had a big gap."

"I think we have a new focus and are developing more of a Division I-type program," she said. "I think we've made a lot of progress. I'm excited about the opportunities for women in athletics." ■

47. Associated Press

06-04 10:07a Category: Local

Proposal would increase graduation requirements

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) - High school students may have to take more classes in English, mathematics, science and social studies before they are allowed to graduate.

A Senate Education Committee on Tuesday voted 5-4 to recommend a bill that would increase the minimum requirement to earn a high school diploma from 18 to 20 units. A unit is equal to 120 hours - the time usually spent each school year on a topic.

The bill - which would first affect the class of 2002 - would cut the number of electives required from nine to six units.

It would add two units in science and one unit each for English, math and social studies.

"Ohio's current standards are 14 years old and I would not characterize them as high enough for the 20th century, let alone the 21st century," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Eugene Watts, R-Columbus.

Watts said he expects the Senate to vote on the bill next week.

The changes would cost joint vocational districts an added \$9.8 million to \$12.2 million a year to hire more teachers, get more space to offer more courses and lengthen the school day.

Costs in other districts would vary, according to the Ohio Legislative Budget Office.

Last month the state Board of Education approved "in principle" new standards that would tighten graduation requirements.

Under the state's proposal, school districts no longer would be required to use units as a graduation requirement. The goal is to shift the emphasis from process to results, education officials said.

Instead, students would be required to achieve various levels of competency in 10 topics: English, math, science, social

studies, foreign language, arts, technology, business, family and consumer sciences, and physical

education.

Watts and John Goff, state superintendent of public instruction, have

predicted that the proposed standards will be merged with Watts' bill. ■

48. Associated Press

06-04 2:51a Category: Local

Republican leaders to offer scholarship bill for D.C. students

WASHINGTON (AP) - Students from low-income homes in the District of Columbia would be eligible for scholarships to the schools of their choice under a bill House Majority Leader Dick Armey plans to introduce.

The bill would set aside \$7 million in scholarship money in the program's first year, \$8 million in the second and up to \$10 million in 2000, Armey spokesman Richard Diamond said.

Scholarships of up to \$3,200 each would be available for tuition and other expenses at private and public schools for students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Washington, D.C., or in the

Maryland and Virginia suburbs. The measure was to be introduced today.

Councilman Kevin Chavous said the plan sounded like a repeat of a voucher plan Republicans unsuccessfully tried to impose on the city last year.

"The public has spoken loud and clear with respect to vouchers," said Chavous, who chairs the education committee. "It may be called a scholarship but it sounds like a voucher."

Chavous said congressional leaders should instead focus on getting schools money needed to clear fire code violations so classes can open on time this September.

Still, House Speaker Newt Gingrich

said the program would be similar to Pell grants available for low-income college students.

"The D.C. school system is in pretty bad shape and this is a good way to use the principle of freedom to help the most needy children in the district," Diamond said.

To qualify for the scholarships, students would have to be from families earning no more than 185 percent of the poverty level, Armey's office said.

Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., and Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., plan to introduce a companion bill in the Senate, Diamond said. ■

49. The Hartford Courant

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Approval seems near for Sheff legislation

By RICK GREEN

Legislators were set to agree Tuesday on a \$90 million response to the state's segregated classrooms and failing schools with a plan that emphasizes preparing children to learn and adds interdistrict programs, but delays substantive action.

The proposal would add day-care and preschool programs, fund new regional schools and expand voluntary busing. It also calls for the state Education Department to create a detailed blueprint to reduce disparities between school districts. But the plan immediately drew criticism from an attorney in the landmark Sheff vs. O'Neill school-desegregation case.

"This is a feeble attempt," said John Brittain. "I think that this bill is extremely weak. It doesn't contain any racial goals, nor does it provide for any meaningful school choice. There is no accountability for anyone to do anything they don't want to do."

The legislative plan, in the form of two major bills that were expected to be approved by the state House and Senate late Tuesday, is the legislature's reply to the state Supreme Court's ruling in the

Sheff vs. O'Neill lawsuit. Last summer the court ordered the legislature to find a remedy to the segregation that divides cities and suburbs.

It was unclear Tuesday whether Gov. John G. Rowland would sign the legislation, which is more expensive - and possibly substantially more - than what he had proposed in response to Sheff in February.

Lawmakers said the plan has the support of the legislative Black and Puerto Rican Caucus and plaintiffs in the case, but some said Tuesday that they would have liked to see more money to create regional schools that bring children of different races together.

"It is an adequate first effort," said state Rep. Kenneth P. Green, D-Hartford, a caucus member. He said the legislature should be doing more to help young children and cities, regardless of the lawsuit. He said the bills would not do enough to reduce racial isolation. "This continues to be a work in progress," Green said.

Green and others said the key portion of the legislation requires the state Department of Education to come up

with a comprehensive five-year plan to eliminate inequality between school districts, from curriculum and resources to student achievement.

The

plan must be given to the legislature by next February. Education department staff members said the job was a huge one: They will have to assess the inequality between districts and come up with

detailed solutions.

The bills call for an expenditure of about \$90 million on Sheff and other education-related initiatives, substantially more than what Rowland proposed to spend, Democrats said. However, this spending could increase substantially when the education department comes back with its five-year implementation plan to the legislature next year.

"We are offering an incredibly attractive incentive," said state Sen. Thomas P. Gaffey, D-Meriden, co-chairman of the legislature's education committee. Gaffey and Rep. Cameron C. Staples, D-New Haven, led the effort to get funding for school choice and more interdistrict schools. They also were

instrumental in the takeover of the Hartford schools, which replaced a locally elected board of education with a state-appointed board for the first time.

"We were able to get together and come up with a plan that was agreed upon by everybody. That was the best thing," said state Rep. Hector A. Diaz, D-Bridgeport, another member of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. Diaz said the commitment to a long-term program, in the form of the five-year plan to be developed by the state Education Department and Commissioner Theodore S. Sergi, was the most important issue for the caucus.

Last month, caucus members, with the support of the Sheff plaintiffs, called on the legislature to ask Sergi and his department to prepare a plan to tackle the inequality between school systems. At the time, lawyers for the Sheff plaintiffs said they were prepared to go back to court if the legislature failed to put together a substantial package to tackle segregated

State Rep. Ernest E. Newton, D-Bridgeport, said that for years the legislature has been more interested in

and inferior schools.

In the Hartford area, the divisions between the city and the suburbs are immense, from racial isolation to poverty to student performance. Hartford's schools serve some of the poorest children in the state. They score the lowest in the state on standardized tests. Schools in Hartford are 95 percent minority, compared with largely white and wealthier populations in the city's suburbs.

The legislation orders the education department to immediately begin preparing a strategy to overcome these differences.

Diaz and others said this was needed to try to remove politics from the process. However, legislators next year will be asked to act on the education department's five-year plan during an election year.

Among the initiatives the legislature was expected to approve:

- * About \$30 million more to be spent building jails than in funding preschool and other programs that could make a difference in a child's life. He said it was

on early-childhood programs, including grants to expand day care and preschool. "School readiness councils" would be set up throughout the state to expand both public and private service providers.

- * Nearly \$12 million to fund magnet schools and other interdistrict programs.

- * About \$6 million to expand family resource centers, which provide a link between schools and families in need.

- * \$6 million to add to the 12 charter schools scheduled to open this fall.

- * \$5.5 million for needy school districts to expand reading and summer school programs.

- * \$500,000 to set up four regional "lighthouse" schools in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport where urban and suburban children would attend.

- * About \$2 million to allow about 1,000 children to cross town boundaries to go to school in a model "choice" program.

time to focus on "what happens to that child before we send them over to the our penitentiary system."■

50. Associated Press

06-04 3:31a Category: Local

House approves desegregation proposals, early childhood education

By DIANE SCARPONI Associated Press Writer

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) - The House overwhelmingly approved a bill early this morning to start what lawmakers promise will be a long road to desegregate public schools and improve education for all children.

The bill would expand school choice, while putting off more comprehensive solutions to racial isolation by endorsing a five-year plan to study disparities and propose remedies.

Tuesday night, members of the House unanimously approved a separate comprehensive plan to introduce preschool to poor children ages 3 to 5 and provide incentives for day-care centers and pre-schools to train teachers and improve their programs.

Both proposals need to be approved by the Senate before the legislative session ends at midnight.

The measures were crafted in response to the state Supreme Court's ruling in the Sheff vs. O'Neill case, which said that

Hartford schools were unconstitutionally segregated. About 95 percent of Hartford's students are minorities.

The House approved the school choice measure 116-28.

Lawmakers freely admitted the bill is not perfect, but said the five-year study and implementation schedule will ensure the state will try to improve education for years to come.

"I think at this point, this is the best we are able to accomplish," said Rep. Cameron Staples, a New Haven Democrat and co-chairman of the General Assembly's Education Committee.

"It's not something that's going to be done in one session in one year. We must commit ourselves to looking at this on an annual basis," he said.

The state would expand a school choice program now in Hartford to include New Haven and Bridgeport, starting in the fall of 1998 for up to 1,000 students, and for the whole state the following year.

Schools that participate can get

\$100,000 from the state annually to implement their plan, up to \$3,000 in grants to transport and educate each student, and more money from the state's school aid formula.

Several suburban Republican lawmakers protested this formula, saying they will have to accept these students for less than half the money the students' home cities would spend to educate them.

Rep. Christopher Scalzo, R-Ridgefield, said the proposal does not address the basics of good education, while it skirts the heart of the problem in city schools - poverty and the disintegration of families.

"The more we use schools to deal with social policy rather than the quality of education, the more we will cheat the students out of obtaining their maximum potential," Scalzo said.

Students would be eligible for this school choice system by lotteries that aim to diversify the racial, ethnic and economic makeup in the classroom. Students cannot be recruited simply for athletic or extracurricular purposes.

Schools that do not have enough space to meet demand would give preference to students from schools that have lost accreditation, such as the case at Hartford Public High School.

Communities that build or add on to schools could get extra money from the state if the project would accommodate choice students.

To find ways to bring suburban students into the cities, the bill would increase the scope of new kinds of schools: charter schools, which operate outside normal school rules, and magnet and lighthouse schools, which try to draw students by offering unique curricula.

Black and Hispanic lawmakers said the five-year look at ways to answer the Sheff lawsuit ensures the state will try to offer all children truly equal educations - from books to curriculum and facilities.

Many minority lawmakers opposed the school choice component of the plan, although they supported the overall bill. They said only a proposal to solely

The bill encourages day-care centers and pre-schools to become accredited from national organizations, and proposes grants to help them train teachers, upgrade their facilities and buy educational materials. The state would set standards for these facilities to follow.

Day-care centers and preschool programs are required to offer a sliding fee, based on the family's ability to pay, while grants would be targeted to needy

improve city schools would reach the most students and solve the dilemmas raised by the Sheff case. They picked out the planning element as the most important aspect of the proposal.

"This bill makes a very good attempt at a long-term commitment," said Rep. Evelyn Mantilla, D-Hartford. "Choice is good, but it's minor to what we can accomplish in the long run."

Meanwhile, the State Board of Education will spend five years studying disparities in schools and find ways to ease the problems.

The board would look at everything from supplies and curriculum offerings to the kinds of teacher training and teacher-student ratios schools offer. They would report to the governor and legislators, which would then consider the recommendations and implement them.

The bill calls for the creation of Regional Educational Service Centers to oversee the progress of the programs and communities and individual centers that serve poor children. Grants would come directly from the state to the day-care centers or other care providers.

The Department of Social Services money would help extend day care and preschool offerings to full-day and year-round classes, so the children of welfare recipients receive education while their parents work. Day-care providers would have to pass background

report to the Legislature.

The House earlier Tuesday approved the other half of lawmakers' two-tiered response to Sheff.

The proposal calls for the state to spend \$10 million starting in June, and another \$19.7 million the following year, to educate children ages 3 to 5, under the Democrats' budget that passed the House and Senate.

This program works hand-in-hand with the state Department of Social Services' welfare-to-work initiatives. The department may fully match the amounts called for in the budget, said Staples.

Lawmakers of all political stripes touted evidence that children who get a solid start in preschool do better in school later on, and have a better chance to succeed in life.

"We're providing funding so day care can stop being baby-sitters and start being early childhood education centers," said Rep. Thomas Herlihy, R-Simsbury.

checks.

The proposal was also set to complement proposals to remedy the racial isolation of city schools, by helping children get ahead from the beginning in their own communities.

"When we talk about Sheff-related initiatives, to me this is what it's all about," said Rep. Lawrence Cafero, R-Norwalk. ■

51. Associated Press

06-04 3:48a Category: Local

Budget panel OKs state high school graduation tests

By ANDREW BLASKO Associated Press Writer

MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Qualifying for a cap and gown would get a little tougher in Wisconsin under a proposal backed by the Legislature's budget panel.

The plan approved 11-5 by the Joint Finance Committee Tuesday would create state graduation tests for high school students.

Gov. Tommy Thompson has proposed state standards in most academic subjects to make sure that Wisconsin students can compete in future job markets.

Developing the test, scheduled to start in the 1999-2000 school year, would cost the state about \$1.3 million.

The panel made its decision as it reviewed Thompson's 1997-99 budget. When it completes its review, the committee will send its version of the

budget to the Legislature for action.

Critics say the proposed graduation testing is more for political purposes than educational purposes, and is offered too late in a student's career.

"If you want to see if a student is learning, the time is not when they are 18 years old and out the door," said Sen. Gary George, D-Milwaukee.

Supporters say the test will create better graduates.

"There is nothing that drives educational achievement more than a test," said Rep. Scott Jensen, R-Waukesha.

A student would have four chances to pass the test before getting a diploma. With a parent's approval, a student could waive the test but would have to allow a school board to use other criteria to judge the student before graduation.

Wisconsin students currently have to

take a state reading test in the third grade and general performance exams in the fourth, eighth and tenth grades. The approved proposal would end the tenth grade exam in 2001.

