

Daily Education News



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NATIONAL

1. Associated Press

August 31, 1998

Clinton Supports Smaller Class Size

By Sarah Wyatt
Associated Press Writer

HERNDON, Va. (AP) — In his first public appearance since a 12-day vacation, President Clinton today led a roundtable discussion of education issues with parents, teachers and administrators at an elementary school in this Washington suburb.

Clinton asked for help in persuading the Republican majority in Congress to pass key pieces of his education agenda, including legislation to add 100,000 teachers nationwide as a way of reducing class sizes in early grades and to modernize older schools.

"I would implore you, without regard to your political party, to contact your members of Congress, your senators, to ask them to support this agenda," Clinton

said. He spoke just a few hours before his scheduled departure for a summit meeting in Moscow.

No mention was made of the president's legal and personal problems, but outside the school there were several signs of protest. One sign read "Liar." Another sign: "We teach our children not to lie."

Inside the school, Clinton drew sustained applause several times, once when he said of his plan for investing more money in improving the quality of elementary and secondary education: "There is no more important area in which to spend the money, now that we have it."

Clinton said it was not too late to pass education legislation before Congress quits for the year.

"I believe if we don't be harsh and political in our rhetoric, but talk about our children and of what we know to be true of education, we can get a listening ear among enough thoughtful Republicans" to pass a bill meeting his party's objectives, Clinton said.

Clinton used the forum at Herndon Elementary School to link education issues to broader national goals, including improving the economy and strengthening democracy.

"The ultimate national security of any country rests in the strength of its own citizens, and for us that means we have got to prove that no matter how diverse we are we can still offer a world-class education to every single American child," he said. ■

2. USA Today

September 1, 1998

Clinton tests public reception at school

Fewer protesters as president pitches school initiatives

By Richard Benedetto

Herndon, Va. - Before jetting to Russia on Monday afternoon, President Clinton continued to work at rehabilitating his image with a visit to an elementary school here in suburban Washington.

Clinton used the academic forum to pitch his education agenda and test public reaction to his Monica Lewinsky problems. His education message was warmly received and so was he.

A handful of protesters gathered outside the Herndon Elementary School. One had a sign that said, "We don't teach our children to lie."

But for the most part, the crowd was friendly and polite.

"Mothers and fathers think his morality is disgusting, but he's still president of the United States and it's an honor to have him here," said Linda

Gordon, a mother of two boys.

Inside, the audience of about 300 teachers, parents, school administrators, area residents and a few students gave the president a standing ovation when he was introduced and interrupted his speech several times with applause and cheers.

Principal Michelle Freeman welcomed Clinton to the session, which she billed as "an opportunity to bend the ear of the president."

Clinton, who just two weeks earlier publicly admitted to an inappropriate relationship with Lewinsky, a 25-year-old former White House intern, was buoyed by the positive response. He appeared at his most relaxed since his confession, often joking with teachers and administrator who urged him in blunt terms to provide more money for schools.

Clinton urged the audience to contact Republican members of Congress and tell

them to support administration bills that would hire 100,000 teachers to reduce class sizes in early grades, build and renovate 5,000 schools and provide more aid for better teacher training.

"These are not partisan issues," the president said. "These are people issues, and our future is riding on them."

Rep. William Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, said in a statement that people should not be fooled by Clinton's anti-GOP rhetoric.

"The Republican Congress is further along with its education agenda than the president is with his," Goodling said.

"Once the president failed to get his huge tobacco tax - the tax that he said would pay for his education initiatives - he decided to blame us for failing to move his education agenda," he said. ■

3. Special Event (CNN)

September 1, 1998

President Clinton Addresses Herndon, VA Elementary School Students

MARY TILLOTSON, CNN ANCHOR: President Clinton, who is leaving for Russia and a summit with Boris Yeltsin only this afternoon, is expected to have some remarks on the problems there. He's speaking in Herndon, Virginia.

(JOINED IN PROGRESS)

WILLIAM J. CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: ... parents and children are meeting their teachers for the first time, and there's excitement and anticipation of what everyone hopes will be a very successful year for the children. And insofar as it is, it's a good year for America.

I have done everything I knew to do for the last six years to try to focus the attention of the American people on the whole question of education because I think it is one of the big questions which will determine the shape of our children's future and the world in the 21st century.

If you think about the other major challenges we face as Americans — reforming Social Security and Medicare so that we baby boomers don't bankrupt the country when we retire, providing quality affordable health care to all of our people, proving we can preserve and improve the environment as we grow the economy, building one America across all the racial and religious and other lines that separate us, something I've been very involved in in the last several weeks, as all of you know, trying to construct a world free of terrorism and more full of peace and prosperity and security and freedom — every single one of those challenges depends upon our ability to have educated citizens. Not just educated presidents, not just educated secretaries of education, but citizens who can absorb complicated information and all these things that are flying at them all the time and evaluate it and measure it, who can develop reasoned principles, passionate responses to keep the idea of America going into this new century.

So that's why I wanted to come here today. Many of you know that I am

I'm also going to Ireland, which is the homeland of over 40 million Americans. We trace our ancestry there. And they've been working a long time on a peace process in which we have been intimately involved, and I'm going to do my best to advance that. I think we have a good chance to do so.

leaving. When I go back from you, I go back to Washington, and then the first lady and I are going to Russia and then to Ireland with a team of people to deal with the issues there. And I'd like to just say one word about it, because it's my only real opportunity to talk with you and through you, thanks to our friends in the press here, to the American people, because this trip is one of the most — is an example of one of the most important lessons every child needs to learn in America from a very early age. And that is we are living in a smaller and smaller world.

This global economy, the global society, it is real. Information, ideas, technology, money, people can travel around the world at speeds unheard of not very long ago. Our economies are increasingly interconnected. Our securities are increasingly interconnected.

I'm sure all of you have followed the events in the aftermath of the tragic bombing of our embassies in Africa. And you know that there were far more Africans killed than Americans, even though America was the target. And you know that the person responsible did not belong to any government but had an independent terrorist network capable of hitting people and countries all around the world.

So there's been a lot of good. We've benefited a lot from this global society of ours. We have over 16 million new jobs in the last six years, and we're about to have our first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years. We have benefited from the world of the 21st century, but we have a lot of responsibilities. And the reason I'm going to Russia is because we have learned the hard way that problems that develop beyond our borders sooner or later find their way to our doorstep, unless we help our friends and our neighbors to deal with them as quickly as promptly as possible.

Now the Russia people are to be commended for embracing democracy and getting rid of the old communist

But I want you to understand that I do these things because I think they are in America's interest; they're not just the right things to do, they're not just nice things to have happen. But every child — You look around this room and see how many children are here and come from different cultures themselves, whose

system, but they're having some troubles today making the transition from communism to a free market economy, and from communism to a democratic society that has supports for people who are in trouble.

What I want to do is to go there and tell them that the easy thing to do is not the right thing to do. The easy thing to do would be to try to go back the way they did it before, and it's not possible. But that if they will stay on the path of reform, to stabilize their society and to strengthen their economy, and to get growth back, then I believe America and the rest of the western nations with strong economies should help them and indeed have an obligation to help, and that it's in our interest to help them.

If you say why, let me just give you a couple of reasons. First of all, Russia and the United States still have the biggest nuclear arsenals in the world. And at a time when India and Pakistan have tested nuclear weapons, we need to be moving the world away from nuclear war not toward it. We have to have the cooperation and the partnership of the Russians to do that.

We don't want terrorists to get a hold of weapons of mass destruction. A weakened Russia, a weakened Russian economy would put enormous pressure on people who have those technologies and understandings to sell them. We don't want that to happen.

We know we need Russia's partnership to solve problems in that part of the world. If it hadn't been for Russia's partnership, we could not have ended the war in Bosnia, which all of you remember just a couple of years ago was threatening the entire stability of Europe. Next door in Kosovo, there's a similar problem today. We've got to have Russia's partnership to solve that. So if Russia will stay on the path of reform, I believe America and the rest of the West must help them.

ancestors come from different countries themselves. There is no nation in the world better positioned than the United States to do well in the 21st century, because we're a people from everywhere.

If our values and our ideals can spread around the world, then we can create a peaceful, secure world. So that's what I'm

trying to do.

But to get back to the main point, the ultimate national security of any country rests in the strength of its own citizens. And for us, that means we have got to prove that no matter how diverse we are,

we can still offer a world-class education to every single American child.

I'm sure all of you know this, but virtually everyone in the world believes that America has the finest system of higher education anywhere. We are

flooded every year with students and graduate students coming from every other country in the world to our colleges and universities, because they think they're the best in the world. And they have made us very strong. ■

4. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A04

President Promotes Education Agenda in Crowded Fairfax

By John F. Harris and Victoria Benning
Washington Post Staff Writers

President Clinton traveled to one of Northern Virginia's largest and most-crowded schools yesterday to make a soft-edged appeal to Congress to pass his education agenda, which includes billions of dollars in proposed spending for new and renovated buildings.

The crowd of parents and teachers jammed into the gym at Herndon Elementary School gave Clinton a warm reception, but there was a notable absence: Fairfax County School Board Member Jane K. Strauss, a Democrat whose district includes the school, boycotted the president's appearance.

"I will not be attending the event on Monday because I do not approve of the president's behavior," Strauss told board colleagues in a Friday e-mail. "His sexual misconduct, lies, and obstruction of the investigation are wrong. I am especially displeased with his pronouncements about the need for high moral character among youth when his own behavior is blatantly immoral."

Other school officials, including Superintendent Daniel A. Domenech, greeted Clinton. School Board member Ernestine Heastic (Providence) said she was "pleased with what we have heard here today."

While Clinton political strategists have said they would relish a partisan showdown if Republicans in Congress

snub the administration's education proposals, Clinton's rhetoric yesterday was mild. Saying he wants to make education an "American issue" rather than a partisan one, Clinton expressed hope that GOP leaders will in the end lend support to his schools package.

That package includes \$5 billion in tax credits over five years to help local districts float bond measures to build and modernize schools; \$12.4 billion over seven years aimed at reducing class sizes in grades 1 through 3 to an average of 18 students; and expanded funding for such goals as promoting experimental "charter schools," improving classroom technology training and equipment, encouraging Hispanic students not to drop out of school and increasing the number of children covered by the federal Head Start preschool program.

Republicans have shown little deference to most of these ideas as they draft the appropriations bills that are due to be passed by the start of the 1999 fiscal year on Oct. 1. Clinton is planning a steady succession of "back-to-school" events to highlight the conflict. He interrupted his summer vacation last week to make a school safety speech at Worcester, Mass., and next Tuesday, after returning from an overseas trip to Russia and Ireland, he, Vice President Gore, and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley will all be pushing the school modernization issue at different sites

around the country.

Herndon Elementary, which Clinton visited just a few hours before flying to Moscow, is an apt setting for discussing school construction. There is a student population of more than a thousand children; Domenech joked some teachers are working out of closets. Nearby Centreville High School is so crowded that students are crammed into some 40 trailers.

On his domestic travels, Clinton often refers to the Fairfax school system and its challenges educating students from more than a hundred national backgrounds. Yesterday, he said the nation's prospects will hinge heavily on how well educators respond. "It's a worthy challenge for a great country to prove that we can take all this diversity, not just racial and ethnic and religious diversity, but diversity of life circumstances, and still give every single child a shot at living his or her dream," he said. "This is just as much a part of our national security as that trip I'm taking to Russia, and I want you to understand that I believe that."

ART PH., FRANK JOHNSTON
CAPTION: President Clinton leaves Oval Office meeting with national security adviser Samuel R. "Sandy" Berger for a final walk with his dog, Buddy, shortly before departing for the summit in Russia. ■

5. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A03

As Test of Vouchers, Milwaukee Parochial School Exceeds Expectations

By Jon Jeter
Washington Post Staff Writer

Anticipating a jump in enrollment, administrators at Messmer High School

here converted their choir hall into a classroom. And they were smart to do so.

On the first day of class here today, 366 students showed up at the door,

boosting the student body by nearly 20 percent in a year. Another 30 students are still trying to get in, which means that, for the first time in its 72-year history,

this Catholic school needed a waiting list.

Everything and nothing has changed at Messmer. Teenagers today fumbled with their lockers, searched for new homerooms and misplaced class schedules. What is different is that, for nearly half of the students attending this private religious institution, taxpayers — not parents — will pay the bill.

The familiar sounds and monotonous hum of a new school year at Messmer represent the extraordinary debut of the nation's most ambitious effort to retool urban education by allowing poor children to attend religious schools using state-funded vouchers.

"Welcome to the beginning of a new era in education in Milwaukee," said Gov. Tommy G. Thompson (R) in an address to students today in Messmer's auditorium. "Instead of busing our kids all over town to a public school that just doesn't measure up, we're going to give parents the chance to send their kids to a school right down the street," Thompson said. "And if that school is private, so be it."

Messmer's growth spurt stems largely from a ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court in June that cleared the way for more than 110 parochial and private, nonsectarian schools to receive public stipends — or vouchers — to teach students previously enrolled in Milwaukee public schools. Rejecting an appeal by opponents of school vouchers, the court ruled that the program violates neither the state's constitution nor the First Amendment, barring laws that promote religion.

At \$4,900 annually per student, the city's voucher program will pay for as many as 15,000 low-income schoolchildren to attend private schools. Since the money comes from the public school system's budget, civil rights groups and teachers unions have opposed the program, arguing that the subsidy will

Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist (D), who like Thompson was an advocate for the city's use of school vouchers, appeared with Thompson at Messmer today to commemorate the shift in

siphon resources from already troubled public schools.

City schools opened last week, and officials say that enrollment, based on applications, has increased slightly from 103,000 pupils last year. Still, they say it typically takes a few weeks for administrators to get an accurate head count, and state officials estimate that nearly 6,000 children will participate in Milwaukee's voucher program this year.

People for the American Way, a District-based civil rights organization, estimates that vouchers will cost Milwaukee's public schools more than \$29 million in this school year alone.

"It's a recipe for flight from the public schools," said Elliot Mincberg, an attorney and vice president of People for the American Way, which today appealed Wisconsin's decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Messmer, among the first parochial high schools to open this year, is considered ground zero for Milwaukee's voucher enterprise, perhaps the city's primary beneficiary of the new program. Located in a toughened, overwhelmingly black neighborhood on the city's north side, Messmer draws heavily from the surrounding community.

And while Wisconsin's voucher program does not require children to attend neighborhood schools, proponents believe it will reduce long cross-town commutes.

Academically, the Catholic school has fared significantly better than most of the city's high schools. Messmer's graduation rate is 98 percent — more than double the city's rate — and 85 percent of its graduating seniors go on to college.

The school does not require school uniforms, but it is demanding. Students cannot chew gum, wear caps or swear, and the school's president, Brother Bob Smith, a Capuchin friar, can expel anyone he wants without a hearing, educational policy. He acknowledged the acrimonious and lingering resentment over the issue in speaking to reporters afterward about his appearance.

"I don't think it would have been

Expulsions still are rare, however. The absentee rate is 3 percent daily, on average.

But before they can settle in, the new children will need to find chairs. Expecting an influx of students, Ann Szekely grabbed a few extra chairs from another classroom. It still wasn't enough; 18 students crowded into her classroom today, and some had to sit on the floor until a few more desks could be retrieved.

"I've never had so many kids wanting to get into my class before," said Szekely, a teacher for six years, the last four at Messmer. "Usually they're trying to get out."

But most faculty members here are enthusiastic about vouchers and Messmer's growth. "It's exciting to me," Szekely said. "I feel like I'm on the cutting edge of education."

Aisha James, 16 and opinionated, attended a city school last year and is glad her mother suggested she transfer this year.

"You can learn better here," she said. "People listen to the teacher. At Madison [a public high school], they don't teach you [anything]. The kids fight all the time, and the principal don't try to help people. If there's a problem, he would just suspend you."

Deseree Gordon said she couldn't imagine sending her two daughters to a public school now that vouchers are available. "There's just too many kids in gang trouble or involved with violence," she said. "The kids can actually learn something when they don't have to deal with all that."

Wisconsin began experimenting with school vouchers in 1990, but legal appeals blocked the state's plans to expand the program to religious schools in 1995. The state's efforts represent the largest voucher program in the country and the only one where children are allowed to attend religious schools, appropriate to celebrate school choice at any of the public schools," Norquist said. "There are still some pretty raw feelings." ■

6. USA Today

September 1, 1998

Court asked to bar parochial schools from voucher plan

By Tamara Henry USA Today

A coalition of groups opposed to school vouchers asked the U.S. Supreme Court Monday to stop use of state-funded

vouchers to pay tuition in Milwaukee's parochial schools.

Under the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, low-income families originally

were allowed to use taxpayer dollars to send their children only to private schools that are nonsectarian.

But the Wisconsin Supreme Court

June 10 ruled in favor of expanding the program to parochial schools. The 4-2 ruling overturned two lower court decisions. Milwaukee schools opened last week with about 6,000 children enrolled in 86 private schools using vouchers. The Wisconsin voucher plan will allow up to \$70 million during the 1998-99 school year to pay tuition for as many as 15,000 students.

The money for the vouchers comes from state aid that otherwise would have been used for public schools. Milwaukee

began the nation's first voucher program in 1990, and weathered many court battles and lawsuits. In an unusual twist, the conservative Institute for Justice- a staunch voucher advocate- supports the request for the Supreme Court review being made by the liberal People for the American Way, the National Education Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP and the Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "The children in this program cannot be secure

until the U.S. cloud from school choice," says Clint Bolick, litigation director for the Institute for Justice. If the court agrees to review the case, it likely will issue a ruling by June 1999, Bolick says.

The Supreme Court must clarify what is and is not legal under the First Amendment prohibition against government establishment of religion, says Elliot Minberg, legal director of the People For the American Way. ■

7. Christian Science Monitor

September 1, 1998

Atten-Hut! Teacher on Deck and Ready for Duty

Gail Russell Chaddock,
Staff writer

of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON — There's a certain snap to Raquel Allen's classroom. Perhaps it's the bright white sweatshirts that her sixth-graders in Walker-Jones Elementary are wearing.

Or the way her students straighten up before they march down the street to a basketball game at a neighboring school in Washington. Last spring, these students scored near the top of the school in end-of-year testing.

"Uniforms in my class are voluntary, but they all wear them. It helps them feel good about themselves," she says. (Students help her haul the sweatshirts to her car to take home for washing every other day.) When a family can't afford the cost of the uniform, she finds donors. When one lanky sixth-grader couldn't come up with dark slacks, she loaned her

"Studies show that the nation will need 2 million teachers in the next 10 years, but the demand is not uniform. These people are not only willing but eager to teach in high-demand areas," says Ms. Feistritz, whose organization released a new report on Troops to Teachers on Aug. 27.

According to this survey, when compared with other first-year teachers, more than 75 percent were rated above average or higher by principals and superintendents. TTT teachers also had five times the retention rate of traditional teachers: 85 percent of those employed in 1994-97 are still teaching.

The survey also noted important differences in the attitudes between traditional teachers and TTT recruits toward teaching to high standards:

* More than 70 percent of all teachers

the pants from her own former Air Force uniform.

Miss Allen is one of more than 3,000 veterans who moved from the military into the nation's classrooms, as part of the highly successful but little known Troops to Teachers (TTT) program. The \$65 million program was launched in 1994 to help the United States military ease over a drastic post-cold-war downsizing. It provides stipends to retiring military personnel to seek certification and grants to school districts as an incentive to hire them. Now that the big personnel cuts are over, the program is due to be phased out by October 1999.

But some educators are hoping to interest Congress in keeping the program alive, not because it is still needed by the US military, but because it has been so helpful to American education.

"Troops to Teachers really did provide for the first time a sample of people who agreed with the statement that "schools should adjust to the needs, interests, and learning styles of individual students, rather than expecting students to meet the norms of the school," compared with 56 percent of TTT teachers.

* More than 57 percent of TTT teachers said that socioeconomic background does not prevent students from achieving at the highest levels, while only 47 percent of existing teachers supported that view.

Eden Reyes, a former US Air Force master sergeant, began teaching fifth-grade mathematics at the Landrum Elementary School, in San Benito, Texas, in 1995. All his students passed the state assessment in mathematics this year. He credits his military experience with helping him get a handle on discipline problems in a tough and diverse school

are nontraditional teachers, and a very rich pool for the future of teaching," says Emily Feistritz, president of the National Center for Education Information, a Washington-based research organization.

Traditionally, the nation's teachers have come into the classroom straight from college via teacher-education programs. Most are female, white, and are not interested in teaching in urban or rural schools.

What distinguishes the Troops to Teachers program is its ability to attract more men and minorities with solid life experiences as well as an interest in teaching needed subjects (mathematics, science, and special education) in hard-to-staff areas. This pool of more experienced, nontraditional teachers could be a pattern for how to meet expected shortfalls in teachers in the future, she adds.

"It's important to let a child understand what is expected of them, and the consequences. In the military, discipline must be maintained to complete a mission. Without effective classroom management, students will not be able to learn," he says.

But educators urging Congress to maintain this program say that the most important contribution of such teachers is the quality of their life experiences before they got into the classroom.

"We need more motivated and mature teachers with successful life experiences to be role models for our students," says Sam Swofford, executive director of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. California will need some 250,000 teachers over the next 10 years.

"We are finding," he adds, "that

teachers who enter the profession later are more successful and stay longer."

FACTS ABOUT TROOPS TO TEACHERS

* Ninety percent of people coming into teaching through Troops to Teachers (TTT) are male; 74 percent of the overall

teaching force is female.

* Nearly 29 percent of TTT teachers are minority; 10 percent of the general public school teaching force is minority.

* Twenty-nine percent of TTT teachers, compared with 13 percent of all teachers, report they are teaching

mathematics.

* Twenty-five percent of TTT teachers are teaching in an inner-city school; 16 percent of all teachers work in inner-city schools. ■

8. Christian Science Monitor

September 1, 1998

Getting to Know You

Mark Clayton,

Staff writer

of The Christian Science Monitor

NEW HAVEN, CONN. — Even though it sits in the academic shadow of nearby Yale University, plucky Southern Connecticut State University unveiled a second-to-none secret weapon at its new-student orientation this year - a lobster dinner and fireworks.

Both were part of a four-day orientation extravaganza unlike anything this urban school has ever seen. Serious seminars on academic survival, alcohol abuse, and date rape were followed by games, free frisbees, and truckloads of food.

As a sea of 1,200 freshmen and transfer students poured past him into a large tent for a meal, Rich Farricielli played traffic cop, walkie-talkie at the ready. "We want the kids to go home and say, 'You wouldn't believe it - not only did I learn something - we had lobster for dinner and fireworks,'" says the dean of student affairs.

Across the United States, colleges and universities are beefing up freshman

Such numbers imply a growing focus on upgrading student orientation preceding school as well, Mr. Robb says. But the direction an orientation upgrade takes depends on the school's needs.

At the University of Connecticut, for example, the school is trying to scrub off a party-school reputation by emphasizing academics. It sent the novel "Amistad" to freshmen over the summer, and will have faculty-led discussions with students about the book during orientation this week. Freshmen will also arrive before upper classmen for the first time this year - partly so they will not have "their minds poisoned" toward studying, a spokesman says.

"What is important to us is making sure that they feel part of campus and as quickly as possible," says Mark Emmert, the university's chancellor. "They have to make the transition from passive

orientations as never before to involve students in volunteer work, Outward Bound-style experiences, and even gourmet meals. The goal is to make a good first impression and create a bond between students and school from Day 1.

As recently as the early 1980s, orientation was still little more than academic counseling, registration, and showing students to dorms. But a decline in the number of traditional-age students - as well as the fact that more than one-quarter of freshmen at four-year schools do not return to the same institution - has wrought radical changes.

Students who become friends with each other during orientation or bond with a faculty member get better grades, get into less trouble, and tend to form an attachment to the school, studies show. And with colleges competing hotly for students and recruiting costs rising, getting a freshman to return for sophomore year is crucial to a school's financial stability.

Schools did not always go to such lengths to greet their incoming class. Certainly few would have guessed that high-school learning to active collegiate learning - and that's very difficult today."

Yet at many colleges, more-academic, "Great Books" programs are being dumped in favor of Outward Bound-style experiences for small groups of new students. The idea is for students with similar interests to meet before college, creating friendships and a support network to help them weather pressures.

At tiny Marlboro (Vt.) College, for example, a handful of students will embark on an eight-day camping expedition in the Green Mountains. With "clarity on transitions" as the focus, it culminates with a 48-hour traditional native American "sweat-lodge experience" designed to create a "unique and silent bond," according to promotional literature. But that's just for starters. The college also offers sailing, diving, sea kayaking, and other options.

faculty members at the University of Connecticut in Storrs would volunteer to be "husky haulers" this week - lugging student belongings up to their dorm rooms. The school's hope is that maybe a freshman will form a fledgling friendship with a history professor struggling up a flight of stairs with his steamer trunk.

"Orientation used to be kind of this one-day advising, registering, and sending them home," says Daniel Robb, president of the National Orientation Directors Association in Bloomington, Ind. "But I can't name one place that is still with a 'sink or swim' approach that says: 'You're a grown adult - you should be able to deal with this.'"

More than 80 percent of colleges and universities reported that they were trying to improve freshman year, according to a 1995 national survey, the most recent available. About 70 percent report offering semester or year-long "freshman-seminar" courses on time management and other nonacademic issues.

At Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a tradition in the just-plain-fun category of "dragon boat" races began a few years ago. Up to 20 people row long canoe-like boats 250 meters down the Cedar River, building camaraderie among students and getting everyone very wet.

Still another increasingly popular approach has students work for a few days in local food shelters or help build affordable housing.

At Lafayette College in Easton, Pa., students conduct a special day camp involving tutoring, reading, and talking with children from Easton's public-housing neighborhoods. Others might opt to help build a home with the Habitat for Humanity organization.

"Students have come to expect that universities will be attentive to their social as well as academic needs," Robb explains.

A number of colleges take things a bit further by involving parents, as the University of Vermont, the University of California at Riverside, and others do.

"We have always been conscious of the influence families have on their college-bound students' success," says Dani Comi, director of orientation and parent relations at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

Together, parents and students go through 32 hours of lunches, movies, dancing, and barbecues as well as information sessions on academic survival and placement tests.

Despite such prodigious efforts, however, 26.7 percent of all freshmen at four-year colleges and universities still do not return for sophomore year at the college where they were freshmen, according to American College Testing Inc., in Iowa City, Iowa. An unknown percentage of those may transfer, not dropping out entirely. Either way, it is a serious economic loss for colleges.

The exceptions are at highly selective schools, many of which graduate 90 percent of students who enroll.

A bigger challenge exists at large, open-enrollment universities like Southern Connecticut State University, an 11,000-student commuter college where many students live off campus and as a result often feel little emotional connection to the school or other students.

Some 72 percent of Southern freshmen returned for their sophomore year last year - a tad better than the 71 percent rate average for public four-year

"It made us feel like a big group of classmates," says Kevan Parri, a lanky

universities. Still, that rate falls to about 60 percent after sophomore year and on down, a spokesman says. To reverse that, the university is mobilizing to erase the "perception of a cold and impersonal place" that has sunk in among students and faculty over the years.

Ten staffers got up at 5 a.m. to blow up 1,000 blue and white balloons and tie them to a footbridge overpass at the college entrance along with a sign saying "Welcome New Students." It had never been done before. One faculty member said it brought tears to her eyes.

Vara Neverow, an English professor who helped organize Southern's orientation workshops, says a "culture change" is under way. She cites at least 32 faculty members (out of more than 300) directly involved with more than 40 small groups of students over the past three days. And that effort does seem to be having an impact on students.

Amid a herd of freshmen crowding a barn-like building filled with "Chemistry" and "English" and other academic department tables, Kelly Pyers pauses to glance around. It is one of only a few moments in this four-day marathon when she is alone - choosing her future, by herself.

Ms. Pyers is wearing a T-shirt that says, "Feminism is the radical notion that women are people too." She says she was one of just 110 in her graduating class in Wallingford, Conn. Making friends and maintaining her identity are top priorities.

"I know I've made some friends already," she says. "It's important to me to have a support system.... At first, [a freshman from Cheshire, Conn. "I guess for me that standing ovation made us feel

few days ago] I was not willing to be part of the community. I thought I might lose my identity a little with so many people. Now I feel more confident."

So does Ken Gatzke, chairman of the philosophy department, who has seen orientations come and go during his 30 years at Southern. But he's never seen one quite like this. He's already had four freshmen indicate an interest in majoring in philosophy - "a huge number" given that there are some years when there are none.

"We've never done anything like this before," he says. "I'm sort of amazed. Four is just an astronomical number. Maybe there's something going on here."

But the really notable event, for many, occurred during a powerful talk on date rape by Katherine Koestner, who travels the country lecturing since she was victimized several years ago.

At the end of the talk she challenged the male members of the audience to "take a stand" against date rape. And a single, lone male stood and applauded. Soon he was joined by several more standing, and eventually the entire audience. She then told the audience that it was the first time in more than 800 speeches she had given that such a thing had happened.

According to many students, including several young male freshmen, it was easily the most powerful moment of the orientation - one they will remember long after memories of lobster dinners and fireworks have faded.

all the same way. It was a good feeling. I don't think I'll forget that."■

9. Christian Science Monitor

September 1, 1998

A Compass For College

Amelia Newcomb,
Staff writer
of The Christian Science Monitor

BOSTON — The fall exodus of college-bound offspring is bound to prompt mixed emotions in parents. Sure, you may not miss your child's "music," or listening for car wheels at 11 p.m., midnight, 1 a.m. But then it's: "You're leaving? So soon?"

And you wonder: Will he be entirely on his own? Will he get much guidance?

A decade or two ago, parents had

good reason to wonder, at least at many schools that took a strictly hands-off approach to character issues. But at a growing number of institutions, these questions are much on the minds of educators concerned about everything from binge drinking to students' spiritual interests to reenrollment rates after freshman year.

Much of the impetus for a stronger personal as well as academic compass comes from students. Religious groups have burgeoned. Counseling services are

in greater demand. Applications at many evangelical schools, where moral standards are typically more firmly defined - and those who adhere to them aren't laughed at - are up significantly, The New York Times reports.

The majority of schools aren't talking a return to the days of in loco parentis. No curfews and dress codes, no lists of dos and don'ts. Instead, at places like Franklin Pierce College in Rindge, N.H., for example, freshman orientation includes introduction to a year-long

theme of ethical and moral responsibilities. The school credits the program, started several years ago, with increases in enrollment and student retention.

So when date rape and pep talks on values crop up at orientations around the United States, is it a positive sign that the age is moving beyond "anything goes"? Edwin Delattre, dean of the school of education at Boston University, says he

sees a "significant number of students who don't expect to have to live with pressure to use drugs, binge drink, or be treated as if they were foolish if they don't intend to be sexually active." But, he argues, few schools tackle the fundamentals of moral life, opting instead to emphasize tolerance and sincerity - never arguing that some actions might be intolerable, or that tyrannical behavior can originate from very sincere people.

Discussions of moral matters that skate along the surface of tough questions are easy enough to have. But what's interesting is that much of the pressure for such exchange is coming from students - typically a skeptical crowd, sensitive to glibness. At orientation and beyond, they should keep up the pressure for a substantive response. ■

10. Associated Press

September 1, 1998

When the smartest are doing the mischief

WASHINGTON - Classroom hellions are using computers to download porn, change grades, swap passwords and send threatening e-mail when the teacher isn't looking. Often, the brightest students are doing the harm, and school officials are struggling with how to discipline them.

The naughty students bring in homemade programs to disable school software, install point-and-shoot war games, make counterfeit money and design scathing sites on the World Wide Web.

"You'd be amazed at what they can do," says Jeannine Clark, assistant principal of Clarkstown High School North in New City, N.Y. "Clearly, a new set of guidelines is needed" - guidelines Clark calls "nerd discipline."

Reminding students of the importance of a college recommendation also works to keep some college-bound computer troublemakers in line.

Nancy Willard, an information technology consultant from Eugene, Ore., advises school districts to take Internet privileges away from computer abusers and make them earn them back. Students who surf sexually explicit sites, for example, might be assigned to write a research paper on victims of sexual abuse.

In Cashmere, Wash., six high schoolers were suspended for up to 10 days last school year for posting a list of more than 300 students, and suggestions

Seventy-eight percent of the nation's public schools today are connected to the Internet, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Educators nationwide have responded to cyberspace antics with a patchwork of Internet-use policies, outlining the dos and don'ts of being on-line at school.

Some are strictly written with harsh punishments for offenders. Others have weak consequences or use vague terms, such as "objectionable" or "offensive," to describe the kinds of Web sites that students are forbidden to visit.

Often harder than writing the policies, however, is punishing offenders.

Routine suspension is often not the best approach for bright students, Ms. Clark says. And some parents, who don't on how each might die. Five students apparently convinced the sixth, who had computer expertise, to put the list on the World Wide Web, according to Gary Harden, who was student body president at the school where he graduated this year.

"They were all suspended and each of them had to write an essay about good uses for the Internet," Harden said, adding that he hasn't heard of any pranks since. "I think our administration wanted to hammer down so it wouldn't happen again."

Educators, however, also must be careful that they don't trample on student rights.

want their children sitting in a suspension room missing honors English, think computer experiments are good even if Johnny breaks school rules.

"As one father told me, it's perfectly acceptable to allow his child to experiment," Ms. Clark says. "After all, we didn't want to squash his curiosity, did we?"

Suspending computer privileges, on the other hand, can be counterproductive for students taking courses requiring daily computer access. Grades can suffer. Credits can be lost. Students can drop in class ranking.

So an alternate punishment - a "monitored probation" - was set up to let students use computers, but only in closely watched settings, Ms. Clark says.

A school district in Westlake, Ohio, agreed in April to pay \$30,000 to a student who set up a Web site - from a home computer - that made fun of his high school band teacher. The 17-year-old baritone player was suspended for eight days, but sued the school district, saying the action violated his right to free speech. A judge agreed.

"I feel that in school you should be held responsible for following the rules they set," said the student, Sean O'Brien, who will be a senior this year at Westlake High School.

"But for me, I was being penalized in school for something I did out of school." ■

11. U.S. News & World Report

08/31/98Section: News You Can Use; America's Best Colleges; 1999 Annual; Page 65-66

High-tech teaching

Colleges are betting that wired classrooms help students learn

By Wray Herbert

When the 10 Mount Holyoke College

students in Prof. Robert Schwartz's history class studied Mary Shelley's

Frankenstein last spring, they followed the lead of the novel's famous scientist.

They harnessed the latest technology—in their case, searching the Internet for music, poetry, and paintings about nature from the Romantic period—to stitch together their own final creation, a multimedia CD-ROM.

Schwartz's course is part of a broad experiment underway in higher education. At institutions around the country, professors and administrators are using computers and related technologies to help students learn about everything from high-energy physics to the works of German poet Rainer Maria Rilke. According to a survey conducted in 1997 by the California-based Campus Computing Project, almost one third of all college courses now make use of E-mail, up from 8 percent in 1994, and a quarter of all classes draw on the Internet. Some find these statistics encouraging, others worrisome, but there's no question that universities and colleges are embracing information technology. According to Kenneth Green, director of the Campus Computing Project, "Information technology has become an increasingly important component of the instructional and learning experience, across all fields and all types of

The main question about high-tech education is whether computers actually enhance learning. Anecdotal evidence from both professors and students suggests that classroom technology may help students engage with the course material. Says 22-year-old Elizabeth Beede, one of the students in the Mount Holyoke Frankenstein class: "Producing a CD-ROM keeps you excited. We found ourselves working late into the night." But few systematic studies have been carried out, and those that exist are too limited to be conclusive. The lack of hard data doesn't keep technological enthusiasts from talking about notions such as "hypertext thinking style"—a more fluid cognitive style that is said to come from following the intellectual linkages of the Web rather than traditional research methods. But it's not clear that computers lead to different, let alone deeper, thinking styles, argues Stephen Kerr, a sociologist at the

institutions." Big investors. The most common investment that schools have made in new technology over the past decade has been wiring—installing computer connections not just in computer labs but in dorm rooms and snack bars. It's not unusual today for freshmen to receive an Internet account along with their ID card. But some schools have gone further. For example: TD A handful of schools now require all incoming students to have a laptop, which they can plug into hundreds of power points around campus. In 1993, the University of Minnesota-Crookston became the first to institute this requirement. Most recently, Wake Forest University in North Carolina raised its tuition by \$3,000 to \$19,450 annually to cover a major investment in new technology, including laptops for all incoming freshmen.

A number of schools are encouraging students and professors to create their own Web sites. At the University of California-Los Angeles, for example, a technical staff will construct a Web site free of charge for any student who wants one.

Enthusiasts for higher education's University of Washington and author of *Technology in the Future of Schooling*.

Critics also argue that there are risks associated with higher ed's infatuation with computer technology. Some say that while there is nothing wrong with multimedia, professors who often assign students technological projects may be sidestepping the difficult job of teaching students to write clearly and argue rigorously. Kerr is also concerned about the trend of substituting materials on the Internet for textbooks: "Textbooks represent consensus on limited, exemplary materials, the fundamentals of a discipline." At the extreme, students can become addicted to computers, much as some become dependent on drugs. According to psychologist Kimberly Young, author of *Caught in the Net*, about 8 to 14 percent of college students become addicted to Internet use. Some spend up to 80 hours a week in chat rooms and "MUDding"—playing a kind

"technology revolution" say getting students wired is well worth the often considerable expense. The primary benefit, says Chancellor Donald Sargeant of the University of Minnesota-Crookston, is that students acquire the technological savvy they will need for many jobs in the 21st century.

Other professors who have taken to new technologies say that their courses have become more dynamic as a result; many have abandoned textbooks altogether, opting instead to put course materials on the Web. Says philosophy Prof. Tad Beckman of Harvey Mudd College: "{A Web site} is a 'living text.' You never have to finish working on it." Beckman and others also say that Web publication of course notes allows teachers to spend less class time lecturing and to devote more time to discussion.

When students are connected electronically, such discussions can continue beyond the classroom walls, say advocates. At Wake Forest, for example, students are encouraged to use their laptops to E-mail professors (and fellow students) whenever a question or comment occurs to them, whether right after class or in the middle of the night. of Internet fantasy game, with a predictable effect on their academic performance. Two years ago, officials at Alfred University in New York became alarmed when they found that nearly double the normal number of students were failing academically. They discovered that 42 percent of those failing were often staying up late at night on the Internet. The university now offers counseling and a seminar warning of the dangers of Internet addiction. Officials at Alfred University and elsewhere are increasingly aware that the new technologies, if not properly handled, may severely undermine the learning they were harnessed to enhance. That's a bleak vision of technology's potential, but one Mary Shelley would have appreciated. ART Picture: Mount Holyoke history students create a CD-ROM for a project on Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. (Richard E. Schultz for USN&WR)■

12. U.S. News & World Report

08/31/98Section: News You Can Use; America's Best Colleges; 1999 Annual; Page 66

Notebook computers go to college

By Susan Gregory Thomas

Not long ago, the question, "What kind of computer should I take to college?"

had one correct answer: a Mac, of course. But today, Macintosh computers command less than 5 percent of the

education market, down from almost 24 percent just four years ago. Some colleges and universities-most recently

Yale and the University of North Carolina—have expressly requested that freshmen not bring Macs along.

Apple has lost its foothold in part because PCs are cheaper and because college students need the kinds of office applications that abound for PCs. "Macintosh's dominance in education was as the platform of choice for educational software, but once students get to college, they're not using those programs anymore," says Roger Kay, an analyst of education technology for the research firm IDC. College computing requires word processors, spreadsheets, databases, E-mail, and Web browsers.

TD A desktop may not suffice, however. A growing number of schools encourage students to bring notebook computers instead. "There's a recognition that students are nomads," says David G. Brown, provost of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. "Colleges are utilizing computers in the laboratories and in study-group sessions

and, to a more limited extent, during class sessions." Some "notebook universities," as they call themselves, require a portable with specific minimum features: typically, a system running Windows 95 with a Pentium-class 133-MHz processor, 16 megabytes of RAM, and a CD-ROM drive. Popular models. To lower the cost to students of notebooks, which can be twice as expensive as desktops, many schools have introduced leasing programs. Meanwhile, for those who can afford to buy one, prices are dropping. A relatively powerful notebook computer, with a 166-MHz Pentium-class processor, 16 megabytes of RAM, a 2-gigabyte hard drive, a CD-ROM drive, and a 12-inch active matrix screen (which conserves battery life), is now about \$1,600. The most popular models on campus are IBM's ThinkPad, Dell's Inspiron and Latitude (available by mail at www.dell.com), and the Compaq Presario and Armada. At many

schools, a leased notebook comes equipped with a network adapter card, which permits a direct, high-speed connection to the college's academic network from the dorm room, as well as to the Internet. (Students who buy their own computers should expect to pay about \$130 for a portable—or, in tech-talk, PCMCIA—network card.) If a school does not provide high-speed access to the network, an extra phone line will probably be needed for extended logons, as well as a fast, portable modem. You can expect to pay \$130 to \$200 for a 56-kbps (kilobits per second) PCMCIA modem, which fits into an open slot on the notebook. Assuming it is treated respectfully (no coffee or ashtrays tipped into the keyboard during cram fests), a notebook should be reaching the end of its life cycle just as commencement nears. ART Picture: Some schools now require all incoming students to have a laptop. (Chris Usher for USN&WR)■

13. U.S. News & World Report

08/31/98 Section: News You Can Use; America's Best Colleges; 1999 Annual; Page 78

The problem with all those A's

Even high achievers often need remedial help

By Rachel K. Sobel

Having scored a 710 on the math portion of the SAT and passed advanced-placement calculus, Kingslea Chan seemed destined for success at Rochester Institute of Technology. Then he took his first college math exams—and got C's and D's.

It was a shock for Chan, who took several skills classes on time management, note taking, and test taking, and raised his grades to B's. But Chan's experience is not uncommon. Some 41 percent of students who attend only four-year colleges have to take at least one remedial class, according to Clifford Adelman, senior research analyst at the U.S. Department of Education. At public and private institutions alike, educators observe that many seemingly well-qualified students struggle their first year. "Even students who do well in high school aren't prepared for the assignments that they are being asked to do," says Eli Goldblatt, director of the Temple University writing program. Grade inflation may be giving many students an unrealistic idea of their abilities. According to the College Board, the proportion of students with an A average taking the SAT rose from 28

percent to 37 percent from 1987 to 1997, while combined test scores fell 14 points. Thus, many admissions officers no longer see the GPA as a reliable barometer of achievement.

TD While the high school transcript remains the most important part of the application, many schools now look much more closely at the profile of the high school and the type of classes taken, says Patrick O'Connor, president of the National Association for College Admission Counseling. The student with a B in AP English would be a better candidate than the one who got an A in regular English, says Dennis O'Driscoll, director of undergraduate admissions at Creighton University in Omaha.

When in doubt about applicants' readiness for college, some schools offer a conditional acceptance. The University of California-Berkeley, for instance, accepts borderline candidates if they attend a six-week summer program. RIT gives students the option of first attending a year of reduced course load and intensive advising that leads into sophomore year.

It's often possible to bypass these programs and remedial classes by applying yourself the right way senior

year. Students who slack off risk coming to the freshman placement exams—which determine who needs remediation—with "their skills rusty, if not atrophied," says O'Connor. Chan was no slouch but realizes now that he studied to get by in AP calculus, not to understand the concepts. Another option is to take a prep class at a local community college senior year or over the summer.

Once on campus, freshmen who feel overwhelmed but don't require a remedial class may want to take advantage of one-on-one tutoring. After getting straight A's in high school, Xiomara Moncada never expected to have academic difficulties when she came to the University of California-Berkeley. But now she has a personal economics tutor. "I like telling my classmates that I have a tutor," she says. "You are just hurting yourself by not taking advantage of the resources." Students at some schools, including the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, can submit questions to a tutor online and receive a reply shortly thereafter. Struggling freshmen needn't despair, though—a C minus in a first-year government class at Harvard didn't hold Franklin D. Roosevelt back in the long run.

ART Picture: Kingslea Chan was shocked by his C's and D's. (Scott Goldsmith for USN&WR)■

14. U.S. News & World Report

08/31/98Section: News You Can Use; America's Best Colleges; 1999 Annual; Page 78-79

Touring schools—from home The virtual visit

By Carolyn Kleiner

High school students with a mouse in hand can research colleges to a degree their parents—even their older siblings—

College sites on the World Wide Web helped Chris Bushong, 17, settle on Carnegie Mellon University. A math and science enthusiast from Silver Spring, Md., Bushong first checked out a long list of home pages for schools' math, physics, and computer science departments to get a sense of their undergraduate programs. After narrowing his choices to three schools—Johns Hopkins and Stanford, in addition to Carnegie Mellon—he clicked on descriptions of each institution's current research projects. Work in the computer science department at Carnegie Mellon with a robot named Xavier particularly intrigued him; he also browsed the home pages of Carnegie Mellon students with interests similar to his and liked the fact that many described projects in electrical engineering or computer science courses

never imagined possible. It now takes just minutes to "arrive" on campus, where you can make virtual visits to admissions and financial aid offices, an academic that they had done just for fun. Linking up. Anyone who hasn't come up with a list of candidate schools might first use the search engines at comprehensive Web sites such as CollegeNet (www.collegenet.com) and U.S. News's Colleges and Careers Center (www.usnews.com), which can identify schools based on criteria you choose—location, size, or degree programs, for example. Links are provided to individual college Web sites. These often feature a "virtual tour," a combination of pictures or video of campus, explanatory text, and audio description—maybe even a rendition of the school fight song. Because "V tours" typically link to other areas on the site, virtual visitors can click out of the tour and further investigate student government, for instance, or sports facilities or health services.

department or two, the drama club or school newspaper—and then chat with students about everything from professors to party spots.