School boards could develop their own high school graduation test using state standards and could decide in which grades the students must take the test.

A proposal that would allow the city of Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to run charter schools was approved 9-7 by the panel.

Charter schools are run by an individual or group and are usually independent of state rules. The schools were proposed by Thompson to improve education in the area.

A proposal to include a charter school for the Milwaukee Area Technical College was rejected.

Critics such as Sen. Robert Jauch,

D-Poplar, likened the charter school to "educational escapism." Jauch said charter schools do not directly address educational problems for most students.

"All you do is reform it for a few people," Jauch said. "Charter schools do

not improve the learning environment for the vast majority of students in Milwaukee public schools."

Students who have disabilities or are disruptive in the classroom will not benefit from charter schools, Jauch said.

Only 13 charter schools exist under a law that was adopted four years ago, giving school districts leeway to tailor curriculum independent of many guidelines of the state Department of Public Instruction. ■

52. Associated Press

06-04 4:33a Category: Local

Utah woman is first to graduate "summa" from Harvard Law

By ANDREA McDANIELS Associated Press Writer

BOSTON (AP) - She's modest, soft-spoken and grew up in a little town in Utah. But at 23, she also will be the first woman to graduate at the head of the class from Harvard Law School on Thursday.

For the record, Grow will also be the first person to graduate summa cum laude since 1982. "Summa" honors students who kept up an average between an A and an A+ their entire three years.

Last year, a woman received her Harvard Law degree "magna" cum laude, which is just below "summa", after averaging between an A- and a B+ at the school.

Harvard Law School, which opened its doors to female students in 1950, has achieved a female-male ratio of 40-60.

The oldest of six children, Grow says her family gave her the support that helped "keep things in perspective" in Sandy, Utah, just north of Salt Lake City. The Mormon church she attended in Cambridge also helped.

"My parents are very supportive. Both of them are very smart," Grow said.

She taught Sunday school at the Mormon church near Harvard Square her first year in school.

But don't expect Lisa Grow to dip into feminist rhetoric when trying to explain what's kept women back all these years.

"I really don't know what explains the difference," she said in a telephone interview Tuesday from nearby Cambridge. "A lot of studies have said that there's a testing differential between men and women."

Her second and third year, she devoted whatever spare time she had to the Law Review, the prestigious academic journal that picks editors by an annual competition. Only 40 of her class of 550 got in.

Her study habits were less than perfect, she said. She mostly crammed before end-of-semester exams since she has a "really bad long term memory."

Academic success is nothing new to Grow, who graduated summa cum laude with a degree in chemistry from the University of Utah.

Partly inspired by her father, who is a lawyer, she said she decided to go into law because she missed the discussion of social issues that the sciences lacked.

With her enviable resume, she'd be the pick of any high-profile law firm. But Grow says she'd rather work in government.

At the end of June, she will become a clerk for Judge J. Michael Luttig on the

Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Virginia. The following year, she will work for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Ultimately, she says she would like to teach law. While she appreciates her education, she says family will take priority over her career when the time comes for children.

"I'm not planning on (a career) being an all consuming part of my life," she said. "I plan to do good things with my law degree, but it won't always be the focus of my life."

As for her advice to incoming female students at Harvard Law, Grow encourages them to get involved in an activity they feel strongly about, find the right group of friends, but mostly "believe in yourself, believe you can do it and don't let anybody tell you otherwise." ■

53. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Bustling Branch is an urban oasis Wadsworth reflects Philadelphia's strong library support, which runs counter to the state norm.

By Gilbert M. Gaul INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

SCHOOL'S OUT, and the Wadsworth Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia is spilling over with the pent-up energy of a dozen kids gathered around its new computers.

The noise level is anything but library-like. But that doesn't bother

Martina Eddy, the exuberant branch manager.

"We don't want to be a quiet library," she says. "We want the kids to feel like they can come in here and be comfortable."

By all accounts, they are. On a

weekday afternoon, anywhere from 30 to 80 children can be found at this bright, attractive library in East Mount Airy. Many will stay until dinner time, when their parents pick them up after work.

While waiting, they use the computers to play games and write school papers.

They do homework. And they sit around the tables and talk. About the only thing missing from this picture is books.

The library has plenty of them - nearly 25,000 at last count. But this day, the aisles are nearly empty of browsers. And circulation - the number of books and videos checked out by readers - is low.

"That worries me," says Eddy. "It worries me because it's my job, and reading is important. We want all of our patrons to read more."

While some branches report strong book use, many more report disappointing figures. And overall, the 52-library Philadelphia system falls below the state average in book circulation - in a state that ranks 39th nationally in circulation.

It's not because of money or a shortage of books. The Free Library is one of the

Shelkrot said the per-capita figures didn't give a fair picture, because the census tracts the library must rely on to report branch library use didn't match the branches' actual service areas.

"Some of those population figures [census tracts] are pretty arbitrary," he said.

He points to the Andorra branch, which, according to the census figures, serves a small population. Located in a busy shopping center, the library attracts readers from outside the census tract and reports high circulation. Those readers are not reflected in the per-capita spending figures.

A better economic measure is what it costs each branch to check out a book or video - or what librarians call the cost per transaction. It is derived by dividing total expenditures by total circulation.

The key to the equation is circulation. Libraries have relatively fixed costs; each branch library, for example, has at least two professional librarians and three library assistants. Thus, it costs branches with high circulation less to process a book than branches with low circulation.

Andorra, for instance, says it costs \$2.85 per book checkout. It has per-capita circulation of 19.53 books and videos.

While Wadsworth spends \$6.13, Widener spends \$8.93, and Cobbs Creek, \$10.97. Widener and Cobbs Creek both have per-capita circulation of fewer than one book a year. Wadsworth's figure is 3.65 books - better, but still less than state and national averages.

Shelkrot contends that such comparisons are not the best way to evaluate the library's effectiveness.

"There are more books being

best-funded libraries in Pennsylvania. It receives solid financing from the city. And under its savvy president, Elliot L. Shelkrot, it has developed a highly successful fund-raising program.

In 1994, the most recent year for which comparative national data were available, the Free Library spent \$31.69 for each of the city's 1,585,577 residents. That was 59 percent more than the national average of \$19.93 per capita, and 118 percent more than the state average of \$14.58.

"There is a long tradition of public library services in Philadelphia," said Shelkrot, who took over as head of the sprawling system in 1987. "Not just that the library is over 100 years old. There is a real sense of . . . the library being important to people."

Shelkrot gives credit to city officials borrowed now than when Philadelphia had two million in population," he said. "In the mid-'60s, circulation was about 6.1 million. Last year, it was 6.4 million."

Circulation is up, although it's difficult to make year-to-year comparisons because of changes over time in state reporting requirements. And recently the library has had problems with its data on utilization. More recent circulation figures include audio and video tapes borrowed from the library. In 1995, those accounted for nearly 11 percent - 689,614 - of the library's total circulation of 6,374,491 items.

"More people are using our libraries. More kids are coming in for summer programs. More kids are part of after-school programs. As long as those numbers are going up, I'm happy," said Shelkrot.

He also stressed that large urban systems faced problems that other libraries did not. Safety, poverty and crime all affect circulation.

"The conditions of so many people in poverty, so many situations where the education level is low, the struggle is all too often dealing with everyday issues," Shelkrot said. "There are times for a poor person when reading is a relative luxury."

City dwellers also use the library differently, he said. Patrons are more likely to come in and read a book or magazine, not take it home. Also, researchers use the library's 11 special collections, and most of that activity takes place in the library.

"We have tried for a long time to come up with a good way of measuring our in-house use, and we haven't found a satisfactory solution," Shelkrot said.

for providing a stable funding base. In 1996, the city accounted for \$42.5 million - or 79 percent - of the library's \$54 million budget.

"It's amazing what you can do when you know what you are going to get," Shelkrot said. "The unusual thing is, there is so little money for libraries in Pennsylvania, it makes us stand out like a sore thumb. It's not so much that we are out of line with the national average. Ironically, it's the state of Pennsylvania that is out of line."

Spending at the library's branches varies sharply, state reports show. For example, in fiscal 1995, per-capita spending at the Andorra branch in the Northeast was \$55.63, while at the Wadsworth branch it was \$22.38, and at the Widener branch in North Philadelphia just \$4.83.

Urban libraries play other roles besides being warehouses for books, he said. They are safe havens in a blighted neighborhood. They provide after-school programs to help working parents. They offer programs for preschoolers and young children. And they are community gathering places and resources.

That's certainly a role that Martina Eddy is trying to stress. At the moment, she's looking for a rug, couch and coffee machine to put in her library's basement.

"The people in this community have a real strong sense of community and look at this library as a place to get together and hold meetings," she says. "What I'm trying to do is set up a kind of Borders-like atmosphere. We may even open a thrift shop."

In many ways Wadsworth, with its new computers and community spirit, serves as an example of the "model urban library system" Shelkrot is putting in place to carry the Free Library into the next century.

As part of its Changing Lives Campaign, the library is soliciting \$38 million from foundations, corporations and private donors to renovate and update each of its 52 locations. By mid-January it had \$35 million in pledges, including \$18 million from the William Penn Foundation earmarked for children's services and new technology.

Forty percent of the three-year William Penn grant, or \$7.2 million, will be used to buy high-speed multimedia computers.

Wadsworth was one of the first libraries to go high-tech, installing seven high-speed multimedia computers with free Internet access in April 1996. Eddy says the computers have attracted more

visitors and changed the culture of the library.

"For decades libraries have been about books," she says. "Now, whether it's videos or computers, information is electronic in our culture, and that's where

libraries have to go if they're going to survive."

Initially, the library's already weak circulation declined after the computers arrived. But it has since rebounded.

"I think it's the excitement of the

computers. I see a lot of new faces in here, including a lot more adults," says Eddy. "I know it's early, but I'm hoping this becomes a pattern. People come in to play with the computers, and then they take home a book."■

54. Associated Press

06-04 5:36a Category: Local

Idaho, Idaho State plan to fuse services at Idaho Falls campus

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (AP) - The presidents of Idaho State University and the University of Idaho have finalized plans for a cooperative agreement

Some students already take classes at University Place from both schools, but complain of hitting a bureaucratic brick wall of registrars, transcript handlers and financial aid officers. That will end with the new agreement, university officials say.

"To the students, it would seem like one university," Kent Tingey, an Idaho State University spokesman, said Tuesday. "In essence, it is a four-year university in Idaho Falls."

Idaho State now offers 20 full degrees

between the two schools' operations in eastern Idaho.

If approved by the state Board of Education at its June 19 meeting, students will be able to take classes from in Idaho Falls. But Tingey said with the new collaboration it will be easier for students to earn more degrees without traveling to Pocatello since University of Idaho classes will be added to the Idaho State offerings.

The agreement is modeled on one between the two state colleges in Indiana. Indiana University and Purdue University, Indianapolis, students take classes from either school toward a degree from one or the other.

Chances of approval from the state

either school for the same price at University Place and earn credits from the university of their choice.

Board of Education look good.

"I would suspect the board would react positively," said Rayburn Barton, the board's outgoing executive director.

Board member Harold Davis of Idaho Falls called the agreement "a healthy step in the right direction."

"As we move into the virtual university and more long-distance learning, the name on the diploma will have less and less meaning," Davis said.■

55. Associated Press

06-04 5:42a Category: Local

Denver schools post reading gains

DENVER (AP) - Students in Denver Public Schools this spring posted the highest gains in a decade on standardized reading tests.

"We're not raising up a flag and saying victory is ours, but we are encouraged," said superintendent Irv Moskowitz.

Elementary and middle school students are still reading below the national average, the tests indicate, but

this spring's score upturn is the first recorded in the five years the district has tracked the reading test data.

The test results show the district's primary emphasis on literacy is working, along with the millions spent on programs to improve reading in the past three years, Moskowitz said.

Nine out of 10 grade levels showed improvement over last year. Three grades -- the first three of high school -- hit or

were above the national average of the 50th percentile.

Complete Iowa test results that include math will be available in about two weeks.

Moskowitz called the reading gains encouraging, because DPS as a whole has become more low-income with every successive year.■

56. Associated Press

06-04 5:10a Category: Local

School aid measure advances

By CHARLES E. BEGGS Associated Press Writer

SALEM, Ore. (AP) - A revised bill to increase state school funding by about \$100 million more than the Senate-passed version is just a step away from House action.

The \$4.2 billion measure was approved Tuesday by a Joint Ways and

Means subcommittee and sent to the full committee.

House leaders of both parties announced May 22 they had agreed to a two-year state school support measure that would prevent any district from having to lay off teachers.

Many Senate Republicans, who control the chamber 20-10, oppose the

higher House school aid figure. The bill is expected to go to a joint conference committee to work on a compromise if it passes the House.

House leaders raised the proposed school aid budget after a May 15 economic forecast indicated state revenue for the 1997-99 budget will be more than \$100 million higher than previously was

forecast.

Instead of moving to raise school aid with the additional revenue, the Senate has passed a measure to spend almost \$100 million on income tax breaks for the working poor.

There still could be a snag before the school funding measure gets through the House.

The House agreement includes a \$150 million plan to authorize school districts to issue bonds backed by state lottery revenue. The bonds could go toward school construction, maintenance and

technology projects.

But details of that plan are not included in the school aid bill. Rep. Chuck Carpenter, R-Portland, said he and others probably will oppose the bill unless the bond plan is included, or an explanation given for why it's not included.

Sen. Lenn Hannon, R-Ashland, subcommittee chairman, said the bond plan details are to be included in a final appropriation bill after the main budget work is finished.

State aid to local schools amounts to

more than 40 percent of the total state budget, and Hannon said agreement on that figure will pave the way toward winding up budget work.

The House and Senate were about \$140 million apart at the time the House leaders' agreement was announced. Their general fund budget proposals average about \$9.6 billion.

Ongoing talks between key budget players in the House and Senate "are narrowing the gap day by day," Hannon said. ■

57. Associated Press

06-04 6:47a Category: Local

Metro Detroit teacher retiring after half century on the job

TAYLOR, Mich. (AP) - After more than half a century in the classroom, a suburban Detroit teacher is hanging up her magic markers and story books.

Berniece McDowell Elementary School kindergarten teacher Marie Manders, who started shaping young minds back in 1943, retires next week.

Ms. Manders is believed to be one of the longest serving teachers in Michigan, Dawn Cooper, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Education Association, told The Detroit News for an article published Wednesday.

In her first year in Taylor, Ms. Manders, 73, roomed with the principal's daughter and made \$1,700 to teach 52 first-graders.

"I didn't know what I was doing. I

wasn't really trained. But I made it," said Ms. Manders, who left Central Michigan University after studying two years because of the shortage of teachers during World War II. "They needed bodies."

Ms. Manders now teaches the fewest number of students in 54 years - a total of 45 in her morning and afternoon classes.

"She's the best teacher, really," said Aaron Morissette, 5, making a construction-paper kite.

School officials estimate Ms. Manders has taught more than 3,000 students during her career.

"She's going to be missed," said Superintendent Barbara Van Otterloo. "There aren't many families in Taylor she hasn't touched and there aren't many like her."

Ms. Manders, whose two children are teachers, has seen it all.

"I've seen just about every kind of kid there is and every situation," said Ms. Manders. "They are still sweet, innocent and lovable. But childhood has changed, making some kids grow up a lot faster."

And much of playtime has been replaced with academics.

"The kids don't get as much free, creative time as I'd like," said Ms. Manders. "These kids are learning a lot more than they used to. I don't know if that is necessarily all to the good."

Her retirement is part of a districtwide exodus of teachers. Of Taylor's 674 teachers, more than 100 are leaving and only 50 will be replaced as part of a consolidation plan. One of the three high schools will close later this month. ■

58. Associated Press

06-04 7:47a Category: Local

Few at Hostos College pass City University English test

NEW YORK (AP) - Most of the 104 Hostos Community College students have flunked an English test required at the last minute to graduate from the City University system.

Only 13 passed the test to prove they can write in English, further clouding the status of 91 who either failed or did not show up to take the test, college officials said Tuesday.

The results alarmed CUNY trustees, who voted last month - just five days before graduation - to require graduates

of the bilingual college to pass the CUNY writing test.

"This is a deplorable showing," said CUNY board chairwoman Anne A. Paolucci, according to a report in today's New York Times.

Last week, a court ordered CUNY to let students who had not passed the test participate in graduation ceremonies.

Students were back in court Tuesday, arguing that CUNY had no right to require the last-minute test for graduation. A five-judge appellate panel heard arguments and a state supreme

court hearing is set for Monday.

A passing grade on the exam, English, is already required for graduation from every other community college at CUNY.

Hostos is a bilingual college. Many courses are offered in Spanish or English, and nearly 80 percent of the 5,000 students are non-native speakers of English.

Free workshops will be offered in intensive English over the summer to those who did not pass, CUNY officials said. ■

59. Associated Press

06-04 9:06a Category: Local

UW case involving student fees headed to appeals court today

CHICAGO (AP) - A U.S. District Court decision that the University of Wisconsin-Madison cannot require students to financially support campus

Shabaz said using fees to subsidize groups whose main objective is to advance political or ideological goals violates students' constitutional rights despite the "viewpoint neutral" way in which fees are distributed to student groups.

"This is a challenge to something that is very central to universities," said Susan Ullman, a Wisconsin assistant attorney general who was to argue the state's case before the appeals court today. "It threatens the wide range of speech and activities that are available at universities.

political groups to which they object headed to the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals today.

Judge John Shabaz's decision last November favored three Christian "Having the speech by all these different groups is a very important part of what the university is all about."

Scott Southworth, the lead plaintiff, said that he and co-plaintiffs Amy Schoepke and Keith Bannach sued the university because they are Christians with conservative views who oppose being forced to support liberal causes.

"As the system is set up, if you don't fund these groups, you can't graduate and you can't receive your grades," Southworth said. "It's morally wrong and it's unconstitutional."

students who sued the university for using mandatory student fees to fund groups they found objectionable, such as the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus Center.

UW Students pay roughly \$330 in fees each year. Less than 10 percent is used to support student groups and services, according to the university. Any one organization receives from 10 to 30 cents per student.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the University of Virginia could not deny a religious group money if other groups on campus receive it, but it has not ruled directly on whether the fees violate First Amendment rights.■

60. Associated Press

06-03 8:06p Category: Local

State says rate continues to decline

SACRAMENTO (AP) - The dropout rate in California public schools continues to decline, falling below 4 percent in the 1995-96 school year, state Superintendent Delaine Eastin says.

The Education Department said in a report for release Wednesday that last year's dropout rate for students in the ninth through 12th grades was 3.9 percent, down from 4.4 percent in the 1994-95 school year.

"This good news makes me confident that we should increase standards and call for higher graduation requirements;

there is no reason to believe that when we raise expectations, more students drop out," Eastin said. "Students need to feel that going to school is worth their time and that they are gaining the knowledge they need to be successful in the future."

The rate reflects the early departure of more than 58,000 of the state's nearly 1.5 million high school students. Eastin said more needs to be done to reduce dropout rates, particularly when the one-year rate, if applied over four years of high school, means one out of every six freshmen drops out prior to graduation.

Schools are offering programs aimed

at keeping at-risk students in class, including classes for pregnant teens, Eastin said.

"Dropping out has enormous economic implications," she said, citing reports suggesting dropouts will earn \$200,000 less over their lifetimes than students with high school diplomas, and \$800,000 less than students with college degrees.

The dropout rate is one of several factors collected through the school year and used to assess district and school performance.■

61. Los Angeles Times

* 06/04/97; Edition: Orange County Edition; Section: Metro Desk; Page A-3 Category: Local

High School Dropout Rates Down 25% in State : In Orange County, numbers follow the trend with Tustin and Anaheim Union districts showing the most dramatic reductions.

By TINA NGUYEN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

High school dropout rates have fallen

by about 25% over five years, according to a state report to be released today, with Orange County figures reflecting that trend.

According to data from the California Department of Education, the statewide rate dipped from 4.4% in the 1994-95 school year to 3.9% in 1995-96, the most

recent numbers available. Orange County's dropout rate remained the same between the two years. Even so, the county's dropout rate is more than 25% lower than the statewide average and has been falling over the past several years.

But that good news was offset somewhat by increases in three districts: Huntington Beach, Fullerton and particularly Santa Ana, where the dropout rate increased by more than 40% in one year and reached nearly double the state average.

"They've gone up rather markedly," Santa Ana Unified Assistant Supt. Alfonsina Davies said. "We will investigate and try to ascertain why this happened and try to prevent this."

Under state regulations, a student who misses 45 days of school and does not re-enroll in school, either in the same or a new district, is classified as a dropout. If a district loses track of a student after he or she moves, that case is also considered a dropout.

In some Orange County districts with declining dropout rates, administrators credited the trend to a variety of alternative education programs and advanced technology that has helped

The decrease has been particularly noticeable in Anaheim Union High School District, where the dropout rate was nearly cut in half within one year, falling to 0.8% last year. That rate also is one-fourth the district's dropout rate of track student attendance.

The Anaheim district invests about \$35,000 annually into trying to ensure its students go to school.

For instance, Anaheim parents receive an automated telephone call when their children are absent from school. If the situation worsens, a district outreach worker visits the family at home.

The dropout rate in the Los Angeles Unified School District fell about 13% in 1996, marking the first significant improvement in three years. But at 9.3%, the rate is still more than twice the statewide average.

"You will not hear that we feel good about it yet," said Assistant Supt. Sally Coughlin. "We're still losing far too many kids."

Statewide, the dropout rate was 6.6% for African American students and 5.6% for Latino students. For white students, the rate was 2.4% and for Asian Americans it was 2%. In all categories,

five years ago.

Tustin Unified School District posted even more dramatic numbers. The dropout rate fell in 1995-96 to one-fourth of what it had been the year before and one-sixth of the rate in 1991-92. females were less likely to drop out than males.

"We can be proud of the gains we have made," said state Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin. "At the same time, we still need to do more . . . particularly when you realize that the one-year rate carried out over four years means that one out of six freshmen will not graduate from high school with his or her class."

Education experts say dropping out generally is related to poverty, to families that move frequently, to poor academic performance and to the lack of a strong bond with a caring adult—whether it's a parent, a teacher or someone else. Students seem to respond well to high expectations and to opportunities to get involved in sports or other activities.

Times staff writer Richard Lee Colvin contributed to this report. ■

62. Los Angeles Times

* 06/04/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-1 Category: Local

Dropout Rate for L.A. School District Fell 13% in 1996 : Decline is called first major improvement in three years. But figure is still more than twice the statewide average.

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN TIMES
EDUCATION WRITER

The rate at which students drop out of the Los Angeles Unified School District fell about 13% in 1996, marking the first significant improvement in three years, according to new figures to be released by the state today.

The district's one-year dropout rate is still more than twice the statewide average, and about four in 10 of the district's ninth-graders can be expected to eventually leave school without graduating.

"You will not hear that we feel good about it yet," said Assistant Supt. Sally Coughlin. "We're still losing far too many kids . . . and we're not resting on our laurels."

The district estimates its one-year dropout rate at 9.3%, down from 10.7% the previous year. The figure reported by the state Department of Education

for Los Angeles Unified was slightly lower than that, but district officials said it was inaccurate because it did not include all schools.

Other Los Angeles County districts reporting significant improvement included Pasadena, Bassett, Bonita, El Rancho, Paramount and Rowland. The countywide rate for Los Angeles, Ventura and Riverside counties improved, while San Bernardino County's dropout rate went up and Orange County's held steady.

The statewide rate went from 4.5% to 3.9%, continuing a decade-long positive trend that has reduced the percentage of students who drop out by half. Even so, more than 58,000 California students leave each year without a diploma, which the Educational Testing Service estimates can cut their lifetime earning potential by an average of \$200,000.

The one-year rate covers the 1.5

million California students in grades nine through 12. Dropout rates also are frequently projected over four years, to show the likelihood of ninth-graders dropping out before graduation four years later.

Statewide, the rate was 6.6% for African American students and 5/6% for Latino students. For white students, the rate was 2.4% and for Asian Americans it was 2%.

"We can be proud of the gains we have made," said state Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin. "At the same time, we still need to do more . . . particularly when you realize that the one-year rate carried out over four years means that one out of six freshmen will not graduate from high school with his or her class."

Education experts say dropping out generally is related to poverty, to families that move frequently, to poor academic

performance and to the lack of a strong bond with a caring adult—whether it's a parent, a teacher or someone else.

"It's that human connection we all look for," said Mary Weaver, an administrator in the state Department of Education's safe schools program. "If you're just a number, you don't feel connected."

The state also is promoting a wide range of programs tailored to pregnant teenagers, newly arrived immigrants, students who have gotten in trouble with the law and other groups. "If we didn't have strategies directed toward them, those populations would have incredibly high rates of failure and dropouts," said Gabe Cortina, the state deputy superintendent for specialized programs.

Another leading cause of dropping out is a lack of academic skill, which causes

Students seem to respond well to high expectations and to opportunities to get involved in sports or other activities. students to flunk required classes—and eventually give up.

That's where officials in Long Beach hope to make a difference.

The improved dropout picture in Los Angeles Unified and Paramount left Long Beach with the highest rate in Los Angeles County, although it was down from 11.1% to 10.2%.

Next fall, the 400 eighth-graders in the district who failed two or more subjects this year will be required to enroll at a new school where they will brush up on basic skills, work on their study habits and be assigned a mentor before being allowed to enroll in high school courses.

"The stage [for dropping out] may be set in middle school," said district

Therefore, many schools are trying to foster relationships between individual students and teachers. spokesman Richard Van Der Laan.

Within Los Angeles Unified, the dropout rate varied widely. The rate at Crenshaw High School, 24%, was the highest among the district's 50 schools with traditional ninth- through 12th-grade student bodies. Three of those schools—Reseda, Taft and Garfield—reported dropout rates lower than the statewide average.

Coughlin said the Los Angeles district has worked hard to improve daily attendance, provide counseling for students with problems and, perhaps most significantly, follow up on students who stop coming to school. ■

63. The Washington Post

06/04/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page B06 Category: Local

Some U.S. Lawmakers Revive Voucher Idea; Bill Would Offer Private-School Tuition Aid to Needy D.C. Children

By Debbi Wilgoren
Washington Post Staff Writer

Some members of Congress are again trying to set up a tax-funded scholarship program to help low-income D.C. children attend private or parochial schools.

House Majority Leader Richard K. Arney (R-Tex.), Sens. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Dan Coats (R-Ind.) and others have planned a news conference for today to announce legislation that would authorize spending \$7 million to \$10 million a year in D.C. funds through 2002 for such scholarships. The money, an aide to Lieberman said, would be part of the District's congressional appropriation but would not come from funds for public schools.

A board of D.C. residents would administer the program.

A similar measure passed the House last year but was defeated in the Senate. The legislation was strongly opposed by

President Clinton, Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), national teachers unions and PTA groups.

The legislation would authorize students whose family income is below the federal poverty guidelines to apply for \$3,200 in aid starting in fiscal year 1998. Those whose families make up to 185 percent of the federal poverty rate would be eligible for scholarships of \$2,400 or three-quarters of the tuition at schools they wish to attend — whichever is less.

The legislation would authorize funding about 1,800 such scholarships a year, plus 1,800 smaller grants for public or private school students to pay for transportation or after-school instruction received on school grounds.

The sponsors of the bill will hold their news conference with District community leaders and parents who support the plan.

Sponsors also will release the results of a poll commissioned by an education reform group that supports vouchers. It said 40 percent of District residents

consider a scholarship program an "excellent" or "good" use of public funds, compared with 18 percent who consider it "only [a] fair" use and 33 percent who consider it a "poor" use of public funds.