Virtual tours, however enlightening, are no substitute for quizzing knowledgeable people. Increasingly, colleges are connecting prospective students with current students, professors, administrators, and coaches through E-mail. From his home in Tanzania, Hiren Patel, 18, "talked" at great length with students and professors at each of the three schools he was considering. In particular, Patel bonded electronically with several students at Virginia Tech and developed a feel for "what academic and social life on campus is really like." It sounded good to him. He decided to attend the school—even though he had yet to experience it offline.

ART Drawing: No caption (Illustration by Marc Rosenthal for USN&WR)■

15. U.S. News & World Report

08/31/98Section: News You Can Use; America's Best Colleges; 1999 Annual; Page 80

Are consultants worth the cost?

For students who are unsure where to apply, the answer may be 'Yes'

By Kenneth Terrell

As admission to the most selective colleges has become ever more difficult in recent years, students and families have turned increasingly to independent consultants to guide them through the process. During the past school year, more than 60,000 students hired consultants, according to the Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA).

At prices that can climb as high as \$3,000 with no guarantee of admission to the school of choice, consultants can be an expensive addition to the cost of the application process. But satisfied clients say the cost is worth it: "Hiring a consultant takes a lot of the stress out of the process," comments Tamar Jaffe, a Stamford, Conn., high school senior.

Consultants may be especially helpful for students who aren't sure where to apply. Many previously worked as

guidance counselors and admissions officers and as a result are skilled in helping students focus on their interests and talents. Consultants help students choose schools that match their needs, prepare applications—including essays—and study for the SAT and other admissions tests.

High school guidance counselors are usually kept busy setting students' class schedules, meting out discipline, and supporting students dealing with pregnancy and drug-abuse problems. Not surprisingly, many are understanding when students turn to private counselors for help with admissions. "If parents of our students decide to use consultants, that's their prerogative," says Reather Kelly, a career counselor at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, a public school in Bethesda, Md.

Many college admissions officers are amenable to applicants hiring

consultants, as well, but others refuse even to talk with consultants. Georgetown University Undergraduate Admissions Dean Charles Deacon charges that consultants exploit students' anxieties, and he worries that they may be helping mediocre applicants appear better than they really are. "Consultants are looking for a way to beat the process, and we won't let them have any influence here."

IECA Executive Director Mark Sklarow maintains that experienced professionals do not seek to misrepresent their clients to admissions committees. But he concedes that because the industry is still unregulated, some of the individuals calling themselves consultants aren't qualified. IECA members, for example, are required to have spent at least three years in the college counseling field and to have visited at least 100 colleges.

Comparison shop. Sklarow and Joyce E. Smith, executive director of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, offer these tips to families considering hiring consultants: Hire a consultant at the start of the student's junior year of high school, when the consultant can best help the student select schools to apply to.

Interview three or four consultants in your area on the list of independent consultants compiled by the IECA

(703-591-4850) or the NACAC (703-836-2222). Ask them how long they have worked in the field and what they did previously.

Agree upfront on what services will be rendered and on a price. Expect to pay rates in the range of \$60 to \$200 per hour.

Quiz the consultants about their experience working with guidance counselors, and if a consultant says he often clashes with counselors, find

another consultant. School counselors are vital to the admissions process: They typically submit a student's transcript to colleges along with comments about his school performance. A bad relationship between the school counselor and the consultant can jeopardize the student's application.

ART Drawing: No caption (Illustration by Tom Garrett for USN&WR)■

16. U.S. News & World Report

08/31/98Section: News You Can Use; America's Best Colleges; 1999 Annual; Page 81

Universities use rankings, too

Colleges may not like being ranked, but they've long ranked students

By Nicholas Lemann

In the world of higher education, the U.S. News rankings are perennially controversial. Gerhard Casper, the president of Stanford, which is tied for fourth place among national universities this year, has written that "much about these rankings—particularly their specious formulas and spurious precision—is utterly misleading." Alan Stone, the president of Alma College in Michigan, has tried, without much success, to drum up interest among college presidents in a national boycott of the rankings.

Yet American higher education itself regularly uses numerical rankings, especially of potential students, as a basic tool. Before the Second World War, the university system was small; it was for the few, not the many. During and after the war, higher education began transforming itself into a mass institution through which all future white-collar Americans have to pass. Big, modern institutions require numbers, and universities rely on an array of them—student test scores, departmental rankings, and government funding formulas. If ranking is a sin, then colleges and universities aren't innocent of it. So why are they so touchy about being ranked? Historically, higher education reaped the benefits of rankings that it controlled while remaining largely exempt from numerical assessment by outsiders. The U.S. News rankings are the kind of consumer-oriented evaluation that is pervasive and popular in

American culture, but our rankings reverse the natural order: They're supposed to rank us.

Colleges object to the whole enterprise of ranking schools "like automobiles or toasters," in Casper's words, and they are especially distressed that the rankings matter. Outside a handful of highly selective institutions, most private colleges are undersubscribed: They need good students who can pay much more than such students need them. Annoyance at the rankings is partly a mask for fear that a bad ranking will lead to a drying up of applications, and perhaps also of alumni contributions and government funding. Still, colleges have instituted an elaborate system of rankings that gives them a clear sense of where they stand on all sorts of fronts. The president of the University of California-Berkeley can find out where every academic department under his supervision ranks nationally, where Berkeley ranks on various measures against the other schools in the UC system, where each prospective faculty hire ranks among the applicants for the job and against peers all around the country.

Universities also use standardized tests like the SAT and ACT, to help them to make nationwide comparisons among applicants. If you apply to Harvard, a computer will analyze your test scores, your grade point average, and the quality of your high school to come up with a number predicting your college GPA, which is used in admissions decisions.

Most of the arguments made by colleges against the U.S. News rankings have an ironic ring, because universities have for decades vocally defended themselves against similar charges. Students have long argued, for instance,

against colleges' ranking them, saying that reducing life's complexities to numbers inevitably distorts and oversimplifies. When faced with such complaints, universities have often responded: You can trust us to put our numbers in context; we aren't slaves to statistics.

Now, the universities share the students' discomfort. Vagaries of data gathering—a wrong guess here, a minuscule difference there—become falsely enshrined as science, they say. Inherently soft factors, such as judgment about reputation, are made to appear hard.

The fact remains that colleges know (and care) where they stand comparatively. Employers and graduate schools know (and care) where the colleges stand. So it's important for students who are choosing a college to know as well. The rankings do not have the mystical power to destroy all independent judgment on the part of students. In fact, they can help sharpen it. According to one of the few studies of how the rankings are actually used, by Patricia McDonough of UCLA, they are consulted most closely by the highest-achieving, best-informed students—those least likely to be the rankings' obedient servants.

Universities ought to assume that students and their families will use the U.S. News rankings with the same wise restraint that they themselves employ when contemplating the scores that students are required to submit if they want to go to college today.

■

17. Chicago Tribune

08/31/98; Edition: NORTH SPORTS FINAL; N; Section: NEWS; Page 1

CALIFORNIA BEGINS ENGLISH-ONLY RULE IN ITS CLASSROOMS

By V. Dion Haynes
Tribune Staff Writer.

Seated at a little table with about a half dozen Spanish-speaking kindergartners, teacher Teresa Mendina led a counting exercise one recent morning at Forty Ninth Street School. Using gestures, elongated enunciation and other techniques, Mendina managed to elicit English responses from the children.

The exercise was part of a fun-filled day during which they learned songs, the parts of the body and phonics—all in English.

Occasionally, though, snatches of Spanish were exchanged. "Empuja tu lengua en tus dientes (Push your tongue to your teeth)," said teaching assistant Dora Vasquez at one point after a little girl named Leticia pronounced the word duck as "uck."

Two months ago in this classroom, where 100 percent of the pupils have limited English skills, the equation would have been reversed: 75 percent of the day would have been taught in Spanish, only 25 percent in English.

The June 2 passage of Proposition 227, the English-only law, has ushered in a new era in California public schools.

Bilingual classes are a thing of the past—or are supposed to be. English "immersion" classes, aimed at preparing immigrant children for regular classes in one year, are the law.

Once again, California, whose voters moved to abandon affirmative action and cut public benefits to illegal immigrants, has become a laboratory for an elaborate social experiment.

Though classes haven't started for most students yet, an early snapshot of what is expected from the English immersion method comes from the handful of schools with year-round schedules.

Some school districts, including San Francisco, Berkeley and San Jose, are fighting Proposition 227 either by seeking state waivers from the law or protection under federal consent decrees. Others, such as the Los Angeles Unified School District, have acquiesced, so far

The first gauge of this new approach will come next month, when the initial

encountering none of the dire predictions Proposition 227 opponents made about mass confusion and parental opposition.

Officials at almost all the districts, though, have experienced a measure of angst in being forced to rewrite curricula, train teachers, reshuffle classes, inform parents, order new classroom materials and consult with lawyers in a two- to three-month period.

The main sticking point with the law is a requirement that schools teach "overwhelmingly" in English. Does that mean 90 percent, 75 percent or is 51 percent English sufficient? The California State Board of Education, which isn't expected to complete regulations clarifying Proposition 227 until November, so far has allowed districts flexibility in interpreting the law. Backers of the initiative believe, however, that with rare exceptions English should be used in the classroom all the time.

"Coming up with a clear policy is difficult when the language (of the law) is nebulous and not defined," said Jack McLaughlin, superintendent of Berkeley Unified School District.

Last Thursday, an Alameda County Superior Court judge ruled in favor of Berkeley and 37 other districts, overturning the State Board of Education's decision not to consider their requests for waivers from Proposition 227. Though the judge's ruling doesn't obligate the state board to grant the districts' requests, it is expected to open the door for other districts to seek exemptions from the law.

The bilingual initiative was prompted by growing frustration over the low academic achievement and high dropout rate of students with limited English skills, who number about 1.4 million in California. A similar ballot measure is being considered in Arizona and a congressman has drafted legislation to cut federal funding for bilingual programs.

Approved by more than 60 percent of the voters, the law has put this state at ground zero in a simmering national wave of parents whose children started school in the summer will decide whether

dispute over bilingual education. Under the 30-year-old bilingual program, students are gradually weaned off native-language instruction as their speaking and academic proficiency in English improve. The reasoning is that they need to continue receiving native-language instruction in math, science and social studies—in some cases up to seven years—so they won't fall behind while their fluency in English improves.

"Children are like sponges; the earlier you expose them to English, the quicker they'll learn it," said Frank Pejack, director of research at English First, a national organization that opposes bilingual education.

This new law is "greasing the skids of the movement," he added.

But other experts are equally convinced about the merits of bilingual programs, when operated properly.

Bilingual education supporters attribute the high failure rate among immigrant students to a lack of good bilingual programs. Last year, only 30 percent of the limited-English-proficient students in California were enrolled in bilingual classes. With a statewide shortage of 25,000 bilingual teachers, they say, some schools have resorted to using less-qualified teachers or diluted programs.

"I agree that bilingual education needs some changes, but as far as deleting it completely, I don't agree," said Aixa Carbonell, assistant principal at Vaughn School in the San Fernando Valley.

As a charter school, Vaughn is exempt from state education regulations, including Proposition 227. Officials at numerous other schools, attempting to retain their bilingual programs, have asked the State Board of Education about re-establishing their operations as charter schools.

Proposition 227 requires districts to initially assign students with limited-English skills to English immersion classes for 30 days.

they are satisfied with the program or want the students reassigned to

traditional bilingual classes. The law, though, makes it clear that schools should grant the waivers only under extreme cases, such as for students suffering from mental and physical disabilities.

Research and the experience of several California districts show that English immersion can be effective. But the biggest question, which can be answered only in the long term, is: Will the students in English immersion really be able to function with little or no assistance in a regular classroom after only one year?

On top of coping with opening day jitters last week, parents and pupils at Buena Vista School in San Francisco were anxious about Proposition 227.

Some children worried that they'd be hauled off to jail for uttering a single word in Spanish. And some parents feared the law would spell the demise of an award-winning bilingual program that not only taught native Spanish-speaking pupils English, but helped native English-speaking kids become fluent in Spanish.

Standing in the cafeteria/library before a group of 50 parents, Lisa Guterrez-Guzman, the principal who goes by the title teacher-in-charge, quickly allayed the fears.

"We are going full speed ahead with our bilingual programs in San Francisco," she declared. "We will continue to speak in Spanish at all times with your children."

Guterrez-Guzman explained that Buena Vista is complying with a 24-year-old federal court-ordered agreement that requires the San Francisco district to provide equal access to English learners through its bilingual education program. Though the district's superintendent once vowed he'd go to jail before implementing Proposition 227, San Francisco schools are incorporating more English instruction into the classes and are pressing all parents to sign waiver forms intended to keep their children in the bilingual program.

The federal court-ordered agreement

was sparked by a lawsuit filed against the school system by a Chinese-American student named Kenney Lau. The Lau vs. Nichols case led to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1974 that deemed as illegal American schools' do-nothing or so-called "sink or swim" approach to immigrant students.

According to San Francisco district officials, graduates of the program routinely outperform their native English-speaking peers in reading.

District officials and parents justify their resistance to Proposition 227 by pointing out that three out of five voters in the city rejected the measure.

"Two-two-seven is a racist attack on immigrants and Latinos," said Tracy Brown, 30, a Latina whose daughter and son attend Buena Vista.

Bilingual education "affirms our cultural identity and shows our children that Spanish is just as important as English," she said.

That attitude has prompted threats of legal action from officials at English for the Children, Proposition 227's sponsors.

"Most districts are finding non-legal ways to circumvent the law," said Sheri Annis, the group's spokeswoman.

The Los Angeles school system played a role—albeit an accidental one—in the campaign against bilingual education.

Ron K. Unz, a Silicon Valley software entrepreneur, was spurred to launch the initiative after learning about a boycott led by parents at an elementary school in the garment district who were dissatisfied with the bilingual program.

Parents at the school succeeded in pulling 75 students from the program in early 1996. Now the district is quick to point out that only two of the students who left the program have passed the English proficiency test. Meanwhile, eight of the 18 students who remained in bilingual classes passed.

Still, the district has gutted its bilingual programs, now requiring language teachers to instruct primarily in English. Some teachers express ambivalence about the new approach.

"If a child has English-speaking parents at home, it will work," said Mendina, the Forty Ninth Street School kindergarten teacher. If not, it will be difficult for them to master English in a year, she added. "They're only here half a day."

Elsewhere in the state, schools that opted years ago to use the English immersion approach rather than bilingual methods have seen positive results.

One recent morning, Charlotte Watanabe conducted her kindergarten class at Bennett-Kew School in Inglewood completely in English, her nine Spanish-speaking pupils working alongside seven native English speakers.

Since the early 1980s, Bennett-Kew School, south of Los Angeles, has placed limited-English-speaking students directly into regular classes.

"I'm glad 227 happened," said Watanabe, adding that in the past the Spanish-speaking children have made great strides toward English fluency after a year, outscoring their bilingual education counterparts at other districts. "The more English you know the better your chances will be of succeeding."

At Maxwell School in Anaheim, limited-English-proficient students also have performed well.

But that progress has not come without extensive help—including Spanish-speaking tutors who spend an hour or so a day going over lessons—well into the upper grades.

"Schools have an obligation to provide support for these students to be successful in the program," said Kris Lasher, the principal.

"You certainly cannot give them immersion for a year and then drop them."

ART PHOTO;

Caption: PHOTO (color): Pupils at Vaughn School in Los Angeles learn from bilingual lessons. The charter school is exempt from the bilingual ban. Photo for the Tribune by David McNew. ■

18. Newsweek

08/31/98 Page 57

California's Class Size Reduction program aims to reduce kindergarten through third grade classes from an average of 29 students to 20

By Donna Foote

Will small classes save the state's failing schools?

Pam Marton should be mad as hell. The principal of the Community School in Los Angeles has just lost the school library, most of the playground and even a bathroom. Not good for an elementary school already missing a cafeteria and an auditorium. The culprit? An ambitious state education program that calls for reducing class size in kindergarten through third grade from an average of 29 students per teacher to 20. The reform has forced schools to convert any space they can find into classrooms, but few people are complaining. "This is one of the best things to happen to education in 20 years," says Marton, a 17-year education veteran. "For once, there's a direct effect on learning. When you walk into a classroom, you can taste it, feel it and see it."

Since California began its Class Size Reduction program two years ago, teachers have raved about how behavioral problems are on the decline while test scores are rising. Notoriously tax-averse Californians have already spent \$3.5 billion in state money on hiring new teachers and creating new classrooms, and that doesn't include local bond measures intended as an extra

economic boost for the initiative. Politicians—in California and other states—love it, too. Half of the nation's state legislatures have passed or are considering bills to cut class size, and the issue is showing up in several of this November's gubernatorial races. Even President Clinton, before he got distracted with other business, was touting reducing class size as one of the major policy goals of his second term. There's only one worm in all these apples: nobody knows for sure if smaller classes are the most effective way to improve education.

It's hard to argue with the simple idea that fewer students means more individual attention from the teacher. A 1998 U.S. Department of Education report found that reducing classes to fewer than 20 students can raise test scores. But some critics wonder if there aren't more cost-effective ways to spend billions of dollars, such as tutoring, increased teacher training and extending school through the summer. In California, the equation is further complicated by the fact that the state doesn't have enough trained teachers to meet the demand created by all these

new, smaller classes. Though the state has hired 33,000 teachers since implementing Class Size Reduction, a third of them have "emergency credentials," which means little or no teacher training at all. That's not to say that some of the lawyers, real-estate agents and even a former clown who have been hired in Los Angeles won't make excellent teachers. But which ones? "The performances range," says one state education official, "from the sublime to the ridiculous."

Californians are seduced by the promise of smaller classes because they're desperate. Only 30 percent of the state's students perform at grade level, way below the national average. A few larger districts, like San Francisco Unified, have already reported a 12 percent rise in second-grade reading scores. "We did it with thousands of people on emergency credentials in crummy, makeshift rooms, and despite that we've had good results," says Delaine Eastin, state superintendent for public instruction. "We've got a long way to go, but we're on the way back." Sometimes, less is more. ■

19. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Style; Page B04

Teacher Says; Go for the 'Golden Edge'

By Evelyn Porreca Vuko

Special to The Washington Post

Noah declares he'll go to first grade only if he doesn't have to read books. He says he had enough of them in kindergarten.

Teacher Says: If Noah needs tutoring in reading this year and you can't afford a professional, consider a senior supplement. Reading-trained senior volunteer tutors have an intergenerational

A two-year study of a similar program found that intergenerational tutoring works especially well with boys. Directed by Harvard psychology professor Jerome Kagan, the Intergenerational Literacy Tutoring Project (ILTP) concluded that mature volunteers — age 55 and older — could, with training and supervision, have a positive effect on the reading achievement of nonreading, high-risk, first-grade students from low-income families in Boston public schools.

Forty senior volunteers trained in language experience and phonics tutored 140 students in three 45-minute sessions per week in six schools. The results were surprising: In 1997, 63 percent of boys

golden edge. The numbers prove it. "Our statistics have been consistent," says Patricia Gilbert, director of Intergenerational Programs at Older Adult Service and Information System (OASIS) in St. Louis. OASIS Intergenerational Tutoring Program studies show that 87 percent of kids tutored had improved attitudes toward reading and language arts. In addition, tutored by ILTP volunteers showed significant gains in reading text, compared with 30 percent of boys not tutored. In 1998, reading test scores of tutored boys increased 14 percentage points. Kagan concludes that though this type of tutoring can't compete with professional instruction, "the program is effective."

How do teachers feel about it? "The only complaint from teachers was there weren't enough tutors," says ILTP volunteer trainer and reading teacher Darci Vogel of Boston Partners in Education. "Teachers said kids who were shy before the tutoring are now reading aloud and volunteering in class," she

teachers reported better class participation, willingness to read aloud, longer attention spans, better verbal skills, more completed homework assignments and improved attendance.

About 5,500 OASIS volunteers trained in language experience methods tutored 12,000 students one hour once a week in 71 school districts in 17 cities nationwide.

said. This year, ILTP is a program in seven Boston public schools and a model for other cities.

What's intergenerational tutoring's golden edge?

First, older tutors have the time and the numbers. "There are a lot of older people out there whose children are gone and they feel useless. This is gratifying for them. They have three hours a week to devote to something like this," says Kagan.

It's nurturing. "These tutors take kids under their wing and listen to their personal problems. The kids appreciate the help and attention. When kids feel

better. they do better," says Gwendolyn Williams, assistant principal at Carrollton Elementary School in New Carrollton.

They erase the hurry. "Seniors aren't rushed and hurried, wanting to get it over with. They have a lot more patience," says Sally Marchessault, coordinator of Volunteer and Community Resources for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Psychologist Kagan disagrees. "They don't have more patience. They are more motivated to do it. They get psychic gains from it."

They're cool. At Carrollton, "tutoring isn't a stigma at all; the kids were proud of it," says Williams. "The kids were requesting tutors. By the end of the year, the parents were begging for it."

They're committed. When an injury prevented her from driving, OASIS tutor Joyce B. Siegel of Chevy Chase took taxis to her weekly session with a second-grader at Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School in Kensington.

After completing 12 hours of training, OASIS tutors must make at least a one-year commitment, usually working with the same student throughout the academic year. "Some of our tutors even move ahead to the next grade with the child," adds Williams.

They supply the grandparent factor. "Many of our families are separated from their grandparents," says Marchessault. Siegel believes her one-year commitment

to the same student builds a trusting relationship and gives plenty of personal attention. "When you develop a rapport with a student, the rest falls into place," she said.

They bring back the P's and Q's. "Their older generational values give kids a different set of standards to live up to. I've heard them gently and kindly remind a child to say, 'Good morning,' 'Please' or 'Thanks.' The kids respond to this," says OASIS tutor trainer June Confer of Shepherd Elementary School in Northwest Washington.

But Noah isn't the only one who benefits from intergenerational tutoring. "It's a gift to myself to do this. I hadn't been around little kids for years and tutoring this year was a joy for me," says OASIS tutor Bonnie Aikman of Friendship Heights, who will tutor again this year.

"Our tutors always worry about getting more from the student than they give, but it just doesn't work that way. This program has had a tremendous impact in our school," says Williams.

Joyce Siegel calls it making "a small difference that counts."

When Noah puts the brakes on books in first grade, consider free tutoring with an edge that buffs up self-esteem along with reading. If you can get into an intergenerational tutoring program without being carded, consider becoming

a volunteer tutor yourself.

Check with your local school, religious organization, civic group, senior organization or the resources below for intergenerational tutoring programs near you.

Contact Evelyn Vuko online at evuko@teachersays.com or write her at Style Plus, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071.

Resources

To set up intergenerational tutoring programs, contact:

Generations United, 202-662-4283. A resource for 100 programs nationwide. Ask for free guidebook "Becoming a School Partner — A Guidebook for Organizing Intergenerational Partnerships in Schools."

Intergenerational Tutoring Project: Boston Partners in Education, Darci Vogel, 617-451-6145. Model program available.

OASIS Intergenerational Tutoring Program: nationwide, 314-862-2933; metro Washington coordinator, Stephanie Olshan, 202-362-9600, Ext. 562; Hyattsville coordinator, Suzanne Van Nuys, 301-559-6263.

Recommended reading for intergenerational tutors: "Book Buddies: Guidelines for Volunteer Tutors of Emergent and Early Readers" (Guilford, \$19.95), by Francine R. Johnston, Marcia Invernizzi, Connie Juel. ■

20. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A11

English Class: Teaching From Experience

By Pamela Constable
Washington Post Staff Writer

Doina Le-Compte is in constant motion. She paces and points, giggles and grimaces — anything to keep the attention of 15 foreign-born youngsters struggling to master English.

"Your last quiz was a disaster," she snaps. "You are not doing the work. I want all your parents to sign your homework, and don't tell me they are gone at work every night."

The students at Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Arlington County cough and wiggle, but their backs straighten.

Le-Compte, a Romanian immigrant who teaches in the school's High Intensity Language Training program, was recently named its teacher of the year. At 56, she is innovative and tireless,

never missing a chance to point out a minor mistake — or to praise a small sign of progress.

"I challenge them, but I also encourage them," she says of her adolescent students, whose native lands range from El Salvador to Bangladesh. "Many have a terrible time because they lack basic knowledge as well as English, but in their eyes I see the hunger to learn."

Le-Compte, who taught school in Romania before marrying an American and moving to the United States in 1989, holds master's degrees in English language and literature. But as a teacher of English as a second language, she needs to be on top of all subjects.

Today, the science lesson veers from atoms to photosynthesis, from how cockroaches reproduce to what monkeys

eat. As the students read aloud, Le-Compte constantly corrects their pronunciation but never makes them feel embarrassed.

"I tell them, 'Don't be afraid of having an accent. I still have one,'" Le-Compte said during a break. "Many of them are already translating for their parents at the bank, but they still have far to go before they can succeed."

In another class, she asks students to comment on a book about a Hispanic girl whose life is filled with loss and death. Several say it reminds them of their own lives. The classroom falls silent as 15 young people remember other lives in other lands.

"Okay," Le-Compte says, "tomorrow we're going to read from 'Winnie the Pooh.'" ■

21. The New York Times

09/01/98Section: National Desk; Section A; Page 18, Column 3

P.T.A. Under Fire for Letting Advertiser Use Its Name

By CONSTANCE L. HAYS

In a decision critics say is at odds with its own policy opposing commercialism in schools, the National P.T.A. has agreed to let its name and logo appear, for a fee, in back-to-school advertisements by a large office-supply chain.

The agreement, approved earlier this summer by the P.T.A.'s president, Lois Jean White of Nashville, is the first of its kind for the 102-year-old association, a nonprofit lobby whose 6.5 million members are teachers, parents and others interested in education issues.

The deal has resulted in a program called Supporting School Values that was created by the chain, Office Depot Inc. Since the middle of August, the program has featured television and print advertisements that include the slogan "Proud to Sponsor the National P.T.A.," as well as the association's telephone numbers and Web site address.

"We've been involved with a lot of organizations, like the National Leukemia

"I saw the TV ad, and I called the national headquarters for an explanation of what this was all about," said Millie Waterman of Mentor, Ohio, a former officer of the National P.T.A. who remains a consultant to her state chapter. "I certainly have a concern about it, that it violates the National P.T.A.'s noncommercial policy."

A Texas P.T.A. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said she was also worried about a secondary message.

"I took offense at the commercial," she said, noting that the Dilbert character in it said, "Don't be a dork when you go back to school." Her objection, she said, is that a remark like that one runs counter to what the association wants to encourage in children.

"If anything," she said, "the P.T.A. wants kids to feel comfortable about their appearance."

Andrew Hagelshaw, a senior program director for the Center for Commercial Free Public Education, an advocacy group based in Oakland, Calif., said the agreement with Office Depot amounted to "a shift" by the association.

"People have been calling us," Mr. Hagelshaw said. "A lot of the public is just finding out about it as they get ready to go back to school."

Society and the Urban League," said an Office Depot spokesman, Gary Schweikhart. "But this year we really wanted to align ourselves with the National P.T.A., which is the biggest and most respected education organization."

The program, which Mr. Schweikhart said had been developed by Office Depot and then proposed to the P.T.A., includes coupon books for Office Depot discounts that were mailed to millions of the association's members. In addition, laptop computers were given to every state P.T.A. office as well as the national office, Mr. Schweikhart said. A back-to-school sweepstakes and a "teacher appreciation breakfast," both of which include "shopping sprees" at Office Depot, are also being advertised with the P.T.A. logo, he added.

Patty Yoxall, a spokeswoman at the P.T.A.'s headquarters in Chicago, said that "we are pleased by the initial response" to the program, adding that in an organization with millions of members, "I have received three phone

Another education advocate, Arnold Fege, former legislative director of the National P.T.A., said, "It seems to me that back to school should not be about buying and selling, but about teaching and learning and ratcheting up reform."

While the agreement may be reminiscent of the ill-fated one last summer between the American Medical Association and the Sunbeam Corporation, Mr. Schweikhart said Office Depot had "bent over backwards not to abuse the P.T.A. and their reputation in any way." He added that one proposal by the company, for rebates to schools in return for association members' shopping at Office Depot, had been turned down by the P.T.A. as too blatant.

"The National P.T.A. thought that would be crossing the line, telling people you have to shop at Office Depot," he said.

The A.M.A.-Sunbeam agreement, in which the medical association was to endorse Sunbeam products like heating pads in exchange for royalty payments, raised so many objections among doctors and consumer lobbies that the A.M.A. withdrew. That prompted a lawsuit against the association by Albert H. Dunlap, then Sunbeam's chief executive. Eventually the association's chief

calls" of protest.

Ms. Yoxall declined to say how much the association had been paid for the use of its name, and called the agreement "a member service" in which Office Depot was sponsoring the National P.T.A. rather than receiving an endorsement, which the association's policy prohibits.

Shirley Igo, the association's vice president for legislation, said: "We've done our research on it, we've had legal counsel on it, and it was the consensus of the leadership that we were not in violation of our policy. We're not selling Office Depot materials in the schools."

But at a time when schools are increasingly attractive targets for marketers of consumer products ranging from sneakers to soft drinks, other officials of the association said they were concerned about the message it was sending to schoolchildren, even though the agreement stops short of endorsing Office Depot or any specific products.

executive, Dr. P. John Seward, resigned, calling the Sunbeam contract "a serious mistake."

But many nonprofits have seen the financial benefits of licensing their names and logos to corporations. Such income is usually tax free, as long as it can be shown to conform with the nonprofit's mission. Corporations, meanwhile, can spruce up their public image by being linked with an environmental or other charitable activity.

"It's a win-win for both sides," said Matt Landy, vice president of the National Charities Information Bureau.

When it comes to licensing a name, the World Wildlife Fund is among the better-organized nonprofits. Its marketing division, which oversees agreements with manufacturers of binoculars, pencils, neckties, Band-Aids and boxer shorts, now has a full-color brochure that includes stickers with the fund's black-and-white panda logo that corporations are invited to try out on their products to imagine how such an affiliation would look.

"W.W.F. is regarded as caring, responsible and credible, and can help your product or service benefit from the fact that 76 percent of Americans are more likely to buy a product that is linked

to a charity," says the brochure, adding at another point: "Animal themes and W.W.F. are an evergreen concept with

universal appeal that provide a superior commercial opportunity. Remember, W.W.F. is as interested in the bottom line

as you are."■

22. The New York Times

09/01/98Section: National Desk; Section A; Page 18, Column 5

School Work, Homework And Good Works in Chicago

By DIRK JOHNSON

CHICAGO, Aug. 31 — To instill a sense of civic duty in teen-agers, the Chicago public school system has become the largest district in the nation to require students to perform community service to receive a high school diploma.

Starting with this year's sophomore class, Chicago students will need to spend at least 40 hours in public service, like tutoring young people or helping the elderly, during high school.

As part of the requirement, students must submit what the board calls a "reflection" on their service — an essay, a video project, an oral report — according to the measure passed by the district's school board last week.

But Chicago school officials, who have gained nationwide attention in recent years for cracking down on misbehavior and imposing a more rigorous academic regimen, insist that those problems are not insurmountable.

The Chicago schools had been labeled as the worst in the nation a decade ago by William J. Bennett, who was the Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan.

Seeing a school district rife with corruption and having scandalously low student achievement scores, the Illinois Legislature in 1995 turned over control of the Chicago schools to Mayor Richard M. Daley, who appointed one of his top aides, Paul Vallas, as the district's chief executive.

Mr. Vallas has earned praise and criticism for scrapping a tradition of passing students whose marks did not merit advancement, the so-called social promotion. Nearly one-fourth of Chicago eighth graders were required to attend

"We want students to learn the importance of community," said Bruce Marchiafava, a spokesman for the Chicago schools, the nation's third-largest system, behind New York and Los Angeles. "They need to know that community is about giving, not just getting."

The notion of mandated community service has been rejected by Los Angeles school officials. While the idea has been raised in New York, J. D. LaRock, a spokesman for the New York City Schools Chancellor, Rudy Crew, said officials had no plan to consider such a requirement.

Critics of the public service requirement say it can lead to an summer school this year.

Mr. Vallas has said urban students, especially those from poor families, were being shortchanged in a system that implicitly believed they were incapable of achieving at higher levels.

When Mr. Vallas began his tenure, about 25 percent of Chicago schoolchildren were reading at or above the national average. That figure has increased to about 35 percent.

The Chicago schools have an enrollment of about 430,000, with some 559 schools and a budget of \$3.4 billion.

Before implementing the community service requirement, Chicago public school officials studied two Roman Catholic high schools here, St. Scholastica and Good Counsel, which require good works for graduation.

Mr. Vallas, a Chicago native who attended the city's public schools, as well as Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic schools, has often called on the public education system to study the successes

administrative nightmare. Schools must decide what constitutes public service, who is responsible for supervising the young people, and whether schools would be liable for harm done to the students, or by them. Also, students from poor families often work to help shoulder family financial burdens and have little spare time.

Education officials here say some of those issues are still being studied, including volunteerism done for groups with political agendas.

"If you let students work for an anti-handgun group, do you also let them work for the N.R.A.?" Mr. Marchiafava asked, referring to the National Rifle Association.

of its parochial school counterparts, and vice-versa.

The public service program will include "service learning coaches" in each high school who will receive an annual stipend of \$1,000 to \$4,000 to supervise the students.

Some school officials around the country, including some in New York, question the message of forcing students to volunteer. Mr. LaRock said the notion of mandating volunteerism seemed an oxymoron.

But Chicago school officials emphasized the importance of students' coming to learn that everyone must contribute his time and talents, or society will suffer.

The type of work being encouraged by school officials includes tutoring, cleaning homeless shelters and assisting the disabled.

"Doing things for senior citizens is always good," Mr. Marchiafava said. "Everybody is for senior citizens."■

TRADE

23. LRP Publications

Aug. 31, 1998

GOP, Clinton Again Butt Heads Over Dueling

Education Agendas

House and Senate Republicans today criticized President Clinton for failing to acknowledge congressional education efforts and shooting down "common sense" education initiatives.

The lawmakers lashed out at Clinton for vetoing, or threatening to veto, a series of education measures, including a spending bill currently under consideration in the House. The comments came in response to a back-to-school Clinton delivered today, in which he again touted his own agenda.

"I have proposed a comprehensive education agenda with high national standards, more well-qualified teachers, smaller classes, modern schools equipped with computers, before- and after-school programs to keep our young people learning in the classroom, and

In late July, Clinton vetoed a bipartisan education reform package sponsored by Coverdell and Sens. Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., and Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn. The bill would have allowed parents to place as much as \$2,000 per year, per child, in a designated savings account to be used for education expenses associated with any K-12 school, including computers, transportation, tutoring and tuition, among others.

"Families in communities across our

summer job programs to give young people the skills they need to succeed once they leave school," Clinton said.

The GOP-led Congress, not the administration, is leading the way on the education front, countered Bill Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

"Contrary to what President Clinton claims, the Republican Congress has an extensive education agenda this year. In fact, the Republican Congress is further along with its education agenda than the president is with his," Goodling said.

"Once the president failed to get his huge tobacco tax - - the tax that he said would pay for his education initiatives - - he decided to blame us for failing to move his education agenda," Goodling added. "That's nothing but a political shell game."

country are demanding better schools for their children, and the Congress has answered by passing bipartisan proposals that seek to address some of the most difficult problems facing American education," said Coverdell. "Now, the time has come for the president to help us finish the job."

Meanwhile, Goodling plans to push through a number of education initiatives when the House reconvenes next week, including increased funding for special education programs and the

Clinton based many of his new education initiatives on a significant influx of funds from a tobacco settlement - - which would have poured more than \$360 billion into federal coffers over the next 25 years. However, any possibility of tobacco settlement legislation died earlier this year and, subsequently, Clinton's already controversial education initiatives are fading.

Sen. Paul Coverdell, R-Ga., urged Clinton to start working with both parties for the sake of education reform.

"I have been deeply disappointed by the president's unwillingness to work with Republicans and Democrats on the serious problems confronting American education," Coverdell said. "The Congress has succeeded in passing bipartisan proposals only to have the president veto them."

Dollars to the Classroom Act, which consolidates 31 federal programs and sends \$800 million in additional funds to public schools.

"I invite the president to work with us on education - - not against us," Goodling said. "Unfortunately, the president's education agenda consists of little more than vetoes and veto threats to our common-sense education legislation." ■

24. LRP Publications

Aug. 31, 1998

Senate to Release FY 99 Education Spending Bill

The budget battles expected this fall between President Clinton and Congress will begin to take shape tomorrow when the Senate unveils its fiscal year 1999 education spending bill.

The Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee is scheduled to introduce and vote on its FY 99 appropriations bill tomorrow afternoon. The full Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to consider the measure later this week.

Lawmakers and the Clinton administration expect the legislation to have a significant effect on the tone of budget discussions in the coming weeks. It will be introduced by subcommittee chairman Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa.

In July, the administration blasted a House committee for adopting a spending measure that fails to fund \$2

billion worth of Clinton's education proposals and cuts deeply into a number of existing programs. Clinton has promised to veto the education spending bill if lawmakers refuse to reverse the significant funding cuts and program eliminations.

Therefore, if the Specter bill restores any of the cuts or deleted programs, it will signal a Republican eagerness to compromise with the president. If it contains language similar to the House bill, however, it will indicate a GOP willingness to engage in a budget showdown.

The last budgetary showdown between Clinton and the Republican Congress occurred in the winter of 1995 and resulted in a weeks-long shutdown of the federal government. The country ultimately held the GOP-led Congress

responsible for the shutdown, a result the Republicans are not eager to repeat this year with elections pending in November.

Rep. Bob Livingston, R-La., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, sent a letter to Clinton last month attempting to head off a possible showdown. Livingston expressed a willingness to work with the Clinton administration to produce mutually agreeable spending bills, but said to do so would require "much more interest, information, and cooperation" than the administration has provided.

The House appropriations bill would increase spending for Department of Education programs in FY 99 to \$30.55 billion, or \$1.1 billion over FY 98 levels. The bill would also provide \$4.31 billion in funding next year for special education programs for school-age

students - a \$509.7 million increase over current levels. But, it would cut \$2 billion from the president's funding request for new education initiatives, including class size reduction and school modernization, and it would eliminate a series of other projects the administration favors, such as the

summer jobs program for disadvantaged youths.

"If we are to respond to your requests for spending, then you owe us the offset details of how we can develop signable bills," Livingston wrote.

However, Livingston's efforts came before Clinton's public admission

regarding Monica Lewinsky and his appearance before Kenneth Starr's grand jury. Specter's bill will be an indication of whether the GOP-led Congress feels it can now fare better in a budget battle with a weakened president, or whether Livingston's willingness to compromise will be echoed by the Senate. ■

25. Education Daily

September 1, 1998

Funding Alert

by Staff Report

* Environmental Education Grants: The Environmental Protection Agency is inviting proposals for environmental education projects that design, demonstrate or disseminate

Eligibility: Nonprofits and public entities, including state, local or tribal

environmental education practices, methods or techniques.

Deadline: Nov. 16.

Funds: About \$3 million in fiscal 1999, with 25 percent earmarked for small grants of \$5,000 or less.

education agencies; state environmental agencies; school districts and higher

Other grants will range up to \$250,000. Proposals requesting \$25,000 or more must go to EPA headquarters; those for \$25,000 or less must go to EPA regional offices.

education institutions. ■

26. Education Daily

September 1, 1998

GTE Giving Science, Math Grants To Secondary Teachers

by Rebekah L. Stivers

The GTE Foundation is inviting entries for the 1999 Growth Initiatives for Teachers (GIFT) Program for projects that enhance math and science curriculum via technology use.

Teams of one math and one science teacher from the same school may enter with projects that integrate the two subjects into curriculum through innovative technology use.

The deadline is Jan. 16, and projects

should be implemented during the 1999-00 school year.

Sixty teams will receive a \$7,000 grant to run its project, and individual winning team members will receive \$2,500 to pursue professional development activities.

Public and private school math and science teachers of grades seven through 12 (and sixth grade in some cases) are eligible in: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut,

District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin. ■

27. Education Daily

September 1, 1998

Clinton Doesn't Narrow Education Goals For 1998

by William J. Cahir

Stopping at a Virginia elementary school before jetting off to Russia, President Clinton yesterday talked about education but failed to send clear signals about his priorities for Congress before it adjourns Oct. 9.

"In the world we're living in, it's not enough just to educate half the people very well," Clinton said to applause at Herndon Elementary School in Herndon, Va. "You must educate 100 percent of

the people very well in elementary and secondary schools."

While Clinton has submitted a litany of education initiatives to Congress, he didn't say what he wants lawmakers to do before going home for the 1998 elections. He has threatened to veto H.R. 4274, the House's fiscal 1999 education funding proposal, saying it falls \$2 billion short of his goals (ED, July 15).

Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., denounced the president for engaging in "a simple

political shell game" of blaming the GOP for failing to move his agenda. Instead, he touted the GOP agenda, saying Republicans want to increase special education funding and consolidate existing programs in a way that would direct \$800 million in federal funds to public schools.

"I invite the president to work with us on education—not against us," Goodling said. ■

28. Education Daily

September 1, 1998

ACLU Sues Mo. School Over Student's Personal Web Site

by Rebecca S. Weiner

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is suing a Marble Hill, Mo., school for suspending a high school student because he posted negative

The ACLU says Beussink's First Amendment rights were violated when the school suspended him for 10 days over the content of the Web site. The organization filed the suit—*Beussink v. Woodland R-IV School District* (1:98CV00093RWS)—last week in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Deborah Jacobs, executive director of the ACLU of Eastern Missouri, said Beussink pulled the Web site as soon as school administrators asked him to, but he still was suspended. And although Beussink passed his courses and exams, he failed the spring semester because he was out of class for 10 days.

Jacobs said the ACLU and Beussink

comments about the school on his personal Web site.

Last spring, Brandon Beussink created a Web page at home that criticized Woodland High School administrators want two results from the lawsuit: Mention of the suspension removed from Beussink's permanent school record, and credit for courses he passed in the spring semester so he can graduate. Jacobs also said Beussink is entitled to monetary damages, but did not specify an amount.

School officials say Beussink was suspended because his Web site was linked to the school's official site, and that he had other disruptive behavior in school.

Students Prevail In Prior Cases

Earlier this year, an Ohio school district settled with a student for \$30,000 after its suspension was overturned by a federal court. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio said school

and students. He also encouraged visitors to his site to e-mail complaints about the quality of the school's official Web site.

officials cannot restrict what students do on their home computers (ED, April 16).

In May, a Florida school district reversed a 10-day suspension it handed out in a similar case. The student instead transferred to a different high school within the same school district (ED, May 1).

And three years ago, a Bellevue, Wash., school district settled for \$2,000 after a student posted criticism about school officials and students from a Web site designed from home. In that case, the principal rescinded college recommendations and the student lost his National Merit Scholarship. ■

29. Education Daily

September 1, 1998

Congress Today Takes Up Appropriations Campaign

by William J. Cahir

With little time left to enact an education funding bill for next year, Senate spending lawmakers are trying to avoid picking fights with the White House as they issue their education spending plan today, sources say.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R.-Pa., chairman of the Senate education spending subcommittee, "is trying to keep off all policy riders that don't have bipartisan support," said a congressional aide who requested anonymity.

As head of the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Specter must play a leading role in the effort to develop a fiscal 1999 education funding bill that both the White House and congressional Republicans can accept.

A Philadelphia Republican who sometimes votes with Democrats on civil rights and education issues, Specter wants to force debate on controversial policy amendments out of the subcommittee and into the full Senate,

where it will be more difficult to change the underlying bill, the congressional aide added.

Specter's staff, however, declined to comment until his subcommittee releases and votes on its fiscal 1999 spending bill today.

Fiscal 1999 starts Oct. 1, and neither the Senate nor the House have passed an education funding bill for next year. Lawmakers have one month to come up with a compromise or pass a continuing resolution that would prevent a government shutdown.

President Clinton has threatened to veto seven of 13 appropriations bills, including the House education funding measure for fiscal 1999, H.R. 4274 (ED, July 15).

Hurry Up

Writing a bipartisan bill will not be a simple task given the lack of time and money. There is very little funding available to increase spending for even the most popular domestic programs.

The House has allocated \$81.8 billion

to the labor, health and education category, an increase of \$1.5 billion. The Senate has provided \$82.17 for those programs, an increase of \$1.9 billion.

Bruce Hunter, lobbyist for the American Association of School Administrators, said he expects Specter's subcommittee to approve a \$500 million increase for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and a \$300 million increase for Title I programs.

"And not much for anything else," Hunter predicted.

"Everyone does special ed," he explained. "That [increase] is not a maybe. Everyone participates in that program, so everyone is interested in it."

Hunter blasted Congress for enacting the 21st Century Transportation Equity Act, (P.L. 105-178), which authorizes \$112 billion for highway construction.

"Why they want to fund asphalt and overpasses instead of teaching poor kids or improving services for disabled kids—that's just a matter of priority-setting,"

Hunter said. "And I think their priorities are out of whack."

Lawmakers who want to provide more dollars for education have to raid health or labor programs.

And Congress has not enacted a budget resolution for fiscal 1999, so appropriators have not received any up-to-date guidance about how they should allocate limited education, health or labor spending.

Changing The Subject

Jay Diskey, spokesman for Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House education committee, said House Republicans want the Senate to match their appropriations bill in at least two ways:

* By increasing special ed funding, and

The House GOP is ready to go to war over funding issues, sensing that the Monica Lewinsky saga has weakened President Clinton's ability to lead.

"If, in fact, portions of the government are shut down, it will be because the president vetoes appropriations bills in an effort to divert attention from his own political scandals," said Chris Jones, spokesman for Rep. David McIntosh, R-Ind.

Jones noted that the president has tied

* By banning the development of national tests in reading and math, as proposed last year by the president (ED, Feb. 7, 1997).

"We hope the Senate bill has a good boost on IDEA funding," Diskey said. "Ours was more than \$500 million. And we also hope that it has a continuing

his own plans to boost education funding to an increase in the tobacco tax, a hike that Congress has spurned.