The question was prefaced with this statement: "Some experts have said that Washington, D.C., has one of the worst public school systems in the country."

Milwaukee and Cleveland have publicly funded voucher programs, and about 30 jurisdictions across the country — including the District — have privately funded scholarship programs to help children from low-income families attend private or parochial school.

But the proposal for tax-funded vouchers in the District sparked bitter debate in Congress last year, delaying passage of the city's budget for months.

Critics said Congress should work to improve the city's struggling schools rather than provide a way for some of its poorest youngsters to leave the system. ■

64. Los Angeles Times

* 06/04/97; Edition: Orange County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-2 Category: Local

Policing Program to Expand Districtwide

By JOHN POPE; JENNIFER LEUER

Anaheim Union High School District has decided to expand its nationally recognized community policing program to all 16 campuses.

District trustees asked staff members to research grant opportunities and set program goals, school board President Harald Martin said.

The current program, a joint effort between the district and the Anaheim Police Department, is credited with

reducing campus crime by nearly 50%.

Trustees said they want to see the program, which now consists of two officers and a district employee, expanded to eight officers, each assigned to a high school and its feeder junior high.

"Most people did agree that we as a school district and as a community would benefit from more community policing," Martin said. "It is the consensus of the board that it is a good program that's working well and that expansion is a

good idea."

Because the district has campuses in several cities, the Anaheim, Cypress and La Palma police departments would be involved in the expansion, Martin said.

He said he expects the new program, which the district hopes to have in place by the 1998-99 school year, to include more than just gang violence prevention.

"We want the officers to become someone who the kids recognize is there to help them," he said. ■

65. Los Angeles Times

* 06/04/97; Edition: Ventura County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-1 Category: Local

Low Dropout Rates Earn Local Schools High Marks : Report shows decline from 3.5% in 1995 to 2.9% in '96. Officials are especially pleased with results in low-income communities.

By ROB SELNA
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Ventura County high schools had the lowest dropout rates in the county's history last year, according to a report to be released today by the state Department of Education.

Between 1995 and 1996, the county dropout rate fell from 3.5% to 2.9%, and eight of nine school districts in the county had rates lower than the state's 3.9% average.

East county schools had especially good numbers, including 1.4% in the Conejo Valley district and a minuscule 0.4% in the small Oak Park Unified School District.

The lone exception to the county's good report card was Ventura Unified, which reported a 4.7% dropout rate.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment. These are the lowest rates I've seen since they began keeping track in 1948," said county schools Supt. Charles Weis.

He was particularly impressed with the "We realize that we need to do a better job of providing students with programs that are appropriate for their needs, so that they don't drop out," said Assistant Supt. Pat Chandler.

Ojai schools recorded the largest improvement, with their rates dropping from 3.9% in 1995 to 1.7% in 1996.

low dropout rates in districts with proportionately large numbers of poor residents.

"Fillmore, Santa Paula and Oxnard have the highest number of poor kids, and their dropout rate was still well below the state average," Weis said. "Oxnard did a yeoman's job and set the tone when you consider the range of socioeconomic status in that community."

Oxnard's dropout rate declined from 4% in 1995 to 2.9% in 1996.

Oxnard schools Supt. William Studt said the rate was as high as 11% as recently as 1989. According to Studt, the district took action in 1990, including hiring "attendance callers," who phone a student's home on the day of an absence, and "dropout recovery" workers, who visit students' homes when absences become frequent.

Studt also requires monthly dropout statistics from each high school principal in his district.

With dropout rates at 3.2%, the Santa Paula and Fillmore school districts also rated well in comparison to the state. Assistant Supt. Pam Martens attributed the decrease to better record-keeping rather than new programs.

"In '93 and '94, we did not track people down properly and find out where they went after they left our district. Last year, we found out that many of our dropouts were enrolled in other districts

average.

Local educators said the number is particularly impressive in light of those districts' large Latino populations. Statewide, Latino students dropped out at a rate of 5.6%.

Jane Campbell, assistant superintendent of Fillmore schools, attributed her district's favorable dropout rates to an emphasis on bilingual education programs and academic support for economically disadvantaged students.

"Seventy-five percent of our district is Hispanic, so bilingual education is really important for us," Campbell said.

*

The Ventura Unified School District's rate actually dropped from 5% in 1995, but its current 4.7% was still the county's highest and the only local rate to exceed the state average.

The small decrease was not much consolation to Ventura school officials, who plan to ask the school board for additional resources to combat the dropout problem. and in adult education," said Martens.

*

Martens also said it is likely that a program for "at-risk" youths at the high school helped keep some students enrolled.

The remaining school districts in the county registered very low dropout rates:

Conejo Valley Unified, the county's third-largest district, went from a 1.8% to a 1.4% dropout rate.

Moorpark Unified dropped from 1.9% to 1.4%.

Oak Park's rate rose slightly from 0.1% to 0.4%.

* Simi Valley, the county's second-largest school district, saw a small increase of 1.8% to 2.1%.

Dropout rates are calculated annually by the Department of Education, which divides the number of dropouts in grades 9 through 12 in each district by the enrollment. ■

66. Los Angeles Times

* 06/04/97; Edition: Ventura County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-1 Category: Local

Voters OK Education Bonds for 2 Districts, Elections: Ventura and Ocean View school measures pass, and Camarillo returns Morgan to council. Turnout called 'embarrassing.'

By CARLOS V. LOZANO
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Showing a strong commitment to finance school improvements, voters in the Ventura and Ocean View school districts approved separate school bond measures in Tuesday's special election.

In Oxnard, a similar measure was winning with a margin of about 40 votes in unofficial returns, but with 292 absentee and provisional ballots yet to be counted, election officials said the race was too close to call.

In the Camarillo council race, former Councilman Mike Morgan ran away with 60% of the vote—overwhelming another former councilman, Ned Chatfield, and high school student Chris Valenzano in a race to fill a vacant seat on the council.

"It's heartwarming," Morgan said of the victory, "and I will continue to do my best to be responsible to my constituents to the best of my ability."

With all precincts reporting, the vote in Ventura was 11,362 in favor of Measure M and 3,825 against, giving the ballot measure a 74.8% victory margin. The \$81-million school bond measure was the largest local bond initiative ever to appear on the county ballot.

"I think the people of Ventura spoke loud and clear: They support education," said district Supt. Joseph Spirito, who

Oxnard School District officials, who narrowly lost their bid for a similar school bond measure in March, were seeking \$57 million in Measure L for construction of two elementary schools and financing of other school improvements in the 14,288-student district.

In the nearby Ocean View School District, school officials proposed a \$4-million bond that appeared on the ballot as Measure N. Property tax

joined supporters at a victory celebration at a local restaurant Tuesday night.

The vote in the Oxnard School District was 4,792 in support of Measure L and 2,334 against, barely scraping above the two-third votes required for passage.

In the Ocean View School District, the vote was 1,022 in favor of Measure N compared to 224 opposed—providing a resounding 82% support.

"We are thrilled," said district Supt. Nancy Carroll. "We're exhilarated. We knew the community and parents would support Ocean View. It's a great vote of confidence in Ocean View and we believe the children deserve this."

And across the county in Santa Paula, 91% of voters approved a measure that would allow the community library to spend property tax money set aside for its operations.

Bruce Bradley, county elections chief, said that voter turnout ranged from 17% in Oxnard to 22% in Ventura.

* "Nobody voted," he said. "It's really quite embarrassing. . . . People complain about taxation without representation, but here we have bond measures throughout the county with no one attending. It really is disconcerting."

Still, Bradley said that the low turnout probably boosted the chances for passage of the school bond measures.

revenue generated from the measure was needed to pay for portable classrooms as well as upgrading and renovating of school facilities in the 2,405-student district.

* At least one other school district, Ojai Unified, is considering placing a school bond measure on the November ballot. Later this month, school trustees are expected to consider placing a \$15-million bond measure on the ballot

"The theory goes that the lower the turnout, the better the chances of the bond measure," Bradley said. "The people who do vote are strongly in favor of the measure, and the people who are opposed—unless they are rabidly opposed—don't turn out."

Ventura, Oxnard and Ocean View school officials were banking on the recent success of three other local school bond measures by placing their own initiatives on Tuesday's special election ballot.

* Ventura Unified School District's \$81-million bond is needed to help build two elementary schools, a middle school and a magnet school by 2010 as a way to ease overcrowding in the 16,773-student district.

Catherine Mathis, a teacher at Juanamaria Elementary School who voted yes on Measure M, called the bond money crucial to helping the district meet its class-size reduction goal of 20 students for every teacher.

"We really need the space," she said.

But retiree John Duprie said he voted against the bond measure because only property owners—and not the general population—would be picking up the bill.

"To me it's just unfair as a taxpayer to have to do that," he said.

to pay for campus renovations.

"Many of our schools in the county are facing deteriorating conditions, so we're very hopeful that the community decides to root for us," said Gwen Gross, district superintendent.

Meanwhile, the three Camarillo City Council candidates were vying for a seat left vacant by the death of Councilman Ken Gose last January. There are 17 months remaining of Gose's four-year term.

The campaign generated little acrimony since the candidates agreed on most key issues, everything from conversion of Camarillo State Hospital into a four-year public university to development of a 16,000-seat amphitheater and 18-hole golf course on county land just south of the city.

Both Morgan, 50, and Chatfield, 78,

said their previous government experience and active involvement in the community made them best qualified for the council job.

Morgan, who lost his bid for a county supervisor seat last year, previously served on the council from 1980 to 1996, while Chatfield was a councilman from 1964 to 1974.

For his part, Valenzano, 18, cited his firsthand experience with issues facing the city's schools, the proposed university and the area's young adults.

Times staff writers Kate Folmar and Rod Bosch, and correspondents Dawn Hobbs and Regina Hong also contributed to this story. ■

67. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 5, Column 1 Category: Local

Principal in Elizabeth Presses Crackdown on School Truants

By ROBERT HANLEY

ELIZABETH, N.J., June 3 — One ninth grader at Elizabeth High School has missed 139 days of class this year, another has been absent 131 days and a third for 97 days.

They are three of the most chronic truants among about 150 students who regularly skip classes at the high school, New Jersey's largest, with 4,300 students. And the principal, Yoland S. Walton, has started a novel counterattack against their high rates of absenteeism by hauling the parents of the 10 teen-agers with the worst attendance records into town court here. "I'm fed up with kids beating the system and beating us," Mr. Walton said today.

Under a compromise "sentence" arranged with the Elizabeth Municipal Judge, Daniel J. Russell, parents of the 10 were ordered in early May to sign their children into school each morning and sign them out when classes end at 3 P.M. Seven were required to do so for seven days, and the three others for every day until the school year ends on June 20.

Mr. Walton said today that the crackdown has had mixed success. He said parents of three of the teen-agers

One of the three, Valerie Kay Young, who said her daughter had missed 92 school days this year, insisted that school

were complying with the judge's order, three were honoring it sporadically and three others were totally ignoring it. The 10th student dropped out of school legally on her 16th birthday on May 23, he said.

Initially, Mr. Walton, with the blessing of the Elizabeth School Board, filed criminal complaints accusing the parents of the 10 teen-agers with violating a New Jersey law that requires parents to insure that their children from age 6 to 16 receive regular schooling. Violations carry fines of \$25 for a first offense, up to \$100 for a second offense and sentences of up to six months in jail.

To spare parents a possible criminal record, school officials and the town prosecutor, Richard Obuch, took a softer approach several weeks ago. The parents and children went before a mediator and signed agreements to attend classes regularly.

But those agreements were ignored, Mr. Walton said today. "What the kids were doing was laughing in the judge's face," he said.

School officials responded by accusing the parents of the 10 of violating a catchall type of local law that officials had never formally notified her of when to start her community service. Ms. Young, who said her daughter was in

prohibits residents from performing an illegal function, Mr. Obuch said.

Again, the intention was to spare the parents a criminal record by charging them with violating the local ordinance instead of a state criminal law, Mr. Obuch said. Most of the parents pleaded guilty, and the others were found guilty, he said.

On May 5 Judge Russell ordered them to perform "community service" penalties — attending class with their children. Seven of the parents were required to do this for seven days, and the three others for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Walton said he modified that sanction to the sign-in, sign-out penalty because some of the parents worked and the presence of others in the classroom was an "imposition on the teachers." Also, he said, there were questions about liability and insurance coverage if parents tripped and hurt themselves while walking to and from class.

Today, Mr. Walton said he was disturbed about the three parents who he said had made no effort to comply with the sign-in, sign-out order. On Friday, he said, he will send the judge a status report on them.

the hospital, said it was unfair to penalize parents if children cut classes. ■

68. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 1, Column 2 Category: Local

Few Who Took an 11th-Hour English Test at Hostos Pass It

By KAREN W. ARENSON

Only 13 of the 104 students who were forced last week to take a last-minute

English proficiency exam to graduate from Hostos Community College passed the test, adding to the furor over City University standards and prompting harsh criticism of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds.

Dr. Anne A. Paolucci, the new chairwoman of the City University trustees, who oversee the community college, said the results of the test provided further evidence that the college standards were unacceptably low, and placed the blame squarely on Dr. Reynolds, the administrator of the 21-campus university. "This is a deplorable showing," said Dr. Paolucci, who was appointed last summer by Gov. George E. Pataki. "This means they're not getting the proper training. The whole situation up there needs to be reviewed to help the students get the proper training."

"I've never faulted the students, who were doing what they were told to do," she added. "It is a grave situation the Chancellor should have addressed."

Dr. Reynolds, who has been Chancellor since 1990, has had a tense relationship with Dr. Paolucci and some of the other board members who were appointed by Governor Pataki and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani. Told of Dr. Paolucci's comments, she said: "I have carefully carried out the policies of the trustees all the years I have been here, and I continue to do so."

She also said that an important thrust of her work has been to reduce the remedial work necessary at the colleges, and to improve students' ability to learn English as a second language through language immersion programs.

The trustees ordered the students to take the test last week after a dispute arose on campus over what measures were necessary to show their proficiency in English before they graduated. In recent months both the Governor and the Mayor have criticized CUNY for what they considered the lack of preparation of their students and the slow progress they

Ronald B. McGuire, representing the students, said that no one questions the trustees' prerogative to set requirements, but this situation seemed unfair to students.

"Not to receive their degrees would be an irreparable harm," he said. "The denial, delay or deferral of a college degree is a very serious thing."

The university, represented by Paul A. Crotty, Assistant Corporation Counsel for New York City, argued that students should not be allowed to tell potential employers that they have graduated when

made toward graduation.

But some students and professors said the last-minute requirement was unfair to the students at Hostos, a bilingual college in the South Bronx, making them pawns in a political chess match.

They also complained that the university's test was a poor measure of students' English proficiency. Some students were in court yesterday arguing that the trustees had no right to add the test as a last-minute condition of graduation.

The college's president, Isaura Santiago Santiago, said she could not comment on the test results because the matter is being contested in the courts.

But some Hostos professors said the results were not surprising.

"Of course, if you use an invalid, flawed and inappropriate measure, you're not going to get results that are indicative of anything other than the deficiencies of the measure," said Henry Lesnick, an English professor at Hostos.

The test asks students to write a short, persuasive essay answering one of two questions. The students last week chose between these: whether America is still a land of opportunity and whether celebrities make good role models. The students were expected to make several points to support their position.

Judges take into account the strength and logic of the argument as well as grammar, spelling and usage. City University officials yesterday declined to release any examples of student answers.

The test itself is used throughout the CUNY system to judge whether new students are proficient enough in English to take college-level classes in the subject. If they fail, they are placed in remedial classes. It was also used to judge whether students were ready to move out of remedial English classes and into freshman composition. Students must pass freshman composition to graduate.

they have not completed the requirements for a diploma.

Mr. McGuire said the trustees had allowed other students to graduate without passing the exam — in previous semesters at Hostos and at two other colleges, Borough of Manhattan Community College and La Guardia Community College.

City University plans to offer free workshops in intensive English this summer to the students who did not pass the university writing test.

CUNY officials said that among the

Hostos, where 77 percent of the students are of Hispanic background and many are recent immigrants, long used the CUNY test for both initial placement and assessment later. But last year, it began offering its own version of the writing test — which some called easier and some called fairer — that substituted a descriptive essay for the persuasive essay. Some students who planned to go on to four-year colleges still took the CUNY test.

In the spring, in the face of student protest, Hostos stopped using the new test as the sole measure of students' English proficiency and began taking into account coursework and professors' evaluations. Under that system, dozens of students who failed the Hostos test were still being allowed to graduate.

In fact, a memo by Dr. Reynolds prepared at the request of City University trustees said that of the students who were found not to have passed the CUNY writing test, only 23 had passed the Hostos version of the exam.

Last Tuesday, the trustees ordered Hostos to withhold the diplomas of any student who had not passed the CUNY exam. Of the 400 scheduled to graduate last Sunday, 140 had not passed.

Students went to court Friday, arguing that the trustees had no right to change their graduation requirements at the last minute.

An appellate judge permitted the university to withhold diplomas temporarily. Yesterday, a five-judge appellate panel of the court heard arguments about whether that hold should remain in effect. A State Supreme Court hearing on the issue is set for Monday.

The proficiency test was offered Friday and Saturday, and 104 students showed up to take it. The papers were graded over the weekend. Graduation ceremonies were held Sunday, but diplomas will not be sent out until this summer.

91 students who did not pass the writing test last week, nearly 50 fell only a point or two short.

"That is encouraging," said Elsa Nunez, a CUNY vice chancellor. "We can take them over the summer and work with them and can really make a difference," she said.

Herman Badillo, vice chairman of the board and an adviser to Mayor Giuliani, said, "The saddest part of all of this is that of 104 students taking the test, only 13 passed it. I would hope they will take it again and pass." THE ASSIGNMENT:

Students must write a persuasive essay on one of two topics, such as "Is America still a land of opportunity?" or "Do celebrities make good role models?" THE TEST: Students have 50 minutes and they usually write about two pages. THE GRADING: Each test is reviewed by two university-trained readers and scored on a scale of 1 to 6. The scores are added together, and 8 is passing. No reader knows what score the other reader has assigned. THE CRITERIA: City

University instructs its readers to pass a students if their essays at least meet the following requirements: "The essay shows a basic understanding of the demands of essay organization, although there may be occasional digressions. The development of ideas is sometimes incomplete or rudimentary, but a basic logical structure can be discerned. Vocabulary generally is appropriate for the essay topic but at times is oversimplified. Sentences reflect a

sufficient command of standard written English to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Common forms of agreement and grammatical inflection are usually, although not always, correct. The writer generally demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer spells common words, except perhaps so-called 'demons,' with a reasonable degree of accuracy." ■

69. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 4, Column 5 Category: Local

Hartford Lawmakers Approve Weakened School Choice Plan

By JONATHAN RABINOVITZ

HARTFORD, June 3 — Faced with an order from the state's highest court to desegregate Connecticut's public schools, Gov. John G. Rowland and top legislative leaders have agreed to let students choose to attend schools outside their district.

The measure, one provision in a bill to end racial isolation in urban schools, is intended to permit black and Hispanic children from the cities to enroll in predominantly white suburban schools, if space is available.

TD But the proposal has been watered down from the school choice plan that began in the General Assembly earlier this year, and only 1,000 students will be able to use it during the next two years.

Along with school choice, the plan includes the following measures:

*A \$32 million program to expand access to preschool programs for poor 3- and 4-year-olds.

*A mandate that school districts provide opportunities for their students to interact with students from other racial and ethnic backgrounds, and that the Connecticut School Board initiate remedial actions for systems that fail to comply.

*A 10 percent increase in school construction grants for projects that provide additional spaces.

*Financing to establish so-called lighthouse schools in the three largest cities, Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven, that would have special curriculums intended to attract students from outside the cities.

In all, the state would spend as much as \$90 million on programs to address the Supreme Court order, about twice what Mr. Rowland had in his budget proposal in February, State Representative Cameron C. Staples said.

Dean Pagani, a spokesman for Mr.

Rowland, said the Governor would sign the measures, and leaders of both parties supported them.

But the measure has lost some of the provisions that were approved by the Education Committee and that had been recommended by a blue ribbon panel in January.

The committee had approved a bill that would have started school choice across the state in September 1998; the present measure delays it a year. The earlier version would have allowed the student to take 50 percent of state financing with him to his new district, roughly \$3,700. The new measure caps it at \$2,000.

The latest proposal limits the number of students who may receive such aid to 1,000 starting in fall 1998, and makes no mention of increasing funds in the following year. ■

70. The New York Times

06/04/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final (New Jersey); Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 1, Column 1 Category: Local

New School Spending Figures

By TERRY PRISTIN

TRENTON — Education officials released figures yesterday showing how they intended to spend \$246 million for the 1997-98 school year to comply with an order from the State Supreme Court requiring the state to beef up its aid to its poorest school districts.

The biggest increase prompted by last month's court ruling will be in Jersey City, the second largest district, The Associated Press reported. That district will get \$31.6 million more, on top of a \$34.1 million increase already slated under the new school financing law.

Newark, the state's largest district, had

been slated to lose \$34.1 million in state aid. The court decision would restore \$23.6 million of that.

Two school districts, Hoboken and New Brunswick, will not get extra money because they already spend as much as the richest districts. ■

71. Associated Press

06-04 2:16a Category: Local

Glum governor rips Senate leader, won't call special session

CHICAGO (AP) - Making no effort to disguise bitterness among top state Republicans and his own disappointment, Gov. Jim Edgar pronounced his school funding bill "dead now" but signaled it could be revived.

"You never say never around here," Edgar declared Tuesday.

Edgar said fighting within his own party made it pointless to call a special legislative session to salvage the bill - the centerpiece of his program. He blamed Senate President James "Pate" Philip, a fellow Republican, for the wreckage of the plan he'd spent months campaigning for.

"I'm not going to call the legislature into session and waste the taxpayers' money if we don't have some agreement," the governor said on WGN radio's "The Bob Collins Show."

Majority Democrats in the House joined with Edgar to approve a 25 percent income-tax increase coupled with property-tax cuts. It was aimed at providing more state aid to low-income districts where local property taxes fail to produce enough revenue to meet the funding levels that experts recommend.

The plan died over the weekend when

Philip refused to call the bill for a vote in the Republican-controlled Senate and lawmakers then adjourned their spring session and went home.

"It's dead now," Edgar said in his WGN interview.

At a Statehouse news conference hours later, though, Edgar denied that he had even used the word dead, apparently forgetting his remark on the radio.

"This thing is alive," the governor said.

He said he would call a special session if Philip would allow senators to vote on the House-passed plan or if there were an acceptable compromise.

Edgar claimed he had the votes to pass the bill in the Senate if only Philip had been willing to bring it to the floor.

Philip spokeswoman Patty Schuh, however, expressed doubt that enough votes were available to pass the "largest tax increase in Illinois history."

Edgar said the strategic position of suburban DuPage County - home to both Philip and House Minority Leader Lee Daniels - worked against his plan.

"Their schools are not in as bad shape as some of the schools in the rest of the state that don't have the local wealth that comes from the property tax," said Edgar,

whose hometown is Charleston.

He also acknowledged concern among many Republicans that joining with Democrats to pass an income-tax increase could make them primary targets.

"There is a certain segment in society, in the Republican Party, a kind of a right wing in the Republican Party, which I think does concern Sen. Philip and Rep. Daniels ..." Edgar said.

Minutes after Edgar claimed he had the votes to pass the bill in the Senate, Daniels was on the WGN program, expressing doubt.

"The overwhelming majority of Republicans in the House and Senate felt that increasing reliance on the income tax was unnecessary when Illinois was undergoing an economic boom," he said.

"... We felt very strongly that you shouldn't use the income tax," he said. "Now when you talk about compromising, there was never any discussion of how you should compromise to get away from increasing the income tax, and that's what caused the failure of this bill."

Afterward, Edgar was unable to resist a shot at Daniels. "If I had Lee Daniels' income, I'd probably be against the income tax, too," he said. ■

72. Houston Chronicle

June 4, 1997 Category: Local

Career-oriented education spelling success for students

By SARAH HORNADAY Associated Press

AUSTIN — The only thing Gabe Moncada knew about the law as a high school sophomore was that he was on the wrong side of it. With the help of a career-oriented education program, Moncada is a high school graduate working toward a college degree in criminal justice.

Moncada, 18, of Austin, is a success story from the "Education That Works" program. It administers \$61 million in federal funds in Texas to programs such as career academics, school-based enterprises, apprenticeships and a revised version of cooperative education.

"Honestly, the only reason I stayed in school was this program," Moncada said.

He graduated this year from Lanier High School and received a scholarship to attend Austin Community College. He plans to transfer to Southwest Texas State

University in San Marcos after ACC.

A school counselor told him about the Lanier criminal justice program that inspired him to return to school — after dropping out for more than six months — and put behind his gang days which landed him in juvenile detention for car theft.

"I found the right side of the law is better than the wrong side," said Moncada, who has an internship with the Austin Police Department this summer and worked with the Travis County Sheriff's Department last summer.

Dropouts aren't the only ones benefiting from the "Education That Works" initiative.

Honor students Shana Mikels, who graduated from Austin LBJ High School's Science Academy, and Amanda McCollum, who will be a senior at Elgin

High School, also have taken advantage of it.

Through the program, Mikels participated in research projects while an intern at M.D. Anderson Center in Bastrop. McCollum has studied Pre-Vet Animal Science classes at her school in addition to internships.

Proponents of the program say the classes and internships allow students to learn job skills from using those skills and not just reading about them. Opponents say the curriculum based around job skills takes away from academics.

"I don't object to vocational education. I object to diluting the academic focus of academic classes," said State Board of Education member Robert Offutt of San Antonio. "I'm a believer in academics. If you prepare a child academically for the

world they will be able to assimilate and obtain job skills."

Ruth Kane, Lanier High School principal and this year's Reader's Digest

American Hero in Education, supports "Education that Works."

"There's a way to integrate industry and education, employers and students,

curriculum that has to do with technology and curriculum that has to do with humanities," Kane said. "We don't have to throw out Romeo and Juliet."■

COMMENTARY

73. The Washington Post

06/04/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: OP-ED; Page A23 Category: Commentary

Stop Me Before I Give Your Kid Another 'A'

By James B. Twitchell

This is the time of year when college students' attention turns to the matter of final grades. And, if you are their parents, your thoughts will be turning there too. When they come back from the mailbox, they'll probably be smiling, and so will you. Isn't it grand, you'll think, that Missy and Junior are such good students. Funny, they don't seem that smart, but somehow they are getting all A's where we had to struggle for C's.

How come? We all know the answer. It's no dirty little secret — it's grade inflation gone amok. What you may not

The greatest inflator of grades was coming up. The student-generated teacher evaluations inched their way not just into the yearly instructor's evaluation but into the merit pay package as well. Your pay depended, or so you may have thought, on how well-liked you were, and that depended, or so you may have thought, on how high the grades were. Many of us suspected that the causality was weak, but no one really wanted to find out.

By this time the school administrations were finding that, in the Ivy League at least, almost everyone was about to graduate with honors. What to do? Administrators tried to jawbone the faculty to return to normality. Then they started to remove certain grades to force averages back down. At the school where I teach, all the minus grades disappeared. The grades I can give now are A, B+, B, C+, C. The F got reinstated, but no one gets it because students can always drop, or make up the grade later. These kids are not stupid. The only way to get an F is not to complete an Incomplete.

Nothing could stop the grade balloon.

know is that it is almost impossible to control. I know. I'm one of the people doing the inflating of your kids' grades.