"Because that tobacco tax has been rejected, that money isn't there," Jones said, challenging the president to propose spending cuts to offset his plan to increase education funding by another \$2 billion.

Highest Hopes

prohibition on funding national tests, or at least another one-year prohibition."

The House returns from its summer recess Sept. 9, but has not set a date to start debating its education spending bill. House lawmakers have not yet agreed to a rule that would permit various amendments. ■

30. Education Daily

September 1, 1998

High Court Asked To Judge Legality Of School Vouchers

by Rebecca S. Weiner

Liberal and conservative groups are looking to the U.S. Supreme Court to ultimately judge the future of publicly funded school vouchers for private religious and non-religious schools.

The Washington, D.C.-based People for the American Way (PFAW) appealed to the High Court Monday to strike down a Wisconsin Supreme Court decision allowing publicly funded vouchers in Milwaukee to pay tuition at private religious schools (ED, June 11).

PFAW argues that the Wisconsin court's June decision violates a 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Nyquist* (413 U.S. 756), which declared direct and unrestricted public funding for religious schools to be unconstitutional. The High Court added that allowing vouchers for private religious schools would illegally advance

religion (ED Supplement, March 30, 1995).

Strange Bedfellows

And the conservative Institute for Justice, also based in Washington, D.C., plans to file a brief with the Supreme Court by the end of the month, asking the justices to take the case.

"We think there is no question the U.S. Supreme Court has to rule on the issue," said Clint Bolick the institute's director of litigation. "It's our job, and [will be] an uphill challenge, to get the court to take our case."

Bolick and PFAW have been fighting on opposite sides of the school voucher issue for years, but the chance for a Supreme Court ruling has made the two unusual allies.

"We seldom agree with Clint Bolick and the Institute for Justice on anything concerning vouchers, but we both agree that the Court should take this case," said

Elliot Minceburg, PFAW's legal director, in a statement.

The Supreme Court will begin its 1998-99 session Oct. 5. At that point, the High Court will determine whether to hear the voucher case.

National Issue

Several other state voucher cases are winding their way through the courts.

The Ohio Supreme Court is expected to hear arguments on a voucher program in Cleveland. The Ohio Court of Appeals ruled in May 1997 that the vouchers violate the Constitution, as well as state laws.

The Vermont Supreme Court could rule any day on a case revolving around state subsidies for students attending private and sectarian schools. And the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine ruled last month that public school funds cannot be used to pay tuition at religious schools (ED, Aug. 18). ■

31. Chronicle of Higher Education

Tuesday, September 1, 1998

Virginia Asks Appeals Court to Block Title IX Lawsuits Against Public Colleges

By PATRICK HEALY

Virginia has asked a federal appeals

court to shield public colleges from being sued in federal court for violating Title

IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a key gender-bias law.

In a brief filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit last month, lawyers in the Virginia Attorney General's office argued that the 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives immunity to public colleges that are accused of violating Title IX. The statute

The lawyers for Virginia argue that because Congress is supposed to limit state immunity only when it passes laws under its 14th Amendment powers, under a 1996 Supreme Court ruling, Congress acted unconstitutionally in limiting states' immunity to Title IX lawsuits. Based on the language of that ruling, Virginia's lawyers contend, Congress acted unconstitutionally in limiting states' immunity from Title IX lawsuits, because such limits had to be tied to the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, not to spending powers.

Two legal principles affecting colleges are at stake in Virginia's argument:

· Did the U.S. Congress act constitutionally when, to bolster enforcement of Title IX, it limited states' immunity from Title IX lawsuits?

· Do public universities waive their 11th Amendment rights by accepting federal funds, an act that makes them subject to Title IX?

A federal district judge ruled in the George Mason lawsuit that Congress had acted unconstitutionally in limiting immunity from Title IX lawsuits. But the judge also concluded that George Mason

prohibits sex discrimination by institutions that receive federal aid — a decree that has been the basis for numerous lawsuits or threatened lawsuits, many involving sports, against public colleges.

Virginia officials are seeking to derail had waived its 11th Amendment rights when it accepted federal funds.

David B. Botkins, a spokesman for Virginia's Attorney General, Mark L. Earley, said the state had appealed the district judge's ruling to settle the question of whether states can be sued in federal court under Title IX. "There's an important constitutional principle at stake," Mr. Botkins said. "The 11th Amendment says states and their agencies, including public universities, cannot be sued in federal court."

The U.S. Justice Department has intervened in the lawsuit on the side of Ms. Litman, and several private groups, including the American Association of University Women and the National Women's Law Center, have filed briefs on her behalf.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia has also endorsed Ms. Litman's suit. Kent Willis, director of the chapter, said Virginia's legal arguments would have a "dramatic effect" on public colleges if adopted by the courts, because "the vast majority of Title IX cases involve higher education at the state level"

a lawsuit against George Mason University, a public institution that is subject to Title IX. A former George Mason student, Annette Greco Litman, sued last year in federal court, alleging that she had been sexually harassed by one of her professors.

"What the Attorney General wants to do is kick the teeth out of the law," Mr. Willis said.

Claire Guthrie-Gastonaga, a lawyer and higher-education consultant, said that under the theory laid out by Virginia, individuals would "no longer be able to bring any race- or sex-discrimination lawsuits in federal court against a state entity." She argued that the Virginia lawyers were overreaching in their legal analysis, and said that in the Supreme Court opinion cited by Virginia, the Justices endorsed a clear 14th Amendment rationale for the passage of Title IX — "to protect individual citizens' effective protection" against discriminatory practices.

Mr. Botkins, of Virginia, denied that the state was trying to undermine enforcement of federal anti-discrimination laws, which he said Mr. Earley, a Republican, supports. "In many respects, this is a narrow procedural issue," Mr. Botkins said. "The issue is whether a private citizen who sues the state under Title IX must do so in state court rather than federal court." ■

LOCAL

32. Seattle Times

September 1, 1998

SAT scores go up again for Seattle seniors

by Dick Lilly Seattle Times staff reporter
Seattle's high-school seniors are bucking the trend for urban schools.

For the second year in a row, they've raised their scores on both parts of the nationwide SAT tests taken by most college-bound seniors. In contrast, most urban school districts have seen their students' scores decline.

"Average SAT scores in the suburbs are above the national average and rising, while scores in urban and rural areas are falling further below that average," said The College Board, the corporation that administers the test to almost 1.2 million high-school seniors annually.

Seattle's seniors' scores, however,

edged above the national average on the verbal skills part of the test last year and added another 11 points this year to reach 530, compared to the national average of 505. For several years, district seniors have been above the national average in math, with the class of 1998 adding 12 points for an average of 530, compared to the national average of 512.

For the first time in many years, Seattle seniors also topped the state averages, which for 1998 are 524 in verbal skills and 526 in math.

National and state averages on both parts of the test have shown less gain than Seattle over the past two years.

Typical of The College Board's

findings, seniors in most suburban school districts in the metropolitan area continued above average and rising. For example, Bellevue School District scores went up to 539 on verbal and 569 on math.

The College Board stresses that scores should not be used to compare school districts or even schools, because students' academic performance depends so much on factors outside the schools' control, such as family income and parents' education.

Indeed, the difference in urban-suburban results itself is considered a demonstration of the importance of socioeconomic factors in

33. San Diego Union Tribune

September 1, 1998

City schools resume

New superintendent, many other changes welcome 139,000

By Maureen Magee and
Lillian Salazar Leopold
STAFF WRITERS

It was teary-eyed kindergartners, video-camera-toting parents, English-immersion courses and hot-and-sticky classrooms yesterday as 139,000 San Diego city schools students battled the heat and started the new school year.

Parents who accompanied their children to school were greeted by volunteers pushing voter registration and support for the San Diego Unified School District's \$1.51 billion bond initiative, Proposition MM.

San Diego schools chief Alan Bersin visited several campuses, taking time to chat with students, teachers and principals about his plans for the school year. An aggressive literacy movement, the passage of Proposition MM in November and an educationally sound way of implementing California's new bilingual education law are tops on his list.

"I didn't come here to maintain the status quo," said Bersin, a former U.S. attorney who was hired as superintendent two months ago.

"You can tell when you walk into a class and the students are on task. When we create an environment that respects students and supports teachers we can have that in every classroom and at every school — and it has nothing to do with socioeconomic."

Meanwhile, some 39,000 students who speak limited English gathered in English-immersion classes that under Proposition 227 will offer English-dominated instruction.

At Jackson Elementary School, whose fourth- and fifth-graders share campus space with Mann Middle School in El Cerrito, bilingual teachers divide their instruction time: 70 percent in English and 30 percent in Spanish.

For the first 1-1/2 hours, teacher Peggy Chiappe yesterday spoke to her combination fourth- and fifth-grade class in Spanish. During that time, she crammed in all the classroom rules and expectations and explained that she

would speak in their native language only for the first 1-1/2 hours of each day. During the daily Spanish period, she will review some of the more difficult lessons she gave in English.

She also told them about her vacation in Mexico City and her love of languages and cultures.

"I'm trying not to ostracize Spanish and make them feel their language is bad," Chiappe said.

Chiappe and other bilingual teachers will be implementing a new language program for English learners this year. Begun in some classes throughout the district last year, even before Proposition 227 was on the ballot, the new program emphasizes reading, writing and oral language skills.

The district's previous program for English language learners emphasized the spoken word, Chiappe said. While teachers taught reading and writing, they mostly had to find supplemental materials to augment lesson plans. The new program comes with materials and lesson plans addressing all three key areas.

In the district's effort to move more quickly to English, Chiappe also will be teaching mathematics completely in English this year.

And she will follow the law under Proposition 227, even if she doesn't think it's best for the children.

"Learning language and math concepts is difficult," Chiappe said. "The language is the problem, not the mathematical concepts."

Under the new law, students who speak limited English are supposed to spend no longer than one year in English-immersion classes before they are sent to mainstream courses. But some students may need more time, said Tim Allen, who oversees the district's bilingual education program.

"Our district enrolls new immigrant students from around the world every year," Allen said. "And very few of them speak English. It's our experience that with these programs . . . it may take longer than a year for some students to acquire sufficient proficiency in

English."

Some schools, such as Mann, have already abandoned traditional bilingual education programs.

Mann still offers "English as a second language" classes, but those are taught completely in English. Teachers, such as Kim Murray and Karen Jackson, use hand gestures, handouts and posters and rely on students who speak a common language to help other students.

When Murray began handing out parent letters to the students in her English as second language class yesterday, it was a rainbow of languages. There were blue for Spanish, yellow for Vietnamese, lime green for Cambodian, orange for Somalian, red for Laotian and pink for English.

In addition to a new bilingual education policy, San Diego Unified also launched a literacy push and tough new graduation requirements this year.

Seniors who graduate in June, for example, must earn a minimum 2.0 grade-point average in citizenship and in their academic subjects to get a diploma. Meanwhile, eighth-grade students who do not pass core courses — such as English, math, science or history — will have to attend summer school or they won't go on to high school.

Meanwhile, all students will be asked to improve their reading and writing skills under the district's literacy program. And, in the earliest elementary grades, students will spend the first three hours of school working exclusively on lessons linked to literacy.

San Diego city schools also opened four new campuses yesterday.

Among them is the new Thurgood Marshall Middle School. Located amid the sprawling housing developments of Scripps Ranch, Thurgood Marshall opened with 900 students, making the campus overcrowded on its first day.

The modern, peach-stucco complex more resembles an office park than a middle school. Students and teachers spoke with pride of their gleaming new school.

"It's kinda cool that everything is brand-new and we're the first ones to be here," said Tim Pistotti, a seventh-grader whose only complaint was that the lunch menu lacked pizza.

Despite yesterday's oppressive heat, some style-savvy youngsters made their school debut in the latest fall fashions — including dark sweaters, wool miniskirts and tights.

Other students, including those at Mann, showed up bedecked in a sea of white and blue uniforms.

At Morse High School, students returned from their summer vacation only to find that vandals had covered much of

their campus with graffiti.

"It's kind of scary," one new student said. "I've never seen so much graffiti, and I don't really know what it means."

Painters covered the unwelcome scrawls as students made their way from class to class and as the superintendent arrived with a media entourage.

"Frankly, I'd like to find out who did it and, if there were students involved, I'd like to put them to work," Bersin said.

The new schools chief popped into several classrooms at Morse, which last year experienced rough times — including racial tensions.

"Last year was last year," he said.

"We have to focus on student achievement without getting distracted by those events."

Bersin, whose oldest daughter is a product of private school, became a public school parent for the first time yesterday as his daughter started school at the district's Language Academy in the College Area.

"I have butterflies, too," he told a visibly nervous MaAiza Ortiqerra, who started high school yesterday at Morse. "My daughter started school today, and this is my first school year as superintendent." ■

34. Denver Post

September 1, 1998

More growing pains for state schools

By Carlos Illescas
Denver Post Education Writer

The recent growth spurt continues for a school district with little room to grow.

With school starting today in Denver, district officials expect about 1,000 more students than last year to fill classrooms during the 1998-99 school year. That will bring the total student population in Denver Public Schools to about 69,000.

The growth comes despite the lack of available land for new DPS schools, other than at the old Lowry Air Force Base and Stapleton Airport sites and in the far northeastern part of the city. That's where district officials have identified the need for additional schools.

This morning's opening of Jessie Maxwell Elementary School in Montbello marks the first time in 14 years that a new DPS school has been needed to accommodate growth. Several schools have opened in the past few years to replace older buildings.

"There's a lot of excitement here, with the opportunity to start a new school at ground level," said Maxwell Principal Robert Woodson. He and the school staff were busy Monday getting the new building looking just right.

More than 5,000 additional students have entered Denver Public Schools in the past three years, and another 4,700 are expected by 2002. The increase in the student population, attributed to Colorado's successful economy and, to a lesser extent, the end of court-ordered busing, follows a trend throughout the Denver area.

Enrollment also is up in Jefferson and Douglas counties, as well as in the Littleton and Boulder school districts.

The Douglas County school district expects a whopping 2,700 extra students this year, bringing the total to 30,000. Jefferson County, the state's largest school district, will get about 1,200 more students, raising its total to 89,000. Smaller increases are expected in Littleton and Boulder.

"Over the next five years, we're expecting more growth, especially in the Dakota Ridge area in southern Jefferson County, Lakewood, Conifer and Golden," said Jefferson County schools spokeswoman Kay Pride.

To alleviate overcrowding, DPS plans to build nine new schools and a school of the arts if a \$305 million bond package is approved by voters in November.

The 325 students attending Jessie Maxwell Elementary have some of the latest advances in classroom technology at their fingertips.

Each class is wired for telephones and the Internet. Each also will be equipped with a television monitor and video cassette recorder. Students will be able to see the principal make school announcements on monitors, instead of just hearing him over loud speakers. The monitors also replace cumbersome overhead projectors.

Architecturally, Maxwell offers a design different than schools of the past. Angled hallways and the use of windows bring natural light into the class rooms.

Maxwell students also will be required to wear school uniforms. Several other schools in DPS either have school uniforms or a dress code, policies decided by each school's collaborative decision-making teams.

Two new charter schools in Denver also are opening. When classes begin later this month, Wyatt-Edison Charter School will have about 650 students. The Odyssey School, which opens today, expects about 50 students. ■

35. Dallas Morning News

September 1, 1998

Group wants \$6,000 raise for teachers

Low salaries driving away Texas educators, leader says

By Jayne Noble Suhler
The Dallas Morning News

A state teachers' organization is calling for a \$6,000 across-the-board raise for teachers willing to stay on the front lines: in the classroom, teaching

students.

Thousands of teachers leave the profession each year because of low salaries, poor retirement benefits and little respect from the public, Ignacio Salinas Jr., president of the Texas State Teachers Association, said at a Dallas news conference Monday.

And almost half of all education graduates from the state's colleges and universities never make it into the profession, lured instead by higher-paying jobs in other fields, Mr. Salinas said.

The result is a lack of teachers across the state in almost every field.

"We call this situation in Texas the 'great silent strike,' " he said. "It's far

more serious, far more permanent, and far more damaging than the temporary strikes we read about in other states."

The Austin-based TSTA, which counts about 82,000 members, will ask the Texas Legislature to use part of its projected budget surplus next year for a raise for all teachers, Mr. Salinas said. TSTA said this would bring Texas teachers to the national average.

Roy Kemble, president of the Classroom Teachers of Dallas, the local branch of the TSTA that hosted the press conference, said parents need to realize how desperately teachers are needed.

"There is money in the state to redirect to education," he said.

In Dallas, more than 200 teaching

positions are unfilled, and 772 teachers are on emergency permits, meaning they have not completed the state-mandated teacher certification training.

And in many classrooms, teachers are certified but not in the subject he or she is teaching. The greatest shortages are in math, science, special education and bilingual education, Mr. Salinas said.

In order to attract the best and brightest into teaching - and to keep them there - teaching must be elevated to a profession with the same salaries of other professions, Mr. Salinas said.

"We do not expect teachers to be second-class citizens," he said. ■

36. Miami Herald

September 1, 1998

Broward schools crunch eases

By JACQUELINE CHARLES
Herald Staff Writer

Here's how some Broward parents are spelling relief: Clutter-free hallways. Fewer portables. Fewer buses.

And even, here and there, an empty classroom.

Some schools that had been bursting at the seams — schools such as Silver Palms Elementary in Pembroke Pines and Flamingo Elementary in Davie — are gaining a little elbow room.

The reason: The Monday openings of three sorely needed new elementary schools — plus a city-run elementary in Pembroke Pines — have drawn students away from the crowded schools.

Add to that slowing enrollment growth countywide and a shift in that growth away from the elementary schools to the middle and high schools.

"We have room to grow for the first time," said Silver Palms Principal Jayne Benz Hall. "It's really wonderful."

Built two years ago for 995 students,

Besides Fox Trail Elementary, the district also opened Silver Lakes Elementary in Miramar, Panther Run Elementary in Pembroke Pines and McFatter Vocational Technical Center High School in Davie.

Two new schools also opened in Weston — but in portables. Another school that was to have opened, Lakeside Elementary in Pembroke Falls, will take in students next month.

Also christened on Monday were charter schools in Pembroke Pines, Lauderhill and North Lauderdale.

Silver Palms once had 2,000 students on its campus.

On Monday, Hall counted 975 youngsters — 49 fewer than the school's projected enrollment.

"We went from 22 school buses down to three," Hall said. "And at least 12 of the 19 portables will go."

Over in Davie, Flamingo Principal Kathleen Morris was equally delighted over losing eight of the school's 17 portables. Only bald spots of dirt remained.

"This is the first time in about 10 years that Flamingo has come in at under 1,000 students on the first day," said Morris, whose school lost scores of students to the new Fox Trail Elementary in Davie.

Some schools were not so lucky. Among them: Western High, just a javelin throw away. It's Broward's most crowded high school — and getting worse.

Western is being buffeted by two Broward now has six of these privately run public schools.

The charter schools, touted as an a less-bureaucratic alternative to regular campuses, had their share of glitches.

Unable to finish its new building in time for Monday, the Somerset Neighborhood School in Miramar tried to open in a model home.

No can do, district officials said.

The solution: two thirds of the 80 students will be taught in portables while the rest will take part in daily field trips until the new building is completed.

trends: booming growth in southwest Broward and a demographic bubble that is moving up from the elementary level into the secondary schools.

Western enrollment is projected at 3,651 in a school that was built for 1,963. Freshmen go to class at a portable annex in Sunrise.

"It's packed," said senior Erika Sensebe. "They need like three more annexes. Then we will be OK."

The first-day count in Broward public schools this year was 205,472. That's up from 194,798 last year and 190,439 the year before.

When everybody gets back from late summer vacations, the district expects enrollment to reach 229,598 by the 20th day of classes, the traditional benchmark. That's about 6,000 more than last year. Although that's enough kids to fill two high schools, it still represents a decline in the district's overall growth rate, which saw enrollment climb by nearly 10,000 students a year for a decade.

At North Lauderdale Academy High, workers were still renovating a corner of the Boys and Girls Club that will house the school's science and computer labs, art room and physical education classroom. The school plans to make do during the next week by dividing some of the larger classrooms in their main building in half.

The Smart School in Lauderhill, a new charter middle school, was also a work in progress. They're still awaiting their new Imac computers, which may not arrive for three more weeks.

Things, however, couldn't have gone much smoother at the new Pembroke Pines Charter School, which opened at two sites on Monday.

"It's a wonderful day," said Principal Gwendolyn Batie as the sea of yellow, pink and blue uniforms parted around her.

From Apollo Middle in Hollywood to Gator Run Elementary in Weston, enthusiasm was evident.

Run as an annex of Eagle Point Elementary last year, an all-portable campus on Arvida Parkway has been reborn as Gator Run Elementary. The portables are surrounded by heavy

machinery and mountains of sand. Despite the cacophony of construction right outside the window, Principal Kathleen DiBona is excited.

"We are very comfortable right now," she said. ■

37. Minneapolis Star Tribune

September 1, 1998

First day is smooth sailing at for-profit Edison/PPL Elementary School

Anne O'Connor / Star Tribune

For-profit public education officially arrived in the Minneapolis School District on Monday, with the promise of longer school hours and a longer school year for pioneering students.

But with the opening of the doors for the first day of school Monday morning, staff members at the new Edison/PPL Elementary School in south Minneapolis weren't focusing on how to make a buck: They're out to deliver a quality education.

"The income of a child, the color of a child's skin, or their special needs are not such a handicap to getting a world-class education," said DeBorah Zackery, principal of the new school.

The first of its kind in Minneapolis and only the third in the state, the for-profit school is a concrete example of the response to the clamoring around the country for more choices in education. The school will feature intensive small-group work in math and reading and significant parent involvement. It has the support of the Minneapolis teachers union and could pave the way for more schools of its kind.

The school is a three-way partnership

The organizers are trying to emphasize all that is different. Students start earlier than in other schools, and the school year is longer. So is the school day — from 7:40 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Students will work with the same teachers over several years, and families are meant to be heavily involved in school activities. All students will be expected to learn Spanish.

"All the kids are supposed to be fluent by the time they leave here [in fifth grade]," said Bryan Cichy, who teaches Spanish. For teaching reading, the school will use Success for All, a program that emphasizes reading 90 minutes a day for all students, writing and small group sessions.

This year, students will learn how to

between the national for-profit Edison Project, the local nonprofit Project for Pride in Living (PPL) and the district.

"It's so different," said third-grade teacher Devrae Gilreath. Her best friend teaches at an Edison school in Miami, and when Gilreath heard one was coming to town, she worked to get into the school. "I think it's a program that's really going to work."

Edison's for-profit strategy, based on the idea that with enough schools around the country they will be able to profit from the economies of scale, made the school highly controversial. It first was proposed as an independent charter school but ultimately it was given a contract with the district, which makes it mostly independent but with more accountability to the district. The contract was signed in April and the school scrambled all summer to sign up staff and students.

Now it is full, with a waiting list. Duluth has two other Edison schools, both of which also have waiting lists.

Hard work ahead

While the school is open to everyone, it's targeting groups that typically do use computers and, next year, each family will get a computer for their home that will be linked to Edison's network. The school teaches technology as a second language.

That emphasis is what attracted Anya Gianlorenzi and Sam Doyle when they were looking for 5-year-old Tanika's school.

"It's science-and technology-based, and that's what she likes," Gianlorenzi said. "She sits at home and does math. I think she's going to thrive here."

The mix of kids was important, too.

"We wanted to make sure there was a lot of diversity," Doyle said. "Where not everyone had a Pocahontas lunchbox."

A smooth start

poorly on basic-skills tests.

Of the 315 students in the school, 85 percent are students of color and 75 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. PPL helps people become self-sufficient by working with them on housing, employment and neighborhood issues. About a third of the students are from PPL families.

"It's exciting to see the idea come to reality in terms of having a really nice facility and in terms of seeing the kind of student profile we wanted to reach," said Steve Cramer, executive director of PPL. "The hard work lies ahead in — is this really going to hold the promise that we think it will for these children? The real test will be how the educational efforts and the efforts to work with families gel."

The freshly painted pastel walls, new carpeting and bright new chairs have remade what was the technical college Brown Institute at the intersection of E. Lake St. and Hiawatha Av. S. into a school for kindergartners through fifth-graders. The school plans to add grades six through eight next year and a high school the following year.

A bouquet of balloons and more than a dozen smiling faces greeted students and parents rolling in about 7:30 a.m. Monday.

"Good morning, welcome," one teacher said to incoming families.

Spencer McDowell made his way cautiously into his new kindergarten class, clinging to his new black backpack and sticking close to his mother. They found the table with his name on it, and his new teacher gave him name tags for both the front and back of his shirt. Liz McDowell, his mom, hugged him goodbye, left him at his desk and headed for the door.

Spencer got up and followed her out. "Mom, where are you going?" he asked.

"No, no," she said, redirecting him back to his chair. "You get to stay with your teacher."

Spencer's teacher brought him back to the chair, helping him adjust to the new world away from parents.

McDowell's third-and first-grader also go to the school. She was attracted to it because it's so close to home and by the warm reception that she's felt from the

staff. And with her busy schedule, she said she thinks the school will work with her to keep in contact.

"And just knowing they were really going to take the time to teach them," McDowell said. "They're just so excited about going to school."

Staff members know that expectations for the school are high, and they say they're ready. A couple of hours after

opening, the office was calm and cleared of parents or students who hadn't found a place.

"It went smoother than I anticipated for the first day," said Zackery. "The students and their parents are very enthusiastic. If this is an example of the first day, we're going to have a wonderful year." ■

38. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

September 1, 1998

New year, new choice

Challenge puts Milwaukee system in position to set precedent for nation

By Joe Williams
of the Journal Sentinel staff

The future of tax-funded tuition vouchers for religious schools across the nation could hinge on a constitutional challenge of Milwaukee's program that was filed Monday with the U.S. Supreme Court.

A petition challenging the program was filed by a coalition led by teachers unions and the American Civil Liberties Union.

"I don't think Americans want their tax dollars to support religious beliefs with which they might disagree," said Chris Ahmuty, executive director of the ACLU of Wisconsin.

Because voucher supporters indicated they were just as eager for the Supreme Court to hear the case, both sides said the court likely would allow Milwaukee's program to set the precedent for similar programs all over the nation.

"This is the case we want to make our

The 23-page petition for review was filed Monday on behalf of the National Education Association, ACLU, NAACP, Wisconsin Federation of Teachers, Wisconsin Education Association Council, Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and People for the American Way.

They asked the court to rule on the matter now "so that those genuinely concerned with improving the quality of education in the United States will be able to re-focus their energies on measures that pass constitutional muster, and a needless, divisive debate between supporters of sectarian education and supporters of public education can be avoided."

As the legal battle began to be played out in Washington, Gov. Tommy G.

stand," said Clint Bolick, litigation director for the Institute for Justice, which represented poor parents who were fighting for choice. "This is the best case out there."

Milwaukee and Cleveland are alone in having fully operational voucher programs in which students may use tax money to attend religious schools. The Ohio Supreme Court has not ruled on the Cleveland program's constitutionality.

As it has since Rep. Annette Polly Williams (D-Milwaukee) created a small program allowing poor students to attend private, non-religious schools in 1989, Milwaukee stood at the forefront of the national debate on education reform Monday.

Even before the petition was filed in Washington, national news crews Monday were gathered for the first day of classes at Messmer High School, a Catholic school where 160 of the school's 360 students are attending school using Thompson and Mayor John O. Norquist participated in the opening day of classes at Messmer, speaking at a student assembly.

"We want to give every child in Milwaukee the opportunity to learn and get the best education possible," Thompson told the students. "If that school happens to be a private school, so be it. Our focus is on the child and the family."

Thompson and Brother Bob Smith, Messmer president, told the students that the country would be watching them closely to see whether school choice contributed to a better education environment in the city.

"You, the students, must hit the books harder," Thompson said.

Choice supporters have wondered since June whether the Wisconsin case

taxpayer-funded vouchers.

"There's a lot riding on this case," said Christopher Wolfe, a political science professor at Marquette University who specializes in constitutional issues.

"There's a very large number of people in this country whose hopes for some of the most important things in their lives are riding on this case. There are a lot of people who really feel strongly that school choice is of enormous importance in their lives."

The Wisconsin Supreme Court in June ruled that the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which allows poor students in Milwaukee to attend private and religious schools at public expense, did not violate the establishment clause of the state and U.S. constitutions, which provides for the separation of church and state. Participation is capped at 15,000 students; about 6,000 are expected to use vouchers this year.

would be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court because, they said, they believed the decision in Madison strongly addressed issues relating to the U.S. Constitution in addition to the state laws.

"If I was a choice opponent, I would wait awhile and hope that (President) Clinton gets another appointment and then try to get another case to the Supreme Court level," said MU's Wolfe, who predicted the choice program would be upheld 5-4.

Bolick said he thought that public support for the program would grow as the emphasis of vouchers shifts from politics to "the real world of real kids and real families." Despite growing support for alternatives to the public school system, he said the program must be supported by the Supreme Court to thrive.

"So long as this issue has not been resolved, this program is in jeopardy," Bolick said. "If the court passes on this case, but takes up another case, it could dismantle Milwaukee's program" if another choice program were found to be

unconstitutional.

Elliott Minberg, legal director for People for the American Way, said his group opposes vouchers because they weaken public schools by diverting sorely needed money.

"We seldom agree with Clint Bolick and the Institute for Justice on anything concerning vouchers, but we both agree that the court should take this issue," Minberg said. ■

39. Detroit Free Press

September 1, 1998

Critics, advocates urge charter school review

BY PEGGY WALSH-SARNECKI
Free Press Education Writer

Five years into Michigan's charter schools movement, there are growing questions about who's checking up on these schools and making sure that taxpayers' money — \$122.3 million last year — is buying quality education for children.

Now that the schools have been operating for three years, critics and advocates say it's time to review what's working and what isn't.

Michigan's charter school law provides for several layers of oversight. The school district or university that grants the charter is given the primary responsibility for oversight. The law, however, did not spell out exactly what authorizers are supposed to do.

Inexperience on the part of the charter school authorizers and, in many cases, administrators, can lead to errors in reporting and undiscovered problems, say critics of charter schools.

Some say the debate boils down to this: Who can provide better oversight: government officials charged with

Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have passed charter school laws since the first charter school opened in Minnesota in 1992, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

With little in the way of models to follow, each state has given its charter school law its own twist.

Michigan charter schools must file the same reports as public schools, including an independent financial audit by a certified public accountant. Michigan is one of 10 states that require charter schools to follow the same rules as public schools, or waive the rules only with approval.

On the other hand, Michigan is one of only three locations — the others are Arizona and Washington, D.C. — where there is no governmental agency such as the state school board approving or monitoring charters.

Michigan is ranked second, behind

checking the schools' curriculum and finances, or parents who can simply take their children elsewhere if they don't like the school?

Last spring, the State Board of Education established a bipartisan committee to review the oversight issue.

"A lot of these chartering agencies didn't know what they were supposed to do," said Kathleen Straus, board president. "There is a need for greater accountability and monitoring."

There have been glitches. Last year, Central Michigan University had to fix several problems, including uncertified teachers in its charter schools. Of the state's 108 charter schools last year, CMU authorized 46.

CMU quickly acted to correct the problems.

But critics were concerned, pointing out the university, like all charter authorizers, gets 3 percent of the charter schools' state funding.

The money is supposed to pay for the authorizer's work in approving and then monitoring and helping charter schools. But charter school opponents argue this Arizona, in having laws favorable to the charter school movement by the Center for Education Reform, a Washington, D.C. charter school advocacy group.

The center gave Michigan the highest marks, five out of a possible five points, for allowing schools funding, autonomy, having multiple authorizing agencies and allowing schools to start without local support.

Charter school advocates argue these schools have the only oversight they need.

"If a parent feels the school is not doing something right, that parent can leave the school," said Tammy Beckering of Rockford, who has three children in Excel Academy in Grand Rapids. "If they don't have full enrollment, it's very hard for that school to stay open."

Beckering and another charter school parent operate Parents for Excellence in Education, a nonprofit group that advises

gives the authorizer an incentive to keep schools going and the money flowing into their coffers. The 3 percent is worth about \$3.5 million to the state's authorizers.

Further questions have been raised because the state Department of Education, charged with providing the state Legislature with an annual report on charter schools, didn't release its first report until 1997, on the 1995-'96 school year.

Many said the report was little more than a list of self-reported school data that added nothing to oversight. A second report, on the 1996-'97 school year, is due within the next few months and is expected to contain the same sort of information.

The oversight debate is not limited to Michigan.

"This is just about the No. 1 topic in the whole charter school field these days," said Ted Kolderie, senior associate with the Center for Policy Studies, a charter school advocacy group in St. Paul, Minn.

parents about educational choice.

"If you're defining accountability as government oversight and paper, then you're on the wrong page," said Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform. "Accountability is whether or not the institutions we've selected or authorized to educate children are doing their job."

Parents are the best judges of their children's education, she said.

Charter schools need the freedom to experiment, Allen said. The whole point of the charter school movement is to see how well schools can teach without the burden of the public school bureaucracy, she said.

Traditional public schools are responsible to a bureaucracy instead of parents, charter advocates say.

"The traditional monitoring process ... is based on the kinds of controls that a school might have up front, as opposed to

the outcomes," Allen said. "You're held accountable based on whether you're following a standard set of procedures, not on whether the kids are really learning."

Regina Hill, the parent of a seventh-grader in Detroit's Chandler Park Academy, agrees. When parents asked for a black history class for the students and a computer class for the parents, the school obliged.

"Chandler Park gives the parents an input on the things they would like the schools to have.

"It's a great opportunity for parents to be involved, which a lot of schools won't

allow," she said.

The whole charter school issue is so new, there are few national rankings or ratings available on charter school accountability. Like all experiments, some charter schools are bound to fail.

"As a reality, one has to expect that some will close because they were created on the basis of a competitive society, and in competition, some do not make it," said Jerry Horn of Western Michigan University's division of evaluation research.

Western Michigan University, which has not chartered any schools, has one of two state Department of Education

contracts to evaluate the state's charter initiative, including accountability and whether schools are meeting their objectives.

The report isn't finished. But generally, Horn said the biggest problems have been inexperience and underestimating how much work is involved.

But, he added, "We would be naive to believe that every school that's created as a charter school will continue to exist, and hopefully we would not continue to prop up a school just because it's created."■

40. New York Times

September 1, 1998

Tax Takes a Holiday for Some Back-to-School Shoppers

By NICK RAVO

In a back-to-school gift to shoppers and retailers, the fourth tax-free shopping week in the last two years begins Tuesday in New York State, with state sales taxes eliminated on all clothing and shoes costing less than \$500.

New York City has suspended its own tax as well, meaning that through next Monday, city shoppers will not have to pay the normal 8.25 percent in sales tax on most types of apparel. The reprieve is

The 8.25 percent sales tax in New York City is made up of three components: a 4 percent state sales tax, a 4 percent city sales tax, and a 0.25 percent tax levied by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. During the last legislative session, lawmakers approved the gradual elimination of the state's sales tax on certain clothing.

Under the measure, the state share of the sales tax on clothing will be eliminated on clothing and footwear for items under \$500 from Jan. 17 to 24, 1999, and will be permanently eliminated for clothing and footwear sold for less than \$110 beginning Dec. 1, 1999.

Ethel Sloan, marketing director of the Manhattan Mall, at Broadway and 33d Street, said that past tax-free weeks have drawn a sharp increase in shoppers. "We are anticipating an extremely strong response," Ms. Sloan said. "The past times we have had the tax-free week, our retailers have reported substantial increased traffic and sales, particularly stores like Modell's. Children's Place and

intended in part to keep shoppers from taking their business elsewhere, as lower-tax states like New Jersey have often drawn people at peak shopping times like the holidays and before the opening of school.

Some retailers are worried, however, that the recent turmoil on Wall Street and other factors may undermine the impact of this week's tax cut.

"During past tax-free shopping weeks, Express."

The accounting and consulting firm KPMG Peat Marwick, which has studied past tax-free weeks, has forecast that retail sales volume in New York City would rise 125 percent during the week, in part because of normal back-to-school shopping. The figure was higher than the increase in sales in 1997, in part because of an improved economy and the inclusion of footwear as a tax-free purchase, the firm said.

The firm also noted in its report of January's tax-free week that the tax reprieve prompted additional spending on taxable items while consumers were purchasing clothing, shoes and other items. This week, the items that are still taxable include watches, umbrellas, rollerblades, sunglasses, handbags and helmets, among other items.

Not all cities in New York State are following the state's lead in suspending taxes for the week.

The local 2 percent sales tax in White Plains remains in effect, though shoppers

United Colors of Benetton stores citywide saw a dramatic surge in sales," said Carlo Tunio, general manager of Benetton U.S.A. "However, this tax-free shopping week may be impacted by the recent instability in the financial markets and the unrelenting hot weather, making customers reluctant to shop and thereby affecting a normally profitable sales period."

will still get a break on the state taxes.

Elliott Ettenberg, chief executive of Bozell Retail Advertising, said the tax elimination was a great boon to parents shopping for school supplies for their children. "If you do the math, at back-to-school time alone, the city loses \$40 per child — that's the cost of another outfit," he said.

"It's a mistake to have this tax at all," he said. "The city should get its tax money from hotel taxes, from the visitors who are clogging the city, instead of hurting the people who live here."

The tax-free week started symbolically on Sunday when Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani knocked down a stack of milk bottles with "tax" printed on them and then went shopping at Modell's in midtown.

"We have already seen a sharp increase in the sales of both footwear and apparel during tax-free shopping week, especially with the New York Yankees merchandise line," said Michael Modell, president of Modell's Sporting Goods.■

41. Richmond Times Dispatch

September 1, 1998

Security measures making the grade?

With the specter of violence looming over schools in the wake of last year's shooting in Richmond and other incidents across the nation, how

safe do teachers feel returning to classrooms this fall?

Administrators and other school

officials are taking steps to bolster security, and when classes resume next week, an array of new hardware and violence-prevention strategies will be in place.

Still, risk is real.

"I think that society is becoming more

violent, and I think that schools are a reflection of society," said Joni Pritchard, a teacher at Stonewall Jackson Middle School in Hanover County. "I don't think we are immune to it by any means." ■

42. Baltimore Sun

September 1, 1998

Ready or not, school begins

Contrast: Elementary schools basked in the glow of a fresh start. But at Northern High, it was a false start.

By Stephen Henderson And
Liz Bowie Sun Staff

By 10 a.m. yesterday at Tench Tilghman Elementary School in East Baltimore, first-graders were deep into alphabet lessons and third-graders were getting briefed on the responsibilities that come with having their own reading books.

But across town at Northern High, a hopeful new principal and a month of

Some high schools, like Northern, have new, highly touted principals this year and one — Walbrook — has been re-opened as a service academy run by the police and fire departments. But wholesale reform has yet to take hold.

"I'm not surprised by much I've seen today. It's actually better than I thought it would be, considering what people told me about this school before I got here," said Northern principal Jones, who was a principal and administrator in Washington before arriving in Baltimore this summer.

"But there's a lot here that needs to change. I can see that. And beginning tomorrow, we'll get into some of that change."

Pleased with opening day

School officials, nonetheless, had a positive outlook on the way schools opened.

"I'm particularly pleased with Northern," schools chief Robert Booker said after visiting the school. "Dr. Jones is a no-nonsense principal. You watch her. You'll see this school managed the right way."

Booker and other school officials spent the day touring four schools with state superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick and Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke.

planning couldn't prevent a false start on the first day. Scheduling problems resulted in hundreds of boisterous teen-agers cavorting through the halls, and at one point, Principal Helena Nobles-Jones ordered everyone back to homeroom to begin again.

Those contrasting starts yesterday helped to highlight the new school board's gains in reforming early education and how much remains to be

Booker and school board Chairman J. Tyson Tildon began the school day by escorting children from home to school at Federal Hill Elementary.

From there, the entourage went to the newly named and reconstituted Uniformed Services Academy at Walbrook High School, McMechen Middle-High School, Northern High and Hamilton Middle — where the principal and teachers were excited to show off their newly renovated building.

Across the city, elementary teachers and principals excitedly cracked open the new books and materials they received over the summer. The board spent \$3.8 million last spring on a new elementary reading series and teachers began training courses for the phonics-based curriculum in June.

At Pimlico Elementary in Northwest Baltimore, first-grade teacher Nadine Allen said she had everything she wanted, including dozens of new books for her children. "I thought we would have to share, but we got everything," she said.

Smaller classes

Class sizes were also noticeably smaller at elementary schools, thanks to the board's efforts to hire more teachers. At Belmont Elementary, Principal Sheila

done to attack the problems at Baltimore's most troubled high schools.

The board has spent millions of dollars and most of the past 15 months reducing class sizes and outfitting elementary schools with new materials and a coherent reading curriculum. But there has been no large-scale strategy so far to tame the city's large, wildly disorganized high schools.

Kolman said her kindergarten and first two grades have 18 to 22 students each.

At Tench Tilghman near Patterson Park, Principal Elizabeth Turner eagerly showed off classrooms with 25 or fewer children. And even in the smallest classes, she has a teacher's aide or paid parent helper — thanks to money added to her budget in the past two years.

"We try to have two adults in every room," she said.

At Lemmel Middle School in Northwest Baltimore, Principal Jacqueline L. Frierson pronounced her school's first day a success because nothing out of the ordinary was happening. "And that's the way we want it," she said.

The same could hardly be said for Northern. Beginning with the arrival of students at 8:30 a.m., the climate at the school seemed to oscillate between controlled and utter chaos for much of the day. It was decidedly not the start that school officials had hoped for the school, which made national news last year when former principal Alice Morgan-Brown suspended 1,200 students for disobedience.

Principal Jones went out to greet students on their way in, but found herself corralling stragglers until well

after 9 a.m.

Inside the building, many of the students roamed the halls, chattered with friends and refused to go to class.

Wrong schedules

Some students complained that the schedules they received were the ones from last school year, that room numbers and teachers were not noted on their slips and that they were assigned to classes they hadn't asked for. Others had no schedules at all.

Jones spent much of the day clearing the halls — much the way the former principal did last year — and confronting students who refused to follow instructions.

Several times, she asked boys to remove their hats — only to find them back on several minutes later. She began confiscating the hats around 9:30. She ordered students to class but found them wandering the halls later in the day.

When the bells rang to signal the start of third period, all order seemed to disintegrate and the confused, loud students emptied into the halls. Apparently, none of the schedules had

the right third-period classes. Jones sent everyone back to homerooms to get things straightened out.

Jones had planned for the school's opening to be different. The tough-talking, down-to-earth principal arrived at the school in July, and has been preparing her staff for the school year since.

She met with janitors and groundskeepers, and let them know that if they could not keep the school clean she'd find someone who would. She told teachers and administrators that they are responsible for keeping the halls clear, that they are to keep children in class.

Jones thought she had solved the scheduling problems that marred last year's opening. And for students who didn't have schedules or weren't on the rolls, she had standby schedules available in the library.

"It has to do with management," Jones said shortly before students arrived yesterday morning. "You just manage it, have a plan and things work out."

But the plans fizzled when the students arrived — demonstrating how

difficult it will be to turn the city's high schools around.

Mayor was surprised

Schmoke seemed startled by the level of disorganization.

On his tour, several students asked the mayor for directions. He referred them to guidance counselors. When he left the school 45 minutes later, he said to Jones, "I'll be there to help."

Outside, the mayor was optimistic about the new principal, but seemed a bit unnerved by his experiences at the school. "We can't depend on one person to turn a giant around. The system has got to think about this physical structure, with a couple of thousand kids trying to change classes all at once.

"I don't know if a school like this is governable unless we break it down into smaller academies."

Jones said visitors should notice a difference at the school without delay.

"I understand this stuff," Jones said. "It's going to change. It will."

Staff writer Mike Bowler contributed to this article. ■

43. Baltimore Sun

September 1, 1998

Glendening wants to hire 1,110 teachers

860 would be assigned to reading, 250 to math; Goal: reduce class size; Plan similar to those of Sauerbrey, Clinton

By Thomas W. Waldron and
Mike Bowler Sun Staff

Outlining his education agenda if elected to a second term, Gov. Parris N. Glendening proposed yesterday hiring more than 1,100 reading and math teachers and adding or renovating thousands of classrooms in the next four years.

Most of the new teachers — 860 — would be assigned to teach reading in first and second grades, a level Glendening called crucial to a student's success in school.

His plan also calls for adding about 250 teachers in seventh-grade math classes — with the goal of increasing the number of students ready for higher-level courses such as algebra and geometry.

"The best way to ensure that our children are able to master the fundamentals of reading and math is to increase the individual attention they receive," Glendening said at a midmorning news conference at Guilford

Elementary/Middle School in North Baltimore.

The proposal would cost the state about \$43 million a year for the teachers once they are hired — a small increase in the \$2 billion the state now spends on education for kindergarten through 12th grade.

Glendening's proposal is similar to one advanced in July by his likely Republican challenger, Ellen R. Sauerbrey, who has called for increased state spending for reading teachers in the early grades.

The governor's plan echoes a pledge in President Clinton's State of the Union address this year to hire 100,000 new teachers to reduce primary school class sizes across the country from an average of 22 pupils to an average of 18.

The governor said his proposal was based on studies showing that students who cannot adequately read by the third grade have difficulty later in many subjects.

Similarly, seventh-grade math is considered an important transition between basic mathematics and advanced courses, Glendening said.

In addition, Glendening said, if elected, he would continue the state's aggressive spending on building and renovating schools. He promised to spend \$250 million in state funds on such projects in each of the next two years — money that would have to be partially matched by local governments.

The governor said the state, with a surplus of \$700 million, could afford the school construction spending.

With the approval of the General Assembly, Glendening has significantly increased the amount the state had been spending on school construction. This year, the state is spending \$225 million on school construction — the highest state outlay in a quarter-century.

"Our formula is simple: more classrooms plus additional teachers equals smaller class size," Glendening

said. "And smaller class size means a better education."

Funds contingent

The governor said the funds for new teachers would be available to local school systems that could demonstrate that they were hiring the teachers to reduce class size.

Lowering class size is the most expensive of all educational reforms. The average class size in the first three grades in the six Baltimore-area school districts is about 24 pupils. Reducing that average to about 18 would require an estimated 1,150 new teachers that would cost more than \$40 million alone in salaries.

But educational research shows that students in smaller classes have better test scores, participate more in school, behave better and retain these benefits over time, said Joan McRobbie, a researcher at WestEd, a federal education laboratory in San Francisco.

However, the more pupils in a class above 17, she said, the more limited the gains.

"Lowering class size helps."

She has vowed to promote the use of phonics in reading instruction and has discussed a possible overhaul of the state's 8-year-old school performance testing program, the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program, which has drawn national acclaim but has been criticized by some parents.

Sauerbrey's Republican rival, Howard County Executive Charles I. Ecker, has called for toughening standards for public

McRobbie said, "but then the question becomes what kind of policy to put in place" — whether to target the additional teachers where most needed.

California — midway through a \$2.5 billion, two-year effort to reduce class size — has what McRobbie called a "one-size-fits-all program that isn't helping enough where it's needed most, in the inner cities."

'Only a first step'

Karl K. Pence, president of Maryland State Teachers Association, a group that has endorsed Glendening, said he liked the governor's education initiative but said it was only a first step.

"There is no magic bullet," Pence said. "This doesn't solve all of the problems, but it makes it possible to start to solve the problems."

State education Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick also endorsed the governor's goal of reducing the number of students in certain key classes, but cautioned that it would be difficult to find 1,100 more qualified teachers in addition to the teachers needed to handle expected school students — and, like Sauerbrey, doing away with "social promotions" of students who are not doing satisfactory work. Ecker also has said he would push for smaller classes in early grades and better teacher training.

Mixed signals

Glendening seemed to send mixed signals yesterday.

Even as he was touting the need to bolster classroom instruction, his

increases in student enrollments in the next four years.

Local school systems across the state are contending with a shortage of qualified teachers. The state, along with the local school systems, must develop more incentives to attract students to teaching, she said.

"We've got to begin to address this issue of a teacher shortage," Grasmick said. "We're not going to do it with the same old mechanisms. The competition is steep for these talented young people."

Glendening is expected tomorrow to outline a series of higher education proposals, including one designed to attract more people into teaching.

A recent poll conducted for The Sun and other news organizations showed that education is the No. 1 issue for a substantial number of likely voters.

In late July, Sauerbrey proposed hiring 1,001 additional teachers by the year 2002, with most of them placed in elementary schools to teach reading.

Phonics promoted

campaign had assembled several dozen students on their first day back in school to serve as a backdrop for the governor's announcement. The students spent at least 45 minutes outside at mid-morning to watch the political event.

Peter S. Hamm, a Glendening campaign spokesman, said students, teachers and administrators at the school were happy to take part in the event by welcoming the governor. ■

44. Boston Globe

September 1, 1998

Schools seen as violating mandate

Immigrant students lose out, group says

By Beth Daley, Globe Staff

Charging Boston public schools with violating a court order to educate immigrant students who cannot read or write in any language, a legal advocacy group is gathering evidence to bring the case back before a judge this school year.

The case casts light on a frequently ignored segment of urban schools' population, but one of its most troubled and academically deficient.

Every year, about 350 students in grades 5 through 12 show up in Boston public-school classrooms with little or no schooling in their native language, according to school officials. The advocacy group, Multicultural Education,

Training and Advocacy Inc., says the number is closer to 700.

Some of the students, from rural areas in Africa, Central America, or the Caribbean, arrive in the United States unable to write the simplest sentence in their native language. For years, most have been thrust into Boston bilingual classes with other students their age, even though the newcomers lack basic skills. Eventually, critics charge, they wind up dropping out or graduating without the skills to get an entry-level job.

"Frankly, it's a real mess," said Jane E. Lopez, staff attorney for the Somerville office of the national advocacy group. "Every year they

promise to address our concerns and then they don't follow through. We need to know services will be in place for these students."

In a 1994 consent decree sparked by a lawsuit filed on behalf of the Boston Latino Parents Association and the Boston Master Parents Advisory Council, the school system agreed to start special two-year programs to help the students, including placing them in small classes with properly trained teachers, giving them tutors, providing them with work programs, and, for older students, helping them make the transition into a GED program.

School officials yesterday

acknowledged their efforts have been uneven in recent years, but expect to be in "substantial" compliance with the consent decree by the start of school Sept. 9.

Last spring, school officials appointed an evaluator to assess, school-by-school, how many older, non-English-speaking students are lagging behind in bilingual programs. More specially trained teachers for older illiterate students were hired for this school year, school officials said yesterday.

"Based on our assessment last spring, we've been working in a much more focused effort to make sure all of the staffing, training, and curriculum are in place," said school spokeswoman Tracey Lynch.

Still, Lopez says, the advocacy group's

lawyers have been visiting Boston schools for over two years and maintain that school officials still do not know how many illiterate immigrant students they have.

"We estimate almost twice the number of students than they do who need these services," Lopez said.

The group is taking depositions from school officials this fall to help prove their case.

Few officials dispute that it is difficult to educate students who arrive in Boston - and similar urban areas - every year from dozens of countries around the world, lagging as many as five or more grade levels behind their American peers.

While there was a large influx in the early 1980s, the number of incoming illiterate students has stayed stable in the

last decade - although the countries they arrive from vary. Most recently, illiterate students from Somalia have arrived in Boston schools, officials said.

Not only is it expensive and difficult to teach the students, but debate rages over whether to teach them in their native language or go directly to English, teachers say.

Also, some bilingual teachers question how long a teenager who does not even have a second-grade education should stay in school.

"Some of the students are nomads and move from area to area and have disrupted schooling," said Francisco Ruiz, bilingual head for English High School in Jamaica Plain. "It is very difficult to teach these kids. Nobody knows the answer." ■

45. Chicago Tribune

08/31/98; Edition: NORTHWEST SPORTS FINAL; NW: Section: METRO NORTHWEST; Page 3

EDUCATORS SHARE TEACHING SECRETS **WORKBOOK FIRM MEETS CLASSROOM NEEDS**

By Anika M. Scott
Tribune Staff Writer.

As teachers move away from hefty textbooks in the classroom, a group of northwest suburban teachers has banded together to write a workbook series that shows step by step how to teach practical skills to students.

Called Teaching Ink Inc., owned by Educational Aids Inc. of Schaumburg, the 3-year-old company has produced thousands of workbooks on more than 30 topics. Kindergartners through 8th-graders can learn art, test taking skills, ecology and how elections work.

Most of the more than 20 teachers involved in the project are retired and hail from Elgin, Libertyville and Palatine. The majority have worked in Palatine Elementary District 15, a recruitment ground culled by Teaching Ink editor Mary Lu Muffoletto, a former teacher and administrator at Central Road School in Rolling Meadows.

The company is the brainchild of Jack Cerman of Educational Aids, also a former teacher, who saw how teachers are increasingly required to create their own materials in the classroom.

After a decade running Educational Aids, Cerman discovered that teachers needed materials that are relevant to what's happening in the world, a tall order in a constantly changing environment.

"Education is a fickle industry. We have to have a crystal ball to see what is going to be hot next," he said.

What is hot in workbooks is back-to-basics tips on teaching the fundamentals of problem solving, language and basic math. With phonics making a comeback, any material for teachers on the subject is eaten up quickly, Cerman said.

"Two years ago, you couldn't sell a phonics book to save your life," he said.

During the summer Olympics in 1996, an Olympics-based workbook sold out. The presidential election the same year had teachers clamoring for the Teaching Ink workbook that explained to students what elections are all about. Teaching Ink sold more than 5,000 election books and had more printed up, Muffoletto said.

The average press run for each workbook is between 2,500 and 5,000, and each takes about three months from conception to printing.

Orders for the \$6.95 workbooks have come in from California, Canada, Europe, and even Saudi Arabia.

The Educational Aids catalog features a variety of classroom products, but has a special, two-page display for Teaching Ink. Released five times a year, the catalog is the main tool for long-distance buyers.

Local buyers can find the workbooks at the three Learning Post stores, located

in Buffalo Grove, Glenview and Bloomingdale.

Retired District 15 teacher Marion Rochelle said that in writing the Teaching Ink book "Child-Side Economics," the challenge was to make a heavy subject palatable.

"We wrote about a little fella named Adam, and his experiences with his allowance and budgeting, opening a lemonade stand and selling cookies," she said. "It helped to make it into a story line; it was sugar coating the pill."

Karla Dencker-Koenig, a 6th-grade teacher at Central Road, has written three books for Teaching Ink. She squeezed writing books on test taking skills into her summers off, while taking classes for an administrative certificate.

Like the other Teaching Ink writers, Dencker-Koenig received a small stipend for her work, and she gets royalties for any books that sell more than a few thousand copies.

But she said her real reward came after seeing the finished book.

"I was amazed that it all came together so quickly," she said. "It was neat to see it with illustrations, tables, graphs and maps and all of that."

ART PHOTOS 2; Caption: PHOTO: Karla Dencker-Koenig (above) wrote the workbook on test taking (top). Tribune photos by Terry Harris. ■

46. The Washington Times

08/31/98; Edition: 2; Section: C; METROPOLITAN TIMES; TOP OF THE NEWS; Page C3

Some teachers' desks still empty

Recruiters scramble to fill jobs

By Andrew Cain
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

With the first day of school looming, area school systems were struggling last week with the fourth R - recruitment.

Prince George's County Schools - which began the summer searching for more than 900 teachers - remained 66 short on Thursday.

Four Prince George's officials spend Most local school districts expect to fill nearly all of their vacancies by the time classes start.

But "in every jurisdiction, there's a little scrambling going on," said Lisa M. Farbstein, a spokeswoman for Arlington County's public schools, which list two dozen vacancies, mostly for part-time teachers. Virginia's public schools open Sept. 8, which gives recruiters a bit more time.

Montgomery County's school system, which employs nearly 8,500 teachers, expects to be fully staffed for the start of school today.

Fairfax County, which employs more than 11,000 teachers, has hired more than 1,000 teachers this year and expects to be ready Sept. 8, when an estimated 152,000 students will show up for classes.

"We're in excellent shape," said Kevin North, director of employment for Fairfax County Public Schools. "Our goal is to have virtually all of the full-time positions filled," by the opening of school.

Prince William County's schools have 20 teaching vacancies out of a work force of 3,500 teachers. Alexandria's school system, which employs more than 1,000 teachers, has fewer than 20 vacancies, a third of which cropped up in the past week.

The District, which employs 5,300 teachers, reported 60 vacancies as of Friday. The school system plans to tap a pool of permanent substitutes to make do

six months each year on the road in a 32-foot recreational vehicle. They log up to 12,000 miles each year in search of teachers.

Some county businesses offer discounts to help lure teachers, such as an apartment with the first month's rent free.

"We're not in a position economically where we can afford to offer the same bonuses" as surrounding localities, said when school starts tomorrow.

"I doubt that we will have classrooms that are uncovered," said D.C. School Superintendent Arlene Ackerman.

Filling all of the openings is daunting because the District's teachers do not sign contracts, which means "they can quit any time they want," Mrs. Ackerman said.

In Virginia, the booming economy - and its promise of full-time jobs - is making it difficult for school systems to find part-time workers. Prince William County's school system is short 125 bus drivers, cafeteria workers and custodians. Fairfax County is running advertisements in movie theaters seeking bus drivers.

The problem is that "we don't need them eight hours a day, we need them five hours a day," said Robert Ferree, the Prince William County school system's assistant superintendent for management.

Most Maryland school districts face increasing student enrollment - and a push to decrease class size by hiring more teachers - just as their older teachers are nearing retirement age.

More than a third of teachers in the state have more than 20 years of experience, according to the state education department. In Anne Arundel, the figure is nearly 40 percent.

From Arlington to Anne Arundel, local school systems insist they do not cut corners or skimp on background checks to fill teaching vacancies.

But chronic shortages of math,

Susan Hubbard, a spokeswoman for the school system.

To lure new teachers, Frederick County pays for as many as 36 college credits and offers a "signing bonus" of \$500.

Anne Arundel County, which had about 325 vacancies last spring, still needs 50 teachers and Baltimore needs 170 teachers.

science, foreign language and special education teachers lead many districts to try unusual recruiting methods, such as Web sites advertising openings and long-distance recruiting trips.

While many local school systems vie for teachers, some rural school systems turn applicants away.

As the coal mining has diminished, school enrollment in Tazewell County, in southwest Virginia, has dropped from more than 12,000 students in the early 1970s to 7,518 today.

"We've got dozens of highly qualified {teaching} applicants that we can't hire," said Bill Rasnick, assistant superintendent of schools in Tazewell County.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

****CHART

VACANT SLOTS

Some Washington-area public school systems are scrambling to fill teaching vacancies.

LOCALITY: TEACHING VACANCIES

Alexandria: 20

Anne Arundel: 50

Arlington: 24, mostly part-time

District of Columbia: 60

Prince William: 20

Prince George's: 66

Source: local school systems

ART Chart, VACANT SLOTS, By The Washington Times ■

47. The Washington Times

08/31/98; Edition: 2; Section: C; METROPOLITAN TIMES; TOP OF THE NEWS; Page C3

Schools prepare for spate of threats

By Gerald Mizejewski

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Anne Arundel County school

administrators and fire and police officials say they're ready to deal with bomb threats this school year, but they're mum on their strategy.

During last school year, classes were disrupted by 161 bomb threats phoned in during the 180 days of school.

The county's public schools open today.

To prevent crafty students from beating the system, officials wouldn't reveal what changes they have made and what tactics they will take if the threats resume.

A school spokeswoman and several

In one case, a 7-year-old Glen Burnie boy boasted to classmates that he had a bomb and planned to harm another student. A 10-year-old Lothian student spent a day in the courthouse lockup in a similar incident.

During the last week of classes in June, police with bomb-sniffing dogs patrolled school halls. During the school year, students were forced back to school during their vacations to make up lost time.

Officer Frye said anyone thinking of making a bomb threat this school year should consider the consequences.

Past offenders "realize this is a decision that has [affected] them for the rest of their lives. I would hope that other

school board members did not return phone calls. Police said "that's something we're not talking about."

"If we should, in fact, get any more, we'll be there just as we have before, treating them just as seriously," said Officer Carol Frye of the Anne Arundel County police.

"We have young people under house arrest, some are doing thousands of hours of community service and we have people who have written letters to newspapers saying that if they could turn the clock back they would."

Police arrested 55 students last year as young people would learn by that," she said.

"It's not the fear, it's just annoying," said Chrissy Biederman, 15, a sophomore at Southern High School in Lothian, a school that had more than 20 bomb threats last year.

"At first the kids liked it because you get out of class," she said. "But after awhile it was really annoying and everyone hated it."

Police even paid \$50 to \$100 to students who turned in the young culprits. The school board offered a \$1,000 reward for any information leading to a threat-maker's conviction.

The issue reached the General Assembly, where Sen. Edward

a direct result of bomb threats at Anne Arundel County schools, Maryland's fifth largest school system. Most of the time, no bombs or explosives were found, but students convicted of filing a false report, which is a felony, were expelled.

The threats came frequently late in the 1996-97 school year with calls or handwritten notes.

The fad didn't lose its appeal over the summer in 1997, and when classes resumed in the fall, it spread deep into elementary and middle schools, with a new scare almost every day.

Middlebrooks, Anne Arundel Republican, introduced legislation that would have charged students 16 or older who make bomb threats or take bombs to school as adults.

The measure ultimately failed.

However, the General Assembly passed a bill that could force anyone who calls in a bomb threat in Anne Arundel County to pay evacuation costs. Judges have been given the power to make that decision.

Officials estimate that it costs \$4,700 for each hour that a high school is evacuated. The cost is \$2,200 for middle schools and \$1,000 for elementary schools. ■

48. Roanoke Times & World News

08/31/98; Edition: METRO; Section: VIRGINIA; Page C3

SCHOOL SYSTEMS WEIGH APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS 'CHILDREN ARE FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS'

By JOEL TURNER
THE ROANOKE TIMES

If local boards don't objectively handle applications, their control may be taken away.

Two months after Virginia's charter school law took effect, the Roanoke School Board is set to begin accepting applications for the semi-independent, public schools that operate apart from the regular school system.

The board has scheduled a Sept. 8 public hearing on a resolution authorizing school officials to receive applications and adopting procedures for reviewing them.

School officials have not received any inquiries about charter schools yet, said Richard Kelley, assistant superintendent for operations.

But Jeff Artis, a former Roanoke teacher who has long been a supporter of charter schools, said a group of current and former teachers has discussed the idea of establishing a charter school for disadvantaged children.

"We're concerned that some children are falling through the cracks and are not being educated," Artis said. "Some are being passed through without being able to read and write."

He noted that Superintendent Wayne Harris has said that poverty is not an excuse for failure and teachers must hold all students to the same academic standards.

"If the superintendent and school board hold up their end of the bargain, we see no need to establish a charter school," Artis said. "But if they don't, we

might apply if we think our application will be treated fairly."

At its meeting in September, the Roanoke School Board will only decide whether to accept applications. Under state law, it isn't required to accept them.

The Virginia School Boards Association has recommended that local school boards adopt procedures for reviewing and acting on charter school applications.

If local boards don't objectively accept, review and act on applications, the General Assembly is likely to take control away from localities and give it to the state Board of Education, said Frank Barham, VSBA's executive director.

The school boards in Roanoke County and Salem have not decided whether to accept applications.

Deanna Gordon, Roanoke County's superintendent, said county school officials, at the School Board's request, are developing criteria that could be considered in evaluating applications. But the board hasn't determined whether to accept applications, she said.

Superintendent Wayne Tripp plans to make a recommendation to the Salem School Board on the issue in October. Two Salem board members and Michael Bryant, Salem's assistant superintendent, attended a VSBA conference on charter

Critics contend that Virginia's law is the weakest in the nation because local school boards have the final decision on applications with a limit of two charter schools per locality.

Charter school teachers in Virginia also will be employees of the local school systems.

Charter schools are alternative, public "schools of choice," which are not part of the regular system. School officials approve "charters" or agreements with groups of parents, teachers, administrators and community representatives to operate the schools.

schools earlier this summer.

The Salem board has opposed charter school legislation in the past, but Tripp wouldn't speculate on whether it would accept applications.

Under Roanoke's proposed procedures, the School Board would appoint a panel of school officials and community representatives to review applications for charter schools.

The panel would make a recommendation to the board within 90 days after the application is received. The

Charter schools are free of most regulations that apply to regular public schools. In return for this freedom, charter schools agree to be held accountable for specific academic goals. The goals must meet or exceed the state's Standards of Learning.

Charters can be revoked if the schools fail to meet the standards.

Laws vary from state to state on the agencies that have the power to grant charters. Local school boards can approve them in some states, including Virginia.

Virginia's law requires school boards

board would provide a period of 30 days for public comment.

Roanoke will require charter school applications to be filed at least 270 days prior to the school's opening.

After debating the issue for several years, the General Assembly approved legislation this year authorizing charter schools and giving local school boards complete control over the application process.

to give priority to applications for charter schools that are designed for "at-risk" students, or those who are in danger of academic failure because of cultural, emotional, physical or economic factors. At least one of the charter schools in each locality must serve at-risk students.

Charter schools are prohibited from charging tuition because they are public schools funded by the local school board on the same per-pupil basis as regular schools.

■

49. The New York Times

09/01/98Section: Metropolitan Desk; Section B; Page 5, Column 5

Applications Keep Pace For New Charter Schools

TRENTON — Despite past complaints that privately run charter schools siphon money from public schools but are not as accountable, 35 applications to establish charter schools in 1999 have been received from parent, teacher and civic groups, state officials said yesterday. The total is nearly as many as the 37 applications submitted in each of the program's first two years.

Thirteen of the publicly financed charter schools opened last year, and 18 more are to open this fall, said Peter Peretzman, a spokesman for the State Department of Education, which grants the school charters. In announcing the number of applications received this year, Gov. Christine Todd Whitman said in a statement yesterday that she was pleased with the total.

TD Districts must contribute 90 percent of what they spend per student to charter schools, a formula opposed by local school boards and teachers' unions. Frank Belluscio, a spokesman for the New Jersey School Boards Association, said his group backs a bill by Assemblyman Gerald J. Luongo, Republican of Turnersville, to force the state to pay charter school costs. ■

50. Associated Press

09-01 4:47a

SAT scores drop slightly from last year

By CARRIE ARMSTRONG
Associated Press Writer

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - South Carolina hugged the nation's bottom rung again this year on Scholastic Assessment Test scores, dropping two points from the 1997 average.

The state's overall average score on the college entrance exam dipped from 953 to 951, according to results released today. The national average increase a point to 1,017.

State Education Superintendent Barbara Nielsen said she shares South Carolinians' frustrations, which is why her agency has started several initiatives to help local school districts improve students' performance.

Among them are steps to make the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test available to more students. PSAT results also should be easier to understand and more widely used by school administrators so they can focus on areas

for improvement, Nielsen said.

"There isn't a secret formula for success," she said. "Our districts and schools know what it's going to take to improve. It just needs to be done."

Also starting this year, the Education Department will co-sponsor a statewide SAT competition, with each high school choosing a test coach to work with students. And the agency will hand out SAT calendars, with real test questions for each school day, to all middle and

high school students.

Last year lawmakers passed a bill that raised graduation requirements from 20 to 24 courses. The latest SAT results show students who took at least 20 academic courses did better on the SAT, averaging 1,045 in South Carolina and 1,096 nationally.

Twice as many South Carolina

districts had composite scores above the national average than last year: Lexington District 5 was tops at 1,051, followed by York 4, Lexington 1, Anderson 1, Florence 5 and York 3. The Jasper County school district was at the bottom with 741.

Hampton 2 made the biggest gain, up 152 points to 967, while Marion 4 had

the biggest loss, down 104 points to 818.

South Carolina's PSAT scores, which were also released today, increased at a higher rate than the national average.

The overall average for South Carolina juniors was up a half-point to 94. Nationally, the average rose three-tenths of a point to 97.7. ■

51. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page D01

Md. Students Stream Into Schools

State, Some Districts Are Seeing Largest Number of Children in Years

By Lisa Frazier and Ellen Nakashima
Washington Post Staff Writers

Students in Maryland's biggest districts returned to school yesterday in the largest numbers in decades, some entering gleaming, new state-of-the-art buildings, others going back to older schools and crowded classrooms.

Schools threw open their doors in Prince George's, Montgomery, Charles and Anne Arundel counties and seven other districts, as well as Loudoun County in Virginia. By Sept. 8, when the remaining Maryland counties begin the new school year, enrollment is expected to reach 838,500 — the state's highest in 20 years, officials said.

Growing school enrollment, fueled by baby boomers, has prompted Maryland school officials to embark on school construction programs. Montgomery has led the state in new school construction, opening three new high school campuses and expanding two elementary schools this year.

You could smell the newness yesterday at James Hubert "Eubie" Blake High School in Silver Spring, from the carpet to the freshly painted walls. No graffiti. No scratched lockers. Even the school newsletter — for now the Blake Blank — still hasn't been officially named.

"Everything squeaks," English teacher Jim Fliakas told a class of freshmen. "The floor squeaks. The desks squeak. . . . You're brand-new, too. It's like we have a brand-new sheet of paper to write on. You can write whatever you want on it!"

In Prince George's, where schools have been built at a much slower pace, excitement marked opening day at Francis Scott Key Elementary in Suitland, the county's first new school since 1995.

All morning, the lobby was crowded with parents who came to check out the

sprawling, one-story school and to ease their children's fears about being in a new place.

Children, looking fresh and crisp in their uniforms, lined up by grades against the walls and marched single file to their classes behind teachers who wore identification badges around their necks. Excited parents and grandparents snapped photos or videotaped the event.

"We have a chance to start from scratch," said Wanda Grant, the school's new principal. "My staff and I are very excited by that challenge."

Prince George's officials plan to construct 13 schools in the next six years under an agreement reached by the school system, county government and NAACP to phase out court-ordered busing and return students to neighborhood schools. A federal judge is expected to sign off on the settlement this week.

"I think this is a new day for Prince George's County," said School Superintendent Jerome Clark. "We're embarking on a new direction, and Francis Scott Key is the kickoff."

Both Prince George's and Montgomery counties saw their enrollments surge to 128,000 students, the highest ever for Montgomery.

Although most schools in Virginia are set to begin next week, summer vacation also ended yesterday for students in Loudoun County, the state's fastest-growing district. Officials estimated enrollment at more than 26,000 students for opening day, up 2,200 from last year.

Loudoun added two elementary schools this year to ease crowding in Ashburn and Leesburg, and the county plans to build 15 more schools in the next six years.

For Jennifer Leuch, a fifth-grader who has been at Emerick Elementary since

first grade, stepping into the school's new annex yesterday morning was a jaw-dropper. Sunlight streamed in from high windows, illuminating a full-size basketball court and green bleachers in the gymnasium. Also in the annex are a new computer laboratory, a library and eight additional classrooms.

"It is very nice because our other gym was used for three different rooms last year," she said. "It was our cafeteria, our room for assemblies, and it was the gym."

In Montgomery, students at Montgomery Blair in Silver Spring, got a new building, and Northwest High opened in Germantown.

Blake is one of three high schools in the county's northeast corner, each with a special focus. Students there were able for the first time to choose which of the three to attend. Blake specializes in the performing arts and humanities, while Paint Branch High focuses on science and the media and Springbrook High offers information technology and International Baccalaureate programs.

Brandi Cherry, 13, initially planned to attend Paint Branch or Springbrook but changed her mind when she considered the excitement of attending a newly built school. The ninth-grader, an aspiring actress who was home-schooled last year, also was lured by the school's performing arts "signature."

"When I heard they specialized in the arts, that was one of the other things that made me want to come here," Brandi said.

At Montgomery Blair, only freshmen — about 830 students — attended classes, an attempt to ease the transition. The other 1,830 students will arrive today.

"So far, the biggest glitch is parents not reading the traffic signs and coming in where they weren't supposed to," said Principal Phil Gainous, who at midday

was still awaiting the arrival of 300 desks.

Prince George's officials said the new Francis Scott Key embodies their hopes for a rebound from the academic and management troubles that last year drew

In Anne Arundel, where efforts have focused on renovating, expanding or replacing aging buildings, school officials expect an all-time high enrollment of 74,275 students.

Students at 43-year-old Ridgeway Elementary in Severn returned to class yesterday amid clouds of dust and roped-off sidewalks because of the site

the attention of the state.

Dubbed a "traditional classical academy," the school offers its elementary students classes in geography, civics and Latin. It offers a science lab and an art room with dedicated space for next door where a new school building, twice as large, is being constructed. They will move into the building in November.

The children at Ridgeway lost a patch of their play area to the construction, but Principal Duane Arbogast said the students don't seem to mind. "It's neat when the kids walk out and see all the bulldozers and tractors," he said. "It's like

a kiln. The students also wear uniforms — a blue and white plaid jumper for the girls and blue slacks, white shirt and matching tie for the boys. Yesterday, staff members dressed in navy and white to match the students.

Jurassic Park for them. Their mouths drop wide open."

In Charles, where housing growth is brisk, the student body was projected to have 400 more students than it did last year, but no new schools were added this year.

■

52. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page D01

Glendening Pledges 7,500 New Classrooms

By Donald P. Baker

Washington Post Staff Writer

Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening promised yesterday that if he is reelected in November, he will build 7,500 classrooms and hire 1,100 new teachers to reduce elementary class sizes so children will have a better chance to master reading and mathematics.

Speaking on the first day of classes at the new, \$52 million Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Glendening (D) declared his proposals "affordable, doable and fiscally responsible."

The governor's likely Republican opponent, former House of Delegates minority leader Ellen R. Sauerbrey, said they sounded familiar.

A month ago, Sauerbrey, speaking in Cumberland, said that as governor, she would direct 90 percent of all new education money to the classroom, cut administrative costs by 10 percent to reduce class size and hire 1,001 new teachers by 2002 at a cost of \$40 million.

Neither candidate's proposal represents a major acceleration in the growth of spending for new classrooms or teacher hires. It also remains unclear how either candidate would find additional, qualified teachers during an area-wide shortage.

The 4,000 classrooms that Glendening proposes building in the next two years would cost about \$500 million, or about \$25 million a year more than is currently budgeted for school construction. The remaining 3,500 classrooms would be

built in the last two years of his term, too far off to estimate their cost, the governor said.

Spending for school construction over the last decade grew from about \$50 million in 1988 to \$225 million this year, the governor said.

Glendening made his announcement with great fanfare — beneath a blue-and-white banner proclaiming "Education First" that also was displayed during a similar speech earlier in the day in Baltimore. He indicated that the extra spending could be financed out of existing revenue, if tax collections continue at the anticipated rate.

In Glendening's first term, about 6,000 new classrooms were authorized, or about 1,500 a year compared with 1,875 annually proposed for the second term. Glendening conceded the earlier rate was "mostly catch-up for a system that had fallen far behind."

In an acknowledgment that many students still attend school in portable classrooms, even in affluent Montgomery County, Glendening said the proposed new classrooms "will not be portable, or temporary, but quality school construction."

The state would pay the full cost of the 1,100 reading and math teachers — estimated at \$120 million over four years — if they are used exclusively to reduce class size and if they are certified in those specialties, Glendening said.

State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick, who last week proposed tax credits for new teachers as

one way to help fill out the teacher ranks, gave Glendening's plan for reducing class sizes a qualified thumbs-up.

"It's a great proposal," she said. "My only concern has to do with how are we going to ensure that we have fully certified teachers to do this? We really have to have a comprehensive plan for ensuring that we can provide the necessary number of teachers to realize the goal of this plan."

Glendening's plan anticipates that just 278 of the new teachers would be hired in the fiscal year that begins next July 1, at a cost of about \$11 million. By the fourth year, when all 1,100 would be on board, the cost would be about \$43 million, according to statistics supplied by Glendening.

Glendening declined to say what the minimum class size should be, saying it will vary with each jurisdiction.

Glendening boasted that since he took office nearly four years ago, test scores overall are up in every jurisdiction in the state by an average of 10 percent while teenage pregnancy is down.

But Sauerbrey's press secretary, Jim Dornan, looking at the same statistics, said Glendening's legacy includes test scores below the national average in science and math in the eighth grade and in reading in the fourth grade, "10,000 temporary classrooms in Prince George's County and two new stadiums" for multimillionaires.

Staff writer Ellen Nakashima contributed to this report. ■

53. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Health; Page Z14

Beating the Back-to-School Jitters

By Catherine O'Neill Grace
Special to The Washington Post

The first day of a new school year is just around the corner. How are you feeling? Excited? Nervous? Couldn't care less?

At this time of year, lots of kids feel anxious about returning to school, especially if they are making a transition to a new place. For example, some kids moving from fifth grade to sixth grade are facing a new school, new teachers, new routines — and lots of unfamiliar kids.

Little things can seem big when you're starting at a new school. Will you be able to find your locker? Will anyone save you a seat in the cafeteria? Will the teachers be nice, as they were in elementary school?

It was fun being one of the oldest kids in elementary school. Now you're going to be the youngest again. What if the older students bully you, or tease you, or ignore you?

Then there's the homework worry. Will there be a lot more? You've heard rumors around the neighborhood that kids at your local middle school get tons of assignments. What if you can't handle it all?

With all those changes around the corner, no wonder kids about to start at a new school sometimes feel nervous about it.

It might help to remind yourself that the transition to middle school is an exciting time. It means you're growing up, taking more responsibility for yourself and beginning to have more independence. The changes may take a couple of weeks to get used to. But once

you are accustomed to using a locker, changing classes and keeping track of your assignments, you'll feel better. And pretty soon those new kids whose names you can't remember will be your new friends.

Here are some practical things you can do to get ready:

Sign up for any orientation programs that are available. That way, when you get to school on your first day, you'll know your way around a bit.

Set up a good study space at home before you ever have your first homework assignment. Get your mom or dad to help you come up with a good system for keeping track of homework assignments, test dates and projects.

Get your school supplies purchased and put away before school starts. Many schools send home lists of what you will need. If not, you can buy the basics, such as notebooks, pencils and folders. Don't just leave them in a heap on your desk. Unpack everything and put it away. That way, when you get home with your first assignment, you won't waste time running around the house looking for your supplies.

Think about what club, sport or other extracurricular activity you'd like to get involved in. Plan to start right away. Research shows that kids who take part in school activities also tend to do well academically and learn to manage their time effectively.

Tips for Parents

Will you be driving your kids to school this year? Here are some safety reminders for drivers and car pools from the National Safe Kids campaign.

Always use safety belts.

Drop off children as close to school as possible so they don't have to cross the street.

Allow extra time in your schedule to avoid driving too fast when late.

For more information on getting your kids to and from school safely, whether they walk, bike, or take the bus, contact Safe Kids at 202-662-0600, or visit their Web site at www.safekids.org

For You to Do

Gathering school supplies, setting up your study space and buying new clothes are all part of the back-to-school routine. Putting a pocket dictionary and encyclopedia in your backpack can't hurt either. Try something like the "The Kingfisher Illustrated Pocket Dictionary," designed for ages 9 and up, which is compact and tough enough to carry around with you. This year, think about putting one special, personal item in your backpack too. You may only need it for the first few days. Having a little something in your pack can help you feel more confident, even if you never actually take it out and look at it! Here are a few ideas: a postcard from the place where you spent summer vacation; a picture of your pet; your favorite book; your baseball; a tiny stuffed animal; a baseball card; a notebook to write things down in; special colored pencils; a rock from your favorite beach or from your own back yard.

You can probably think of lots of other ideas. Remember: Even though you're new, you're still you.

■

54. Los Angeles Times

* 09/01/98; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-2

Primary Attention

New Campus Eases Overcrowding for District's Youngest Students

By DUKE HELFAND;
MICHAEL BAKER

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES. Duke Helfand is a Times staff writer; Michael Baker is a Times correspondent

Every kindergartner should be as "Nice and happy," a smiling Shinese said of her first day.

Shinese's new school—Van Nuys Primary Center A—is the first campus in the Los Angeles Unified School District

lucky as Shinese Jobity.

The little girl with dimples began school on Monday at a kindergarten campus of just six classrooms.

There were no crowded hallways or big kids smacking balls across the devoted exclusively to kindergartners.

Every detail of the campus is geared to 4- and 5-year-olds, from coloring books and Play-doh stations to tricycles and kid-level sinks in bathrooms—one for

playground.

Instead, Shinese found waiting in her classroom a little wooden mailbox with her name, along with two teachers and an aide, who greeted her warmly.

every classroom.

The mini-campus, and others like it for students in kindergarten through second grade, are part of a broad effort by the Los Angeles Unified School District

to serve its youngest students and ease overcrowding at elementary schools.

A second kindergarten school, 59th Street Primary Center in South Los Angeles, is scheduled to open next Tuesday.

Four other primary centers already are serving pupils in kindergarten through second grade, and the district plans another 20 mini-campuses over the next decade. Six of those are slated to open by next July.

The philosophy behind the schools is as simple as the primary colors splashed across their classrooms: Keep the youngest pupils off buses and close to home in tranquil settings that offer individual attention and protection from older students.

The Van Nuys primary center, for example, will accommodate 285 students this year, a fraction of the total enrollment at nearby Van Nuys Elementary, which used to house the kindergartners. The students at the primary center are divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The school has three tracks, with two attending at any one time.

"Not only do I get to know every child by their first name, I also get to know their families," said Van Nuys Principal Candida Fernandez-Ghoneim. "When you know the children personally, you are able to accommodate them more effectively."

Primary centers also are attractive to school planners because they are far less expensive than conventional elementary schools and can be built within months,

using portable classrooms.

The Van Nuys school cost \$3.7 million, compared with the \$12 million to \$15 million price tag for a traditional elementary school.

The primary center—which has yet to be officially named—actually opened in July in classrooms at Van Nuys High School. Administrators wanted to begin a full year-round schedule that would match that followed by Van Nuys Elementary, where the kindergartners will go next year for first grade.

Monday passed with excitement and chaos.

Even as students settled into classrooms to recite the alphabet and assemble puzzles, construction workers were fencing off what will be the playground and staff parking lot.

Wires dangled from the ceiling in the office, and although it was just after 9 a.m., a clock on the wall read 2:26. Another showed 2:06.

In the canopy over the lunch pavilion, a hole remained where a skylight will be placed. Boxes filled corners of the faculty center.

Even the coffee pot broke before it could be used.

But teachers and administrators beamed as they surveyed their new—if unfinished—home, on a former Department of Water and Power parking lot. Many of the 14 instructors said the new school and its classrooms—each slated to receive four computers and a television—created a sense of renewal.

"This is the first time in my career I can tell you how each child holds their

pencil and how they make their strokes," said Andrea Lindeen, a 24-year teaching veteran. "I feel like I'm starting my career over again. The whole environment is a teaching environment."

Teacher Babette Tatum was equally excited by the opportunity to work with children in an intimate setting. "Everything is geared for the little ones, who are a world apart to begin with," she said.

Parents, too, expressed delight as they walked their sons and daughters to the front gate and lingered a few minutes to chat about the opening of their neighborhood school.

"I'm so excited because it's a whole new place for them to learn in a better atmosphere," said Flora Muratalla, as she dropped off her daughter, Jacklyn. "They get to mix with other kids that are the same age and don't have to worry about the older ones."

*

Duke Helfand is a Times staff writer; Michael Baker is a Times correspondent. ART * PHOTO: Students file into teacher Edna Tapia's classroom on their first

day at Van Nuys Primary Center A, devoted to kindergartners.;

PHOTOGRAPHER: Photos by IRFAN KHAN / Los Angeles Times; PHOTO: Shinese

Jobity, 5, and her classmates will get individual attention on the * mini-campus, and won't have to deal with older students.■

55. Los Angeles Times

* 09/01/98; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-3

Program Puts Students on a Fast Track

Two graduates of Urban League class will be assigned to a pit crew for a race this weekend in Exposition Park.

By HECTOR BECERRA
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Before she enrolled in the Los Angeles Urban League's Automotive Training Center, Sonya Jones was languishing in the underbelly of the entertainment business—a dead-end job

On Monday, because of her academic excellence, Jones was one of two Urban League students chosen to be pit crew members at the new Ford L.A. Street Race in Exposition Park—a race that marks the first time the NASCAR stock car racing organization has come to Los

selling bogus services to actors.

"I'd wake up every morning, and I didn't want to go to work," she said. "I was in the business of telling lies."

Then Jones, 26, recalled her teenage love of fixing cars, like that 1964 Ford Falcon she tuned and painted to save Angeles.

About 500 students have graduated from the Automotive Training Center, a joint venture of Toyota Motor Sales USA and the Urban League, since it was founded in the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

money. That love led the poker-faced high school dropout into the Urban League program, which trains and places about 100 people annually in entry-level automotive repair jobs.

City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas commended the center at a news conference Monday for its 86% success rate in placing graduates in jobs.

One graduate who attended the news conference, Lanier Gray, is now a manager at the Krage Auto Parts store

on Vermont Avenue in South-Central Los Angeles. "The program helped lay the foundation for my self-esteem," he said. "I'm in management now, which was one of my goals when I came to the program, and I'm going to continue ahead."

The second program member chosen for the pit crew, 17-year-old Ryan Goff, beats the Automotive Training Center's director to work every morning. His love of cars took him straight to the center after he graduated from Cerritos High School.

Goff said he started working alongside his father doing repair work when he was 5.

"I'd clean up the rims, stuff like that," said Goff. His goal is to be certified as a master mechanic. "I'd like to be driver. Maybe set up a race team some day."

Ford L.A. Street Race events will begin Saturday and continue through

Monday. Ken Schrader, Chad Little and Mark Martin, stars of the Winston Cup racing series, are committed to participate in Sunday's NASCAR qualifying event, promoters say.

Jones and Goff are assigned to the pit crew of Willy T. Ribbs, who became the first African American to qualify for the Indianapolis 500 field in 1991.

"The kids here got here by a process of elimination. They're the cream of the crop," Ribbs said. "This sets a great foundation for them to own their own business, to become master technicians, maybe get into auto racing."

Another NASCAR driver, Mark Mitchell, told the 40 students currently enrolled in the Crenshaw district program that he would consider some of them for jobs at his Brent-Air Towing Service.

Mitchell brought his Chevrolet Monte Carlo race show car, which invited gawking and a flood of questions.

"Everything has to be spot-on in one of these cars or you'll slow down or run into a wall," Ribbs said. "And the wall wins every battle."

Jones said the fact that she is a woman in an overwhelmingly male vocation hasn't held her down. "I think I can make a better technician in many ways than men because I'm very detail-oriented."

The rest of the automotive repair students will be guests at the race.

"The doors are opening for these kids," said race founder William Burke. "We're just glad to be here when it opens a little bit more."

ART PHOTO: Automotive training program graduates Sonya Jones, left, and

Ryan Goff, right, with driver Willy Ribbs, whose pit crew they will join.; PHOTOGRAPHER: KEN LUBAS / Los Angeles Times■

56. The Washington Post

09/01/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page D05

D.C. Schools Are Set To Beat the Tardy Bell

By Jay Mathews

Washington Post Staff Writer

The D.C. schools open today with high hopes of not repeating the headlines that describe school openings of the recent past:

"Underestimating a Judge Kept School Doors Closed" (1994).

"Classes Start Late at Some Alternative Sites" (1996).

"How Delay Will Affect Programs" (1997).

Barring a last-minute catastrophe, schools will start on time and in their proper buildings, the result of a weary recognition on the part of teachers, administrators, parents and students that a late opening this year would risk the total collapse of one of the weakest public school systems in the country.

Most of the participants in the legal and political fights that delayed previous openings give credit to the new superintendent, Arlene Ackerman, for

Rice-Thurston said she did not want veteran principals who had taken the easy route of promoting ill-prepared students to think the superintendent has come over to their side. "I don't want to see the system fall back into its old bad habits," she said. "It is very important that students and parents alike understand that the system is holding them responsible."

There is also some concern that

getting schools ready and providing hope that this year's lessons will have a positive impact on the system's 77,000 students.

"We are on target," said Maudine R. Cooper, who heads the emergency trustees board that advises the D.C. financial control board on the city's schools.

"It gives me a sense of relief," said Wilma R. Harvey, president of the D.C. Board of Education.

"I am actually quite impressed," said Delabian Rice-Thurston, executive director of Parents United, the education advocacy group whose battle for safe schools led to court orders that delayed some previous openings.

Ackerman said she is pleased with the initial reviews, "but we are going to keep monitoring everything. It is a team effort."

Some problems remain. Ackerman replaced several principals but has yet to Ackerman's trimming of school janitorial staffs to save money will backfire, but there have been few complaints about dirty schools. "Based on the reports I have received, the buildings are clean," Harvey said.

William D. Blount, principal of C.W. Harris Elementary School in Southeast Washington, said his janitorial staff has been cut from five to four but has

find someone to administer Ballou Senior High School, a frequently troubled campus that most educators agree needs an unusually tough leader. She said that she has brought back two retired principals to run the school until a new principal is found and that she wants to revitalize the school with an International Baccalaureate program of high-level courses.

Some parents are bothered by Ackerman's decision to drop her threat not to promote at least 3,000 students who failed to reach minimum reading scores on the Stanford 9 Achievement Test. She instead left the decision to principals, who appear to be promoting all but a few students.

In an interview, Ackerman said that some of the 3,000 were close enough to the minimum to be promoted and that she had warned principals that she would not stand for promotions of children who need much more remedial work. "worked very hard to get the building ready, and we are looking good."

Ackerman's emphasis on student achievement had an impact at Harris, where 16 teachers exceeded the superintendent's target of a 15 percent increase in student scores. The 16 were dubbed "Superstar Teachers" at a Harris ceremony last week, and each received a \$200 award.

D.C. Council member Kathy Patterson (D-Ward 3) said she is pleased with the on-time opening, despite reports of some delays in processing paperwork of new teachers.

Rice-Thurston, like many other parents and educators, praised Ackerman for organizing a summer school program that drew more than 24,000 students and raised the possibility that many more children than usual will be ready to learn this fall. But she said she hopes the

superintendent will note that summer school students learned well in classes that had no more than 15 students per teacher.

"We would hope that the system, at least in those schools that need serious support," will continue to fund a 15 to 1 ratio, she said.

Ackerman said that if she can find the money, she would like to do just that. "We are working with very limited resources," she said, "but that

individualized attention worked very well during the summer."

ART ph.,JUANA ARIAS CAPTION: Arlene Ackerman says, "We are going to keep

monitoring everything." CAPTION: American University students Jessica Pius and Melissa Merwin help put away boxes at the new Oyster Elementary School building before the Northwest Washington school opens today.■

COMMENTARY

57. Philadelphia Inquirer

September 1, 1998

Perennial excitement, new fears as school opens

A parent's fall worries — violence, bills, standards — cannot dim the joy of a fresh second grader.

Acel Moore

It's that time of the year again: Children are returning to school.

For many, this time signals the end of summer. For others, it means that the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City is upon us. So are the beginning of autumn, the evening chill, the World Series and football. Halloween will soon follow; already, decorations have surfaced in some retail outlets.

For a school-age child, choosing the right kind of backpack or loose-leaf binder is a serious decision. Not to mention new clothes: shirts, footwear, sweaters, skirts, pants and dresses. Picking the right color and pattern for those things can lead to disagreements with parents, but with compromise, these conflicts can always come to an agreeable ending.

These signals of the new school year have been constant for generations.

But as we come to the verge of a new millennium, we are reminded that there are new challenges for children, teachers and parents.

Despite the fears, the complexity of today's technology, and the diversity of emotions involved, there are few things

For recent school years also signal a new era, one that holds a new world of changing technology with challenges that simply did not exist for our parents or grandparents.

For my parents, the primary concerns were buying clothes, schoolbooks and lunch boxes, and sending us off to school.

My mother was there every day when we came home from school, and when I was in primary school, we did not own a television.