The upward shift started in the jungles of Vietnam, when those of us now at the full-professor level were safely in graduate school. We were deferred by virtue of being in school, which wasn't fair and we knew it. So when grading time came, and we knew that giving a C meant that our student (who deserved a D) would go into the jungle, we did one better and gave him a B.

In the old days we would post these grades on the office door, and it was a One after another, the ropes that tied grades to the real world snapped. The most recent one was a new development in the way we are paid: for lack of a better term, call it the beauty-contest method. At the University of Florida it goes by the acronym TIP, or Teacher Improvement Awards. This money, a few thousand, is not a one-time bonanza but is added to your base pay. TIP resulted from the legislature's deciding that it had to show concern about teaching, not just publishing, so this "pay adjustment" is based on teaching alone. And how best to judge teaching? Why, by relying once again on the student-generated forms.

Of course, at the same time all this was occurring, education in America has become obsessed with student-centered learning. Every child must be recognized for trying. Gold stars are appearing on Pee-Wee's report card, bumper stickers proclaiming "My child is an honor student [sorry about yours]" are displayed on bumper stickers. So it is only fair that Junior and Missy are also almost Phi Betes at State College.

The process can't be stopped. Recently

sign of rebellion to have your grade sheet littered with B's. You were doing your part.

Then the war was over and we were moving like elephants to tenure. We still posted the grades, but even that stopped as the various privacy acts forbade public display of a student's personal life, even if only the Social Security number showed. We used to read the doors too. Soon, however, you couldn't tell who among your colleagues had reverted to taking grades seriously. As we were to learn, few had.

I received a memo stating that the average grade in my department was B+. Many of my colleagues are giving almost all A's! The younger members of the department have never even known what a C was all about — let alone what a gentleman's C was. When I tell them that this kind of grading is unfair to my good students, I'm told that graduate schools don't know that my C is someone else's B+.

What to do? I'm afraid it's in your hands, parents. Faculties can't do it unless they are convinced not just that their colleagues will follow through but that other faculties at other schools will also grow backbone. Administrators are embarrassed, but they would never deign to step deeper into the minefield of teacher/student assessment. Good students are penalized, true, but they hardly are able to insist that faculty do their job and evaluate. You are the only hope. And, if you are like me, you aren't going to do anything. I love it that my kids are doing great at college.

The writer is a professor of English at the University of Florida. ■

74. Christian Science Monitor

06/04/97; Edition: ALL 06/04/97; Section: UNITED STATES; Page 1 Category: Commentary

How Some Schools Make a Success Of Character Ed.

By Laurel Shaper Walters, Staff writer of
The Christian Science Monitor

Posters on respect and responsibility dot the walls at elementary schools nationwide. Teachers use "Charlotte's Web" to teach about loyalty or discuss Helen Keller to define courage.

After a 10-year boom in character education, children in thousands of American classrooms are now being taught values.

But one question looms: Are they absorbing anything?

The answer is a very qualified yes.

Experts warn against overblown expectations. And they say there's no such thing as quick-fix character education. But with substantial effort, children can start to assimilate values taught in school and begin applying them to their lives.

Take, for example, 50 kids in Oakland, Calif., who had intensive character education from kindergarten to eighth grade.

Compared with "nonprogram" children, they were more spontaneously

The St. Louis program, Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP), involves 213,000 students in nearly 400 schools and 28 districts. Rather than a single approach, this is a collection of programs that receive funding and training support through PREP.

Most of the school districts have reached consensus on the values their communities want to stress through character education. From there, individual schools and districts come up with their own programs.

Getting an 'A' in character

Some emphasize community-service projects. One school began "catching" students on campus exhibiting a PREP quality - such as honesty or helpfulness - and sending home a postcard announcing that Johnny was caught being good.

Another school district has started a pilot program that grades students on their character. Rather than old-fashioned citizenship marks, these elementary students now get graded on how well they live out the qualities most valued in their community.

Since its beginnings a decade ago, PREP has conducted formal evaluations at participating schools.

The findings suggest that cognitive development of character has increased.

helpful, friendly, and collaborative in the classroom. Their conflict-resolution skills were more advanced. And they were less "socially anxious" and less lonely in school.

But all this comes only with hard work. "You really need to change the moment-to-moment, day-to-day experience of schooling for kids," says Eric Schaps, president of the Oakland, Calif.-based Development Studies Center, which tracked the kids.

The Oakland program focuses on simultaneously nurturing students' intellectual, ethical, and social growth.

Reading materials must offer positive lessons for students and class discussions revolve around moral and ethical issues.

Teachers are encouraged to be models of good behavior and seize opportunities in the regular curriculum to discuss common values, such as what it means to be helpful, caring, honest, and kind.

Connections between home and school are fostered through "Family Reading Nights" when students and parents join with teachers for an evening of stories and discussion at school.

Every few weeks, teachers also assign Students can better recognize character traits in stories and define them.

"In those districts which have taken it seriously and implemented it fully, character education has had some impact," says Professor Grady. "Students are certainly more aware of character education. But it's still an open question if it has {affected} behavior."

While the research is still too thin to determine whether character-education has a long-term impact on student behavior, researchers are reaching consensus on the kinds of programs that are most likely to succeed.

One yardstick for success

Thomas Lickona, author of "Educating for Character," has developed a survey that helps schools measure success.

His "Eleven Principles Survey" asks school officials, teachers, parents, and students to document how well their school is implementing certain basic criteria. These include the use of conflict resolution, providing good role models, making use of literature that teaches virtues, and including parents in the character-education process. (See box at right.)

This is a first step to the later hope of determining the impact on students. "It's only to the degree that you know teachers are actually implementing quality

"family homework." For example, parents and students may share opinions on household chores or research the family's ancestry.

The project is continuing in about 50 schools in several school districts nationwide, including Louisville, Ky., White Plains, N.Y., and Cupertino, Calif.

What really makes a difference is the "hidden curriculum," Mr. Schaps says. "It's not just what the kids are told but whether they experience their schools as a caring community in which they feel they are valued, contributing members."

Effects tough to chart

But even with extensive programs, it's tough to measure any effect on behavior.

Schaps warns that the evaluations are "slow and tricky."

Another evaluator puts it more starkly. "Sometimes I feel like I'm trying to figure out if going to church makes people better," says Michael Grady, a St. Louis University professor who is measuring a St. Louis program's success.

"There are a lot of churchgoers in jail, of course," he quips.

character education that you can make sense of student outcomes," Dr. Lickona says.

But the expectations for character education may be out of sync with reality, some say.

"If you read the rationale for character education, it says we have a drug problem, a crime problem, a sexual promiscuity problem, and if we'd only do character education in our schools, we could fix all these problems," says James Leming, a professor of education at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

"We have to be realistic about what we can expect from these programs," he adds.

"It's naive to expect teachers to wave a magic wand and turn everyone into good little boys and girls by doing lessons in their classrooms."

11 PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

These are summaries of criteria for effective character education programs developed by Thomas Lickona and the Alexandria, Va.-based Character Education Partnership.

1. Ethical values are defined as the basis of good character. Qualities such as "caring, honesty, fairness, and responsibility" set the standard by which

the school and students are evaluated.

2. Students succeed in "thinking, feeling, and behaving" in line with these "core values."

3. Each activity and environment in school is geared toward teaching character.

4. School is a "caring community" that fosters caring relationships between students and adults.

5. Students apply what they learn by cooperating in groups and settling

arguments.

6. The academic curriculum is intellectually challenging and helps students value themselves, and each other, as learners.

7. Rules promote a sincere interest in doing good - minimizing material rewards and punishments.

8. The school staff shares responsibility for, and lives by, the "core values."

9. Various committees are

administered by staff and students who volunteer and are elected to serve as these groups' "moral leaders."

10. The school involves parents and the community in advancing "core values."

11. There is an assessment of the school's character, the staff's success in cultivating character, and the student body's character overall. ■

75. Minneapolis Star-Tribune

June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Commentary: High school — only if you earn it

By Carol Jago

While watching friends' children applying to private high school and then waiting nervously for their acceptance letters, it dawned on me that this is what public school students should be doing as well. Why is entrance to high school automatic?

If every eighth-grader had to demonstrate minimum competency in math, reading and writing before being

These ninth-graders then bring home a bouquet of Ds and Fs on the first report card, setting a pattern for the next four years. It seems to me that screening and remediation does these students a greater justice than punishing them for acting out.

I am not suggesting that youngsters who cannot meet standards remain in middle school. If three years in an institution had little impact on their learning, a fourth is unlikely to either. Students who do not qualify for high school entrance should be offered two alternatives.

The first would be the option to enroll in an accelerated program focusing on basic skills. Small, intensive classes would help students catch up, pass the entrance test and get on with their education.

The second option would be for students who have no interest, at least at the moment, in education. These 14-year-olds would be able to enroll in apprenticeship programs where they could learn job skills in a field of their choice.

Attendance would be mandatory until they are 16, but once they demonstrate

allowed to enroll in high school, more students might pay attention in middle school.

Some might get the message that taking up space at a desk doesn't equal learning. A few might even begin to realize that free public education is a privilege.

Seventy percent of any public high school administrator's time is spent their worth to an employer, there would be no reason why they couldn't be paid as they learn. The option to go back for the accelerated program would always be open and from there the door to high school or community college.

Be prepared

High school is no place for students who don't know their multiplication tables. Can you picture a college prep high school accepting a student who didn't know fractions?

I believe it is a reasonable expectation that entering freshmen should be able to read and write. It also is reasonable to expect that students will carry books and pencils and paper. Depending on when you last visited a public high school, you may or may not be surprised to see how many teenagers don't. The problem with this stance is that, unencumbered by the accouterments of a scholar, let alone his habits of mind, there is little incentive to behave like one.

English teachers turn themselves inside out trying to figure out innovative ways of teaching a novel to students who won't read 10 pages for homework. Can you imagine reading all of "Lord of the Flies" aloud in class? No wonder both

tending to discipline problems caused by 10 percent of the students.

One of the most obvious reasons teenagers disrupt class is that they simply can't keep up with the coursework. The troublemakers figure that it's better to play the fool and cover up what they don't know.

teachers and students are yawning.

Rather than redesign curricula, let's first make sure everyone in class has the skills necessary to complete the work assigned. Once this has been ascertained, expect performance of each and every one. No coach would do less.

When eighth-graders apply for entrance to high school, they and their parents should be asked to sign a contract. The agreement would spell out both what the student can expect from the school and what the teachers can expect from the student.

Repeated failure to meet these terms on the part of the child would end not with rancor and an ugly expulsion but with admission to the internship program. If the evidence is that the teenagers aren't in the mood for school, they shouldn't be there.

A public education, while free, is expensive. We should start treating it as such.

— Carol Jago teaches at Santa Monica (Calif.) High School and directs the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA. She wrote this article for the Los Angeles Times. ■

76. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Is Accreditation Worth the Trouble?

By Selby Holmberg

Suppose someone were to walk into your office or classroom right now and say, "OK, stop what you're doing and spend the next week reflecting on your work, talking to your colleagues, and writing about it." Admit it, once you got past the interruption of your routine, maybe a few inconveniences, you might find the exercise a great luxury, yielding new wisdom and enthusiasm for what you do. At its heart, in my experience, that is what a strong accreditation program seeks to do for a school.

In questioning the value of accreditation, an article in these pages recently focused on the accreditation processes of the six regional accrediting groups. ("Once Status Symbol for Schools, Accreditation Becomes Rote Drill," March 26, 1997.) It might be helpful to look at parallel accreditation

As an observer and evaluator of a number of independent school accrediting programs, I have learned that they are interested above all in standards of educational excellence. One independent school groups states as a goal "to ensure that the public interest is well served by member schools' adherence to the principles of quality education." But they also provide standards for areas of operation particular to independent schools, including governance, adherence to mission, admission policies, financial viability, and fund-raising practice.

Tedious checklists, if they exist at all in the independent school accrediting processes, are far from central to the evaluation of schools. Of primary importance to the school and the evaluators are the self-study and the evaluation visit.

Guided by a good self-study instrument, a self-study provides more than a snapshot of the school's current status, or a laundry list of practices. Instead, it leads the school to look at its mission and purpose and to reflect on how it is meeting that mission, and where it wants to be in five years or more. In the view of one teacher I spoke to recently,

programs that have been established by 14 independent school associations on behalf of their member schools.

First, a couple of definitions: Independent schools are distinct from other schools in that they are primarily supported by tuitions, charitable contributions, and endowment income rather than by tax or church funds. These private schools are not-for-profit, are governed by a board of trustees, and, to be a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, must be accredited by a state or regional association.

The independence of an independent school derives from the fact that each is a unique community with its own mission—a private institution with a public purpose. To serve these schools' needs, a number of state and regional independent the self-study process gave her an opportunity to come out of the classroom, to think more broadly about her work in the larger context of the school's educational mission, and to work collaboratively with colleagues across the curriculum and across school divisions in ways that the school day and school calendar do not normally provide. The process breaks down the isolation imposed by the classroom.

With a carefully assembled evaluating team, one that reflects the particular focus of a school (for example, for a progressive school, the team would include educators familiar with the values and practices of progressive education), and with a thoughtful team leader, the evaluation visit will enrich far more than interrupt the work of the school. The head of the school may share hopes for the future of the school with the visitors, asking them to apply a special lens to their observations, with the goal of nudging the school forward to new growth. The visit gives the school community an opportunity to exchange ideas with peers from other schools, who will often affirm the good work they are witnessing and offer in the final report suggestions for greater success.

school associations have developed accreditation programs, based on a process of peer evaluation, which honors the individual character of each school while determining if schools meet the association's standards.

There is another important layer. In 1989, at the request of its member independent school accrediting associations, NAIS established the Recognition Program, through which the organization observes, evaluates, and recognizes accrediting processes and demonstrates that accountability for accreditation extends beyond an accrediting association's own board of directors—a source of some concern in the Education Week article. That's where my experience comes in.