Even when I got to high school, the majority of parents at my school did not have automobiles. Most students traveled by public transportation.

Today, preparing for the school year also means preparing for, selecting and budgeting for after-school programs. That might mean the changing of a work schedule for one of the parents.

There is not only the influence of television on children; there are also cable, home computers and the Internet.

Today's parents have to be concerned not only with whether their children more satisfying for a parent than watching the excitement on the face of a 7-year-old who is eager to return to

know the three R's, but whether they are computer-literate.

Buying new software or updating the home PC is as important as buying books and clothing.

If you are poor or a single parent, the challenges are even tougher.

Today, the concern for safety is also paramount for many parents. Not only whether their child will be safe to and from school — but whether he or she will come to harm in school.

Guns and violence are fears that parents of inner-city children have long faced. Last school year, a rash of shootings in Mississippi, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and Oregon brought those fears home to white, middle-class, suburban and rural communities as well.

For their part, schoolteachers today are concerned with more than just preparing their lesson plans. They, as well as administrators, are weighing such questions as whether to install metal detectors or institute random weapons checks.

school to begin second grade.■

58. Bergen Record

September 1, 1998

Just why are college tuition costs rising?

By DENIS HORGAN

THOSE "NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD" types you see Boris Karloffing around are not actually people who have been paying too much attention to the news. (Whatever happened to the "Dog Days of August"? The Good Old Days.) No, the zombies are mostly stunned people who have just written their college tuition checks.

You could think, out of a sense of solidarity, that when the kids finish up college you'd fling yourself down the cellar steps a few times as autumn approaches just to bring back the exquisite sensation of paying college tuition.

Consider:

For the price of a year at a private college you can buy a top of the line, spiffy Toyota Camry without having to haggle over the pinstriping. The car will last a decade, but with college, you get to do it again 12 short months later. Like those cute Beetles that are back on the streets? They're not cheap but you could get two of them for nine months at one of the more pricey schools.

You can go all the way around the world in high style, no hostels or steerage travel, for a single semester's college cost. You could spend a month on safari and have enough left over to buy a small elephant with what it costs to buy off the extortionists at good old Big Bucks U.

For what you pay for the young scholar's educational keep for a measly month, you could fly the entire family to Paris and back or buy a whole living room's worth of furniture. Nice furniture.

Send the brilliant young heir to the state school and you'll only be paying the equivalent of a family's food budget for half his university sentence.

A week of college time at one of the grander emporiums will cost what a pinstripe lawyer pays for a serious suit at Brooks Brothers or for a Waterford crystal setting for 10. A day of Boola Boola stands for what a snazzy meal costs at the very best restaurant, four stars, where they put out more than one fork; and while you can only eat so many meals, the meter ticks relentlessly on the college calendar. An hour of university lectures will set you back what you'd pay for an NFL game, if you could get even a cheap seat.

Turning it around, the average policeman or fireman could work from one end of the year to the next and barely take home enough to send a child to party away his or her time for a college year — a year with more vacation gaps in it than there is in a 5-year-old's smile. If the police officer has the audacity to eat or live under a roof during this time, there isn't enough left to feed the even hungrier college machine without loans. Maybe you can afford to pay \$60-an-hour for each class, but most folks can't.

While most of us wonder where all that money will ever come from, there are some others who wonder where it all goes. Provisions to the Higher Education Act poke around in the Congress which would compel the colleges and universities to explain in some detail why costs have risen like mercury in the Sahara, even while the rest of the

economy is almost under control.

Good luck.

While even the Defense Department — yes, even the Defense Department — has to strive for economies and explain a lot to cranky taxpayers, colleges and universities get away with the old sleight of hand wherein we are never able to find out under which shell the pea might be. Where everyone else has to tighten the belt, college costs rise at merely double everyone else's rate.

Why?

Because people will pay for it. All that malarkey they teach in those colleges about supply and demand does not seem to apply to those colleges. We have long been advised that the skinning up of the college-age population from the depleted Boomers would create a buyers' market favoring the student and his poor parents.

Right.

It is actually worse than before for the saps in the middle, those caught between the wealthy who don't care what it costs and the worthy poor who are helped along with aid unavailable to the rest. (In fact, there should be some consideration allowing the middle class to declare future poverty since the thump of tuition will wreck the savings of all but a Vanderbilt.)

Beyond a bit of theatrical cluck-clucking, the colleges don't care. They'll charge whatever they want and anyone troubled by the illogic can pay extra for an answer — which somehow never comes anyway. There's an education in that someplace. ■

59. USA Today

September 1, 1998

Uniforms put focus on learning

By Lorraine Dusky

I wore uniforms from the first through 12th grades at two Catholic schools in Dearborn, Mich.

Of course, by the time we were 12 or 13, we were making fun of the uniforms, as in, "Ugh, those pleated navy blue skirts are so gross." In high school, we wore straight skirts, paired with white blouses and navy cardigans. The boys likewise wore dark slacks, white shirts and ties.

The kids with whom I went to school were from quite different rungs on the socioeconomic ladder. They were the children of plumbers, carpenters and teachers (my group) and the children of

Ford Motor Co. executives and small businessmen (the group of many of my friends).

Some of them had swimming pools in their back yards and cashmere sweaters to wear to parties on Saturday night. But at school, wearing uniforms was a great leveler. During the school day at least, the uniforms made us equals. It's likely that most teachers didn't know which of us came from poor households and which didn't; we were all given the advantage of high expectations.

So the news that the New York City Board of Education has become part of a growing trend by mandating that students in city elementary schools wear uniforms

should be greeted with cheers from parents. But, instead, it has set off a debate, with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) threatening to sue. One reason: Poor parents can't afford the uniforms. Norman Siegel, the ACLU's New York director, argues parents ought to be able to send their kids to school wearing anything they wish.

Is this guy for real? Has Siegel tried to send a teen-ager to school in what he, Siegel, wishes? If so, his child must be from some planet other than Earth. Last time I checked, it was peer pressure that dictated what kids wear to school, not parents.

What does that mean? Unequivocally,

jeans. The grunge/baggy look has subsided in my part of the country, and kids generally are more presentable than they were a few years ago; but none of the kids look as if they have much in mind other than fooling around or just hanging out. Only the most preppy dress in what might be suitable, say, wool slacks or clean khakis and shirts and sweaters, or anything vaguely resembling age-appropriate clothing for "casual Fridays" at many companies.

But school is everyone's first job. We go to school to learn, not to play. School should not be just gym and gender studies, but readin', writin' and 'rithmetic. Putting students in attire which sends that message is a giant step forward in making classrooms more hospitable to those who want to learn.

It also works. School districts around the country which have uniform policies report that behavior changes along with the clothes. Long Beach, Calif., which in 1994 became the first large public school district to mandate uniforms, has found that in those grades requiring uniforms, K-8, attendance reached an all-time high last year in the nearly two decades records have been kept. Not counting excused absences for illness, attendance was more than 99%.

The drop in crime was just as dramatic: 76%. That includes fighting, sex offenses (down 93%), robbery/extortion, drugs and weapons or

The New York City Board of Education didn't go far enough. It's not just first through sixth grades where students need uniforms; rather they are needed most during the more traumatic, troubled years of junior high and high school. The board ought to reconsider and make it mandatory up until

other dangerous devices. (What is not down, regrettably, are assaults with deadly weapons. It will take more than uniforms to get the guns out of our children's hands.)

Improved academic achievement is harder to gauge because school districts have been making other changes along with the uniform policy; but with better behavior and attendance, a student is on her or his way. By passing the uniform code, New York joins six other large districts that have implemented a uniform policy: Birmingham, Ala.; Chicago; Dayton, Ohio; Oakland, Calif.; and San Antonio, as well as Long Beach. Others seem likely to follow.

Uniforms can't cure all the problems of today's public schools - crumbling buildings, not enough textbooks, too-large classes, knives and guns - but insisting that students dress appropriately for their jobs as students is a beginning. It sends them a message, however subtle, that school is different from vacation.

School is for learning. Uniforms increase that likelihood. They also discourage gang activity, eliminate social bias and reduce peer pressure to have expensive clothing, while building a sense of community and school pride. Given all that, parents ought to be scrambling to get uniforms in their children's schools. There is no evidence that uniforms reduce individuality in reasoning.

graduation from high school. Long Beach, by the way, has started a uniform policy in the ninth grade at one of its magnet schools this year.

And while I'm offering suggestions, school districts surely should let the girls choose between skirts and pants. For one, pants are warmer. And two, if the first

Despite any initial cost (estimated at about \$100 annually), uniforms are less expensive than individual dressing in the long run because they stay the same day in and day out. School districts and local businessmen usually offer help to those families who need it; in some districts, children donate their old uniforms to be passed on. Peer pressure among teen-agers to sport cool, new clothing is diminished because teen-agers don't have to show up in something different every morning. And as the parent of any teen-age girl will tell you, that minimizes morning madness.

Interestingly, those in the economic group that might have enough disposable income to buy some cool clothing for their children (\$30,000 to \$39,000), but not enough to supply the demand, are the people most in favor of uniforms, 38%, according to a poll reported in USA TODAY. Another poll, done by New York City's Daily News, found that 87% of African-Americans and 74% of Hispanics - groups more likely to have a lower economic status than whites - favor uniforms more than whites, who are evenly divided on the subject.

What these numbers suggest is poorer parents understand their children will be more "equal" if everybody dresses the same, just as I didn't have to feel deprived because I didn't have a closet full of the "right" clothing as one of my best friends did.

lady can appear on television in a stylish pantsuit, certainly pants are appropriate for girls when they choose.

Lorraine Dusky, a free-lance writer in New York, is a member of USA TODAY's board of contributors. ■

60. Orlando Sentinel

08/31/98; Edition: METRO; Section: EDITORIAL; Page A11

SCHOOL VIOLENCE DECLINING, BUT HYPE ISN'T

By Vincent Schiraldi
Special to The Washington Post

During the past school year, the public was riveted by the images of small-town schools taped off by police lines, paramedics rushing to wheel adolescent bodies away on gurneys and kids being carted off in handcuffs. As the national news media zoomed into Pearl, Miss.; West Paducah, Ky.; Jonesboro, Ark.; Edinboro, Pa.; and Springfield, Ore.,

news outlets began to describe these highly idiosyncratic cases as "an all-too-familiar story" or "another in a recent trend."

A kind of moral panic swept the country as parents and children suddenly feared for their safety. A principal in Bethesda, Md. - a community that had recently experienced a 26 percent decline in juvenile crime - warned "it could happen anyplace."

But it doesn't happen anyplace, and it rarely happens at all. The best data available from the Centers for Disease Control on the threat of school-associated violent deaths reveal that kids face less than one chance in a million of being killed at school. Young people report being assaulted in schools today at the same rate as in 1976. Research by the National School Safety Center shows that there were 27 percent fewer school

killings in the 1997-98 school year than in 1992-93. Indeed, twice as many people were killed by lightning in 1997 as were killed in all of America's schools.

This is not to say that our children face no threats to their safety in society - even in schools. As tragic as the 11 deaths in Jonesboro, Paducah, Pearl, Springfield and Edinboro were, 11 kids are killed every two days by their parents or caretakers.

But with all of the news-media coverage these school shootings have received, we have not witnessed the kind of reporting or analysis needed to give worried parents or concerned policymakers the context in which to judge the safety of our institutions of learning.

Instead, the news media's linking of these shootings as a "trend" has exacerbated people's fears about the safety of their children in schools. The result has been that misdirected public policy is being generated to safeguard the schools, even though the real threat lies elsewhere.

To remedy the purported "crisis" of classroom violence, politicians have proposed solutions ranging from putting additional police officers into schools to eliminating any minimum age at which children may be tried as adults. The Legislature in Texas has proposed to expand the death penalty to 11-year-olds in response to the Jonesboro shooting.

Despite a 30 percent decline in juvenile homicides since 1994, President Clinton recently proposed that police be allowed to stop children on the street during school hours without cause. Gov. James Gilmore of Virginia suggested ending after-school programs because of the violence, even though a wide spectrum of criminologists, police and educators say such programs constitute vital crime-reduction and community-enhancing strategies.

Concern among school administrators has reached such a fevered pitch that children are now being suspended from school for making make-believe threats to harm the Spice Girls or Barney the purple dinosaur. A computerized search

of the nation's newspapers turned up 216 such school expulsions just in the months of May and June this year, compared with 22 in May and June of 1997.

There are many real dangers facing America's children. Our kids are killed by guns at 12 times the rate for children in other industrialized nations. But 99 percent of kids' deaths are away from school, and the peak times for such killings are evenings, weekends and vacation periods.

The good news is that schools are some of the safest places in America, and America's teenagers are represented more by the weeping young faces depicted after the shootings than by the image of Luke Woodham being led out of the school in handcuffs.

The recently publicized school shootings, though, could provide a long-overdue call for action in America to occupy our children productively after school hours and keep them away from handguns. But only if our elected officials avoid panicking and look in the right place for solutions. ■

61. The Dallas Morning News

08/30/98Section: OPINIONS; Page 7A

Help parents get involved in education

By Russell Rian

The scene is a school cafeteria. Parents are cramped along lunch tables designed for elementary students, waiting to hear some news about their child's education. The school is holding a parent meeting.

But most parents have probably elected to stay home.

Why?

Some may still be at work. Some may not know about the meeting. Some don't care.

For many, however, it's simply because far too many of these meetings, whether held by the school or the Parent-Teacher Association, don't have much to offer.

They aren't quick, efficient, business-like meetings where, as parents, we find out what our kids are supposed to be learning this year. Indeed, there's not likely to be any information about academics at all.

Instead, they are lengthy, tedious meetings that are more likely to string out 15 minutes worth of information into an hour of discomfort.

Much of the information is likely to be a lecture about how students should behave. You quickly get the sense you're

being admonished for all the obnoxious silliness that educators have to put up with.

Worse, much of the information is superficial.

At an elementary school parent meeting this week, for example, the hour-long presentation included nothing about what the students would be taught in any of the courses - what topics will be covered in social studies, whether they'll be learning about long division or fractions in math classes, or what writing styles they're supposed to master.

Instead, the hour was filled with information that could and should be compiled in written handouts - items such as the teachers' backgrounds, what constitutes tardy or absences, where to drop off the kids at the school.

The only subjects that even broached academics skirted content.

We learned that the textbooks were the same ones used last year, nothing about what was in them. We learned that a new curriculum called TEKS will be starting this year, but were told it was essentially the same as before (something state education officials would probably argue). There was nothing about why

there's a new curriculum or what the changes were.

We did learn how our child can get an easy 100 grade by keeping their notebooks tidy. Nice, but should we really be stressing how the kids can get an easy grade rather than information, for example, about how we might assist our student by going over multiplication tables, using flash cards or workbooks that might complement the lessons being taught.

Further disheartening is that the students weren't supposed to attend these meetings, although none were prevented from attending. But it seems obvious that more parents, particularly those of elementary-age kids, might attend if they didn't have to worry about child care. It also seems that it would be beneficial to have the kids attend with parents so the kids see their parents participating.

Too many Parent-Teacher Association meetings suffer from the same malady. They are often inefficient and treat adults like children by holding the parents hostage prior to a school performances—something akin to no dessert until you eat your dinner.

The very fact that some subterfuge is

needed to get parents there suggests good communication is lacking. Rather than perfecting the subterfuge, time would be better spent finding quicker, easier ways to pass along information effectively.

Handouts are one way. Yes, many won't read them. But they aren't likely to be listening when someone drones on about the same topics anyway, so the loss isn't great. But it would allow time to get to the meat - what are the students studying and how can parents help.

Don't hold PTA meetings or executive board meetings during the day when

many parents are at work. Set a schedule at the start, stick to it and more parents might find the time to attend. Offer parents at the performance a written summary of what the PTA talked about that they can read while waiting for the performance to start, rather than dragging up each officer to give a report.

Make better use of the district's web pages. Much of the information currently on the site is outdated or refers to last year. There's almost nothing on the site about what is taught, nothing about the textbooks that will be used, nor any

recommended supplemental materials, added homework or workbook sheets that could be downloaded or printed from the web site.

A more academic approach to parent participation is needed by all sides.

We all attended school, but that experience doesn't transform parents into teachers. If parent meetings focused on providing that help, rather than serving as a forum for announcements about playground rules, we'd be better off. And so would our kids. ■

62. Newark Star-Ledger

08/30/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: PERSPECTIVE; Page 009

Whole-school reform encompasses proven strategies for kids' success

By Leo Klagholz

EDUCATED GUEST In a July 29 editorial on the **Department of Education's** implementation of the Supreme Court's recent Abbott decision. The Star-Ledger stated, "In May, the court gave the state, not the districts, the power when it said 'whole school reform'- whatever that means- shall be implemented."

The statement conveys the impression that whole-school reform is some sort of fuzzy philosophy. Nothing could be less true. Over the past year, we have described the concrete details of whole-school reform in many public forums. The record and decision of the Supreme Court contain similar descriptions of what whole-school reform details. We would like to reiterate that description here for the benefit of The Star-Ledger's readers.

In its May 1997 decision, the Supreme Court accepted the state's Core Curriculum Standards covering seven academic subjects as the definition of what students need to learn as the result of the "thorough and efficient education" that our state constitution promises them. A year later, in their recent decision, the justices strongly endorsed "whole-school reform" as an approach that can enable students in the 28 Abbott school districts to reach those goals.

It is important to understand how the court arrived at the decision. First, it directed the Department of Education to study all of the various approaches to improving the academic achievement of students from low-income families. Based on its extensive review of

programs and research across the nation, the department proposed "whole-school reform" as being far and away the most effective approach.

The Supreme Court appointed a Superior Court judge, aided by a nationally recognized expert, to hold hearings on the department's findings. Through these extensive hearings, the department's research was thoroughly scrutinized, the opinions of other experts were solicited, and urban school improvement efforts throughout the nation were reviewed. Opponents of the department's proposals were rightfully given every opportunity to challenge them with contradictory evidence.

Based on the hard evidence produced by this exhaustive process, the Supreme Court accepted the department's recommendations and ordered the implementation of whole-school reform in all elementary schools in the Abbott districts.

What indeed does that mean? What will a school look like after it has implemented this approach?

Essentially, whole-school reform combines into a single program all of the individual educational practices and strategies that have been shown over the years to be the most effective in enabling disadvantaged students to achieve. Therefore, the different whole-school reform packages developed by various experts have common basic elements. Yet they differ in their details and emphases. Therefore, the best way to describe whole-school reform is to use one package as an illustration.

The best documented whole-school

reform program, and the one the department prefers, is the "Success for All/Roots and Wings" (SFA/R&W) program developed by Johns Hopkins University. When an elementary school in one of New Jersey's Abbott districts adopts SFA/R&W, it will implement the following specific measures.

The school will be led by a strong, committed and effective principal. Because research has shown that such leadership is an important determinant of children's academic success, the Department of Education and the district central office must and will take whatever actions are needed to assure that it exists in the school.

Parents and teachers will be involved in key decisions concerning the school's program and budget. Specifically, a School Management Team, composed of parents, teachers and administrators, will be empowered to make key programs, staffing and spending decisions.

Both research and practical experience show that parents and teachers can productively be involved in making such decisions. And they must be involved in order for children to achieve academic success. The Education Law Center's comments, as reported in an August 9 column in The Star-Ledger, that urban parents and teachers constitute an "uninformed democracy" and are "not prepared for the complex curriculum and budget responsibilities" are elitist at best. Research and experience also prove these comments to be simply wrong.

The New Jersey Abbott school that adopts the SFA/R&W package will

provide its students with a safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning. Secure facilities with adequate security staff will be provided. A code of student conduct will be clearly defined, presented to teachers, parents and students, and consistently enforced.

All students will begin their education early. They will be provided half-day preschool at ages three and four, and full-day kindergarten at age five.

So teachers can concentrate on teaching, the school will have the services of a Family Support Team composed of a counselor, social worker and school nurse. This team will help promote parents' involvement in the school and identify children and families with health or social problems that inhibit learning. Before the program is implemented, the school staff will be trained in their roles and in the SFA/R&W methodology, and they will receive extensive training continuously thereafter. The school will have a trained facilitator, a staff member with the expertise to help teachers and other staff to implement their respective parts of the program.

The school will adopt a goal of implementing these various programs and strategies so effectively in the early grades that it can avoid or minimize the practice of later pulling students out of the educational program for special education or remediation. SFA/R&W calls this preventative approach "neverstreaming."

The school will also participate in an accountability program. It will set specific goals for student achievement of state standards, measure students' performance against those goals, and be rewarded based on the results.

Some additional observations need to be made about what else whole-school reform means in general terms. First, it means that in order for the state to implement these measures successfully, as it has been required to do by the Court, it must focus attention on individual schools, not solely on district central offices as has been its past practice. The task must be seen as one of rebuilding each individual school, one by one, from the ground up, with the participation of the principals, teachers, parents and students of the school.

Emphasis will be placed on laying the foundation for the development of reading and language skills.

There will be a concerted program to enable each student to read at grade level by the end of third grade. This will mainly involve regrouping the students in small classes across grades according to their current progress for a daily 90-minute reading period. Certified tutors will be available. Students in all grades

Second, whole-school reform means that in order to achieve full academic benefit, the elements described above must be implemented as interrelated parts of a comprehensive program. Those elements cannot be treated as a menu from which the school may choose some and not others. In order to maximize gains in student performance, the school has to implement all of the elements.

Third, whole-school reform must actually be reform. The essential components are not "extras" to be added onto whatever the school is already doing. Ultimately, they must replace existing practices that are ineffective.

Fourth, therefore, the financial task in implementing whole-school reform is no longer primarily one of figuring how to fund district central offices. The Abbott districts now have regular education spending parity with New Jersey's wealthiest districts, and they receive substantial additional amounts for special programs from federal and state sources. The primary task now is to combine all of those district resources and use them to create a budget for each individual school. That budget must be sufficient to support the elements of the school's whole-school reform program. It must also be used for that purpose and not for other purposes.

The concentration of all available resources to support a single strategy, called "zero-based budgeting" is part of what whole-school reform means. And, it is not just a matter of fiscal efficiency, as a July 29 Star-Ledger editorial suggested when it referred disparagingly to the state's "squeeze the dollar approach to education." Instead, it is educationally necessary that resources be allocated and reallocated at the school level to support a single reform strategy.

If a school can demonstrate the need for new resources, there are avenues by

will receive instruction in a challenging "Roots and Wings" curriculum aligned with the state's standards in seven academic subjects. Classes will be of an appropriate size. Teachers will use proven methods of developing students' subject knowledge, computer skills, and high-level thinking and problem-solving skills, as defined by the standards.

which they can request them. But, that consideration is secondary to the fact that the ability of whole-school reform to enhance student achievement will be diminished if existing resources continue to support disparate conflicting practices—in fact, that would not even be whole-school reform. That is why the Supreme Court stated in its decision that, "consistent with zero-based budgeting, the Commissioner may, before seeking new appropriations, first determine whether funds within an existing school budget are sufficient . . ."

At the conclusion of the hearings on the Department of Education's proposal, the court-appointed expert stated in his report that "the approach taken by the State, if fully and faithfully implemented, would represent the cutting edge of re-engineering school finance to the purposes of standards- and school-based reform . . ." The Superior Court judge who conducted the hearings stated, "This court strongly endorses the concept of whole-school reform with the presumption in favor . . . Success for All. In sum, this court agrees with the State's overall approach for educational and financial reform at the school level." (original emphasis) Finally, the Supreme Court concluded, ". . . the evidence in support of the success of whole-school reform encompassing Success for All is impressive. In summary, and consistent with this position, we determine and direct that the commissioner implement whole-school reform."

For the first time in more than a quarter century, there is governmental consensus on an approach that clearly has demonstrated great potential to provide the state's poorest schoolchildren with the kind of education they deserve. That approach deserves a chance to succeed and should not glibly be written off before it has even begun. ■

63. The Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot

08/31/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: OP-ED; Page A07

Choice of schools shouldn't come at expense of others

I find it sad that David Kirkpatrick ('As I See It,' Aug. 13) must question the motives of those who oppose forcing taxpayers to subsidize tuition costs of parents who voluntarily choose to send their children to private and church schools.

As much as I may disagree with Mr.

To correct one of the numerous inaccuracies in his article, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1925 did indeed determine that we have a constitutional right to send our children to sectarian schools. That right was established in

Kirkpatrick on the fundamental question of whether it is either appropriate or lawful to force taxpayers to pay for religious instruction in church schools, I do not question his sincerity or his motives.

Historically, when parents decide to support their church schools by sending *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*.

But, contrary to Mr. Kirkpatrick's implications, as recently as Aug. 11 of this year, a federal court stated: 'The law is clear, however, that they parents of children in sectarian schools} do not

their children for there religious education, that has been their choice, their conscience and their expense. Mr. Kirkpatrick would change all of that, and yet he finds it so difficult to understand that people might oppose his proposal on grounds of principle and conscience.

have the right to require taxpayers to subsidize that choice' (*Strut v. Commissioner*). Mark P. *Widoff* General counsel, Pennsylvania State Education Association Harrisburg ■

64. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

08/31/98; Edition: FIVE STAR LIFT; Section: EDITORIAL; Page B7

STUDENTS SHOULD STOP KILLING GRANNY

By MICHAEL ERICKSON

Every year thousands of students heedlessly kill their grandmothers on college campuses. These shameless murders are usually clumsy attempts by desperate students to buy time for late homework. Grandmatricide has reached genocidal proportions on some campuses, with some unsuspecting grandmothers dying several times in a semester.

Some desensitized professors merely laugh off such excuses now, sometimes to the horror of the odd student who really has lost a grandmother. A few diabolical professors have offered to accompany the terrified student to the funeral.

As students prepare for college this year, purchasing new clothes, the latest CDs and Leonardo DiCaprio posters, many may neglect to prepare for one of the most important aspects of their education - the scholastic excuse.

An acute creative excuse crisis exists on American college campuses. This could have lasting repercussions. Certainly, of all the skills one acquires in college, few are as useful in later careers and marriage as that plausible lie, the excuse.

The following examples from "The Artful Dodger's College Handbook" are offered in the hope that they will stimulate creative thinking:

You are called on in class and haven't done the assigned reading:

Agree with the person who spoke before you.

Ask a question about the question.

Skim the introduction and ask a petty but distracting question.

Say you read the wrong assignment, implying but not saying that it was the instructor's fault.

How to look good in class discussions with little or no preparation:

If you have little or nothing to say, always be the first to speak.

Make vague, generalized statements that are easily supported.

When challenged, state that you are (1) a "big picture" person, (2) misunderstood (3) a spokesperson for millions of people like yourself (4) only stating the obvious.

Always evaluate work based on whether you like it or don't like it. The standards for your personal opinions cannot be disputed.

If called upon to be more specific say, "That's just how I feel."

Always treat facts you are unfamiliar with as just matters of opinion.

In debate, never attack your opponent's strongest arguments. Instead, find some flaw in a minor point and exploit that to cast doubt on larger arguments.

Rhetorical appeals to emotions are to be deplored and employed whenever necessary.

When you can't win on your points, change the subject.

When you can't change the subject, attack the rules as being unfair.

Distort to your advantage what others have said while appearing to helpfully clarify and summarize their points.

Always express your opinions as fact. (Remember: an opinion will become accepted fact if expressed with confidence and persistence.)

An accepted fact is an opinion held by a majority of concerned people.

An accepted fact is superior to a "real" fact because a majority of people believe it.

What to do when you fail to do an assignment:

Say you were absent when the assignment was given.

Say the assignment was unclear.

Miss class the day the assignment is due.

Act as though you handed in the paper. (When the instructor hands back the papers, ask where yours is. Act shocked.)

Tell the instructor you will hand in the paper by the end of the day. Then when asked why you didn't hand in your paper, swear that you used a thumbtack to attach the paper to the instructor's door after hours. (Sticking a thumbtack and a torn scrap of paper on the instructor's door adds a nice touch of authenticity.)

Type a title page for the appropriate assignment and paper clip it to an old paper for another class. This should easily give you three to seven days before the instructor discovers the bogus paper. You then say you mixed up the paper with one for another class and, as soon as the other instructor gives you back the right paper, you will hand in the correct one.

Your backpack was stolen on a bus.

You were going to print out your paper when the computer center crashed.

Personal medical emergency. Fake broken bones and cancer invite sympathy and too much scrutiny. Best to stick with something off-putting like a sudden

spastic bowel flare up.

You were going to write up your notes last night, but your roommate (1) started a fire in the kitchen, (2) brought home a gang of bikers to party, (3) tried to commit suicide again.

Excuses too strange not to believe:

Your cat exploded.

Your dog was paralyzed by a falling tree branch.

The pharmacist gave you the wrong prescription and you've been in a coma

for two days.

Another spastic bowel flare up.

A good excuse can last a lifetime. And remember, you really have no excuse for killing off granny this year.■

65. The New York Times

09/01/98 Section: Editorial Desk; Section A; Page 24, Column 5

Old Ideas for CUNY

To the Editor:

Benno C. Schmidt Jr., Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani's appointee to lead a task force on the future of the City University of New York, has said that he will gauge the university's success on clear standards and measurable outcomes — the same themes that have dominated educational reform in public schools for the past decade (news article, Aug. 30). The

assumption is that education officials can motivate students solely through external goals and consequences. There is no sense of how education nurtures students' inner urges to learn — their excitement over new ideas, their desire to express beauty, emotion and visions of a better society.

Mr. Schmidt has already tried out his ideas in the private elementary and

secondary schools he established through the Edison Project, with limited success. He should question his assumptions before bringing them to CUNY.

WILLIAM CRAIN

New York, Aug. 30, 1998

The writer is a professor of psychology at City College, CUNY.■

EDITORIAL

66. New York Daily News

Section: Editorial; Page 26

NYPD SPELLS SCHOOL SAFETY

THE REPORTED AGREEMENT to give the Police Department control of school safety must move from "imminent" to "implemented."

The Board of Education, the mayor's office and the NYPD are said to be this close to ironing out a deal that would allow the police to train, deploy and oversee the 3,200-member school safety corps.

Just what this page has sought for the past three years. Unfortunately, we've heard this story before. Many times. It's well past time to stop talking and start doing.

The Board of Ed, which has steadfastly opposed a police takeover of school safety, must put the deal at the top of its agenda when it has its first meeting of the school year Sept. 16. The city's students must not spend another year in unsafe schools.

They're certainly not getting the protection they deserve now. In the last three years, more than 165 school safety officers have been arrested for everything from child molestation and abuse to drug dealing and loansharking.

The NYPD which has brought crime to its lowest level since the '60s and made

New York one of the safest cities in the country has the organization and know-how to forge a top-flight security force that can do in the schools what the cops have done for the city at large.

As Herman Badillo, the mayor's point man for the schools, put it: "Police aren't the enemy, crime in school is." Indeed, cops are in 130 of the city's 1,100 schools. And they're working just fine with principals, teachers and students.

Putting the NYPD in charge lets cops weed out those who never should have been security officers, retrain those who have the potential to serve and hire the best-qualified new officers. And it can transform a dead-end job to one with a genuine career path — a stepping-stone for advancement into the Police Department. That's good for all involved.

One of the last hurdles in solidifying an NYPD takeover of school safety is said to be determining how to divide responsibility between cops and principals. The division ought to be obvious: Principals should be concerned about education; cops, about safety. Where the two overlap, teamwork and cooperation provide the answer.

Turf battles must not stand in the way

of making schools truly safe. Nothing less than 1.1 million young lives are at stake.

Fixing an aging metropolis

With bricks tumbling from school buildings, bridges crumbling and water-main breaks turning potholes into lakes, it won't surprise anyone to learn that New York is falling apart.

Last week, however, city Controller Alan Hevesi issued a 940-page tome detailing just how bad things are. Schools, subways, firehouses, bridges and roads, sewers . . . the litany is endless. Hevesi puts the cost of necessary capital fixes at a whopping \$92 billion over the next 10 years \$40 billion more than the city has planned to spend.

Mayor Giuliani has called the report a "wish list." And it is. Even Hevesi acknowledges, "The point is not that the city can or should double its capital spending. That simply is not possible." Instead, he provides a set of smart guidelines for less costly ways to finance capital improvements. That is the most valuable aspect of his report.

The city funds capital programs by issuing debt. But its ability to finance new debt is stretched to the constitutional

limit, and debt service is eating up the budget.

Hevesi suggests an interesting alternative: an annual \$200 million

The controller also recommends that the city establish an infrastructure improvement fund with one-shot revenues like the sale of the New York Coliseum or other assets. Additional suggestions call for reforming the Wicks Law, which drives up the cost of construction projects by requiring multiple contractors, and expanding the

pay-as-you-go program. That would cut debt by \$1.8 billion by the year 2007 and add \$2 billion for infrastructure improvements. It also would cut interest state's revolving loan fund.

The city especially its transit system has come a long way since the deferred maintenance of the '70s fiscal crisis ushered in urban decay. But there is still a long, long way to go.

By spending wisely, as Hevesi suggests, city officials can save New York from crumbling in on itself.

costs. If the city continues to borrow, debt service will gobble 20% of tax revenues by 2001.

Looks count

From the wires: As a media frenzy greets the first anniversary of Princess Diana's death, experts on celebrity are saying that had she been dowdy and dumpy, the press would not have pursued her alive or beyond the grave.

So what else is new?■

67. Syracuse Post-Standard

08/31/98; Edition: Metro; Section: Editorial; Page A8

LE MOYNE SCORES

ITS COMBINATION OF RIGOROUS ACADEMICS AND MODEST TUITION EARNS IT A TOP RATING.

Combining higher education and solid value is a noble pursuit. Le Moyne College has once again been recognized for providing a reasonable price tag for its students. U.S. News and World Report has named Le Moyne as the best value among the 429 regional liberal arts colleges in the Northeast.

Le Moyne has become a regular in the magazine's annual recognition of good educational deals. The school finished in the top five in the Northeast each year since 1994.

"It's a great message to the constituents we serve," said Dennis DePerro, Le Moyne's dean of enrollment management.

It's also a strong message to other colleges. Parents who are struggling to pay tuition bills appreciate a college that delivers a demanding education without a mind-boggling bill. In recent years, college costs have multiplied, making the path to a college degree more costly and, thus, more unlikely for many students.

Le Moyne's ability to use discipline in keeping down costs is a refreshing, encouraging accomplishment.

How about school colors?

Do prospective college students and their parents pay attention to the ranking of colleges by newsmagazines? A 1996-97 poll of 400 high school seniors and their parents suggests: Not much.

Here are the sources of information they used to select colleges, based on a scale of 1 to 100.

Catalogues: 66 (students); 61 (parents)
 Another parent: 66; 44
 Admission staff: 63; 62
 Colleges' viewbooks: 60; 45
 Students on campus: 58; 47
 Guidebooks: 47; 49
 Fellow students: 47; 26
 Teachers, counselors: 46; 41
 Alumni: 34; 36
 Newsmagazine ratings: 18; 32
 Videos: 12; 8
 CD-ROMS: 4; 3
 Internet: 2; 1
 ■

68. York (Pa.) Daily Record

08/31/98Section: OPINION; Page A; 04

Back to school with phonics

Were you able to read the previous sentence? Of course not. It was pure garble. You hadn't seen the "words" before, and you weren't able to sound them out.

Well, that's how people who don't understand phonics see words they haven't viewed before. The "whole language" approach, when used to teach reading without phonics, may be the most damaging thing ever to have happened to American education. It is nothing less than criminal when alleged educators rob children of a solid phonics education.

The Baltimore Sun reported last week Drivers' education: Pennsylvania

that Baltimore County's beginning readers' skills have greatly improved. Officials say Maryland's renewed emphasis on phonics brought about the improvement.

Sound this out: Ph(f)-on-i-c(k)-s r-u(oo)l-s(z).

The 'fourth R' may be 'rest': Teens who have trouble getting up in time for school aren't necessarily slackers, scientists say. Many teen-age body clocks are set to sleep in. The problem is nothing to yawn at. Researchers attribute sleep deprivation to everything from poor grades and mood swings to actual violence.

would legally require parents to help

A Minnesota study found improved grades and fewer discipline problems at high schools delaying high school until 8:30 a.m. But York County school leaders don't plan to reset their schedules in sync with teen-age biological rhythms. Sleep deprivation is not that big a problem, they told Daily Record education writer Julie Nash.

Since school isn't going to start later, the only way to grab those extra ZZZZs is to go to bed earlier. Exercise helps, too. It beats sleeping in study hall. Or math.

their teen-age children learn to drive, if

state Transportation Secretary Bradley Mallory has his way. Mr. Mallory would legislate that parents certify they have spent a certain number of hours behind the wheel with their child during the 30-day learner's permit period.

Parents are surely a piece in the puzzle that saw 14 percent of all 16-year-old drivers in Pennsylvania involved in reportable accidents last year. But most are nervous about their new drivers and

insist on behind-the-wheel time before turning their valuable vehicles over to their invaluable children.

A large problem in training teen-age drivers is the difficulty of securing space in a school drivers' education class. Most schools have waiting lists, and some districts are trimming their programs because of budget constraints. Mr. Mallory should have a heart-to-heart with the secretary of education before he

proposes legislating proper parenting.

There's clearly a vital, public-safety interest in having teen-age drivers well trained. It's also a fact that many parents are ill-equipped to provide that training. Witness the number of bad drivers who are older than 19. Schools that aren't taking driver's education seriously should start doing so, and the state should back it up. Legislation to force good parenting won't work. ■

69. Chicago Sun-Times

08/30/98; Edition: 5XS; Section: EDITORIAL; Page 31

Student service

Although young people certainly should be encouraged to serve their communities, volunteering for community organizations as a requirement for graduation from Chicago Public Schools raises some concerns.

The proposed "service learning" program would require students, beginning in their sophomore year, to complete 40 hours of service learning to earn a diploma. Service learning is part of a values and character curriculum, and officials argue that 40 hours spread over three years would not be a burden on students who may already be involved in extracurricular activities.

But students will have to make a much

greater time commitment to participate in a service learning project. In fact, the board policy states that students "are strongly encouraged to participate in semester-long activities and to complete the 40-hour requirement in one semester."

And many of the agencies that have agreed to participate in the program require a commitment of between six months and one year.

Although school officials make a strong case that requiring community service would put Chicago students on par with those in private and parochial schools, the fact is such schools are not struggling to deliver the basics to their

students. For all the impressive progress that has brought much-deserved praise for Paul Vallas and Gery Chico, the Chicago Public Schools still are challenged to have students perform at national norms on standardized tests. We worry that in heaping more and more on their plate, schools may be biting off more than they can chew.

Community service is important for college admissions; public school students should be urged to give of their time. But we would rather that Chicago schools themselves concentrate on teaching the nuts-and-bolts subjects that will get students into colleges or the work force. ■

70. Richmond Times-Dispatch

08/30/98; Edition: City; Section: Editorial; Page F-6

NOT ALL STUDENTS DO EQUALLY WELL

By Clarence E. Cowles

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

Regarding the August 24 editorial, "Passing the Test": What will be the passing mark? Some years ago I took the final exam in geography at the University of Virginia. It consisted of the usual essay questions and a world outline map on which we had to pinpoint remote islands, nations, and waters.

The passing mark was 50, because experience showed that a higher

requirement would produce a multitude of failures.

The passing mark for the Standards of Learning faces a similar dilemma. High school tests in math, science, history, and English divide students into groups. Group one has students who are strong in math and science but weak in history and English. Group two has students strong in history and English but weak in math and science. Group three has students who are strong in shop and physical

education but weak in academic subjects.

There are some high schools that have mostly academic students, while other schools have mostly non-academic students. State accountability demands that if less than 70 percent of students pass, that school loses accreditation.

Parents and students, prepare for a shock. Many schools will fail in spite of the fact that teachers and staffs are doing their dead-level best to educate the children of Virginia. ■

71. Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot

08/30/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: EDITORIAL; Page B08

Increasing black college enrollment is a basic educational challenge

Patriot News

Increasing the number of African-American students attending and

completing college remains an ongoing and complex challenge for Pennsylvania.

The state was recently cited in a study by the Southern Education Foundation, a charitable organization, for its low percentage of black high-school graduates entering college and high drop-out rate among those who do. And for failing to show progress in this area over the past 20 years.

This is not for any lack of trying. Pennsylvania's public universities have not been idle in trying to bring greater numbers of black students to their campuses. Both Penn State and the State System of Higher Education continue to pursue innovative efforts to diversify their student bodies.

But both Penn State and the State System operate from a fundamental handicap: By and large — their campuses being primarily in rural parts of the state — they are not located where African-Americans live. That offers another compelling reason for establishing a publicly sponsored, four-year residential university campus in Harrisburg.

The broader problem, however, requires not only that there be institutions attractive to African-American students, but that the state do a better job of preparing those students to meet the rigorous challenges of higher education. Under-representation of blacks in higher education has more to do with the failure of elementary and high schools to provide that preparation than any particular failure on the part of colleges and universities.

A third factor raised by the foundation report is affordability, though it isn't clear to what extent that is a valid concern. Both public and private higher-education officials repeatedly say that any qualified student can afford to attend college, because loans and grants are available in greater or lesser degree according to a family's ability to pay. Poorer students receive more aid.

However, families who have had no experience with college financial aid may either be unaware of it or find the process daunting.

That may be reflected in the relatively high percentage of blacks who attend

community colleges, though that is hardly a negative. Community colleges offer a quality education close to home at an affordable cost. They may, in fact, represent the best approach to beginning a college education for anyone, black or white, who may not want, or may not be ready for, a full-bore immersion in the campus scene.

Pennsylvania universities have been working on this problem long enough to recognize it does not lend itself to quick and easy solutions. Increasingly, they are looking to work with school districts to encourage children to begin thinking about and planning for college in sixth grade and earlier.

A multi-layered challenge, as this is, requires a multi-pronged response. Pennsylvania is doing some of those things, but it still needs to do more of them better.

The most fundamental task is to ensure that students being graduated from Pennsylvania high schools possess the educational skills needed to succeed in life, whether or not that includes going to college. ■

72. Omaha World-Herald

08/31/98; Edition: Sunrise; Section: Editorial; Page 6

Colleges vs. Alcohol: The Battles Go On

The University of Iowa is a small step closer to a more responsible approach to alcohol. Leaders in the fraternity system said they were voluntarily restricting the possession of alcohol in fraternity houses as of Aug. 1, a year ahead of a university-imposed ban.

The move doesn't cover all the potential problems associated with alcohol. Members aren't barred from using alcohol off-campus. Moreover, members who can legally drink are exempt from the no-alcohol policy if they don't share a room or a drink with

underage fraternity brothers. Nevertheless, the cause of responsible use of alcohol should be advanced.

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where a freshman student died last year following a night of binge drinking, the university said it plans to end the practice of allowing freshmen to live in fraternity houses. Beginning in 2001, they will have to live in dormitories.

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Chancellor James Moeser has made a high priority of

dealing with alcohol abuse. "The toll in unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual assaults and other forms of violence is very high among these students," he said, referring to binge-drinking students. A five-year, \$70,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will help the school attack high-risk drinking.

Alcohol abuse is far too common at colleges and universities everywhere. Some responsible institutions are looking for solutions. Others should. ■

73. Minneapolis Star Tribune

September 1, 1998

Education Minnesota — Teacher unions smart to merge

Today, after nearly a decade of planning, Minnesota's two teacher unions officially become one. It was a wise move. The new organization — Education Minnesota — brings together 65,000 state educators under a common banner.

The consolidation is best for teachers, students and families — and for education and unionism in general.

Under the old structure, the former Minnesota Federation of Teachers and Minnesota Education Association

duplicated services in their annual conferences, professional development seminars and member services. In the past, the two unions also bickered, lobbied separately and competed with each other for members.

In fact, those problems prompted several Minnesota local teacher groups to join forces even before the state organizations did so. In 1992, groups affiliated with the two national organizations formed the Dakota County United Educators, which includes teachers from Rosemount, Apple Valley and Eagan. Additionally, 13 Minnesota education locals have fully merged.

With public education under more scrutiny than ever, the system's front-line professionals need to devote their energy to improving teaching, learning and achievement, and assuring that all students have access to quality education.

The consolidation will help. Another advantage of merging the two unions is that it may help pave the way for regional collective bargaining, an approach that could in turn reduce pay disparities among similar school districts.

Minnesota teachers were right to move ahead with their own merger, even though the National Education Association rejected a proposal this summer to merge the two national organizations. Fortunately, that rejection didn't kill the national merger movement. Members of the American Federation of Teachers approved principles of unity during the AFT summer convention. And

NEA leadership is polling its members to determine how to revise a merger resolution. Preliminary surveys indicated that most members were comfortable with the concept of a single teacher union, but objected to some of the merger details.

As the first state to officially combine its teacher unions, Minnesota educators have once again shown themselves to be pioneers in innovation and initiative. Education Minnesota has set the standard and laid the groundwork; now other locals, and eventually the national organizations, should follow its fine example. ■

74. Sacramento Bee

September 1, 1998

Tough calls for teachers trashed on the Internet

Censorship of student work by school officials is nothing new, but traditionally it has been limited to school-sponsored newspapers, films or speech conducted on campus. Now the Internet offers a Web site for articles censored from school papers www.boltreporter.com, along with a new arena for adolescent expression — whether astute and creative or merely obnoxious. In the process, some troubling questions are being raised about students' free-speech rights.

When high school junior Brandon Beussink used his personal Web site to profanely insult his teachers and to criticize the school's own Web page, for example, officials at Woodland High School in Marble Hill, Mo., were not amused. According to the New York

The U.S. Supreme Court has yet to rule on school censorship on the Web, but in a case involving school newspapers, it has ruled that what students publish outside school is covered by the First Amendment's

Times, even though the "open disrespect" and vulgar language Beussink used was in cyberspace, not on campus, and even though he removed the site as soon as school officials complained, the teen was suspended for 10 days and failed for the entire semester. The ACLU plans to file a First Amendment lawsuit.

In a similar case earlier this year, Sean O'Brien, a 17-year-old student at Westlake High School near Cleveland, won a \$30,000 out-of-court settlement and an apology from school officials. The teen, who plays baritone horn in the school band, was suspended for 10 days and threatened with expulsion after he posted on a home-based Web site a description of his band teacher as "an overweight middle-age man who doesn't like to get haircuts." The teacher's free-speech protections. When it comes to libel, defamation or threats, however, students should also be subject to civil or criminal law.

Parents should view such cases as reminders of their responsibility to

telephone number and home address were printed on the page. O'Brien and his parents sued the school district over the suspension, claiming violation of his free speech rights and seeking \$550,000 in damages.

It is understandable that teachers maligned by students over the Internet might want to extend their campus authority to discipline such acts. In an era when classroom discipline has eroded beyond incivility in many schools, it must be particularly galling for teachers and school officials to put up with personal insults from students mouthing off on the Web. When a home-created Web site that takes profane shots at school officials is viewed at school on school computers, it seems a fair target for discipline.

monitor their children's Web postings. Schools, meanwhile, ought to teach about libel and defamatory speech — serious wrongs that can lead perpetrators to worse trouble in court than might be found in the principal's office. ■

Daily Education News



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[Tape Restoration Project Hex-Dump Conversion]

[Tape Restoration Project Hex-Dump Conversion]

NATIONAL

1. Associated Press

09-02 5:44a

SAT scores point to possible grade inflation at high school

By DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - More high schoolers are getting top grades but these students at the top of their class aren't doing as well on the SAT college-entrance exam as A pupils in the past.

That has educators wondering if an A today still stands for academic achievement.

Since 1988, the percentage of high school students with A-plus, A and A-minus grade point averages has risen to 38 percent from 28 percent. At the same time, the SAT scores of that same group of students fell an average of 12 points on the verbal section of the test and 3 points on math.

"We don't know why grades are rising," says Donald Stewart, president of the nonprofit College Board that administers the SAT. "The way grading is taking place is somewhat suspect. I think there is a penchant to grade students less rigorously than in the past."

Teachers sometimes are pressed by parents and administrators to give good grades, but the teachers union has no evidence that this is happening on a grand scale, said Robert Chase, president of the National Education Association.

"No one wants to see grade inflation," Chase says. "It's a red flag, but I'm not ready to say that's what's occurring."

Top achievers aside, the average math score for high school students who took the SAT improved slightly this year. But the students didn't do any better than last year on the verbal section, which tests reading, sentence completion and words, the College Board said.

Students taking the test had an average math score of 512, up a point from last year and the highest in 27 years. The average verbal score was 505 - exactly the same as last year and just 6 points above record-low verbal scores in 1991 and 1994.

In Washington state, the average verbal score was 524 and the average math score was 526. Fifty-three percent of the high school graduates in the state took the test.

In Seattle, the state's largest school district, the average verbal score was 530, up from 503 four years ago. The average math score also reached 530, up from 512 four years ago.

According to a survey of the 1.2 million college-bound students who took the test, grades have risen in all high school subject areas during the past 10 years.

Critics complain that students themselves supply their grade-point average to the College Board on SAT registration forms. The board says it has sampled grade information and is confident students are not lying about their grades.

A recent UCLA study found similar evidence of grade inflation: More than 30 percent of 30,000 college freshmen studied in 1996 reported high school grade point averages of A-minus or above, compared with 22 percent a decade earlier.

Patricia Riordan, dean of admissions at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., says she thinks grade inflation is not as rampant as some people believe. "We're definitely seeing more students entering with Advanced Placement

courses, but we don't see any evidence that there is any change in grading. The grades look pretty fair," she says.

Fearing grade inflation and social promotion - the practice of moving students into the next grade even if they've failed to master academic work - some states have started giving students proficiency tests.

Christopher Cross, president of the Council for Basic Education, a Washington group that advocates rigorous liberal arts education, says discrepancies between high school grades and national test scores also demonstrate a need for academic content standards.

"Standards level the playing field," Cross says.

Paul Cohen, a spokesman for Princeton Review, another New York test coaching company, claims the College Board is raising questions about grade inflation to convince people the SAT is a better measure of academic achievement than high school grades.

Grade inflation, he says, is only a smokescreen to turn attention away from allegations that the test is biased against girls.

"We can either trust the school (grades) or trust the test," Cohen says.

Female students get better grades in high school and college, yet the average combined math-verbal score for boys this year was 1040, compared with 998 for girls.

Females have outnumbered males taking the test for more than two decades. The College Board argues that this larger pool of female test-takers, which includes girls from lower in the class ranks, weighs down the average female score. ■

2. The Wall Street Journal

09/02/98

SATs Change Little

Black-White Gap Widens Further

By June Kronholz
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal
WASHINGTON — SAT

college-entrance scores barely budged over those of a year ago, rising one point in math and not at all on the verbal test,

the College Board said. But gaps between whites and blacks and between suburban and inner-city youngsters widened ever

further.

The results come as no surprise, but the widening SAT gap is disturbing because it seems to predict a future widening of the gulf between the country's haves and have-nots. That's because students with higher SATs are more likely to finish college, and because a college education usually results in a higher-paying job. "The odds against [inner-city youngsters] seem to be growing," said College Board President Donald M. Stewart.

Math scores for the 1.2 million students who took the SAT this year averaged 512 out of 800. That's up 12 points since 1991, but still short of the 517-point average in 1969, when far fewer students took the test. The average for the verbal test was 505, which has barely changed in 20 years. The College Board drew some cheer from the verbal scores, though, because students whose first language wasn't English accounted

for 8% of this year's test takers.

Women lagged behind men in both the math and verbal tests, and Asian-Americans again far surpassed all other ethnic groups on the math test. The test also highlighted continuing grade inflation in the schools: 38% of the test takers had A averages this year compared with 28% a decade ago. But SAT scores for those same students fell an average 15 points in 10 years.

The SAT report held some bad news for policy makers who are trying to raise the performance of the public schools: Students who scored the lowest of all on the SAT want to become teachers. But there was good news for technology concerns that are being forced to look overseas for qualified workers: The highest scorers planned to major in engineering, biological sciences and computers.

The grimmest news, though, was that blacks averaged 860 on the combined

tests, compared with 1,060 for Asian-Americans, 1,054 for whites, and 927 for Hispanics, and that the gap between blacks and whites has actually widened in the past decade. Suburban children scored 37 points above the national average, while in the inner city, where, the College Board said, about half of its minority test takers live, scores averaged 24 points below the national average.

One obvious reason for the gap, the College Board said, is that blacks and Hispanics take fewer courses during high school than whites and Asian-Americans — 18 compared with 19.5. But parents' education level also has a huge impact on SAT performance, a further advantage for whites. Children whose parents had a college degree scored 40 points above the national average, while those whose parents finished only high school scored 67 points below average. That gap, too, is widening. ■

3. The Washington Post

09/02/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page B01

Despite Gains, Disparities In SAT Scores Vex Officials

By Victoria Benning and Ellen Nakashima

Washington Post Staff Writers

Average scores on the Scholastic Assessment Test increased in most Washington area school systems this year, according to figures released yesterday, but officials in the area's three largest districts voiced concern about the lagging performance of some of their minority students.

In Montgomery County, the average score of African American students on the college entrance exam declined slightly from last year, while the scores for other racial groups increased. In Prince George's County, average scores were down, and the combined math and verbal score of Latino students dropped by 33 points.

In Montgomery, African American activists said the performance of black students — whose average score has dropped by 10 points during the last four years — was especially troubling because the school system had launched a major effort to boost the scores. During the past two years, the district has given intensive SAT preparation to students at several high schools.

"The rhetoric always exceeds the execution," said Charles Sye, a member of the African-American

In Fairfax County, the combined math and verbal score of Latino students dropped by 21 points, although black students did much better on the test than a year ago.

Nationally, the average SAT math score was 512 — the highest in 27 years and one point above last year, according to the College Board, which administers the SAT. The average verbal score was 505 — the same as last year and only six points above the record lows of 1991 and 1994. Latinos and Puerto Ricans, who are listed in separate categories by the College Board, were the only groups whose combined verbal-math score declined from a year ago.

Parents and local school officials pay close attention to the rise and fall in SAT scores as a barometer of how schools are performing, although many educators say the scores mostly reflect the income and education levels of students' parents and should not be used to gauge the quality of a high school.

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performing, although many educators say the scores mostly reflect the income and education levels of students' parents and should not be used to gauge the quality of a high school.

"I am very disappointed at the decline of overall average test scores for the county," said Jerome Clark, the school superintendent in Prince George's, where the verbal score fell by six points and the math score by one point. "We intend to analyze these scores school by school and take whatever steps are necessary to make improvements. The continuing achievement gap between African American and Hispanic students and their white and Asian counterparts is particularly troublesome."

makes it hard for the district to raise its average SAT score.

"I'm relieved that the scores didn't take a Dow Jones plunge," Vance said. "I think that it's incredible that given the changes that we've been having that we can say the scores are flat."

In Fairfax, which also has made a concerted effort to provide extra SAT preparation for minority students, the average verbal-math score for African American students rose by 24 points this year — after dropping by 18 points the

previous year.

The recovery shows that it is a mistake to attach much significance to SAT scores for any one year, said Fairfax School Superintendent Daniel A. Domenech.

Nevertheless, Domenech said he is concerned about the falling scores of Fairfax's Latino students. "A majority of our Hispanic students are immigrants and language is a major issue," he said. "They also tend to fall into a lower socioeconomic level. All that coming together makes it very difficult for them to achieve at the same level as some of our other students."

For all Fairfax students, the average score rose by seven points to 1,095, and Domenech expressed pleasure that the county outscored Montgomery in their annual rivalry.

Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's were the only Washington area districts that provided a racial breakdown of their SAT scores.

D.C. public schools had an average verbal-math score of 810, the lowest in the Washington area and one point lower than last year.

Nationwide, students whose first

language is not English represented 8 percent of all students who took the SAT exam this year, up from 5 percent a decade ago, the College Board said. That may help explain why overall scores on the verbal section have not improved, said College Board President Donald M. Stewart in releasing the results.

"One factor may be the decline in the familiarity with English," Stewart said.

The College Board also found that while SAT scores in the suburbs are above the national average and rising, scores in urban and rural areas are falling further behind the national average.

"This growing disparity is particularly troublesome," Stewart said. "because 40 to 50 percent of African American and Latino students who take the SAT live in large cities. Even though underrepresented minorities are better prepared for college and have higher academic aspirations than ever before, the odds against them seem to be growing."

writers Amy Argetsinger, Desson Howe, Lyndsey Layton, Todd Shields and Paul W. Valentine contributed to this report.

SAT Scores

Average scores for 1998 graduates in public schools:

VERBAL MATH TOTAL
1998 Change *1998 Change*
D.C. 410 -2 400 +1 810
Virginia
Alexandria 475 -1 478 -10 953
Arlington 523 0 525 +4 1,048
Fairfax 540 +2 555 +5 1,095
Loudoun 523 -1 513 0 1,036
Manassas 519 +22 522 +26 1,041
Manassas Park 489 +10 471 +11 960
Prince William 516 +1 507 +3 1,023
Stafford 520 +2 504 +7 1,024
Maryland
Anne Arundel 513 -1 533 +3 1,046
Calvert 524 +9 518 +4 1,042
Charles 495 -1 501 +4 996
Howard 535 +6 549 +4 1,084
Montgomery 537 -2 555 +2 1,092
Prince George's 446 -6 442 -1 888
St. Mary's 510 +1 514 +12 1,024
U.S. AVERAGE 505 0 512 +1 1,017
*Change in points from 1997

NOTE: Scores for Fauquier County and the city of Falls Church were not available.

SOURCES: College Board, school districts
ART ch■

4. The Washington Post

09/02/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Prince William Extra; Page V03

School Pride: Higher SAT Scores Bring Bragging Rights

By Ann O'Hanlon
Washington Post Staff Writer

Local schools had reason to brag about last year's SAT scores, which were released yesterday, and brag they did.

"In the history of the City of Manassas Public Schools," read a news release, "only one class (1992) had better SAT results."

And Manassas Park Associate Superintendent Ben Kiser announced numbers that showed a 21-point increase in the total score from last year, which was a four-point increase over the previous year.

"We feel like it reflects some progress on the part of our kids, some indication that maybe some things that we tried to do have made a difference," Kiser said. "We're hopeful that we'll continue to see the progress over the next few years. So we're optimistic."

State and national scores also rose a bit this year, but Manassas, Prince William and Stafford students scored

Stafford County schools were on an upward trend as well, leaving officials there "very pleased," according to Donna Cahill, coordinator of public information.

"We believe that [the scores] reflect the excellent education that our high school students receive," she said.

Prince William County announced the continuation of a five-year upward trend well beyond those figures.

The Scholastic Assessment Tests are a rite of passage each year for college-bound high schools seniors. Only a portion of each jurisdiction's students take the exams, which give separate math and verbal scores. Those scores are required by many colleges and universities as part of a student's application package.

The entire student body in certain grades must take a number of tests each year, including the Stanford Achievement Tests and the new Virginia exams, which will test required curriculum for the second time this spring. Educators

in the total mean score in the Scholastic Assessment Test, including some six-year high scores for Brentsville, Gar-Field and Hylton high schools.

"The numbers are up again, and we're pleased as a whole," said Superintendent Edward L. Kelly.

caution that any one set of test scores gives an incomplete picture of a school or school system, even if that one set happens to be good news.

"It's just one measure of student performance," Cahill said. "You just can't look at scores and judge schools."

Kelly said he and his staff stress that same point each year to parents and teachers.

"This is only an indication of some kids' performance, and it's an aptitude test, not an achievement test," he said.

The combined mean math and verbal score for Virginia students last year was 1006; nationally, it was 1017. In

comparison, the 220 Manassas students who took the exam scored an overall 1041. In Manassas Park, where 23 students took the exam, that number was 960. In Prince William, 1,813 students scored an overall 1023. And in Stafford County, the overall mean score was 1024

for the 699 students from the county's three high schools who took the exam.
LOCAL SAT RESULTS
 Mean scores of Scholastic Aptitude Tests for the 1997-98 academic year.
 Math Verbal
 National 512 505

Virginia 499 507
 Manassas 522 519
 Manassas Park 471 489
 Prince William 507 516
 Stafford 504 520■

5. The New York Times

09/02/98 Section: National Desk; Section B; Page 8, Column 4

S.A.T. Scores Decline Even as Grades Rise

By WILLIAM H. HONAN

Calling it evidence of persistent grade inflation in American high schools, College Board officials said yesterday that more college-bound students had A averages than a decade ago but that they scored lower on their S.A.T. exams.

The College Board, which sponsors the S.A.T., said that test takers with A averages grew from 28 percent of the total to 38 percent in the last 10 years, but the S.A.T. scores of those students fell an average of 12 points on the verbal portion and 3 points on the math portion.

The disparity between grades and the S.A.T., the nation's leading standardized college entrance test, is sufficiently troubling that the president of the College Board, Donald M. Stewart, said the organization has commissioned a study of the issue by Rand, the research institution.

"We don't know why grades are rising," Mr. Stewart said. "The trend may reflect positive changes in education, but it may also reflect greater focus on personal qualities instead of academic achievement."

Over all, S.A.T. scores remained about the same this year as last: 512 on the math portion, a point above last year and

Bob Chase, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest union with 2.4 million members, cautioned against blaming teachers for grade inflation. "If it's happening," he said, "no one could be supportive of that, but it may result from pressures from both parents and the schools. We just don't know."

Seppy Basili, a spokesman for Kaplan Educational Centers, the largest test preparation company in the nation, said "grade inflation is here to stay," and may be explained in part by the popularity of advanced-placement courses. "Students who do well in A.P. courses may receive a weighted grade which is higher than an A," he said.

Howard Everson, the College Board's

the highest in 27 years, and 505 on the verbal portion, the same as last year. The figures were released yesterday in the College Board's annual report on the 1.2 million students who took the S.A.T. before they graduated from high school last spring.

The board also reported that substantially greater numbers of high school students were taking the test and that more were enrolled in advanced placement courses, making them eligible for college credit before enrollment.

Mr. Stewart said the scores revealed two troubling trends. One is that suburban students are improving their S.A.T. scores, while urban and rural students are falling further behind, with a 30-point gap between urban and suburban students.

"This growing disparity is particularly troublesome," Mr. Stewart said, "because 40 to 50 percent of African-American and Latino students who take the S.A.T. live in large cities."

Also, the S.A.T. scores of the children of parents with less education are falling further below the national average, the report said.

These conclusions were based on the College Board's analysis of the 1.2 chief research scientist, said that the increased number of students taking the test is "good news for the nation."

"It shows that there is a growing cohort of those who aspire to attend a competitive college," he said.

Mr. Basili attributed the rise in math scores over the last four years to a rule change that permitted students to bring along their calculators when taking the test.

"Having their calculators made them feel comfortable, and helped them to avoid making sloppy mistakes," Mr. Basili said.

Mr. Stewart also said that even though there were growing gaps in the scores of urban and suburban students, there was relatively good news for minorities.

million seniors who took the SATI: Reasoning Test, and the 321,000 who took college-level Advanced Placement Examinations before they graduated from high school last June.

The evidence of continuing grade inflation comes at a time when many states are requiring schools to adopt higher standards, though sometimes grading the students on the basis of portfolios of their work.

"More subjectivity is going into assessments," Mr. Stewart said. "This also could be the result of the increased emphasis on accountability by teachers. That is, since teachers are supposed to be teaching better they are giving out phony grades in an unconscious effort to show themselves well — something that is exploded by the S.A.T. tests."

Bob Schaeffer, a spokesman for Fairtest, a longtime critic of testing services, warned that the prevalence of grade inflation should not be taken as an argument that the S.A.T. "keeps the process honest." He said that proponents of the S.A.T. "admit that high school performance is a better predictor of how someone will do at college than is the S.A.T."

"Despite the recent backlash against affirmative action, racial and ethnic minorities continue to see college as the route to a better life," he said. "This year, minority students are a record one-third of the S.A.T. population and 28 percent of AP graduates, and more of them aspire to master's and Ph.D. degrees."

Ward Connerly, a black trustee of the University of California who has long opposed affirmative action, said he sees the increased number of racial and ethnic minorities who take the test as a welcome indication of their growing confidence.

"What this really represents is that with the demise of preferences in California and Texas, and soon the entire nation, blacks and Latinos are beginning to realize that they can make it without

preferences." Mr. Connerly said.

Mr. Stewart faulted Mr. Connerly for failing to seek an alternative to affirmative action to equalize opportunity. Mr. Stewart said he, too, would oppose preferences, "but only if we can find a way to create equal educational opportunity."

In another trend reflected in this year's tests, many students' career aspirations seemed out of step with the prospect for jobs in the years ahead. Student test takers were asked to check off on questionnaires the careers they hope to pursue. Labor Department projections indicate that the top three occupations expected to grow most rapidly between now and 2006 are computer-related. Yet relatively few students (5 percent) checked off computing and information sciences.

Students' first career choice was health and allied services (18 percent), followed by business and commerce (14 percent) and social sciences and history (11 percent).

The S.A.T. was taken by 43 percent of all high school graduates, or about 1.2 million students.

The College Board is the nonprofit educational association that sponsors the S.A.T., which is developed and administered by the Educational Testing Service. The S.A.T. is the dominant test on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The

A.C.T. is more popular in the central United States.

ART Chart: "KEEPING TRACK: Suspicious Growth of A's"

More college-bound high school students in the United States are getting A's than 10 years ago but are also scoring lower on S.A.T.'s. A+ GRADE AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING A+ GRADE AVERAGE (1988): 4

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING A+ GRADE AVERAGE (1998): 7 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1988): 625 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1998): 615 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1988): 632 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1998): 629 A GRADE AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING A GRADE AVERAGE (1988): 11

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING A GRADE AVERAGE (1998): 15 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1988): 582 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1998): 569 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1988): 586 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1998): 582 A GRADE AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING A- GRADE AVERAGE

(1988): 13

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING A- GRADE AVERAGE (1998): 16 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1988): 554 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1998): 542 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1988): 556 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1998): 554 B GRADE AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING B GRADE AVERAGE (1988): 53

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING B GRADE AVERAGE (1998): 48 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1988): 495 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1998): 483 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1988): 490 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1998): 487 C GRADE AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING C GRADE AVERAGE (1988): 19

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING C GRADE AVERAGE (1998): 13 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1988): 442 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — VERBAL (1998): 430 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1988): 431 AVERAGE S.A.T. SCORES — MATH (1998): 428

(Source: The College Board)■

6. Los Angeles Times

* 09/02/98; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-3

SAT Scores Rise Slightly for L.A. High Schools

Verbal tests improve and math results hold steady. The district plans to offer more preparation next year.

By DOUG SMITH
TIMES EDUCATION WRITER

Los Angeles high school graduates who took the SAT college admission exam this year raised the district's verbal score slightly over last year, while math scores held steady, according to results released Tuesday.

School officials said they will offer extensive preparation for the test in the 1998-1999 school year in hopes of achieving a bigger improvement.

"We are estimating we are going to provide test prep for 5,000 students who have never had it before," said Bob Collins, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Despite the barely measurable improvement overall, district officials

highlighted strong gains at several schools, led by Kennedy High School in Granada Hills. Its advances of 33 points in verbal and 35 in math were both district highs.

Other schools that improved on both portions of the test included Sylmar High School, up 18 in verbal and 14 in math; Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles, up 17 in verbal and 18 in math, and Venice High School, up 16 in verbal and math.

Conversely, several schools registered large losses. Gardena High School fell 26 in verbal and 18 in math, Jefferson in South Los Angeles fell 23 in verbal and 26 in math, and Polytechnic in Sun Valley fell 22 in verbal and 15 in math.

Van Nuys High School maintained the

district's highest scores in both categories, despite small losses, followed by El Camino High School in Woodland Hills.

Supt. Ruben Zacarias' emphasis on getting more Los Angeles students into college helped turn around a four-year slide in the number of students taking the SAT, a measure used by colleges to predict performance.

Still, the 11,239 SAT tests represented only a 2% increase over 1997—less impressive growth than at either the state or national level—and remained below the 1994 high of 11,679. Statewide, 5% more students took the test, and nationally the increase was 4%.

The average verbal score of 433 represents a seven-point gain over the

past five years, while the 452 in math is the same as five years ago.

District scores continued to trail the state, which scored 497 in verbal and 516 in math, and the nation, which scored 505 in verbal and 512 in math.

The gains at Kennedy—coupled with significant improvements on this year's Stanford 9 test taken by all 9th-, 10th- and 11th-graders—validate the school's

efforts to improve reading comprehension, Principal Warren Mason said.

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC) L.A. Unified SAT Scores

Below are listed the SAT college entrance exam results for the Los Angeles Unified School District's graduating class of 1998. The first two columns show the

average verbal and math scores of all students tested at each high school. The second set of columns show how many points the school average gained or lost on each portion of the test compared with the class of 1997. The SAT is used by colleges, along with high school grades, to predict college performance.

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7. Los Angeles Times

* 09/02/98; Edition: Orange County Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-1

SAT Results Are a Mixed Bag in County

Irvine schools average the highest scores, while most campuses in

Newport-Mesa and Garden Grove districts see drops. State average is up.

By TINA NGUYEN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The latest Scholastic Assessment Test results show a mixed trend of gains and dips in scores from Orange County's Class of 1998—with marked improvements in Santa Ana high schools and plummeting figures at most Newport-Mesa Unified campuses.

Data released Tuesday by the College Board, which administers the SATs, showed that California's average inched up by three points, bringing the total

"It is one predictor of how a student will do in college, but it does not provide the full picture of a student's abilities," said Patrick Levens, director of secondary education in Capistrano Unified, where the district's SAT average rose by 15 points, to a total of 1095.

Other districts that saw improved SAT scores included Santa Ana Unified, where numbers climbed at three of four high schools. Valley High School posted the highest growth in the county, with a 61-point improvement, bringing its total score to 920.

But Santa Ana scores remained far below the state averages.

For Loara High in Anaheim, the total SAT score jumped by 60 points, boosting its average to 1044. This was a dramatic change from a downward trend the

score to 1013 and continuing a five-year incremental upward trend. Meanwhile, a majority of Orange County school districts—ranging from Irvine Unified to Orange Unified—landed much higher marks.

Irvine continued to rank at the top of the county with an overall average of 1159.

"We have super teachers, hard-working kids and supportive parents and that seems to be a formula that produces terrific results," said Irvine school was seeing in previous years, Principal John Dahlem said.

Stepped-up SAT prep efforts in English and math courses apparently paid off, Dahlem said. Teachers drilled students particularly on reading comprehension and vocabulary to help raise scores.

"We're an urban school," said Dahlem, whose campus faces a turnover rate of 45% annually, the largest rate in the Anaheim Union High School District. "So, this is something we're very proud of. It proves that if you give the kids an opportunity, they'll do a good job."

As in previous years, Irvine's University High maintained the top spot with the county's highest total score of 1223, up by 15 points from the previous year.

Unified Supt. Patricia Clark White.

The SAT, a national standardized test with a possible total score of 1600, is used in admissions to many colleges. It is made up of two tests, verbal and math, each with a possible top score of 800.

The SAT is viewed as a way of measuring how prepared a student may be for higher education. But some education officials warn that it provides a limited glimpse of a student's achievements.

"When you're at the top, it just takes so much more to move up," said University High Principal Diana Schmelzer. "So, I am very delighted with this year's scores."

But the news wasn't good for some other districts. Scores slipped in all but one school in Newport-Mesa Unified. The worst drop was at Estancia High where the total score fell by 43 points.

In Garden Grove Unified, scores sank in four of the district's seven high schools, a troubling change from improved marks last year. Pacifica High, one of the district's most celebrated campuses, saw a 58 point drop in the total average, the worst in its school system.

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8. Los Angeles Times

* 09/02/98; Edition: Ventura County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-1

Ventura County Tops U.S., State SAT Averages

Schools offered classes, hired consultants to improve scores for the fifth consecutive year, led by Santa Paula High's 84-point gain.

By JULIE TAMAKI
TIMES STAFF WRITER

For the fifth consecutive year Ventura County students improved their SAT scores and once again outshone their peers across the state and nation, with Santa Paula High registering a whopping 84-point gain.

Ventura County's 1061 average eclipsed the state average of 1013 and the national average of 1017. It also marked a five-point increase over last year's countywide average score and a 25-point increase since 1994.

The county's students averaged 523 on the verbal test and 538 in math, compared with state averages of 497 in verbal and 516 in math and national averages of 505 in verbal and 512 in math.

"It's an important gain, particularly if you look at the trend over a five-year period," said Ted Bartell, director of research and evaluation for the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools office. "The scores in the county are rising at a faster rate than at the state and national levels."

Increasing numbers of county students enrolling in core academic, advanced placement and honors courses, according

Elsewhere in the county, two schools that had significant gains last year posted double-digit drops this year. Ventura High School's average score dipped 49 points and Fillmore High School registered a 46-point decrease. On a brighter note, Simi Valley High School reported a 39-point jump.

Gains made by Ventura County's Latino and African American students over the last five years outpaced those of white students. Since 1994, African Americans' test scores have jumped by 73 points and Latinos' by 32 points, compared with whites, who improved by 19 points but whose test scores are also higher on average than their ethnic counterparts.

Charles Weis, the superintendent of county schools, said while the county has reason to be proud of this year's SAT scores, he would like to see more students taking the test.

"The kids are working hard, their parents are supporting them, and the teachers are doing a great job for those kids who are college-bound and are taking the tests," Weis said. "Unfortunately, it only represents roughly

to Bartell, may account for higher test scores on college admissions tests.

Once again the Conejo Valley Unified School District boasted some of the best scores in the county. Students at Thousand Oaks High School averaged a combined score of 1118, a five-point decrease over last year but still the highest average score of those available.

"Our students really came through again," Principal Jo-Ann Yoos said.

Students at her school prepared for the test at workshops organized by the Conejo Valley Unified School District, while others attended private workshops at their own expense, she said. The workshops give students a chance to take practice tests and learn test strategies.

Each year thousands of college-bound students take the Scholastic Achievement Test, which universities use as an entrance requirement and a predictor of academic success. While most county schools had received their scores by Tuesday, several had not, including Camarillo, Hueneme and Oxnard high schools.

Elsewhere in the county, Santa Paula High reported a 51-point jump on the verbal portion of the test and a 33-point increase on the math portion. 36% of the kids."

The percentage of students taking the SAT tests varies dramatically throughout the county, he said. In one district, as many as 80% of students may take the SATs compared with as few as 9% in another.

Weis said he plans to discuss with other superintendents ways to boost those figures countywide. One possibility is to access scholarship money set aside in the state budget by Gov. Pete Wilson to pay for test fees.

"I would like to see more children in Ventura County aspiring to college," Weis said.

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MAIN STORY: A1
(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC) Ventura County SAT Scores Districts 1996-1997 1997-1998 and schools Verbal Math Verbal Math Conejo Valley Unified Thousand Oaks High 553 570 546 572 Newbury Park High 520 543 524 546 Westlake High 538 561 543 565 Fillmore Unified Fillmore High 455 474 429 454 Moorpark Unified Moorpark

"We're very proud of how well our kids did this year," said William Brand, superintendent of the Santa Paula Union High District. "The SATs are so important, so they are essential for our kids to do well on."

The school came close to its goal of reaching the county average, but fell short with a score of 953. Nonetheless, bolstered by the school's progress, Brand plans to continue to build on this year's gains, which were achieved in a number of ways.

School officials hired an outside consultant who not only showed teachers how to prepare students for the tests but explained to students the importance of leaving a question blank rather than guessing an incorrect answer, which carries a heavier penalty.

The consultant also prepped the parents on ways they could help, such as ensuring their children a quiet place to study and seeing they got to bed early the night before exams.

Santa Paula students were also helped by a controversial move implemented during the 1997-98 school year that eliminated lower-level classes and funneled hundreds of students into college-prep courses.

High	527	529	526	529	Oak Park Unified Oak Park High	523				
551	527	535	Ojai Unified Nordhoff High	525	533	511	526			
Oxnard Union High Camarillo High	539	545	NA	NA	Channel Islands High	454	486	468	488	
Hueneme High	493	485	NA	NA	Oxnard High	493	481	NA	NA	
NA	NA	Rio Mesa High	503	511	505	512	Santa Paula Union High	434	435	485
468	Simi Valley Unified Royal High	512	532	516	531	Simi Valley High	519	540	537	561
Ventura Unified Buena High	542	542	537	552	Ventura High	541	552	522	522	Ventura
County average	521	535	523	538	State average	496	514	497	516	National average
505	512	Note: Possible maximum score for verbal and math sections combined is 1600	Source: Ventura County school districts	ART GRAPHIC-TABLE: Ventura County SAT Scores	■					

9. Los Angeles Times

* 09/02/98; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro Desk; Page A-1

More Latinos Take SAT, but Scores Lagging

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN
RICHARD COOPER
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

More Latino students are taking college entrance exams but their scores are falling further behind those of Asian and white classmates, the College Board reported Tuesday.

The widening gulf is disturbing to educators because many Latinos are unable to compete for admission to the nation's better colleges, particularly with the end of affirmative action programs in California and elsewhere.

Nationally, math scores on the SAT college entrance exam rose one point to a 27-year high in 1998, but the verbal score remained stubbornly unchanged for the third consecutive year, the board reported.

In California, the average verbal score inched up one point to 497 on the exam, leaving the state eight points below the national average of 505.

In math, California's class of 1998 African Americans and Latinos who take the SAT are studying more chemistry, physics and calculus than they did previously, but still not as much as white and Asian students. As a result, Stewart said, "even though . . . minorities are better prepared for college and have higher academic aspirations than ever before, the odds against them seem to be growing."

In another trend, Stewart noted that grade inflation appears to be continuing. Since 1988, the percentage of students whose grades average better than an A-minus has increased from 28% to 38%, while the SAT scores of that group have fallen 12 points on the verbal side and three points in math.

Women continue to report higher grades than men in high school and now make up the majority of those taking the SAT. But their SAT scores are still lagging—seven points behind in verbal and 37 points in math.

California's white students scored better than white students nationally. But other groups of students in the state were generally behind their peers. Asian students in California, for example, averaged 550 in math compared with 562 for Asian students nationally.

In the last 10 years, the scores of Asian American students nationally have risen the fastest—21 points in math and 16 points on the verbal part of the test. White students' scores in math have risen

recorded a two-point gain from the previous year, to 516. That boosted the state four points above the national average of 512 and continued four consecutive years of improvement.

SAT scores are a closely watched measure of student achievement because they are required by 90% of the nation's four-year colleges and universities. While serving as a barometer of educational quality in the United States, they also reflect social and demographic change.

The fact that overall scores are staying the same or rising slowly was seen as relatively good news—given that students are increasingly likely to be poor, to be minorities and to speak English as a second language.

"If we were a company and looked at it as return on investment, you'd say 'Not bad,'" said California Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin. The improvement, she said, "is a pretty important achievement."

Still, the scores reflect only the 14 points and gone up four points on the verbal questions, which among other things test students' ability to understand and analyze what they've read.

In contrast, the average verbal score of Mexican Americans nationally, which the College Board reports separately from other Latinos, has dropped six points since 1988 while their math scores have not changed.

Scores for African American students are rising slowly but are further behind Asian and white students than they were a decade ago.

In the Los Angeles Unified School District, where 90% of the students are African American or Latino, the average verbal score rose for the fourth consecutive year. But, at 433, the number is 72 points below the national average. The district's math score was unchanged at 452.

College Board officials said the slight gains in California and Los Angeles are nonetheless striking, given the demographics of the state's students.

Amy Wilkens, an analyst for the Education Trust, said the gap in test scores between minorities and white students can be closed with better teaching. Researchers have found that poor and minority students are more likely to have unqualified teachers than are their suburban counterparts.

"If we single-mindedly and systematically went about ensuring that

academic preparation of the state's college-bound students. And the combined verbal and math scores of African American and Mexican American students in California continue to lag several hundred points below the combined score for white students. A similar but smaller gap exists nationally.

Nationwide, students in the suburbs, where more of the students are white, are increasing their lead over students in cities, who are more likely to be African American or Latino.

"This growing disparity is particularly troublesome," said College Board President Donald M. Stewart.

He said the 1.2 million public and private school students who took the SAT nationally are increasingly diverse ethnically, indicating that minority students "continue to see college as the route to a better life," Stewart said.

A decade ago, three-quarters of the test takers were white; today only two-thirds are white.

low-income kids and kids of color had teachers who were as qualified, you'd cut 50% of the gap right there," Wilkens said. "If you put the most qualified teachers with students who were in the deepest trouble, you'd eliminate the gap."

Suburban and affluent students also enjoy another advantage—greater access to commercial test preparation courses that can add 120 points or more to a student's SAT score.

Seppy Basili, executive director of pre-college programs for Kaplan Educational Centers, said students who do not have the benefit of such courses can still raise their scores by 140 points simply by doing all their homework.

L.A. RESULTS: Verbal scores rise slightly while math remains steady. B3

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC) State, U.S. SAT Scores

Here are the average scores on the SAT College Entrance Exam for California's and the nation's graduating class of 1998. The scores are divided into ethnic groups according to how the students identified themselves. The first and third columns show the average verbal and math scores of all students tested. The second and fourth columns show how many points the average gained or lost on each portion of the test compared to 1997.

CALIFORNIA SCORES

Avg. +/- Avg. +/-
Verbal '97 Math '97

American Indian or Alaskan Native	489 -1 497	State Average	497	516	1997	+2		
+2 Asian, Asia American or Pacific Islander	488 +2 550 same	State Average	496	514			Puerto Rican 452 -2 447 same	
Black	433 +1 428 +4	****					Other Hispanic origin 461 -5 466 -2	
Hispanic		NATIONAL SCORES						White 526 same 528 +2
Mexican American	442 +3 452						Other 511 -1 514 same	
+3							1998 National Average 505	
Puerto Rican	478 -6 478 same						512 1997 National Average 505	
Other Hispanic							511	
origin 450 -8 456 -3							Source: The College Board	
White 532 +1 540 +2							ART GRAPHIC-TABLE: State, U.S.	
Other 518 +3 526 +1 1998							SAT Scores■	

10. Associated Press

09-02 6:16a

Md. students outperform all but one state in region on SATs

Maryland's 1998 high school graduates scored about the same on the SAT as last year's students, but they performed better than students in all but one Mid-Atlantic

About 35,800 Maryland high school students took the SAT in 1997, putting Maryland among 12 states that have at least 65 percent participation in the national exam.

The SAT measures a student's reasoning, verbal and math skills against the skills needed to be a successful freshman in college. The primary use of the SAT is as a tool for admission to colleges and universities.

Nationally, scores on the math test increased from 511 to 512, the highest

state.

Overall, Scholastic Assessment Test scores for Maryland students rose one point in math - from 507 to 508 - and fell score in 27 years, according to the College Board, which administers the test. National scores on the verbal section remained the same as last year at 505.

Maryland's combined cumulative score of 1,014 makes it the second highest-performing state in the Mid-Atlantic, only surpassed by West Virginia, which had a cumulative score of 1,038. Only 18 percent of students in that state took the SAT, however.

The 1998 verbal and math SAT scores for Maryland students, followed by the

one point in verbal abilities - from 507 to 506. The number of students taking the test rose one percent, the first increase in five years.

1997 verbal and math scores, are:

-Anne Arundel County: 513, 533; 514, 530.

-Baltimore city: n.a., 425; n.a. 407.

-Baltimore County: 499, 501; 500, 505.

-Carroll County: 518, 526; 525, 525.

-Harford County: 525, 528; 515, 513.

-Howard County: 535, 549; 529, 545.

-State: 506, 508; 507, 507.

-National: 505, 512; 505, 511.■

11. Dallas Morning News

September 2, 1998

Texas SAT scores stay below national average

Minority high school seniors show gains

By Terrence Stutz

The Dallas Morning News Page A1

AUSTIN - Texas high school seniors again scored below the national average on the Scholastic Assessment Test this year, although minority students registered modest gains.

Results on the 1998 SAT, released Tuesday, showed that Texas students scored an average 501 in math and 494 in verbal skills - the same as a year ago.

The long-running performance gap between Texas students and their counterparts across the nation increased slightly because the national average in math went up a notch, from 511 to 512.

The national average in verbal skills was unchanged at 505.

There was some good news for Texas minority students. Blacks and Hispanics both improved their math scores over last year, and Hispanic students also went up in verbal skills.

State Education Commissioner Mike Moses said he was encouraged that Texas results remained the same though a record number of students - more than 100,000 - took the college-entrance test.

"Testing experts, including those at the College Board, tell us that test scores typically go down when the number of students taking the test goes up," he said.

"It is encouraging that our scores remained stable despite the record increase in the number of students taking the exam."

The percentage increase in the number of students who were tested this year was the highest in a decade, according to the nonprofit College Board, which administers the SAT.

Nationwide, this year's scores showed a growing disparity in skills between students in suburban schools and those in urban and rural schools.

Average SAT scores in the suburbs are above the national average and rising, while scores in urban and rural areas fell

further below the national average.

"This growing disparity is particularly troublesome because 40 to 50 percent of African-American and . . . [Hispanic] students who take the SAT live in large cities," said Donald Stewart, president of the College Board.

"We also see that SAT scores of students from less-educated families are falling further below the national average, while the scores of students from well-educated families are rising further above the national average."

The College Board did not release an urban-suburban breakdown for Texas students.

Among other highlights:

The 1998 SAT results showed a continued pattern of grade inflation in U.S. schools.

Since 1988, the percentage of students with an A average has risen from 28 to 38 percent, while SAT scores have fallen an

On the other major college entrance exam, the American College Test, Texas students showed gains this year in English and reading skills as they beat

average of 12 points on verbal skills and three points on math. In Texas, the percentage of students with an A average is even higher.

This year's grade point average for all SAT takers is 3.23 - well above the 3.07 in 1988.

"We don't know why grades are rising," Mr. Stewart said. "The trend may reflect positive changes in education, but it may also reflect greater focus on personal qualities instead of academic achievement."

Nearly 1.2 million students took the SAT during the 1997-98 school year.

The gender gap on the exam was still evident this year as male students in Texas and elsewhere posted higher scores than females.

Male students in Texas had an average 518 in math and 499 in verbal skills, and females earned an average 486 in math and 490 on the verbal portion.

last year's overall score.

ACT results indicated that Texas students are pulling closer to the national average on that exam. More than 64,000

Bob Schaeffer, director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing in Cambridge, Mass., told The Associated Press that colleges and universities should not rely on an SAT that is "profoundly gender-biased."

College Board officials called the gap a "disturbing trend" that has continued over the years though females take more academic courses than males in high school and receive higher grades in every subject other than math.

Texas results showed a relationship between average scores and family income. Students from families with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more earned an average math score of 559 and an average verbal score of 547. Students from families with annual incomes of less than \$10,000 had an average math score of 428 and a verbal score of 414.

Texas seniors took the ACT in the 1997-98 school year. ■

12. Sacramento Bee

September 2, 1998

College-bound seniors in state improve scores: Marks on SAT are up slightly

By Jon Engellenner Bee Staff Writer

The academic performance of California's college-bound high school students edged a notch higher this year, according to SAT average mathematics and verbal scores released Tuesday.

The state's high school class of '98 averaged 516 in mathematics, which was two points higher than last year and four points above this year's national average.

The mathematics scores marked the best showing since 1972 when California students averaged 517 on the newly renamed SAT I: Reasoning Test, commonly known as SAT.

On the verbal side, however, California's results represented a gain of just one point, to 497, over last year's totals. The national average is 505, based on a perfect score of 800.

Students attending public schools in upscale and suburban areas generally are on the fast track toward college, while those in rural and inner-city schools have a less certain itinerary, the SAT data confirm.

Suburban students scored 17 points above the national average, while rural

and urban scores, respectively, were 9 and 13 points below the national average.

In Sacramento County, math scores in the San Juan, Sacramento City and Elk Grove districts averaged 544, 514 and 503, respectively. The verbal scores averaged 530, 478 and 481.

In San Juan, where the average mathematics score rose 9 points and the verbal score was up 5, officials attributed gains to new learning standards that tell students and parents what to expect from each grade level.

"Our good news is that in 1996 our math score was 500. It's 514 today," said Jim Sweeney, Sacramento City schools superintendent. "We have a continuing trend — more kids taking the test and a higher percentage of the total number of eligible kids taking it. Typically that won't get you better test scores."

Elk Grove's college-bound students showed substantial gains over last year, rising 13 points in verbal and 15 in math, said David Gordon, superintendent.

"The number of test-takers went up substantially, too, which means we're getting higher performance out of a larger

group of students — which is good," Gordon said.

These were the top SAT-scoring high schools in Sacramento's three largest districts: Mira Loma High, San Juan district, 603 in math, 601 in verbal; John F. Kennedy High, Sacramento City district, 565 in math, 505 in verbal; Elk Grove High, Elk Grove district, 538 in math, 503 in verbal.

The improvements statewide came despite built-in demographic disadvantages and the fact that California spends \$900 less per pupil than the national average, according to Delaine Eastin, state superintendent of public instruction.

"It is also troubling that 50 percent of SAT test-takers nationwide have completed 20 or more academic courses, while in California the percentage is only 37," Eastin lamented.

Male students, on average, outperformed their female classmates statewide. Males averaged 537 in math and 502 on verbal skills, compared with female scores of 499 and 492.

In California, 57 percent of the SAT

takers were minorities, compared with 33 percent nationwide. For 19 percent of the state's test-takers, English was not the primary language, compared with 8 percent in the country.

"This college-bound class typifies the challenge facing higher education today: more students whose first language is not English, and a widening gap in preparation," said Donald M. Stewart, president of the College Board, which oversees SAT, the nation's leading college admissions test.

Nationally, the average math score of 512 was up a point from 1997 and the highest in 27 years. In verbal skills, the average score of 505 was the same as last year and just 6 points above record-low verbal scores in 1991 and 1994.

"We can point to increased math and science study as a reason for the current high in average math score," said the SAT's Stewart. "But the rock-steady verbal scores are more difficult to explain."

Stewart said the 1998 results send a mixed message.

"We see more racial and ethnic diversity, more students whose first language is not English, more evidence of grade inflation and more students who are well prepared for college," he said. "Unfortunately, there are also more students who lack sufficient academic preparation."

There was a single-point rise in verbal scores in the state, but these have remained virtually flat since 1982, a

factor attributed to the continuing influx of immigrants who don't speak English.

"Immigration is keeping the test scores down — that's probably accurate," said Seppy Basili, spokesman for Kaplan Educational Centers, the nation's largest private test preparation company.

Basili also suggested that the use of calculators on the test has skewed the results by underestimating the students' knowledge prior to 1995.

Before 1995, when the use of calculators was first allowed, he said, SAT results "probably underpredicted or suppressed the scores of the students taking the test. The jump now is probably reflecting the reality of what kids know."■

13. San Diego Union Tribune

September 2, 1998

County's SAT math scores rise again But students' verbal averages fall 3 points

By Chris Moran STAFF WRITER

County students' SAT math scores rose for the third straight year, but verbal scores are down three points from a year ago, according to statistics released yesterday.

More students than ever took the SAT I: Reasoning Test, a significant factor in interpreting the scores. In 1997-98, 10,779 students in the county took the SAT, or Scholastic Assessment Test, 48 percent of high school graduates. That's an increase from 10,021 students, or 47 percent, for the class of 1997.

The more seniors who take the test, the more test takers with low grade-point averages figure into school, district, county, state and national averages. Consequently, local educators estimate that SAT scores can be expected to decline two points for every percentage point increase in the participation rate.

This formula begins to explain the county's verbal score decline. The math score increase is impressive in that it has defied the correlation. County math scores have increased by seven points since 1993, even as the percentage of seniors taking the test has risen from 42 percent to 48 percent.

"We're pleased with the steady improvement in mathematics performance, where scores have increased from 509 to 516 in the past six years," County Superintendent Rudy Castruita said in a prepared statement.