A common theme among all independent school groups is that an evaluation's primary purpose is to determine whether a school is adhering to its own goals: In the words of another NAIS member association, its purpose in accreditation is to "assist the school in better realizing its objectives, to support rather than inspect, and to enhance the school's unique character rather than impose a common design."

Far from being "rubber stamps," independent school accrediting programs serve three very important purposes. They have a gatekeeping function for independent school associations, they have an accountability function by certifying the quality of the school for parents and other institutions, and they represent the support we extend to one another, at our very best, as a community of educators.

Worth the trouble? Without a doubt.

Selby Holmberg is a vice president of the National Association of Independent Schools, with headquarters in Washington, and directs the NAIS Recognition Program. ■

77. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

How Can Urban Schools Retain Young Teachers?

By James Kelleher

Despite incentives such as college-loan forgiveness for top students going into teaching in urban schools,

many cities are still plagued by a low retention rate for new teachers. After finishing my undergraduate degree at Harvard University, I was excited about the chance to work with needy students in a beleaguered, economically depressed city in Massachusetts. But within months I was burnt out, an isolated newcomer in an unwelcoming staff, frustrated by a lack of administrative support and overwhelmed by my students' behavior and the responsibilities I faced during a typical day. Now that I have made a happy transition to teaching in a suburban high school, I look back upon my original expectations and wonder not only what happened but also what the school might have done to make my experience more positive.

Burnt-Out Faculty. Many of the teachers in my first school found little joy in their jobs, having been beaten down by a history of discord between the central office and their union; morale had never

Classroom Learning. Officially I was a Spanish teacher, but many of my students could not write or read basic English and had trouble even sitting and paying attention in class. Many of the lower-level students in this school took Spanish I and II twice in order to pass; a good number of my students planned on returning during the summer to pass the course (when it would be taught by an uncertified teacher who might not even know Spanish). Our outdated textbooks were in tatters, but I still tried to make my lessons as creative as possible, developing interdisciplinary projects and using the limited computer technology we had available. But most of my students were not very interested in school, and it was almost impossible for them to come to class and put aside their overwhelming personal problems. Absenteeism made it difficult to progress with my curriculum; students were often absent, sometimes in court, often suspended. But with 30 or more students in each class, even having a handful absent did not reduce my workload very much.

Since I was one of the only young

recuperated from a strike organized several years beforehand. Most had been on the staff for over 15 years, having survived the layoffs of the early 1980s. During this time, the city population had shifted dramatically from middle-class factory workers to immigrants and welfare cases. Students coming to the high school were no longer coming from stable families, and instead had a host of complex personal problems to deal with. Teaching was no longer fun; some faculty members openly acknowledged that they continued teaching only because they needed the money for their mortgage or their children's college tuition.

Discipline Problems. Having gone to a private high school, I really had no sense of how bad discipline could be in an urban school. During my first few months, students threatened me, swore at me, and hurled every insult imaginable at me; the students were so hostile and my classes so large that it was hard to teachers on the staff, I was isolated and did not have anyone with whom to share my frustrations. Some of my college classmates were already making nice salaries at consulting jobs, while I was coming home discouraged every day and making only \$26,000, less than the cost of a year's college tuition, wondering what happened to my plans to help needy inner-city students. Instead of using after-school time to tutor students one-on-one, I often found myself processing the bureaucratic paperwork that had accumulated during the day. The school could have chosen from a number of different options to improve working conditions for new teachers such as myself, ranging from smaller class sizes to cleaner working conditions, but it seems to have missed the effective and relatively cheap solution of having a strong, well-organized mentoring program.

A good mentoring program pairs energized veteran teachers with new ones, organizing meetings not only at the beginning of the year but also throughout the year to monitor new teachers' problems and devise solutions. My

become comfortable with more than just a handful of kids. To monitor students, the large school had its own police force, and I often saw students being escorted past my office in handcuffs. Also, teachers were given walkie-talkies and assigned hall duty to break up fights and monitor students in the halls. Students needed a pass to go anywhere or do anything in the school; it made sense that administrators wanted to know where students were, but it meant that I had to spend a good amount of class time writing passes for students going to the bathroom or other destinations. Perhaps the worst part of the discipline code was that the administrators were inconsistent in enforcing it; one assistant principal would take the hard line, doling out many suspensions, while another would take a friendly approach, warming up to the kids, meting out only minor punishments for infractions.

department could not solve many of the administrative and bureaucratic issues I faced, but it could have done much more to make me feel like a member of the community.

Administrators need to build a team image; generally they touch upon this theme on the first day of school, but they must be consistent in acknowledging throughout the year that we are working together toward a common goal. This is not easy in an oversized urban high school, but it should be recognized as a crucial step in inducting new faculty members. And the important role of the mentor teacher should be recognized by providing a small stipend rather than a few token points toward recertification or a simple "thank you." Schools have tried hard to attract qualified recent graduates to education, and they should not neglect to put the same effort into welcoming new teachers, involving them as fully as possible in the school community.

James Kelleher currently teaches Spanish at Wellesley High School in Wellesley Hills, Mass. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in education at Boston College. ■

78. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Reading for Fun

By Morris Freedman

In his State of the Union Address in February, President Clinton proposed a modern children's crusade. "Every

8-year-old," he declared, "must be able to read." Perhaps I can contribute to the effort by emphasizing that we should

make reading fun, something that not everyone believes.

For five decades now as a teacher of

English I've tried to get students to read for fun. My problem has not been with them so much as with those who believe that students are not supposed to enjoy serious reading. It baffles me when colleagues declare that literature is not supposed to delight.

Many parents fear, as I did, that their children will never start reading. I stopped pressing my children to read when I realized the more I pressed the more they resisted. My son tells me he began seriously reading books only after I established a track record of suggesting ones that he enjoyed. His sister, who was younger, got caught up in his fun.

It helped to remember my own introduction to books. When I was 8 years old or so, my father took me to the public library. Because we did not speak English at home, he asked the librarian

A U.S. Department of Education study found that about a quarter of 8th and 12th grade students rarely read for plain fun. It also reported that students who had the highest reading scores talked over the books they read instead of just answering workbook questions about them. Alert teachers know how animated classes can get when they allow free discussion of reading.

Good reading, like any satisfying work, produces fun. We whistle when we like our work. Tom Sawyer realized this when he conned his buddies into white-washing Aunt Polly's picket fence, turning a chore into fun. Like any effort, reading a new text may at first be a labor but should also quickly change to pleasure. At least, this process is what has made the classics last over the ages and turned difficult new works into classics, like the fiction of Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and the plays of Samuel Beckett.

In any good reading, one regularly finds satisfaction in epiphanies, moments of insight that leave lessons for a lifetime. An important one for my son occurred when David Copperfield thinks about what he had lost when he was 8 years old through his stepfather's cruelty: "God help me," David says, "I might have been improved for my whole life, I might have been made another creature perhaps, for life, by a kind word at that season."

Learning comes with realizing and absorbing truth. Reading that challenges inevitably teaches; it doesn't bore since it involves the reader. It helps one deal with everything from delight to disappointment and pain. It sets experience in perspective; it prompts a person to weigh familiar things and see

for advice. The books she recommended enchanted me and I kept returning.

So I felt as a father that any reading Iris and Paul enjoyed would be better than none. Paul, now a newspaper editor, reminds me that I never told him any particular book or type of reading was good or bad for him — Tarzan, Huckleberry Finn, Gulliver's Travels, Tom Swift, Sherlock Holmes stories, assorted magazines. He thinks that if I had, I might have turned him off.

Parents and teachers keep forgetting that fun is exactly what reading is supposed to give. Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, with their strong narratives and engaging characters, once provided the pleasures and, inevitably, the learning that film and television at their best do today.

Indeed, one way to find good reading some he has overlooked. It teaches us how to tell the difference between high quality and low. It makes us aware of moral and ethical conflicts, helps us distinguish between right and wrong, even provides the excitement of defying convention.

Reading helps with practical daily living — talking seriously, saying precisely what you mean, sharpening a sense of humor, getting to the heart of matters. It can help develop sensitivity and tolerance. It deepens personal relationships.

Productive reading always gets the reader to commit himself to the text. Unfortunately, we often try to promote reading deceptively, by salesmanship, by offering irrelevant inducements. "Read at least six books this summer," urged a local library bulletin, "and you'll receive free books; discount coupons for CDs, tapes, and other merchandise."

We should commend the library and merchants for putting books alongside compact disks as sources of pleasure. But such projects may be self-defeating. Bernard Malamud has a short story about a high school dropout who became a neighborhood hero when he announced that he was going to read 100 books over the summer. He read not even one and felt bitter shame in the fall.

Reading for fun requires that we attend and respond to the words on the page. Finding pleasure in reading rarely comes from busywork or from skimming a text. High school teachers in summer seminars I've taught used Robert Frost's "Birches" to assign research on trees, canoes, the poet's biography, metrics, symbols, hidden meanings. They didn't

sources is in the original texts behind good movie, TV, and stage adaptations: for example, Hamlet, Ivanhoe, Little Women, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, Pride and Prejudice, Anna Karenina, Hedda Gabler, The Importance of Being Earnest, A Farewell to Arms, The Maltese Falcon.

Too many believe that learning must always be solemn, formal, even uncomfortable, like medicine. No pain, no gain. I once proposed an anthology for college students containing James Thurber's charming spoof "The Macbeth Murder Mystery." "Students are not supposed to have fun with Shakespeare," huffed a consultant to the publisher. (Thurber's solution was that Lady Macbeth's father did it. It is worth rereading "Macbeth" just to get the full flavor of Thurber's joke.) read Frost for fun themselves or know how to teach their students to do so.

Everyone can have fun reading. Of course, we should not expect the same reward from everything we read. "Some books are to be tasted," wrote Francis Bacon, "others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

Some reading will surely disappoint us, just the way some movies and some gourmet meals will. But regular reading will repeatedly surprise and delight us, and that's always fun.

Here are some tips that should help students and adults alike get into the habit of reading for fun:

Start with short works that hold your interest. Don't feel you have to read every item in a collection of stories or poems. Sample. Enjoy.

Bring at least as much patience to a longer text as you might to a television series or a baseball or basketball playoff. Remember that many long books were the equivalent in their time of an ongoing television soap opera. They first appeared in installments.

Keep reading a work once you start. Don't stop to look up every word or name you don't know or can't remember, but only do so if the word keeps recurring and the meaning doesn't become clear. Don't let an author's style or the thickness of a book put you off.

Avoid summaries and outlines of famous works, "trots." Don't confuse reading with memorizing plots. If you do find summaries that intrigue you, by all means read the book itself.

Avoid introductions to books. They can be misleading. You can always go back to an introduction after you've read

the book.

Don't worry about whether the book has a hard cover or a flexible one, is used or new. If you can, choose a copy that you can hold comfortably, with print that's easy to read. Try to get one with the original illustrations, like Sir John Tenniel's for Alice's Adventures in Wonderland or those drawn by Phiz (Hablot Knight Browne) for much of Dickens.

Don't worry too much about the translation of a work. Most translations

of Leo Tolstoy, Feodor Dostoevsky, Henrik Ibsen, and Anton Chekhov are serviceable. If the idioms are too old-fashioned and stilted, as in some translations of Guy de Maupassant, look for other editions. The important point is to enjoy your reading.

Look for other books by authors you like or for books about them. Reading lots of works by one writer can be as much fun as reading works by lots of different writers. And remember, you may also enjoy books about writers

whose works you've enjoyed. Richard Ellmann's biographies of James Joyce and Oscar Wilde, for example, can give pleasure the way the original works by these authors did.

Morris Freedman has taught at the City College of New York and the universities of New Mexico and Maryland and has written and edited textbooks for high school and college courses. He lives in Hyattsville, Md., and writes regularly on education. ■

79. Education Week

June 4, 1997 Category: Commentary

Raising the Caution Flag On the Standards Movement

By Paul Houston

Standards. Higher standards. World-class standards. Standards have become the mantra of school reform. They have replaced apple pie and motherhood as the one thing no educator can be against. On the surface this makes sense. A recent study by the New York City-based nonprofit Public Agenda found that students today do not feel they are being held to a high enough standard of performance. The literature is replete with information on grade inflation, low expectations for minority students, and a raft of other subjects that would indicate that holding students to a much higher set of expectations for their work makes great sense. In my conversations with teachers, school leaders, and with citizens, all seem to agree that higher standards are a must.

Yet, at the risk of pointing out that the emperor's clothes are a bit threadbare, I must raise the caution flag on the standards movement. Not because higher standards are wrong, but because the movement itself is flawed. If we ever expect to reach a higher set of outcomes for students, we'd better fix the movement that we expect to take us there.

Let's start with the assumptions undergirding the reform movement. It is widely reported, and therefore believed by politicians and the business community, that American education has slipped badly in recent years. Starting with the pivotal A Nation at Risk report of 1983, it has been taken for granted that the golden era of American public education is behind us, that we have lost the competitive edge over the rest of the world, and that our economic future is threatened by a decline in the quality of education in America.

It would take more than a few paragraphs to refute this claim. However, let it be known that there is a substantial body of evidence that our schools have held their own against a rising tide of social problems. Despite the dramatic decline in family life, and overall loss of social capital supporting children, schools have maintained and slightly increased achievement. While most international comparisons are bogus at best, because of different samples, curricular assumptions, and cultural variances, when comparisons are made with like groups, the United States does just fine.

We do need to improve what we are doing, though, and improve it dramatically, because incremental improvement will not suffice in an exponential environment. Expectations for all children have skyrocketed against the past, and we have not kept up with those expectations. So improvement is needed. But not for the reasons the critics assume. And if we have misdiagnosed the problem, we are quite likely to prescribe the wrong treatment. A blind call for higher standards without examining what children need to know how to do better could well lead to wasted time and resources.