This year's county math average, up

two points from last year, equalled the state average and surpassed the national average by four points, even as the state and country recorded the highest math scores in 27 years.

"San Diego County's verbal scores did not keep pace, however. I know San Diego County educators will address this issue. I am confident we'll see verbal scores improve in future years," Castruita said.

On the SAT's verbal portion, county students again matched the state average but scored eight points below the national average.

SAT scores taken together with high school grade-point averages are considered valuable predictors of college success. The SAT is also a high-profile exam because it is one of the few barometers of national performance.

The scores may be taking on more importance, said Seppy Basili, executive director for precollege programs for the test preparation company Kaplan Educational Centers.

The College Board, which administers the SAT, reports that since 1988, the population of students with A-plus, A and A-minus grade-point averages has grown from 28 percent to 38 percent. Over the same period, the SAT scores among this select group have fallen an average of 12 points on verbal and three points on math.

"Grade inflation is here to stay in America," Basili said. "Colleges are

going to be forced to rely on tests like the SAT more than ever before."

Donald Stewart, president of the College Board, said in a prepared statement that higher grades in class even as SAT scores decline could indicate improved education. "But it may also reflect greater focus on personal qualities instead of academic achievement," he said.

SAT scores are considered in admission criteria for about 90 percent of the nation's four-year colleges and universities.

In San Diego County, Superintendent Castruita promotes widespread SAT test taking because preparing for the test helps students improve academic skills.

The county Office of Education offers a free SAT preparation course. The 822 students who completed the program last year achieved an average gain of 58 points between their first practice test and their actual SAT exam.

School-by-school scores were not available yesterday, although several school districts had compiled districtwide averages in advance of the release of yesterday's data.

The San Diego Unified School District, for example, which has about a third of the county's public school students, reported that its verbal score had declined five points to 482 and its math score by two points to 498. The percentage of district seniors taking the test rose to 50 percent, up from 48.3

percent last year.

Other results include:

53 percent of the SAT test takers in the county were minority members, compared with 33 percent nationally.

Native-English speakers in the county

scored 519 on the verbal SAT, compared with 517 in California and 516 nationally.

In California, females continue to lag behind males. Females scored 492 in verbal, compared with 502 for males. In

math, females scored 499, males 537.

Nationally, verbal scores for Latinos declined by five points from last year, and math scores declined by two points. ■

14. Denver Post

September 2, 1998

SAT scores up slightly in state

By Janet Bingham
Denver Post Education Writer

Colorado high school seniors in the class of 1998 scored slightly better than last year's class in both math and verbal skills on the SAT college entrance exam.

Nationally, math scores were the highest in 27 years while verbal scores stayed flat. SAT officials also said the scores this year may be an indication of grade inflation.

More high schoolers today are getting top grades, but those at the top of their class aren't doing as well on the SAT as grade-A pupils in the past, said Donald Stewart, president of the College Board, which administers the test.

When students take the SAT, they are asked to give information about themselves. The national data indicates that since 1988, the number of test takers with A-plus, A and A-minus grade-point averages has grown from 28 to 38 percent. At the same time, the average SAT scores of students getting those high grades has fallen.

"We don't know why grades are rising," Stewart said. "The trend may reflect positive changes in education, but it may also reflect greater focus on personal qualities instead of academic achievement."

Colorado Education Commissioner Bill Moloney said that while he has no Colorado data, "it is beyond belief that we would be an exception." One major national study showed that the proportion of A's and B's on report cards increased 220 percent between 1972 and 1992, he said.

"Grade inflation is a humongous problem. People should be shouting from

the rooftops about it because it is the silent murderer of standards. It is like a general anesthetic administered to parents and citizens to suggest that everything is fine. It is education's dirty little secret."

He said Colorado SAT scores this year, like scores released last month on the ACT, the other major college entrance exam, show "no startling developments."

Average scores for the graduating class of 1998 were 542 in math and 537 in verbal skills, well above the national average math score of 512 and verbal score of 505. Possible scores on each part of the test range from 200 to 800.

"While it is good to be 'above the national average,' we must remember that said average is not what it used to be, and 're-centering' a couple of years ago didn't help," said Moloney.

In 1995, the College Board adjusted the score scale, re-establishing the original mean score of 500 on a 200-800 scale.

Taking the "re-centering" into account, the Class of 1998 averaged 10 points higher in math than the Class of 1988's 532, but the verbal scores were the same at 537.

Moloney said he is concerned about an increase in the gender gap, with females this year falling 41 points behind males in math, compared with 36 points behind last year; females were 10 points behind males in verbal skills, compared with seven points behind last year.

He said he also is concerned about continuing lower averages of African-American and Hispanic students "in light of recent evidence that they are not being exposed to the rigorous

curriculum they need.

"Minority kids are too often channeled by educators into less demanding courses," he said. According to national figures released Tuesday, African-American and Hispanic students are less likely than Asian and white students to have taken the tougher academic courses that give students good preparation for college. And women are less likely than men to have taken advanced math courses.

That conclusion coincides with information released last month by officials who administer the nation's other major college entrance exam, the ACT.

The ACT is taken by about two-thirds of Colorado students, while the SAT is taken by about one-third. The ACT test is based on core classroom curriculum, while the SAT relies more heavily on critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In explaining score trends this year, Stewart said the flat verbal scores may be due to an increasing proportion of test-takers whose first language is not English.

Of the nine largest districts in the Denver metro area, six had scores below state and national averages, with verbal and math scores as follows: Westminster, 488, 513; Adams 12, 506, 508; Aurora, 511, 517; Denver Public Schools, 522, 521; Jefferson County, 534, 539; and Douglas County, 535, 539.

Three districts had scores above state and national averages: Boulder, 559, 573; Cherry Creek, 540, 565; Littleton, 538, 552. ■

15. San Francisco Chronicle

September 2, 1998

California's SAT Math Scores Climb At same time

S.F. students drop 5 points below last year

Lynda Gledhill, Chronicle Staff Writer

Average SAT math scores in California reached their highest level last school year since 1972, extending state

"We have made good, steady progress," said Delaine Eastin, state superintendent of public instruction. "We're moving in the right direction, but we still have a lot more to do."

High school seniors in California who took the Scholastic Aptitude Test scored 516 on the math portion of the exam, up two points from last year and the highest total since 1972. The national average was up one point last year to 512. The test is scored on a 200- to 800-point scale.

Eastin said more students are taking advanced math classes, which might account for some of California's good numbers. She also cited higher math standards at half of California's high schools.

The average verbal score among California high school seniors was 497, up one point from last year. The national average held steady for the third straight year at 505.

In San Francisco, however, the news was not as good. High school seniors in the city dropped five points on the math test compared with last year, to 456, and verbal scores remained the same at 512.

"I'm not pleased at the drop in our math scores," said Mary Hernandez, chairwoman of the school board's curriculum committee. "I want to know if there's a problem with the way we're teaching math, or if the drop is because far more students take the SAT in this district. If so, then that's not as worrisome to me."

students' lead over their counterparts nationwide, according to figures released yesterday by the national College Board.

Verbal scores in California also edged. About 70 percent of seniors, or 2,500, took the test in San Francisco. Only 43 percent of the nation's high school seniors took the test. In California, 47 percent of students took the test, up 2 percent from last year.

School officials said California's lower verbal score was a reflection of the relatively high number of students in the state for whom English is a second language — 19 percent, versus 8 percent nationally. The average verbal SAT score for native English speakers in California was 517, one point higher than the national average for that group.

Even California's slight increase in verbal scores should be seen as a positive sign, said Seppy Basili, executive director of precollege programs for Kaplan Educational Centers, a college test preparatory service.

"With an increase in the percentage of people taking the test, and an increase in the number of people for whom English is a second language, any rise in verbal scores means students are doing well," he said.

Other findings of the report:

— Members of ethnic minorities continued to score lower than white students, although the averages increased for most groups. Mexican Americans showed a two-point increase over last year for both math and verbal tests, up to 460 and 453, respectively. African American students scored an average of 426 on the math test, up from 423 last year, but showed no change on the verbal

higher but lagged behind the nation as a whole.

test.

— SAT scores in the suburbs are above the national average and rising, and scores in urban and rural areas are falling further below average.

For example, SAT verbal scores were 13 and nine points below the national average for students from urban and rural areas, and those for suburban students were 17 points above average.

"It is easy to see the continued connection between resources and SAT scores," Basili said.

— Nationally, female test takers continued to lag behind their male counterparts, despite taking more academic courses and having higher national grade point averages.

Girls scored an average of 502 on the verbal test, compared with 509 for boys. The average math score for girls was 496, well below the boy's 531. However, the mean grade point average for college-bound girls is 3.30 on a 4.00 scale, compared to 3.14 for boys.

The disparity is one more reason not to put too much faith in the SAT, said Paul Cohen, a spokesman for the Princeton Review test preparatory service.

"These scores don't represent legitimate benchmarks that should be relied on," he said. "The same students over and over do better than the rest. The SAT doesn't measure what teachers in school measure, so it doesn't reflect what students know." ■

16. Ft. Worth Star Telegram

September 2, 1998

Fort Worth students show improvement in SAT scores

By Martha Deller
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

Math and verbal scores on the SAT improved this year among Fort Worth students, even with more test-takers of different races and ethnic backgrounds.

Many other area school districts also improved their scores on the college entrance exam.

Nationally, math scores inched up a point, but verbal scores remained steady. Officials at the College Board attribute the verbal results to an increase in test-takers whose first language is not English.

A perfect score on each part of the test is 800.

A record number of 100,417 public and private students in Texas took the SAT, and scores were stable in both the math and verbal sections. Texas ranked second in the country in the number of Hispanics who took the test, and the state had the third-highest number of African-American and Asian-American test-takers.

The state's Hispanic and African-American test-takers scored at or just below the national average. Asian-Americans scored above the national

average.

Fort Worth students, whose average math and verbal scores jumped by 3 points each, are beating the state and national average among Hispanics.

The district's scores remain below the state and national averages, but the number of students taking the test increased by more than 11 percent, a milestone cheered by Superintendent Thomas Tocco.

"I encourage virtually all students to take the test despite its impact on our averages," Tocco said. "A number of young people who don't feel like they're

college material do amazingly well and experience academic rejuvenation."

"I know it can hurt the school's image for our scores to go down, but it's good for kids to take the tests to see how they stand with other students," said Risa Payne, Western Hills High School's academic coordinator.

Even with more students taking the test this year, Western Hills improved its overall SAT averages by 31 points. Payne said she accomplished that by urging students to take harder courses and practice test-taking skills.

Those techniques have paid off for years at Paschal High School, where scores topped national, Texas and district scores overall and for African-American and Hispanic students.

Paschal's Asian student scores fell below state and national averages, but

Some high school administrators agree, but others say that encouraging academic coordinator John Hamilton said he believes that is because many of the test-takers have only been in the United States only a few years.

But Hamilton said the number of Paschal's SAT test-takers has stabilized at 200-plus, and he sees no point in encouraging students who are not college-bound to take a test for which they are not prepared.

"Certainly there is a push among most schools to have more kids participate in this, but you could almost overdo it," he said. "It's not something you take on a whim. Every time you take it, it goes on your College Board record."

Fort Worth isn't the only district to use test preparation classes to improve scores on the SAT and the American College

unprepared students to take the college entrance test does them a disservice.

Test. ACT is taken by fewer Texas students but more in other parts of the United States.

Eagle Mountain-Saginaw's Boswell High School recovered from a 41-point drop last year to a 10-point gain this year by requiring preliminary SAT tests for sophomores and offering after-school workshops.

White Settlement's Brewer High School also increased its average by devoting part of each day for a week to prepare students for test situations.

Azle High School's average SAT score increased by 20 points while its number of test-takers jumped almost 50 percent. School officials there offer a test preparation course and plan to start an additional drill period in January. ■

17. Miami Herald

September 2, 1998

Dade's SAT scores fall slightly

By SABRINA WALTERS
Herald Staff Writer

After a slow but steady climb in scores on the nation's most respected, standardized college entrance exam, Miami-Dade public school students took a very slight step back this year.

Scores on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), released Tuesday, show 1998 college-bound seniors averaged an overall score of 928 on the two-part exam, a single point lower than last year's countywide average.

Test results inched up one point on the math portion, but dipped by two points in the verbal section, bringing the overall county average down slightly.

Scores had ticked up over the past several years, increasing by 17 points between 1994 and 1997.

District officials said they see the dropoff as a minor setback and believe future results will be better.

"Obviously we're not happy, but we're going to narrow the achievement gap through reading," said Deputy Superintendent of Schools Henry Fraind, referring to a new district-wide program that will require every student to read for three hours each day.

"Very, very soon you will see a marked difference when our reading program takes hold," he said.

There was some encouraging news. Of the 6,182 seniors who took the exam in Dade, 45 percent were Hispanic,

Tuesday.

School-by-school averages showed many of the 30 high schools that took the test saw scores improve or remain steady in one or both portions of the exam.

South Miami High saw the most dramatic improvements, with scores rising by a combined 79 points over last year.

"We came in four years ago and changed the entire curriculum," said Principal Thomas Shaw. "We eliminated courses we felt didn't challenge youngsters and didn't lead to the ability to think critically."

Shaw also said students were encouraged to take four years of math and science, instead of the three years the district requires.

Turner Tech and Norland High also had significant score increases over 1997.

Out of a possible 800 points on each portion of the test, Dade students scored an average of 461 in verbal and 467 in math. Broward seniors averaged 486 in verbal and 498 in math, slightly up from last year. Statewide scores were 500 in verbal and 501 in math.

The Miami-Dade, Broward and statewide averages were still below the national norm, which was 505 in verbal and 512 in math.

Fraind cited several factors that contributed to lower scores in Dade. 28 percent black, 19 percent white, 3 percent Asian and 5 percent not

"We have a disproportionate number of students who speak English as a second language, minority students and low-income students," he said.

For 29 percent of Dade students who took the exam, English was not their native language. That's about 2 1/2 times higher than the statewide figure of 11 percent or the 8 percent nationwide.

Across Florida and the nation, those three groups have consistently scored significantly lower than students from more affluent areas who primarily speak English at home.

For instance, SAT verbal scores for students in urban districts were 13 points below the national average, and nine points below for those living in rural areas. But students from suburban districts scored 17 points above national averages.

"Some minority students and underprivileged youngsters don't hear certain words, and they're already several hundred words behind in first grade," Fraind said. "We're saying if they're not reading by third grade, they will go right into remedial, right then and there."

Only 42 percent of Dade seniors took the SAT. The actual number of test-takers dropped by 40 students from 1997 to 1998, although the class of 1998 had 340 more students.

identified by race.

More than half of test-takers across

the nation — 67 percent — were white, 11 percent black, 8 percent Hispanic, 9 percent Asian and 1 percent American Indian.

Officials at The College Board, which administers the SAT, explained the gap

in achievement in terms of money. They said money, or the lack of it, was responsible for the dimly low scores in some large urban school districts.

"I'm convinced when there are differences in socioeconomic levels, that

equalized education financing can make a difference," Donald Stewart, president of the nonprofit College Board, said Tuesday during a tele-conference from Washington, D.C. ■

18. Columbia (S.C.) State

September 2, 1998

State SAT scores still rank last

By BILL ROBINSON Staff Writer

South Carolina remains at the bottom of the national heap when it comes to student performance on the college entrance exam known as the SAT.

The 1998 results continued a decade-long pattern of finishing at or near the bottom in annual comparisons with the other 49 states and the District of Columbia.

That's not the complete picture, however. Students' performance on the standardized test reflect highlights as well as trouble spots.

Among them:

Six of South Carolina's 86 school districts — Anderson 1, Florence 5, Lexington 1, Lexington/Richland 5, York 3 and York 4 — had average scores above the national average of 1,017.

The average SAT score for the 22,973 high school seniors in South Carolina who took the test was 951 — two fewer points than the year before.

Chapin High School had one of the best average scores in the state — 46 points above the national average — at 1,063.

Estill High in Hampton District 2 saw its average score go up 152 points, but only seven students took the test last year compared with 17 in 1997.

The average score at Blackville-Hilda High in Barnwell District 19 went up 96 points. But, at 897, the school's score was still below the state average of 951.

Brittons Neck High in Marion District 4 experienced the biggest drop in average score — 104 points — but only six students took the test last year.

Lower Richland High's average score in 1998 dropped 48 points.

Tuesday's SAT report again focused more negative attention on the state's education system. Civic leaders and

The district's Dreher High again had the district's highest average SAT score with 1,049, higher than the national average of 1,017.

Barbara Roach, a teacher on special

educators have struggled to fix the system since the 1984 Education Improvement Act passed and the penny sales tax was levied to pay for new programs.

State education Superintendent Barbara Nielsen expressed frustration Tuesday with the lack of improvement in SAT scores. But she also said she was encouraged by results on two other standardized tests.

Current high school juniors in South Carolina who took a preliminary college entrance exam, the PSAT, performed slightly better on that test than the previous class.

And the number of passing scores handed out on advanced placement exams was 8,090. A year ago, that number was 7,579.

Nielsen called those statistics "dramatic," especially since a greater number of students took advanced placement exams for college credit "and took more of them" as well.

"The only way for us to improve is for our students to be able to take more rigorous courses," said Nielsen, sounding a familiar theme of her eight years as elected leader of public education.

Educators must work harder to convince students and their parents that taking the most challenging courses a school offers can pay dividends in better scores, she said.

Chris Robinson, a Lexington/Richland District 5 school board member, said South Carolinians should be concerned, but not alarmed, about the state's performance.

"It's not the only indication of the quality of education in this state," said Robinson, who is president of the South Carolina School Boards Association.

"Fluctuations (in average test scores) are insignificant as far as I'm concerned," he said.

assignment this year at Eau Claire High, said teachers and administrators at the school are working to help students do better on the SAT. Eau Claire's average SAT score was 761, the district's lowest

Robinson served on a task force organized by Nielsen to develop a strategy for helping students better prepare for the SAT.

Among its recommendations: ensure lessons taught in middle and high schools are aligned with skills the SAT measures; provide sample questions students can study so they're prepared when they take the test; and create a statewide scholastic competition that recognizes students who do well on the SAT.

John Hudgens, a former Richland District 2 superintendent, said: "We feel like we will have some improvements in SAT scores next year. That depends on every school district getting excited about this opportunity and using these ... strategies for the benefit of the young people they serve."

Richland 2 scores dipped slightly from last year, a change district officials say is not significant because it is short term and likely a result of more than 100 additional students taking the exam.

"These are students who probably haven't traditionally been college bound," said Debra Hamm, the district's chief academic officer. "We're glad that they're considering college and taking the test."

"We think that is a good thing for the students, although it may have had a negative impact on the SAT scores in the short term."

Richland 1's average SAT score was 893, down 20 points from last year.

"One of the frustrating things about this situation is the inconsistencies exhibited by our students relative to achievement," said Richland 1 Superintendent Don Henderson. "Scores were up last year, and they dropped a little this year. That is extremely frustrating."

and more than 200 points below the state average of 951.

Lower Richland's average SAT score was 822 for 1998, down 48 points from the previous year. That was the biggest

decrease among Richland 1's seven high schools.

"Forty-eight points was a big drop for

us. We weren't pleased with that, and we're going to work hard to get that back up," said Lower Richland Principal Titus

Duren. ■

19. Chicago Tribune

September 2, 1998

SAT SCORES CONTINUE RISING TREND

By Nancy Ryan Tribune Staff Writer

Two weeks after news of this year's improved ACT scores in Illinois, school officials announced Tuesday that the state's average score on the 1998 Scholastic Aptitude Test has continued a decade of improvement.

This year's state average score on the SAT's verbal test was 564, up from 562 in 1997, while the average math score rose to 581 from 578. Both scores outpaced the national averages, 505 on the verbal exam and 512 on the math portion.

"As with the recent ACT scores, the SAT scores again show that Illinois students are better poised to succeed in

college than at any time in recent years," said Robert Mandeville, interim state superintendent of education.

Illinois' SAT scores have climbed steadily in the last 10 years, while the national average has remained relatively stable.

In 1989, state students scored an average of 537 on the SAT verbal test, versus 504 for the national average. On the math test, Illinois students scored 539, compared with the national score of 502.

But because Illinois and many other Midwestern universities and colleges do not require SAT scores for admission, fewer Illinois students take the SAT than

the ACT exam.

About 17,000 students from Illinois were among about 1.1 million nationwide who took the test this year. In contrast, 89,500 of the state's high school students took the ACT exam.

This spring, Illinois students posted a composite ACT score of 21.4 on a 36-point scale.

Mirroring nationwide SAT results, boys in Illinois scored higher than girls on both portions of the SAT. Family income and time spent in class were also factors. ■

20. Detroit Free Press

September 2, 1998

Michigan tops national average on SAT

BY PEGGY WALSH-SARNECKI
Free Press Education Writer

Michigan's class of 1998 did much better than the national average on the SAT, formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test, testing officials said Tuesday.

Michigan students averaged 558 on the verbal and 569 on the math for an overall average score of 1127 out of a possible 1600.

Nationally, scores averaged one point above last year's on math, which was the highest average score in 27 years.

The national average for the verbal test, however, was the same as last year's, and only six points above the record low.

Michigan's results are likely skewed by the fact that students taking the SAT tend to be the best and brightest who are preparing to apply to more-selective or out-of-state colleges.

There was some good news about minorities, however. The number of minority students taking the test increased to about one-third of the 1.2 million test-takers. This is a sign that more minority students are planning to

Michigan SAT takers had an average grade point of 3.47.

Only 11 percent of Michigan high school students take the SAT. Most take the ACT, which most state colleges and universities prefer.

Some experts said one reason for the low average score nationally on the verbal tests is an increase in the number of test-takers whose first language is not English.

This is especially true of Hispanic students, SAT officials said. About 40 percent of them did not speak English as a first language.

Urban and rural students tended to score lower than suburban students.

And while average scores in the suburbs continue to rise, scores in urban areas — including those for minority students, most of whom live in urban areas — are falling further.

Urban and rural students tended to score lower than suburban students. And while average scores in the suburbs continue to rise, scores in urban areas — including those for minority students, most of whom live in urban areas — are falling further.

Finally, females continued to lag behind males. The difference was less pronounced in Michigan, however, than in other parts of the country.

Again, SAT officials blamed poor

areas — are falling further.

Suburban test-takers score higher because those school districts tend to have more money, pay teachers more, have newer buildings and more up-to-date textbooks, according to SAT officials. Suburban students are also more likely to have college-educated parents who place a higher value on education.

"We need to continue to do all that's possible to equalize school financing" between suburban, urban and rural schools, said Donald Stewart, president of the College Board, which administers the SAT. "More money is spent on students, per capita, in suburban areas than urban areas."

Scores for white and Asian students continued to rise faster than minorities are closing the gap, SAT officials said.

preparation for the differences between the scores. Males still outnumber females taking advanced classes, especially in science and math. ■

21. Philadelphia Inquirer

September 2, 1998

SAT scores show gaps in readiness for college work

By James M. O'Neill
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The college freshmen who have been descending onto campuses nationwide over the last week are more ethnically and racially diverse than ever, but their scores also reflect a widening gap in how well high schools prepare various ethnic groups to do college work.

Minority students represented a full third of the students who took the most recent Scholastic Assessment Test — a record — but SAT scores among African American and Latino students fell further behind their white and Asian peers, according to the College Board, which released the latest SAT results yesterday.

African American students have seen their SAT scores rise by 13 points over the last decade. But the scores of white students have risen slightly more quickly. As a result, while African American students on average scored 189 points below their white peers a decade ago, this year the gap had widened to 194 points.

In addition, College Board data showed that the education level of students' parents also played a factor in SAT results, no matter the ethnic group. Students whose parents have only a high school diploma averaged 107 points behind students whose parents held bachelor's degrees. A decade ago, the gap was only 87 points.

Nationwide, white students averaged 526 on the verbal portion of the test and 528 on the math portion, while African Americans on average scored 434 on the verbal and 426 on the math. Latinos scored 461 verbal and 466 math, while Asians scored 498 verbal and 562 math.

Kenneth Hartman, director of secondary programs in the College Board's Philadelphia office, said the gap in test scores between whites and minorities is tied closely to the fact that whites are exposed to more college-track

courses than their minority peers. Frank Smith, associate professor of education at Columbia University's Teachers College, said that the College Board statistics on course work also reflect the fact that many minority students lagging behind in school are placed in remedial courses that don't count toward their credits.

In addition, those remedial programs

courses than their minority peers.

For instance, College Board data indicate that white and Asian students in Pennsylvania and New Jersey are exposed in high school to more hours of college-track courses in math, natural sciences, art, foreign languages and history than are their African American and Latino peers.

"The message here is that students who take more years of college-track courses do better on the SAT," Hartman said. "It's an important message, and we shouldn't be so quick to shoot the messenger."

Not everyone agrees with the College Board's conclusions, however. For years now, groups like FairTest in Cambridge, Mass., have complained that the SAT is income-biased and promotes inflated scores for wealthy students who can afford test-prep courses.

Gretchen W. Rigol, a College Board vice president, countered that the commercial pre-test courses only boosted SAT verbal scores by about 20 points and math by 30.

Nationally, among all students, SAT scores showed little change over the previous year. The average SAT math score is 512, the highest in 27 years and one point above last year's level. The average verbal SAT score held steady at 505.

Pennsylvania's average verbal scores dropped a point to 497, and math remained unchanged from a year ago at 495. In New Jersey, both verbal and math remained at 497 and 508, respectively.

Hartman said the higher scores in New Jersey reflected the state's greater affluence, as well as Pennsylvania's population diversity, including large pockets of poor rural communities.

Education experts say whites tend to have greater exposure to college-track courses because they attend schools — are geared to teaching students minimum skills, so they fall even further behind their peers, Smith said. Once again, the issue of expectations is raised.

"These remedial courses provide a low level of content and are ineffective," Smith said. Instead of tracking students and providing algebra only to some, Smith said, schools should provide it to

everyone, and provide extra tutorial and other support to the students lagging behind. Otherwise, he said, students channeled into remedial programs won't finish high school with the skills and course instruction that four-year colleges require for admission. ■

often in the suburbs — with better financial resources than their urban minority peers. "Money and resources are a huge part of it," said Dave Conway, assistant vice president for enrollment at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. He said he saw student transcripts from wealthy suburban school districts that included Calculus 1 and Calculus 2. "In the past that would have been unheard of," he said, "and in many urban schools, such courses aren't even offered."

In addition, Donald M. Stewart, the College Board's president, said much depended on the expectations teachers, academic counselors, school districts and parents had for their students and children.

Statistics from individual school districts in the area seem to bear out Conway's and Stewart's points. In wealthy suburban districts, the percentage of students who have been exposed to algebra by ninth grade is often far higher than in poor urban districts, and the percentage of those suburban districts' graduates who go on to enroll in four-year colleges is also much higher.

For instance, the percentage exposed to algebra at Cherry Hill High School East by ninth grade is 92 percent, and 82 percent of the school's graduates enroll in four-year colleges. In urban Gloucester City, on the other hand, only 51 percent of ninth graders are exposed to algebra, and only 21 percent of graduates attend four-year colleges.

Similar comparisons abound in Pennsylvania. In Radnor, 90 percent of students are exposed to algebra by ninth grade, and 86 percent attend four-year colleges. In the more urban Norristown Area district, 45 percent are exposed to algebra by ninth grade and 46 percent attend four-year colleges.

everyone, and provide extra tutorial and other support to the students lagging behind. Otherwise, he said, students channeled into remedial programs won't finish high school with the skills and course instruction that four-year colleges require for admission. ■

Area students follow national trend on SATs

By Susan Ferrechio
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Most area high school seniors scored lower or showed no improvement on their verbal SATs in 1998 compared with last year but did slightly better on the mathematics portion of the exam. The most recent Scholastic Assessment Test scores, released yesterday, follow a national trend of stagnant verbal performance and rising mathematics scores. Verbal scores either went down or did not budge from scores posted in 1997 in all area public school systems except for Prince William and Fairfax counties in Virginia, which saw increases from 515 to 516 and from 538 to 540, respectively. Officials with the College Board, which administers the two-part standardized test, said one explanation for the sluggish verbal scores may be a "decline in familiarity with English" among minority students. At least one local superintendent disagrees. "That is just another excuse," said Paul Vance, superintendent in Montgomery County, Md., where scores on the verbal test dropped by 2 points. "I think a major factor is that we are swimming upstream in just a torrent of popular culture. [The SAT test material] is just not common to their experience." Mr. Vance and other educators say that in order to raise verbal scores they must intensify reading and phonics instruction beginning in elementary schools and must be more rigorous in teaching core skills such as spelling and grammar. "I don't think there was a conscious turn away from that —

it was subtle," he said. "There were concessions to the common pop culture." Statewide, Maryland students dropped 2 points on the verbal portion of the exam, from 501 to 499 and remained the same, at 504, on the math section. The Virginia average did not change from 504 on the verbal test and rose 2 points on the math, from 495 to 497. The tests were taken during the 1997-1998 school year by college-bound seniors who plan to graduate next June. The scores released yesterday do not include private school students. Prince George's County, Md., suffered a decline in SAT scores overall and on the verbal portion of the exam. The combined SAT score dropped from 895 in 1997 to 888 in 1998. The verbal score declined from 452 to 446; the math score from 443 to 442. Prince George's Superintendent Jerome Clark said in a written statement he was "very disappointed" with the scores and plans to take "whatever steps necessary" to improve them. Particularly disturbing, he said, were the differences in scores between black and Hispanic students and their white and Asian classmates. Whites scored a combined 1,076 on the 1998 exam while blacks scored 848 — a 228-point difference. The school system began offering SAT preparatory courses in 1997, but students who took the exam last spring did not have a full semester of the training. "The 1999 senior class will be the first to benefit from the more intensive phase of the SAT Improvement Initiative," said Leroy Tompkins, chief divisional administrator for instruction

for Prince George's schools. Alexandria, Va.; the District; Loudoun County, Va.; and Anne Arundel County, Md.; each posted a one-point decrease in their verbal scores. Across the suburbs, mathematics scores for the most part increased by a few points with the exception of Alexandria. Educators attributed the gains in mathematics to improved math curriculums, including an increase in the number of courses offered and required by students to pass before graduation. Those gains did not materialize in Alexandria, where math scores dropped by 10 points — from 488 in 1997 to 478 in 1998. Combined with the 1-point drop on the verbal section, the city's scores fell a combined 11 points, the sharpest decline in the area. Alexandria Superintendent Herbert Berg was not available for comment and issued no written comment on the scores, which have been on a devastating decline from 1,006 in 1996. Arlington County, Va., students posted a 4-point increase on the math portion of the exam, from 521 to 525. The verbal score remained the same at 523. Fairfax County and Prince William counties in Virginia were the only area jurisdictions to post gains in both sections of the exam in addition to being the only ones to show an increase on the verbal section. Math scores in Fairfax County increased from 550 to 555, in Prince William from 504 to 507. The Fairfax scores continue a five-year upward trend, Superintendent Daniel A. Domenech said. ■

23. Bergen Record

September 2, 1998

SAT scores hold steady for the state

By JOHN MOONEY Staff Writer

As she deals with thousands of anxious applicants every year, Seton Hall University's admissions director doesn't fixate on Scholastic Assessment Test scores as she winnows the accepted from the dejected.

"I can't tell you the number of times I have signed letters of rejection for students with SAT scores above 1,100," said Patricia Burgh, the associate vice president for enrollment services.

But she's not about to abandon the entrance exam numbers, either. "It's a piece of what we have to review," said Burgh, who looks first at high school

transcripts. "Not the first thing we look at, but also not the last."

For years, teens have regarded SAT scores as the prime numerical gauge of their college worthiness. But the test results for the high school Class of 1998 come as colleges continue to debate their value in the admissions process and in predicting academic success.

Nationwide and state-by-state scores, released Tuesday, show slight gains in math scores, but a stubborn stagnation in verbal scores.

New Jersey seniors averaged 497 on the verbal portion of the exam and 508 in math, both unchanged from the year

before. Nationally, verbal scores remained at 505; math scores rose one point, to 512. (Each section is graded on a scale of 200 to 800.)

Officials say New Jersey lags because 79 percent of its high school graduates take the test, almost double the national rate. The conventional wisdom is that New Jersey averages are held down because students of wide-ranging abilities take the test, whereas in some places only elite students do.

New Jersey's math scores have climbed more than 10 points since 1988, but verbal scores were down slightly from those 10 years ago — both closely

following the national trends.

"We can point to increased math and science study as a reason for the current high in average math score, but the rock-steady verbal scores are more difficult to explain," said Donald Stewart, president of the College Board, which administers the test. One factor, he said, may be rising numbers of test-taking students whose first language is not English.

But with the annual release of scores also comes persistent questions about how much importance they should have in a college's decision to send an acceptance letter or one that starts, "We're sorry to inform you . . ."

Several schools — including prestigious Bowdoin and Bates colleges in Maine — have made SAT and other standardized tests optional in their admissions process. The University of California system weighed a similar move last year, as questions mounted about whether the test discriminates against minorities.

The report by the College Board showed a widening gap nationwide along ethnic, racial, and social-economic lines, with black and Hispanic students showing slower gains. Some experts say the debate is ironic, since the test was devised in 1925 to be an objective alternative to written applications.

"It was once seen as the great equalizer," said Seppi Basili, executive director of pre-college programs for Kaplan Education Centers, the test-preparation company. "Now it is turning the other way, and people see it

At the same time, however, there remain pressures on colleges to keep an eye on the numbers. For one thing, high SAT scores of those accepted bode well for a college in national guides and other comparisons.

"For that reason alone, they'll never be abandoned," said Nancy Norville,

as a way that may be closing doors for students."

But College Board officials on Tuesday again fended off the charges of test bias and downplayed any shift in the SAT's use in college admission offices, saying the scores are required at 90 percent of the schools.

"With all the changes in the traditional high school transcript, colleges don't always know what is going on at a high school, and they'll continue to rely on the SAT scores," said Gretchen Rigol, a College Board vice president.

In New Jersey, some college admissions officers said they rely somewhat less on SATs than they did in the past. Though they note the perceived racial bias, they say they have larger concerns about the limited judgments that can be drawn from any standardized exam.

Still, most agreed the test provides a useful tool in context with other factors, starting with a student's high school course load and grades.

"By themselves, the [SAT] scores don't predict a student's performance in college very well, but when you look at it along with a student's record, it is a little better," said Roberto Noya, director of admissions at Drew University in Madison. "They work best together."

A Rutgers University admissions director agreed that the SAT score is "not the be-all and end-all," despite the anxiety the test brings and the millions of dollars spent each year in test prep classes and coaching programs.

"Students come to us all the time director of admissions at William Paterson University, which recently abandoned the use of a formula that included SAT scores to rate applicants.

And with many high schools doing away with class rankings for students, admissions officers said they can ill-afford to lose another tool.

believing it will make them or break them," said Diane Harris, Rutgers' associate dean of admissions. "I tell them it won't, but I'm not sure they believe me."

Instead, Harris said, the "great equalizer" is a transcript showing the rigor of a student's courses and how well he or she did in them. "It's where you can see trends and patterns; where you can see how much a student has applied him or herself," she said.

In a 1997 national survey of college admissions officers, more than 80 percent listed grades in college prep classes as of "considerable importance." Standardized test scores were second at 50 percent, followed by grades in all subjects, class rank, counselor and teacher recommendations, and application essays.

Extracurricular courses and work experience came in a distant ninth.

Dale Herold, Fairleigh Dickinson University's admissions director, said colleges would be dishonest if they didn't acknowledge using at least some informal cut-off point in SAT scores when sifting through applicants.

But Herold said she has seen a slow transformation.

"At one time, the process was so reliant on test scores," said Herold, a 20-year veteran of college admissions. "But now I think you can at least argue your case with a strong high school transcript and not-as-strong scores. I'm not sure you could do the same the other way around."

"In those cases, you may be forced to consider [test] scores more than you'd like to," Noya said.

He said SAT scores are not a bad indicator to fall back on. "It's the most studied exam in the world, and whatever blemishes it has are well-known," he said. "That's kind of comforting, too." ■

24. New York Post

September 2, 1998

CITY STUDENTS' SAT SCORES ADD UP TO LITTLE GAINS

By SUSAN EDELMAN

The SAT scores of New York City high-school students - like their peers nationwide - rose slightly this year in math, but remained stagnant in verbal skills, officials said yesterday.

City kids still trail way behind the

state and the nation, and girls are doing starkly worse than boys - but critics charge the test is biased against minorities and especially females.

More urban and minority kids are taking the key college-entrance exam, but are falling further behind suburban

students, according to the College Board, which administers the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

This growing disparity is particularly troublesome because 40 to 50 percent of African-American and Latino students who take the SAT live in large cities, said

Donald Stewart, president of the Manhattan-based College Board, which released state and national results yesterday.

One reason for the stagnant verbal scores, officials said, is a rise in the number of kids taking the test whose first language isn't English.

But State Education Commissioner Richard Mills voiced alarm at the trend.

It is very troubling to see that literacy has not improved. Schools must focus on reading and writing, Mills said, adding that the state urges all students to read 25 books a year and write 1,000 words a month.

New York kids will be under extra pressure to hit the books this year: for the first time, students entering the 11th grade must pass the English Regents exam to graduate.

High SAT scores open doors to the best colleges and universities - and to financial aid or scholarships.

The Board of Education said the

26,957 city students who took the SAT this year - up from last year's 25,735 - scored an average 444 on verbal, the same as last year, and 468 on math, up three points.

That mirrored state and national trends. The average New York state verbal score remained at 495 while the math score rose one point to 512. Nationwide, the average verbal score stayed at 505 while the math score increased one point to 503.

A perfect score on each half of the test is 800.

It's a good sign that our math scores went up slightly, even though larger numbers took the test, said J.D. LaRock, a spokesman for Chancellor Rudy Crew.

Citing new English and language-arts standards that took effect for all grades in January, and the new English Regents test requirement, LaRock said: We hope that these two things will contribute to gains in the future.

Critics have long complained that the

SAT favors white males, who do better on multiple-choice tests and strategic guessing.

The test is biased against females, said Bob Schaeffer, public-education director at the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, a watchdog group.

The sole scientific claim for the SAT is its ability to predict first-year college grades, but women historically get higher grades in college than men in identical courses.

The growing gap between urban and suburban kids did not surprise experts.

Urban schools are more overcrowded. They have larger class sizes, less qualified teachers, and a less stable principal leadership, said Norm Fruchter, director of the Institute for Educational and Social Policy at New York University.

In New York City, you have many languages spoken, many new arrivals. You also have old, decrepit schools, and not a lot of money spent on them. ■

25. Boston Globe

September 2, 1998

State SAT scores hold steady, but verbal tests show gender gap

By Jordana Hart, Globe Staff

Massachusetts high school students' SAT scores were unchanged from last year, remaining the highest they have been in the past decade.

The average verbal score at the state's public and private high schools was 508, three points above the national average. The average math score also was 508, four points below the national average.

But the latest state-by-state SAT report card, released yesterday by the College Board, shows that Massachusetts girls saw an average a two-point drop to 504 on the verbal test between 1997 and this year, while boys saw a three-point rise to 513. Nationally, girls averaged 502 points compared to 509 points for boys on the verbal part of the test, formerly the Scholastic Assessment Test.

The decline in girls' scores, locally and nationally, may well be nothing more than a statistical blip but nonetheless it nags at some testing specialists.

"The most noteworthy thing is the gender gap [on the verbal test] and that it

has increased nationally," said Charles Rooney, assistant director at FairTest in Cambridge, a watchdog agency that charges that standardized tests are biased against girls and students of color.

"On math, where most of the attention is focused, the gap is large but diminishing," Rooney added. "But in verbal, the fact that there is a gap at all is disturbing. Women take many more advanced courses in those areas."

In math, Massachusetts girls scored an average of 492 points, 34 below the boys' average math score. Nationally, the gender spread in math is 35 points, according to the data.

Some cited that nationwide more girls than boys are taking advanced math and science courses, more are taking the SAT, and more are going to college. The data show that 54 percent of college entrants are girls.

"Girls now are significantly the majority going to college," said Seppy Basili, director of precollege programs for Kaplan Education Services, the national test preparation company. "That could explain some of the change. The

larger the number of students who take [the test], the more likely scores go down."

Boston school officials said the city's SAT scores were not immediately available yesterday.

Meanwhile, after two years of boasting the nation's highest percentage of high school seniors taking the SAT, Massachusetts this year slipped to fourth with a 77 percent participation rate, slightly behind the District of Columbia (83 percent), Connecticut (80 percent), and New Jersey (79 percent.)

Last year, 80 percent of Massachusetts seniors took the SAT. The state's test-taking rate remains well above the national rate of 43 percent.

Yesterday, state education officials and others cautioned against reacting to the recorded drop in the participation rate, saying it could be statistically insignificant.

"It has dropped, but it is not a concern yet," said David Driscoll, interim education commissioner for the state. "If it becomes a trend over time, then we have to look at it." ■

26. World Today (CNN)

September 2, 1998

Colleges Offer Courses to Fill Corporate America's Hi-Tech Jobs

JIM MORET, CNN ANCHOR: For students heading off to college this fall, many are choosing careers in the healthcare field, followed by business and commerce.

But relatively few are choosing the high technology field, and that could be a mistake, as CNN's Patty Davis reports.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

What does technology do for us?

PATTY DAVIS, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Loyola University thinks technology can do a lot for its students. As corporate America increasingly needs computer

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: I just never really got into it. I am computer literate. But it just never interested me to do that as a major.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: I've got friends who are starting to do that now and they can ask for whatever they want, and they can make as much money as they want. So — but, it's kind of late now, right?

savvy workers, Loyola is trying to fill that gap. It's answer: more courses; and, new this year, a certificate program in information systems management.

PROF. ENRIQUE VENTA, CHMN., MANAGEMENT SERVICES LOYOLA UNIVERSITY: These are jobs that are high paying, in the service industry that make a lot of money. And they are going unfilled. So what can we do as universities to help people move into these fields?

DAVIS: The U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics projects hi-tech jobs, including data base administrators, computer

DAVIS: In the college board's survey, computer and information services rank at the bottom of the list of career choices. Even as Loyola offers more courses to meet the growing job market, its administrators say students should not learn to earn.

NED LAFF, ASSOC. DEAN, LOYOLA UNIV.: The people who stay employed are people who explore their

support specialists, computer engineers and systems analysts, will double over the next ten years. The problem, according to the College Board, graduating high school seniors are not choosing computer careers.

GRETCHEN RIGOL, VICE PRES., COLLEGE BOARD: In 1998, the most popular majors for males were business and engineering, tied at 16 percent. For women, the most popular majors were health and allied services, followed by social science and history.

own interests and find out how those interests fit into the employment niches that are out there.

DAVIS (on camera): As students bypass hi-tech careers, nearly 350,000 jobs for computer programmers, engineers and systems analysts go unfilled. Companies are increasingly turning overseas to fill those open spots.

Patty Davis, CNN, Chicago. ■

27. USA Today

September 2, 1998

PTA lectured about Office Depot deal

By Tamara Henry, USA TODAY

The National PTA is facing a chorus of criticism after agreeing to let a large office-supply chain use its name and logo in back-to-school ads.

Office Depot began using the National Parent-Teacher Association logo about a month ago in TV and radio spots and in in-store advertisements. The fee for the deal was not disclosed.

The PTA's Patty Yoxall says there is nothing improper about the one-year agreement. She says the PTA is not asking its 6.5 million members to support the company or its products.

The PTA has joined with other companies, she says, but "what's unusual about (Office Depot) is the degree of

visibility that this one has."

But Merede Graham, associate director of the advocacy group Center for Commercial Free Public Education, says the PTA appears to be endorsing the company's products.

"I think the bigger issue, though, is what does that mean when the Parent-Teacher Association of America starts to crawl in bed with corporations in terms of the broader issue of commercialism in schools?"

Office Depot has stores in 44 states. Spokesman Gary Schweikhart says each has special coupons, some for PTA members only. In addition, a \$250,000 sweepstakes contest will give 40 schools

across the nation \$5,000 shopping sprees at their local Office Depot stores.

"There's a very fine line to maintain your purity and virginity," Manya Ungar, national president of the PTA from 1987 to 1989, told The Associated Press. "Once you overstep it, I think you open yourself and your organization up, to continue the analogy, to prostitution."

Office Depot's Schweikhart denies that the agreement is similar to one last summer in which the American Medical Association agreed to endorse Sunbeam Corp. products. The AMA withdrew from the deal amid harsh criticism from doctors and consumer groups.

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28. Associated Press

09/01/98

Survey: Ages 12,13 Key in Drug Fight

By LAURA MECKLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - Just as young teen-agers are becoming more exposed to drugs, their parents are losing influence over their lives, according to a new survey that suggests ages 12 and 13 are critical years in the fight against drug use.

Few 12-year-olds know how to buy marijuana or know someone who has used hard drugs, but about three times as many do by the time they are 13, according to the survey from Columbia University's National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse.

"In no other year does a child's access to drugs and attitude about drugs shift so precipitously," said Joseph A. Califano

The survey found those rates increased most sharply between ages 14 and 16, yet attitudes and exposure to drugs change earlier, with the most dramatic differences between 12- and 13-year-olds.

More than three times as many 13-year-olds said they wouldn't report a student they saw using drugs.

A 13-year-old is less afraid of getting caught using illegal drugs and relies less on parents - and more on friends - in making important decisions. Twice as many 13-year-olds have no adult at home

Jr., the center's president and secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Carter administration.

The survey also found that teens think the drug problem is considerably worse than their teachers and especially their principals do. For instance, 78 percent of teens say their schools are not drug free; just 18 percent of principals agree.

And while only 15 percent of high school principals say the school drug problem is getting worse, half of students and 41 percent of teachers believe it is.

"Principals make monkeys of themselves as they reveal their see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil posture," Califano said.

The annual survey found that for the after school.