The second problem with the standards movement is that it fails to consider context as a powerful issue. Having served as a superintendent of a wealthy district, where most children came from two-parent families with high levels of parental income and education (not to mention expectations), and having served as a superintendent of a couple of urban districts with high levels of poverty and "broken" families, it is difficult for

me to take the standards movement seriously absent a consideration of the contextual differences the children bring to school with them.

I am not for a moment suggesting that poor children should not have the opportunity to meet the same high expectations that wealthier children are expected to meet. In fact, it is our moral imperative to see that the trajectories of their lives have the same opportunity for liftoff. I am suggesting that a school reform movement that does not consider the problems presented by lack of equity—that suggests all students reach the same finish line, but does nothing to redress the fact that the starting line is further back for some—is a movement I have difficulty taking seriously. Thus far, I have seen nothing from the politicians of either party that would indicate that we can expect this issue to be confronted and addressed. Without dealing with context, the standards movement is doomed to fail.

The fact is, we already have high standards for some children. Students who attend our highly selective and competitive magnet high schools in some of our inner cities—schools such as Stuyvesant and the Bronx High School of Science in New York, or University High in Tucson, Ariz., or the dozens of others all across America—meet and exceed the world-class standards that are currently being discussed. Students attending many of our elite suburban schools also meet these standards. The consortium in the Chicago area that outstripped the world on the recent Third International Mathematics and Science Study is evidence of that. Our problem isn't that

American students can't meet higher standards. The problem is that we lack the will as a people to do what we have to do to see that all students have the same opportunities that some of our children have.

Another problem I have with the standards movement is that it is totally disconnected from everything else we do.

And finally, we must ask, "Higher standards for whom?" For if we want to have higher standards for students, we must also have higher standards for teachers. And if we want to hold teachers to higher standards, we must do the same for principals. And what is good for principals is good for district staff and superintendents. And that leads to higher standards for boards of education. Which naturally leads to parents, and community. For good measure, let's throw in business leaders and politicians.

Education is organic. It is fluid. It lives and breathes because, of all the aspects of our existence, it is perhaps the most human and the most dependent upon humans to carry out. Those acting and those acted upon are human. And as the old saying points out, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." You can lead a student to Children are at the bottom of the food chain. Blaming them for their problems, and not as adults taking responsibility for adding to their problems, is really blaming the victim. Yes, children need to reach high standards. So do adults.

If the emperor wants to show off his new duds, he needs to make sure everyone else is dressed as well. When we can truly begin to understand what our kids need to know and know what to do to face an uncertain future, when we can see that all our kids have the same

knowledge but you can't make him learn. That requires motivation, understanding, and sometimes compassion. It is the stuff of hopes and dreams. And it will take more than a mantra to fulfill. It will take fairness and equity. It will take strength and joy. It will take us acting toward each other in human ways. It will take our behaving in connected ways. chance at success that is currently reserved for a few of our kids, when we can connect all the parts of education and join together — adults and children working toward the same end of higher achievement — then we can all start chanting the mantra together. It will be more than a mystical incantation — it will be a goal within our grasp.

Paul Houston is the executive director of the American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, Va. ■

EDITORIAL

80. Sacramento Bee

June 4, 1997 Category: Editorial

Who'll run the testing program?

GOV. PETE Wilson is in something of a showdown with the Democrats in the Legislature, and with much of the education establishment as well, about the timing and nature of a statewide testing program for all California elementary and secondary school students. It's a fight that, for the sake of educational standards and quality, he ought not to lose.

The danger is that he could prevail in this battle, which will come during the next couple of weeks in the so-called Big Five budget negotiations with legislative leaders, and still lose the war. The key to that is who controls and administers the test. If the state Department of Education runs it, Wilson could well have won an empty victory.

On the surface the issue is simple: whether to buy a standardized off-the-shelf-test now — the kind of educational achievement test that thousands of California children already take — or wait for the development of a new California test, which in turn depends on adoption of a whole new set of standards. Such a test may take, literally, until the next millennium to get in place. After almost a decade of flying blind, California badly needs a testing

program now to reliably evaluate its programs — and inform parents and others on how it's doing.

The opponents of Wilson's proposal say that since teachers always teach to the test, the standardized test he proposes will drive the curriculum — presumably in a direction of which they disapprove — before the state's own standards are in place.

BUT BENEATH those objections, this is just another form of the debate between the curricular left and right — the phonics and math facts people on one side, the constructivist, whole language descendants of the old progressives on the other.

There is no absolute right and wrong in that debate — good schooling is a mixture of both. But for the moment the national drift, both in the polls and in pedagogical scholarship, is very much toward tougher, less fuzzy standards. Most of the Department of Education, the teachers colleges and the California Teachers Association, on the other hand, still belong mostly to the party of fuzz, self-esteem and good feelings.

A little history should make that clear.

In the past few years, bureaucrats in the state Department of Education have

tried to soften or derail a long line of hard-nosed proposals to reduce the mush quotient in testing, standards and curricular frameworks. They defended the old CLAS test, the last California effort to do its own thing, to the death, even after it was clear that it didn't measure what it purported to measure.

It also took enormous outside pressure — from private citizens, from legislators and from dismal national test results — to force the department to produce revisions in the state's reading and math programs, changes for which state schools chief Delaine Eastin now claims credit but which she does little to implement. On the contrary, even though those changes were adopted and written clearly into law and state policy, there have been attempts from within the education establishment to sabotage them. Eastin herself tried to block the confirmation of Janet Nicholas, a Board of Education member who insisted that the state's math program include texts with a heavy dose of fundamentals. And, of course, Eastin strongly opposes Wilson's testing proposal.

Yet even if those things were only partially true, there is an inherent conflict of interest in letting the California

Department of Education run a high-stakes assessment system that could reflect badly on the things to which the educational bureaucracy is so deeply committed — whole language, bilingual education, constructivist math. Under Wilson's proposal, every student, every

But there are fairly easy alternatives — and possibly an important precedent for other forms of assessment. Put the whole testing program — this one and the one that the state expects eventually to develop for itself — in an independent agency. The office of the state auditor

school, every district would be evaluated.

HOW SUCH an evaluation is conducted — who gets excused, how scores are reported, how strictly test security is maintained — thus becomes highly important. In other places, there has on occasion been widespread general would seem the most obvious candidate, though there could be others.

If that succeeds, a whole set of other performance audits, particularly in education, could usefully be moved to the same place. Such a change would require moving some people over and shutting

cheating (by adults) or fudging of scores. Since the careers of principals and superintendents (including, in this case, potentially Eastin's career as well) may ride on the results of the tests, there's plenty of reason for concern.

some things down. But that would hardly be a tragedy; on the contrary, it could set a wonderful precedent. No agency so subject to ideology ought to be evaluating its own programs.■

81. Chicago Tribune

June 4, 1997 Category: Editorial

CASTING FOR A SCHOOL DEAL

Senate President James "Pate" Philip was at his vacation home in the Upper Peninsula Tuesday, presumably showing more deftness at bagging northern pike than he did at finishing a school reform deal.

Gov. Jim Edgar was at his Springfield office, presumably contemplating how Philip would look dangling from the other end of the fishing line.

When these two get back in the same state — some might say if they ever get back on the same planet — they have some business to do.

They don't have to hold any press conferences; they don't even have to tell us about it. They just have to sit down together, with no one else in the room, and talk about education.

They'll probably have to work through a few things, such as why Philip buried the most important initiative Jim Edgar has ever put forth. And why Edgar tried to foster a revolt in Philip's own caucus,

rather than seek an accommodation with him.

But if they can get past the ill feelings, they ought to be able to reach an accommodation on schools.

The legislature isn't scheduled to go back to Springfield until October. If they follow tradition, the state's leaders will put school reform on hold for the summer, maybe longer. "Wait 'til next year" is heard more often in Springfield than in Wrigley Field.

This is the time to break tradition. Next year is not soon enough. This October is not soon enough.

The governor should call a special session of the legislature for one purpose: education. But he should negotiate an agreement first. It would be useless to haul everyone to the Capitol under the notion that that would pressure the legislators to respond.

If Edgar can reach an agreement with Philip, the rest of the deal should fall into

place.

It will probably mean a smaller increase in the state income tax than Edgar wanted, coupled with some consumer taxes. It will probably mean less in the way of property-tax relief. But there's no reason Edgar and Philip can't reach the primary goal: a school plan that guarantees every child will have a reasonable minimum amount of money available for his education.

Edgar's plan is better than that, but let's be realistic. The people responsible for killing that plan — Philip and House Minority Leader Lee Daniels — show no signs of going anywhere. Edgar, though, might be going somewhere. If he decides this summer not to seek re-election, his influence will wane.

It's Edgar's call to make, and time for him to make it. Heck, maybe Philip has room for him in his boat.■

82. The Christian Science Monitor

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How Some Schools Make a Success Of Character Ed.

Laurel Shaper Walters, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ST. LOUIS — Posters on respect and responsibility dot the walls at elementary schools nationwide. Teachers use "Charlotte's Web" to teach about loyalty or discuss Helen Keller to define courage.

After a 10-year boom in character education, children in thousands of American classrooms are now being taught values.

But one question looms: Are they

absorbing anything?

The answer is a very qualified yes.

Experts warn against overblown expectations. And they say there's no such thing as quick-fix character education. But with substantial effort, children can start to assimilate values taught in school and begin applying them to their lives.

Take, for example, 50 kids in Oakland, Calif., who had intensive

character education from kindergarten to eighth grade.

Compared with "nonprogram" children, they were more spontaneously helpful, friendly, and collaborative in the classroom. Their conflict-resolution skills were more advanced. And they were less "socially anxious" and less lonely in school.

But all this comes only with hard work. "You really need to change the

moment-to-moment, day-to-day experience of schooling for kids," says Eric Schaps, president of the Oakland, Calif.-based Development Studies

Teachers are encouraged to be models of good behavior and seize opportunities in the regular curriculum to discuss common values, such as what it means to be helpful, caring, honest, and kind.

Connections between home and school are fostered through "Family Reading Nights" when students and parents join with teachers for an evening of stories and discussion at school.

Every few weeks, teachers also assign "family homework." For example, parents and students may share opinions on household chores or research the family's ancestry.

The project is continuing in about 50 schools in several school districts nationwide, including Louisville, Ky., White Plains, N.Y., and Cupertino, Calif.

What really makes a difference is the "hidden curriculum," Mr. Schaps says. "It's not just what the kids are told but whether they experience their schools as a caring community in which they feel they are valued, contributing members."

Effects tough to chart

But even with extensive programs, it's tough to measure any effect on behavior.

Schaps warns that the evaluations are "slow and tricky."

Another evaluator puts it more starkly. "Sometimes I feel like I'm trying to figure out if going to church makes people better," says Michael Grady, a St. Louis University professor who is measuring a St. Louis program's success.

"There are a lot of churchgoers in jail, of course," he quips.

The St. Louis program, Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP), involves 213,000 students in nearly 400 schools and 28 districts. Rather than a single approach, this is a collection of programs that receive funding and training support through PREP.

Most of the school districts have reached consensus on the values their communities want to stress through character education. From there, individual schools and districts come up with their own programs.

Getting an 'A' in character

Some emphasize community-service projects. One school began "catching" students on campus exhibiting a PREP quality - such as honesty or helpfulness -

Center, which tracked the kids.

The Oakland program focuses on simultaneously nurturing students' intellectual, ethical, and social growth. and sending home a postcard announcing that Johnny was caught being good.

Another school district has started a pilot program that grades students on their character. Rather than old-fashioned citizenship marks, these elementary students now get graded on how well they live out the qualities most valued in their community.

Since its beginnings a decade ago, PREP has conducted formal evaluations at participating schools.

The findings suggest that cognitive development of character has increased. Students can better recognize character traits in stories and define them.

"In those districts which have taken it seriously and implemented it fully, character education has had some impact," says Professor Grady. "Students are certainly more aware of character education. But it's still an open question if it has [affected] behavior."

While the research is still too thin to determine whether character-education has a long-term impact on student behavior, researchers are reaching consensus on the kinds of programs that are most likely to succeed.

One yardstick for success

Thomas Lickona, author of "Educating for Character," has developed a survey that helps schools measure success.

His "Eleven Principles Survey" asks school officials, teachers, parents, and students to document how well their school is implementing certain basic criteria. These include the use of conflict resolution, providing good role models, making use of literature that teaches virtues, and including parents in the character-education process. (See box at right.)

This is a first step to the later hope of determining the impact on students. "It's only to the degree that you know teachers are actually implementing quality character education that you can make sense of student outcomes," Dr. Lickona says.

But the expectations for character education may be out of sync with reality, some say.

"If you read the rationale for character education, it says we have a drug problem, a crime problem, a sexual promiscuity problem, and if we'd only do

Reading materials must offer positive lessons for students and class discussions revolve around moral and ethical issues.

character education in our schools, we could fix all these problems," says James Leming, a professor of education at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

"We have to be realistic about what we can expect from these programs," he adds.

"It's naive to expect teachers to wave a magic wand and turn everyone into good little boys and girls by doing lessons in their classrooms."

11 PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

These are summaries of criteria for effective character education programs developed by Thomas Lickona and the Alexandria, Va.-based Character Education Partnership.

1. Ethical values are defined as the basis of good character. Qualities such as "caring, honesty, fairness, and responsibility" set the standard by which the school and students are evaluated.

2. Students succeed in "thinking, feeling, and behaving" in line with these "core values."

3. Each activity and environment in school is geared toward teaching character.

4. School is a "caring community" that fosters caring relationships between students and adults.

5. Students apply what they learn by cooperating in groups and settling arguments.

6. The academic curriculum is intellectually challenging and helps students value themselves, and each other, as learners.

7. Rules promote a sincere interest in doing good - minimizing material rewards and punishments.

8. The school staff shares responsibility for, and lives by, the "core values."

9. Various committees are administered by staff and students who volunteer and are elected to serve as these groups' "moral leaders."

10. The school involves parents and the community in advancing "core values."

11. There is an assessment of the school's character, the staff's success in cultivating character, and the student body's character overall. ■