The survey also concluded:

-Teens who regularly attend religious services are much less likely to smoke cigarettes, use marijuana or hang out with people who drink and use drugs.

-Teens who have never smoked marijuana are more likely to eat dinner every night with their parents and to rely on their parents' opinions. Pot smokers are more likely to hang out with friends after school and less likely to listen to music or do homework after school.

-Teens who use one substance are

fourth consecutive year, teens said drugs were the most important problem they face. And the percentage of high school students who report that drugs are used, sold and kept at their schools continued to inch up, rising to 78 percent this year from 72 percent in 1996.

Overall, 41 percent of 17-year-olds said they had smoked marijuana, while 39 percent said they drank and 23 percent said they smoked in the previous 30 days.

Among 12-year-olds, 9 percent reported drinking in the past month, while just 1 percent said they had smoked recently and 2 percent reported using marijuana.

more likely to use another: Smokers are more likely to drink and use marijuana; pot users are more likely to drink.

The telephone survey was conducted in May, June and July with 1,000 teen-agers, 824 teachers and 822 principals. The margin of error for teens was plus or minus 3 percentage points; for teachers and principals it was 3.5 percentage points.

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29. CyberTimes (New York Times on the Web)

September 2, 1998

Vermont College Experiments With Graduate Internet Programs

by Pamela Mendels

Later this month, 64 adults eager to learn how to use the Internet in business or in the classroom are expected to begin an unusual graduate degree program offered by Marlboro College in Vermont.

If they stick with the course, an intense year-long mixture of online and face-to-face instruction, they will earn a masters degree either in the science of Internet strategy management or the art of teaching with Internet technologies.

By paying \$15,000 per person to participate, they also will have contributed to the financial well-being of a small private undergraduate school that, like many others, has sweated to balance its budget in recent years.

Marlboro officials are keeping their fingers crossed that the institution's first venture into graduate education will prove a money-maker that could cut the school's annual operating deficit in half.

"Marlboro is a traditional liberal arts school, struggling financially," said Paul J. LeBlanc, president of the college and the founder of its new Graduate Center. "It is branching out in this new, interesting but very different way and strengthening itself financially as a result of those efforts."

Like Marlboro, many small private schools are facing financial headaches, and are experimenting with ventures such as graduate programs in physical therapy or business management to help generate revenue. Where Marlboro is taking an unusual turn, said Ann J. Duffield, associate director of the Institute for Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania, is its focus on the Internet as a body of study.

"Courses about the Internet are rather unusual as formal degree offerings from colleges or universities," she said, adding

"I think it's rather exciting."

Marlboro's undergraduate program, with about 260 students, is based in a cozy cluster of white, farm-like buildings off a winding rural road about ten miles outside of Brattleboro. The Graduate Center, in contrast, is located in town in the computer-filled suites of a nondescript office building.

The separation was intentional, said LeBlanc, a former English professor who fell in love with technology as a graduate student and had a programming language accepted to help fulfill his foreign language requirement.

For one thing, he wanted the Graduate Center to be as easily accessible to students who commuted to school as possible. For another, he wanted the program to forge its own identity.

The Graduate Center, which opened with its "pioneer class" last January, is

aimed at working adults who want to be able to advise their companies on how to use the Internet in business, or to work with technology proficiently in an educational setting.

The course of study is practical. In the Internet strategy management program, for example, students are required to take courses about such things as network design, online privacy and Internet marketing. In the teaching with Internet technologies program, they learn about network operation in academic settings and the design of online educational materials.

Much of the coursework takes place

Apparently, the program is finding a market. After launching with 25 students in January, an extra class was created to accommodate 64 students this fall. And the school has already received 50 applications for next year.

This is good news for Marlboro's coffers. The school, with an endowment of about \$2 million, has a budget of about \$7 million a year and a deficit of about \$1.2 million, which has been erased annually in recent years through appeals to donors. By the end of this academic year, the Graduate Center will

via the Internet, but every other week, students assemble at the Graduate Center for nine hours of live instruction. As much as he believes in online education, LeBlanc says that there are some things that are best taught in person. "I wanted that energy and spark that comes from having people together in the same room from each other and their professors," he said.

One of the first students to enroll in the program is John M. Mahoney, a 62-year-old writer, photographer and Web designer who wanted to hone his Internet marketing skills. Living in Stanstead Township in Quebec, Canada, has helped chisel away at that figure by clearing about \$300,000. Eventually, LeBlanc said, the Center should cover about half of the school's annual deficit.

However, some experts warn of potential pitfalls with the new revenue-generating initiatives that colleges are pursuing. "The danger is that you stray so far from your educational purpose that you lose your soul," said Richard A. Detweiler, president of Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York.

But LeBlanc is convinced that this will not be the case with the Graduate

Center. He believes that a liberal arts institution is the best place for Internet instruction, because it can bring a more humane perspective to technology.

LeBlanc, who took a leave of absence from academia in 1993 to create and direct an education technology business unit for the Houghton Mifflin Company, said that although studying the Internet can be a highly technical endeavor, it also requires examination of knowledge itself — how it is created, stored and shared in society. ■

just over the U.S. border, Mahoney drives three hours every two weeks to attend class at the Graduate Center. "I've got every Interstate exit mapped in my head by now," he jokes.

With what he pays for overnight lodgings, food and course necessities such as software, Mahoney estimates that the program will have cost him about \$20,000 by the time he earns the Internet strategy management degree in December, after three semesters of work.

But the expense and time have been worth it, he said. "I have more synapses firing than I have in a long time."

30. Washington Post

September 2, 1998

An Era Slowly Rolls to a Stop

One of the First Students Bused in Prince George's Balances the Opportunities Against the Pain

By Kevin Merida
Washington Post Staff Writer

I returned to my high school recently, hoping to unearth memories from yearbooks I never purchased. But no yearbooks could be found. It's also too late to buy the class ring I didn't want or to attend the senior prom I skipped. And no matter how hard I massage my brain, I can't remember a single white friend at a school that was 80 percent white.

It is quite possible I had no white friends.

Twenty-five years ago, I was among the 32,823 students who were uprooted from their neighborhood schools in the name of achieving racial equality in the Prince George's County public school system. Now that mandatory busing is being phased out — a federal judge approved a settlement in the desegregation case yesterday — I am struggling to resolve contradictory

feelings about that tumultuous period: Why was I so disconnected from Crossland High School, so bitter about being bused there at the time, and yet so fond of my experience in retrospect?

My conflicting emotions about busing, about the price of integration, were revived last fall in a crowded hallway at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring. There, I ran into my former English teacher, Linda Wanner, who looked very much as she did a quarter century ago — blond and cheery and eloquently commanding. Now an assistant principal, she was directing traffic for parents on back-to-school night. It was a jarring sight. I had often wondered what became of this petite, inspired woman who goaded me to write short stories and join the school newspaper staff, who encouraged me to pursue a journalism career.

It would be months before our

schedules allowed us to sit down and revisit the bit parts we played in Prince George's history, when the county finally complied with the Supreme Court's 1954 decision outlawing racial segregation in public schools.

"It was just a moment that needed to be," Wanner reflected, "and it changed the direction of all of our lives. You don't know it at the time. It's only after you look back on it."

Wanner succinctly recalls the directive from Crossland principal John Hrezo to jittery faculty on the weekend before the buses rolled: "We're having busing. These will be our students. We're happy to have them. We will make this work."

And it did work for me and for buddies like Barry Fletcher, now a successful hairstylist in Prince George's, and Wilkins McNair, now a successful accountant in Baltimore. But for some of my friends and peers, busing became just

another slice of chaos in their already unfocused lives. It became an obstacle in the path of education, a reason to let inertia kick ambition's haughty behind.

Over the years, when I would hear some awful news about folks I grew up with — someone committing murder or suicide or losing his mind to drugs — I occasionally wondered whether busing had anything to do with their fate. This was not exactly rational thinking; it was purely reflexive. In my head, I pictured these friends as they were in high school,

Here I was in 10th grade, thriving as a student-athlete at Central High School, surrounded by familiar faces from my Seat Pleasant neighborhood, intoxicated by our rock-and-roll cheerleading squad, loving the vibe of a nearly all-black school (92 percent), even though Central — with its constant disruptions — often seemed hilariously chaotic. Some things you overlook at 15.

Then all of a sudden I'm told I have to give that up? In the middle of an academic year? Hell, in the middle of basketball season. Obliterating my comfort level was a 12 1/2-mile bus ride to predominantly white Temple Hills and its neighborhood school, Crossland. To catch the bus, I had to rise at 6 a.m. You miss the bus and you could forget school for the day. Either stay home or find eight bucks for a cab ride. Sometimes I didn't make it home from Crossland until 6 p.m., after an "activity bus" had slowpoked its way from community to community dropping off the "extracurricular kids."

Attending Crossland was like going to work. And we were the new employees, there for evaluation — all 300 of us. I felt — the Seat Pleasant kids who had beefed up the school's black population from 5 percent to 19 percent.

Some beef.

But that's the perspective of a teenager.

A Long Time Coming

On the fourth floor of The Washington Post building are sets of rolling shelves where they keep the yellowed clippings, the accounts of what went on back when it went on. The articles on school integration in Prince George's County are crammed into skinny brown envelopes that smell like clothes stored in the attic. I hadn't remembered the 15,000 anti-busing protesters who rallied at Rosecroft Raceway in Oxon Hill. Or the artful dodges of local politicians who were afraid to provide leadership. Or the fact that the county police department put its 650-man force on two 12-hour shifts

and when I thought of high school I thought of busing. And when I thought of busing, I thought of what schools were intended to be — community institutions that understood their environment.

My big complaint about busing is that it separates schools from neighborhoods and neighborhoods from schools. My kids attend Montgomery County public schools within walking distance of our home. Their upbringing, in the broadest sense, is dramatically different from mine: They have a United Nations of that first day — just in case.

Enforcing the Supreme Court's mandate to dismantle "separate but equal" school systems for blacks and whites has proven to be difficult over the years. Mandatory busing, in particular, has provoked some of this country's angriest debates. Not to mention some of its scariest moments.

Like other locales that went through this transition, Prince George's County was a cauldron of passion. Buses carrying black students weren't pelted with rocks the way they were in Boston. But there was enough fear and ire over busing here to produce the kind of racial candor you rarely see these days among citizens of good standing. We're talking about families willing to be photographed in their living rooms and quoted by name for all the world to see.

Take Thomas Coats, a retired Air Force engineer from Suitland who had served in Vietnam. He was quoted in The Washington Post as resenting busing's intrusion. His and other white families had worked hard to afford housing in an area with good schools and convenient shopping. "You do all this and what happens; your kid still has to go to school in little Africa."

Sometimes students proved they could overcome the prejudices and stereotypes their parents bequeathed them. Steve Cossett, a white student who transferred from Surrattsville High to Central High, was quoted as saying his new school in a predominantly black neighborhood "wasn't run down like my parents said it was. My parents told us to stay with our own white clique and don't associate with them [blacks] because they are dope addicts, their mothers are on welfare

But when I went home Monday after the first day, I told my parents that Central wasn't like that at all."

Perhaps the most revealing stuff in the newspaper accounts was the unvarnished honesty of kids who were just beginning to realize how racially sheltered their lives had been. Listen to Donald Costen,

friends. The social functions they're invited to are integrated. School is at the center of much of their lives.

They are incredulous that I have no mementos from my high school years, only decrepit basketball stories. They don't hear me talk about classroom remembrances, school dances or lunchtime fun. So I explain to them how I saw high school as a 15-year-old in the fall of 1972.

a black student whose neighborhood junior high in Palmer Park went from 92.5 percent African American to 70 percent white: "We've never socialized with white people before. There's a barrier between us and them. Almost all the black families out here came from D.C., and from childhood we learned to hate whitey."

Many applauded the sweeping desegregation order handed down by U.S. District Judge Frank A. Kaufman in December 1972. Integration, they figured, was long overdue and worth the considerable upheaval.

Prince George's County's reaction to the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling had been to implement a plan of "orderly and gradual desegregation." It was like watching rain dry on porch furniture. In the first year of this policy, the 1955-56 school year, only eight of the county's 104 schools were racially integrated. Nine years later, 80 percent of Prince George's black students were still attending segregated schools. The NAACP and others complained, but the response from top school officials was that this was the way to avoid the dangerous racial confrontations that had beset other desegregation efforts.

But the pressure on the county's school system didn't let up. In 1971, the Nixon administration threatened to cut off \$14 million in federal education funds. And though that threat was later dropped, the following year eight black families — represented by the NAACP — filed suit against the county seeking further school desegregation. It wasn't that the families were thirsting to have their kids educated with whites; they just wanted the same resources, the same quality of schooling for their children that white children enjoyed. This is an important distinction that's sometimes overlooked.

Consider what one of the plaintiffs, Margaret Wheatfall, told Post columnist Bill Raspberry on the eve of busing: "We're not looking for busing. We're not

even looking for integration. Even if we got it, I know they [white people] are gonna run. All I want is for my kids, wherever they are and whoever their classmates, to have the best education Prince George's County can offer.

"To tell the truth — and speaking only for myself — I'd really prefer for my daughters to go to a predominantly black school. I've been to predominantly white schools myself, and I think about things like getting dates, becoming a cheerleader, participating in extracurriculars, getting scholarships.

Science teacher Tom Wysocki, who has taught at Crossland since 1968, recalls that teachers and support staff had gathered in front of the school to greet the new students. One of his colleagues, he remembers, was perhaps a bit overzealous. "He's standing out on the front, yelling 'Welcome, welcome to Crossland!' He had this big booming voice. And these kids were like, 'What's going on? Where's the band?'"

"I remember when we pulled up at Crossland we saw this crowd of white folks and we didn't want to get off the bus," recalls my friend Wilkins McNair. "It appeared we were not wanted. Nobody would move."

The way Wilk remembers the scene, there were students out front as well, some positioned as though they were blocking entrance to the school. "Everybody just sat there [on the bus], and Milton Lucas finally said, '[Expletive] these white boys.' And we said, 'Okay, power to the people.'"

In truth, there were no school-door blockades and no significant disturbances that first day. But there was a heightened sense of anxiety.

"We had to stay together," says my buddy Barry Fletcher. "We had to hold hands in that joint. We saw we were severely outnumbered. It caused me to respect sisterhood and brotherhood."

Neighborhood rivalries began to break down. The half-hour bus ride became a social outing, a bonding session. "It wasn't so much us fighting each other," recalls Fletcher, though in truth there was some of that. "We fought for each other."

The Post reported on some of those fights. One, on Oct. 25, 1973, involved 200 to 300 students and lasted more than an hour. It apparently started when a white student bumped into a black student in the hallway. When the two went outside to settle the issue, black and white students took sides and the incident turned into a fracas.

Crossland always seemed to be

going to proms."

I heard similar reservations in my Seat Pleasant neighborhood of Peppermill Village. There was far more trepidation about busing inside black households than was commonly assumed.

Kaufman wasted no time ruling on the black families' lawsuit. In July 1972, he gave the county a month to come up with a desegregation plan. The county begged for time. Officials argued that it would simply be too disruptive an exercise to carry off for the opening of school in September. So Kaufman granted more simmering, but in retrospect there was probably not as much black-white tension as we believed at the time. As kids who had never seen real racial terror, as some of our parents had, we probably attached too much significance to a small gang of self-described white separatists known as the "Grits," who patterned themselves after the 1950s ducktailed teenagers. In truth, the Grits were about 5 percent of the student population, but because they were showy and aching for confrontation they seemed to represent a greater threat.

Unlike me, Wilk remembers having white friends at Crossland. But the lines of demarcation were such — lunch tables were segregated by choice, blacks and whites hung out separately in the halls — that to advertise such friendships was taboo.

"It was so funny because we would be friends in the classroom, but as soon as the bell rang we'd walk down the hall and not talk to each other," he remembers. "That was the understanding." For black kids who wandered off from the Seat Pleasant clusters, the penalty could be severe. By teenage standards, anyway.

"If we had white friends, we were called Toms, punks, white boys," recalls Wilk.

While the informal patterns of socialization divided along racial lines, school officials were more determined to bring students together than I had remembered.

Wilk, a standout running back, recalls the first post-busing football practice the following summer. White players gathered on one side of the bleachers; black players on the other. Coach John Merricks, who has since died, surveyed the arrangement, Wilk recalls, and shook his head in disapproval: "Gentlemen, we're red, white and gold. We're not black or white. We're one team. If you're going to play for Crossland, let's mix it up."

"For a while, you forgot you were black or white," Wilk says. "You were a

time, but he ultimately lost patience. On Dec. 29, 1972, the judge ordered busing to commence exactly one month later. The appeals reached the Supreme Court, but they proved fruitless.

On Jan. 29, 1973, the buses rolled.

Finding Our Way

"I very vividly remember the day the buses brought the students from Central, Seat Pleasant," recalls Patti Kirk, the Crossland gym teacher who has been at the school for three decades. "I won't say fear, but there was this look: 'What's happening to us?'"

Crossland Cavalier."

In the classroom, there was anxiety among teachers about what to expect from the Seat Pleasant kids. Would they be able to cut it?

"The worst thing you can do is try to teach black kids differently," says Wysocki, recalling a pre-busing presentation from a Harvard professor to that effect. "This is something I've never forgotten. Sometimes I get annoyed when they come up with these programs — 'Oh, here's a new program to teach minority kids.' Well, if it's good for minority kids, it's good for all kids."

At the time, Crossland was one of the top-rated schools in the state — strong in math and science, with a specialty in vocational education.

"It made me get serious about education because it took me out of my comfort zone," recalls Fletcher, "and I didn't realize I needed to be taken out of it."

For Wilk, Crossland demystified white people. "White was always considered right, the best. But when you got a chance to get close to them, all of a sudden they weren't everything you thought they were. You found out you could compete."

The experience, Wilk figures, helped him later when he was a junior accountant at a major white firm. He now has his own firm in Baltimore, with an office in Chicago, and ambitions for more expansion.

For Fletcher, the experience gave him more confidence. He didn't go on to college, but he started cutting hair for neighborhood folks in his basement and caught the entrepreneurial bug. Today he owns a salon not far from where he once caught the bus to Crossland. He's in demand. Entertainers from Tina Turner to Toni Braxton to Halle Berry have used his services.

"Busing was not a mistake," says teacher Wysocki assuredly, "because there were definitely have and have-not

schools. It had a purpose, which was the best way to make things equal. Now, we're at the point where we could go back to community schools."

A Kind of Liberation

The agreement approved yesterday by U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte will gradually end mandatory busing for 11,400 students in the county, allowing them to attend neighborhood schools. Over the next six years, 13 new schools will be built. In 2002 the parties will

In my old Seat Pleasant neighborhood, teenagers still rise early to catch a ride to Crossland. But when they arrive they are surrounded by black faces; not even 7 percent of the student body is white. Thousands of white families deserted the school system as blacks continued their migration into the county. Prince George's schools are now 75 percent African American.

At Crossland, no black kid has to worry about the Grits; if he encounters trouble it's probably because he went afoul of the Temple Hills crew or the Marlow Heights crew or some other black crew.

And no one talks about busing for integration purposes anymore — though 9,400 kids across the county voluntarily take buses out of their neighborhoods to magnet schools. They are the children of parents in search of the best schools — schools where their kids can nurture specific talents and pursue special programs.

When my own kids — who've always attended multicultural schools — remark upon my tragic lack of a yearbook and prom pictures, it's easier for them to see

return before a judge. If they all agree there have been no breaches in the settlement, the federal court will finally say goodbye to the county's school system.

I wish I could get more excited about these developments. I wish the county had ensured that my neighborhood school, Central, was a better place to learn 25 years ago, not a place where one of my 10th-grade English classmates felt comfortable firing up a joint in class and what I lost that first day I went through Crossland's doors than what I gained. For a long time, it was easier for me, too.

But as I grew older and more detached from my high school years, as I traveled and broadened my circle of friends, I realized how liberating it had been to leave my neighborhood — not just physically, but psychologically. Somehow, my dreams got lifted.

I know it's fashionable now to dog busing, to view integration as ruining the connectedness we used to have in black communities; I too miss that. But such retrospection is far too simplistic. Though I readily admit to conflicted feelings about my own 25-mile round trip to high school, I also think about the numerous John Lewises of the world who were beaten, jailed or killed on the road to dismantling segregation. Of how unsung attorneys labored through the night to prepare court challenges so black kids like me could have the same quality learning environment as our white peers. Of how those white peers then had the opportunity to experience the breadth of our humanity.

Should we now think those efforts

blowing the smoke out a window. I would have preferred to graduate from Central — it was hipper, had more cachet — though I'm glad now that I didn't.

Returning to Crossland made me think about what equality of opportunity in education means and where I would have been today without that opportunity. For the kids who are closing out this millennium, busing does not represent what it once did.

were unnecessary, even harmful?

Occasionally, when I pause to assess my life — and consider that my job has enabled me to survey the crumbled Berlin Wall, jog with a president and shoot jumpers with a top NBA draft choice — I wonder whether busing was the linchpin to so many rich and varied adventures. My mother assures me that if I had stayed at Central and strayed at Central, she and my dad would have steered me back on course, found ways to keep me motivated. I believe her. But it is also easy for me to see myself evolving mostly as an athlete at Central, never working for the school newspaper, never being encouraged to develop my writing talent, accepting a basketball scholarship at some small college. And from there, who's to say?

Who knows if I would have been writing this article for *The Washington Post*? What I do know is that 25 years ago a bunch of us embarked on a scary journey that changed our lives forever. And now that a judge has agreed this experiment should cease, I have to say the trip was worth taking. ■

31. Washington Post

September 2, 1998

Judge Ends Busing in Prince George's

By Lisa Frazier
Washington Post Staff Writer

A federal judge in Greenbelt yesterday ordered the end to mandatory busing in Prince George's County, concluding a 26-year-old government effort to desegregate the schools and closing one of the most divisive chapters in the county's history.

During the next six years, busing will be phased out as the county begins building 13 neighborhood schools and refurbishing older ones. Under a settlement to end busing, the school system also will focus on boosting the academic achievement of all students and

closing the achievement gap between African American students and their peers.

In his 37-page opinion, U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte approved the agreement reached in March by representatives of the school system, county government and NAACP, the parties in the lawsuit filed in 1972 that prompted the only federal school desegregation order in the Washington area.

Messitte called the agreement "a fitting denouement to one of the most serious dramas of modern America."

His ruling will change little for county

students this school year. But next year, students will begin going to neighborhood schools as attendance boundaries are redrawn and facilities are built, though parents will have the option of allowing their children to stay in their current schools.

"These are exciting times for Prince George's County," School Superintendent Jerome Clark said. "You're going to see new schools being built in communities. You're going to see the academic performance of our youngsters going up, simply because we can focus our energies and not be divided by this thing we call

court-ordered desegregation."

At the height of the Prince George's desegregation effort, 33,277 children were reassigned to schools to achieve racial balance, and the burden of busing fell evenly among white and black students. But by 1996, nearly 92 percent of the 11,332 students mandatorily bused were African American, many of them

If the neighborhood schools are built on schedule and the government maintains its commitment to county schools, Messitte said, he will close the suit completely in 2002.

Although the judge's decision effectively eliminates integration as the panacea for a quality education for African American students, officials say improvements will take time.

"They're telling me they're going to have improvements, but are they?" asked Minerva Sanders, president of the Prince George's County Council of PTAs. "The key to this is that the quality of education has to be raised, so parents will be comforted in knowing their children will get the education they need."

School officials said they won't abandon their attempts to make classrooms more racially diverse as they search for proven ways to boost the academic achievement of students at all schools.

State and county leaders hailed the judge's decision as an opportunity for the state's largest school system to move ahead.

"This is good news," said Del. Howard P. Rawlings (D-Baltimore), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "The debate and emotion surrounding the busing debate were detracting from the

sent to predominantly black schools outside their neighborhoods.

School board Chairman Alvin Thornton (Suitland) said parents and the community must remain vigilant to assure that the terms of the agreement are kept.

"It really is up to the board and other fiscal authorities, as well as parents and main purpose of the schools — educating students."

Commitments from the county and state to finance the school construction projects made the lawsuit settlement possible. The Maryland General Assembly earlier this year agreed to provide \$35 million a year over the next four years for new school construction.

"It's a tremendous step forward for Prince George's County and the entire state of Maryland to get that ugly chapter in our history behind us," House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. said.

The three litigants began negotiating toward a settlement after a trial on the desegregation lawsuit ended in December.

Both the school board and county government, co-defendants in the lawsuit, agreed that court-ordered busing in a school system that is now predominantly black is no longer useful. The NAACP, however, had asked Messitte to maintain busing in instances where it improved the racial balance at schools.

The litigants resolved their differences with a settlement that will end court-ordered busing while the schools work to improve academic instruction. And the school system no longer has to submit regular reports to Messitte on the racial makeup of its schools and teaching

the larger community, to take full advantage of the opportunities created by today's decision," he said.

As part of the agreement, school officials must develop extensive academic progress reports, with performance data broken down by school, race and poverty levels.

staff.

If by 2002 the three parties agree that the terms of the settlement have been met, Messitte automatically will lift the order and declare the school system "unitary," meaning there are no vestiges of the old, separate system that provided unequal educations for black and white children.

"I just think that's a good resolution," said Patricia Brannan, a lawyer who has represented the NAACP in the case since the mid-1980s. "It think it's taken a lot of effort to get there, but it was well worth it."

Nathaniel Thomas, 17, a Suitland High School student and president of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, said returning students to neighborhood schools will spark more parent involvement.

"I think it's good because it's building the whole concept of communities committed to children," Thomas said. "When a large portion of the school student body doesn't live in the community, it means less participation in the community."

Now, he said, the system can get down to the business of "opportunities and programs and getting the students ready for high school improvement tests." ■

32. NewsHour (PBS)

August 27, 1998

SCANDAL 101

JIM LEHRER: How President Clinton's problems are being treated in the classroom. Jeffrey Kaye of KCET-Los Angeles reports.

A new challenge for social studies teachers.

JEFFREY KAYE: Hollywood is not normally known for its restraint. But that's not the case in classes in the neighborhood's Le Conte Middle School. Social studies classes typically discuss current events, but the sexual nature of the scandal in Washington poses challenges for teachers.

CONRAD LOVO: (speaking to class)

Do you think President Clinton has broken the public's trust right now?

CLASS IN UNISON: Yes.

JEFFREY KAYE: Conrad Lovo has no qualms about discussing the President and Monica Lewinsky with his eighth grade history class as long as the lesson is about government and politics, not about sex.

STUDENT: I think he still should be our president because he did a lot of good stuff to the USA, and it's none of our business. It's his private life, so he didn't have to—

CONRAD LOVO: Do you think that

because he is so powerful, he is the president, he has a right to do that?

STUDENT: No.

JEFFREY KAYE: Lovo says that on the subject of Monica Lewinsky, there's an unstated boundary that he's not going to cross.

CONRAD LOVO: We have not gone into details, we have not, you know, we try to avoid as far as we can, the sexual aspect of things.

JEFFREY KAYE: You don't talk about oral sex?

CONRAD LOVO: Because—no, because it's something that is not, at this

age level, I don't think they're mature enough to identify with it yet. Kids are talking about it outside of the classroom, but it's not something that I want to be the one who is going to be telling them

ROBERTA CASTILLO: I have two groups of kids, and both classes tend to giggle a lot whenever you mention anything sexual, and this is a very sexual nature. I think it would be wonderful to be able to talk about it with the kids, and maybe even have a debate pros and cons. And I would definitely do that maybe if I were in high school, but based on my 6th grade experience, I don't think it's something that I would consider doing with my 6th grade class right now.

JEFFREY KAYE: Because they're just going to get the giggles.

ROBERTA CASTILLO: And I probably won't get much out of them.

JEFFREY KAYE: But producers of Channel One news cannot ignore such a major story. Channel One is a 12-minute commercial news program transmitted by satellite each weekday to more than 8 million students in 12,000 U.S. schools.

ANCHOR: There has never been a day like this at the White House.

JEFFREY KAYE: Like the rest of the media, the staff at Channel One News has every opportunity to report on the titillating details of the Clinton/Lewinsky affair. But, instead, Channel One has covered the story without mentioning the word "sex. Andrew Hill is Channel One's president of programming.

JEFFREY KAYE: You report on a relationship, but you don't report on a sexual relationship.

ANDREW HILL: That's correct.

JEFFREY KAYE: Why is that?

ANDREW HILL: Because we think that basically the issues that are involved within that relationship are probably appropriately of a private nature between the parties involved. We broadcast to an audience of eleven to eighteen-year-olds and really don't think it's appropriate for us to delve into issues that parents and their children may not have gotten into in the privacy of their own home. It's not our job to create an audience of young people going home and asking their parents questions that their parents

about it or discussing such issues in the classroom.

Should the Lewinsky matter be discussed in classrooms?

JEFFREY KAYE: Teachers say that simply aren't prepared to answer.

JEFFREY KAYE: Channel One has stressed its commitment to rumor-free coverage of the scandal.

MONICA NOVOTNY: In the last few months, there have been plenty of rumors and allegations floating around, but Channel One News decided not to report anything that wasn't in the public record. As a result, we've probably covered this less than any other news organization out there.

SPOKESMAN: The Clinton and Monica Lewinsky story —over the weekend, all the talkers were out on the talk shows.

JEFFREY KAYE: This past Monday morning, Channel One executives weighed their options for that day's coverage the Lewinsky matter.

ANDREW HILL: I don't think there's really anything to go with. You know, the stuff that was out is really under a new bar of Internet garbage that's—there's nowhere to go with it.

JEFFREY KAYE: They decided against doing a story that day. Previous segments have focused on governmental and legal aspects of the story.

The Clinton/Lewinsky matter as a teaching vehicle.

ANDREW HILL: It was an easy choice, I think, to turn it into a civics lesson. We're in a school. We're in an educational environment, and there are a lot of things that are important to this story that I think a lot of viewers aren't really informed about to the degree that they should be about the grand jury and what its powers are and how it operates. And actually this Clinton/Lewinsky story becomes an interesting teaching vehicle.

MONICA NOVOTNY: Why if the information from a source is true won't they go on the record?

JACKIE JUDD: There are a lot of reasons that people won't go on the record.

ANDREW HILL: One of the things that we covered last week was a piece on

discussion with children about the Clinton/Lewinsky affair should be appropriate for their age. Sixth grade teacher Roberta Castillo says she would not bring up the subject in her classes. leaks and what they mean. It doesn't mean you don't believe the information, but it does specifically mean that it's probably coming from someone with an agenda.

JEFFREY KAYE: In Conrad Lovo's classroom, students see the Clinton/Lewinsky story as more of a lesson in morality than in civics.

A lesson in morality?

JEFFREY KAYE: What do you think the most important issue is that's coming out of all this?

STUDENT: He lied in court, then they said that he tried to cover up the evidence.

STUDENT: He's supposed to be a role model for the people, and not only he lied to his family, but in the court and to everyone else. And I think what he did was very wrong.

JEFFREY KAYE: These eighth graders also said that the classroom lesson should include discussion about the sexual nature of the affair and not be limited to civics.

STUDENT: We deserve to know about what's going on with the president, not like just adults need to know about it, kids needs to know about it too, because we have to live in a world where he controls most of it.

JEFFREY KAYE: Outside the classroom, teens we spoke to said the sexual aspect of the scandal makes it a personal, not a political matter.

TEEN: If he want to commit adultery, let him. That's his bad.

TEEN: I'd say it's like it's not our business really, and if he's going to have sexual relations with, you know, anybody, it's between him and his family. And I think they're making way too big of a deal over it.

JEFFREY KAYE: These teens on the street and in class agreed the nation's political attention should be re-focused on government. ■

33. Christian Science Monitor

September 1, 1998

Sometimes the Best Track Isn't the Fast One

Carol Jago

SANTA MONICA, CALIF. —

Mention the word tracking in a faculty lunchroom and the temperature rises.

Bring it up at a PTSA meeting and the rest of the agenda will go untouched.

Everybody has a theory to espouse and a story to tell. What is remarkable is that each storyteller is convinced,

In a Council for Basic Education publication, Ruth Mitchell writes that "while research has established that academic ability is distributed evenly throughout all racial and ethnic groups, the lower tracks in schools are still disproportionately populated with Latinos, blacks, newly arrived immigrant groups, and poor white children.... Few today would suggest that this phenomenon - predominantly white middle-class students in the upper tracks and poor, minority, and immigrant students in the lower ones - is still based on perceived destiny."

Upon what, then, is this phenomenon based? Why are traditional, academic classrooms comfortable learning environments for some and utterly foreign territory to others? In an effort to be fair to all their students, teachers purposely ignore differences among them. Treating students identically whatever their color or culture feels democratic. The only problem with this assumption is that curricula and

passionately, that his or her solution is what is truly best for kids. Passion, however, is rarely a sound foundation for textbooks are designed by predominantly middle-class, white, native-English speaking educators for students of the same ilk. No wonder some students are uncomfortable.

We also misjudge students by confusing intellectual ability with speed. Faster isn't always better. But again and again on tests and in class, we reward the one who gets there first. Jeannie Oakes, an education professor at the University of California-Los Angeles and a researcher in tracking, has observed, "Gifted students are often contrasted with those 'who don't get things quickly' or those at 'the slow end.' Such views justify sorting students into groups that could work through material at the same pace."

I do it myself. In 10th-grade honors English I expect students to read 20 books in the course of an academic year. Anyone who has difficulty reading quickly or making time for 30 to 50 pages of reading per night will simply not be able to keep up. Should I slow down? Should I rethink my curriculum so that

policy.

performance isn't so closely linked to pace? What about the sense of achievement that students who do keep up feel in June when they look at the list of books they have read?

I know I am guilty of talking out of both sides of my mouth about tracking, especially when it comes to my own son. Given that James is not a natural scholar, I want him surrounded by peers who come to class on time, respect the teacher, and do their homework. Their behavior will help to modify his.

Unfortunately, there simply aren't enough such paragons to go around. I don't know what system will most effectively ensure that all children have equal access to a rigorous education. I do know that without that opportunity, the waste of human talent may be this country's undoing.

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

34. The New York Times

09/02/98Section: National Desk; Section B; Page 8, Column 3

School Starts on Time in District of Columbia

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1 — District of Columbia schools began their year on schedule today for the first time in three years.

Last year the schools opened three weeks late as roof repairs dragged on. This summer the Army Corps of Engineers was called in to oversee repairs on dozens of buildings.

"What we're trying to do is show Congress that we can do the job and we

can do it well," said the new superintendent of schools, Arlene Ackerman, who has reassigned or replaced nearly a quarter of the district's principals and administrators since she took office in May.

The prompt opening drew praise from parents and politicians.

"We have turned the corner," said Kevin Chavous, a City Councilman who leads the panel's education committee

and is running for mayor in the Sept. 15 primary. A cornerstone of Mr. Chavous's campaign is a call for radical approaches to improve local schools.

Angela Duvall sent two daughters off to school today. The on-time start, Ms. Duvall said, "is a really welcome sign. I was really worried that it wouldn't happen." ■

35. Talk of the Nation (NPR)

09/01/98Section: News; Domestic;

Going Back to School

RAY SUAREZ, HOST: This is TALK OF THE NATION. I'm Ray Suarez.

This morning, my kids were complaining about the weight of their backpacks as we walked to school. I reminded them they were only heavy for this one day. Today, they were weighed down with the packs of school supplies making a one-way trip to the first day of school.

It's a ritual repeated in millions of families around the country — the rising expectations and anticipations, new teachers and room assignments, a list of particular pencils, kinds of paper, and in my household because of the age of my children, crayons and markers.

On the sidewalks outside our local elementary school, there were dozens of mini-reunions, checking in this era of no

tracking whether old friends were going to be in your new class. And we parents made quick greetings to new teachers and other parents. And as the morning progressed, parents cleared out of the classrooms and out of the building and left their children to get started on a new year's work.

My wife and I had made brave declarations at the beginning of the summer about keeping the kids from losing their school-ready edge over the long break. Well, we talked a good game, but beyond successfully keeping reading going all summer, we didn't accomplish that much.

My children and their 450 or so school mates are now getting their habits back. Homework will begin this week. The rhythms of our home will once again conform to the rhythms of the school year. A lot of you have done your back-to-school rituals already. Others will walk through those doors right after Labor Day. What are the best ways to prepare children for that day? What has worked and hasn't worked for you? What have schools done to help children ramp up to the pace needed to cover the curriculum by June?

Marguerite Kelly is with me in Washington. She's a syndicated columnist. Her "Washington Post" column is called "The Family Almanac." And she's the author of "The Mother's Almanac Goes To School."

Welcome to TALK OF THE NATION.

MARGUERITE KELLY,
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST;
"WASHINGTON POST" COLUMNIST,
"THE FAMILY ALMANAC";
AUTHOR, "THE MOTHER'S
ALMANAC GOES TO SCHOOL":
Hello, Ray.

SUAREZ: Our number is 800 989-8255. That's 800 989-TALK.

Well every time there's a debate about reforming the school year, some people make the observation that the summer break is just too long, and it makes the September ritual more difficult than it really needs to be. What do you think?

KELLY: I just can't imagine cutting the school year — making it shorter. I know that it's the biggest trend going now — let's do that. I think kids need that break to just hang. They're way too programmed anyway. I like that time of just fooling around. I really do.

SUAREZ: So a great big chunk of summer rather than several shorter mini-breaks.

KELLY: Yeah, but you know, when the authorities decide to do something, they're going to do it. Then six years later, they're going to say: "Oh, we made a mistake." You know, and then they're

KELLY: I would say after somewhere between October 15 and November 15, you would try to make a move. Sometimes you just have to tough out a

going to change it again so.

But mostly you want to just have the work going in your own house. The homework — let the children handle it all themselves. This is what I don't like to see, is the parents hovering so much. I don't much care, I guess, about how long or how short these breaks are. I want the parents to know that school is the kid's job. And they just oversee it, but they don't crowd them. They don't over-program the kids with after school activities. They let the kids be more. They let them flourish. They let them work up their own imagination.

SUAREZ: Well, teachers themselves have widely different expectations; widely different styles of how to run a classroom ...

KELLY: Sure.

SUAREZ: ... during the day; how to maintain order; how to keep the pace going. And your own child may come home a week from now and say: "Boy, my new teacher — I just hate my new teacher." What do you do about that?

KELLY: You sympathize, the way you always do with your children.

SUAREZ: 'Cause they don't really hate them, they may just not be used to ...

KELLY: No, they don't ... they're afraid of the teacher. They don't think the teacher likes them. That's what. And of course, if your child is seven, you're going to probably get that all year, off and on. "My teacher doesn't like me." "I have no friends." You say, but you've got seven birthday party invitations in the mail in the past month. "That's OK. Nobody likes me."

It turns out that at seven, they really hit a watershed then. It's not talked about much, Ray, but a weak hormone — the same one that hits at about 13 — puberty, right? — it hits around seven. And they get quite moody and they get a little bit up and down and they think nobody loves them.

You just have to hug them and say "now, now." LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: So how do you tell the difference between the sort of run-of-the-mill — "Oh, I hate my new teacher: they're so tough or they're so this or they're too that."

KELLY: Right.

SUAREZ: How do you tell the difference between that and a situation where there may be a real clash ...

KELLY: Real problem.

SUAREZ: How do you tell the difference between that and a situation where there may be a real clash ...
KELLY: Real problem.
year, you know. I'm afraid that teachers are like anyone else. You have some good ones and you have some bad ones. And you have some — a lot — who are

SUAREZ: ... between the kind of kid that your kid is and just the kind of teacher this happens to be.

KELLY: Absolutely. I think you say: "Let's let it go for a couple of weeks and see how it goes. We'll try really hard. Anything that seems to bother her, being there right on time or having the supplies or having the homework looking neat — whatever it is — we'll try real hard and see if she doesn't change."

Usually, all of that goes away. Certainly, it's ...

SUAREZ: So let's try it their way first.

KELLY: Yeah. Certainly, it goes away by six weeks. But if you still have a funny feeling about it and the kid is still complaining, you ask for permission from the teacher to observe for a morning in school, and just see how it is. A good teacher will always let you do that, as long as she knows ahead of time that you're coming.

And a bad teacher cannot hide her mistakes for more than about 10 or 20 minutes. And by the end of even an hour, but certainly by three hours, you can see exactly what the problem is. Just standing on the playground with the teacher there, you can see what the problem is.

And then you have something to go in and talk to her about, both parents if possible, going in and saying: "This is the issue as we see it, and we don't know if you really understand the kind of child we have. And we think — we've found that this particular approach works better. And is there any way you can do this?"

And if nothing comes out of it — if nothing really works — don't hesitate to go and talk to the principal about it, and say: "I think we've got a real problem. I don't think this is ever going to work. I don't want my child to lose a whole year of school, the love of learning and the love of the school. Is there a way that she could be transferred to another classroom in the same grade?"

SUAREZ: But I would think you'd want to accomplish that before too much time has elapsed.

KELLY: Sure.

SUAREZ: There's a sort of tension between ...

KELLY: Absolutely.

SUAREZ: ... moving precipitously ...

KELLY: Right.

SUAREZ: ... and not moving quickly enough.

just in-between, just as you do in any office, you've got the good clerks and the bad clerks and the in-between clerks.

SUAREZ: And good kids and bad

kids and in-between kids, too.

KELLY: Right. Exactly.

SUAREZ: Let's be honest.

KELLY: Let's be.

SUAREZ: A lot of kids and certainly this morning when I was standing on the sidewalk watching all these kids, thinking about doing my job later today, a lot of kids were obviously very excited ...

KELLY: Oh, yeah.

SUAREZ: ... to be back at school. And that's a great thing ...

KELLY: They love it.

SUAREZ: ... when you see a kid who's glad to be back at school. But some kids, you know, watch the calendar moving forward in late August ...

KELLY: Yeah.

SUAREZ: ... and they hate the idea of getting back to school.

KELLY: And I think ...

SUAREZ: What do you do about that?

KELLY: ... I think then you have to really talk with the child and try to figure out what's going on. What's the matter, sweetheart? And you do that talking, by the way, in the dark, after the lights are out, you know. Or taking a walk, but preferably just sitting by the child's bed and just talking, leaving space in your conversation for the child to get out the words to say what's going on.

And I say "in the dark," because a child doesn't make eye contact. The child will tell you much more in the dark or in a car or even on the telephone than he will face to face across a dinner table. SUAREZ: And how seriously should you take those kinds of signals — the reluctance to want to do any planning; the reluctance to talk about school beginning; the feeling that you get — you're getting strong vibes from this kid that they don't want to go back. Of course, they are going to go back. There are mandatory ...

KELLY: Sure.

SUAREZ: ... mandatory education laws and all that. But — and you're going to make them if it comes to that. But just how much — how seriously should you take this?

KELLY: I think you take kids pretty darn seriously, but a lot of it is just giving them the chance to natter — to talk about it; to complain. And then you sympathize, and then you encourage. "And I bet this year you're just going to do great." Now. It's amazing the different kinds of temperaments your children come in. Like grownups, they

SUAREZ: Well, it's a distance learning program and you get the

come in 16 flavors according to Jung.

And there are some wonderful tests — the Myers-Briggs personality index. And it will — you'll read some of the books on this, and you'll see: "Oh, my gosh — that's my kid and he's not a bit like me in his temperament." And you say: "Oh, OK — I understand him. He's just a kid who likes to complain." You know, it's just a thing he does. He doesn't like change or he doesn't like something new.

SUAREZ: And one common complaint that I've heard from talking to teachers over the years is that it takes them several weeks — even the good ones — to get the class sort of all marching in the same direction ...

KELLY: Absolutely.

SUAREZ: ... headed toward June. Now, you get these kids in the door who have been playing ball and they've been on vacation and they've been in camp and they've been with their grandparents and they've just been ...

KELLY: All over the map.

SUAREZ: ... structuring their own days to a great degree. And now everybody has to sort of get behind the wheel here.

KELLY: Yeah.

SUAREZ: Is there anything you can do to short that — that timeline for that teacher? Something that you could be doing at home to help everybody get on the same page back in the classroom?

KELLY: I think it helps a child to know exactly what the goal is. By which month are we all going to be reading this? Or learning this math problem? What are the goals of the class? What are the goals by the end of the year? It's that being up and feeling like they're walking in Jello. they don't know what to expect. They don't know where they're going.

That really helps a child to know what they're doing. It helps a child to know why the schedule for the school day is the way it is, you know. Why we have a snack at 10 o'clock, because it brings up the blood sugar so you have more energy to think at 11:30, you know. They need to know reasons for things. They — children need reasons just as much as you do.

SUAREZ: If you're just joining us, we're talking about the early fall troop back to school. There are some, I don't know, 50 million kids between five and 18 in the country right now. There's a lot of people going back to school during this two week period.

Marguerite Kelly is with us — the programs from Johns Hopkins or Stanford. There's a couple of schools

writer of the syndicated column "The Family Almanac" and author of "The Mother's Almanac Goes To School."

Our number is 800 989-8255. Laura joins us from Rochester, Minnesota. Hiya, Laura.

CALLER: Hi. Say, I have a question for your guest. My son attends a parochial school here in Minnesota, and they are required to take a national standardized test every year. And every year, he brings his results home and it has like a national percentile average and then it has grade equivalent.

Now, I can understand what the national equivalent is, but what is grade equivalent? I've asked the principal and the teachers, and they can't explain it to me.

KELLY: I understand — as I understand it, the grade equivalent is — this is the grade level that your child is operating on. It may be higher than he's placed. It might be lower. It might be the same.

CALLER: OK. Now, it seems like it's sort of ridiculous. OK, I don't want to sound like I'm bragging or anything, but last year my son was in sixth grade and his average grade equivalent was 11th grade, six months.

KELLY: Fantastic.

CALLER: Does that mean that he can be in that grade or what is that?

KELLY: It does mean that if his social level — his maturity, his social maturity, were at 11 grade, six months — and it almost never is. So if you by any chance moved your son up there, he would just feel dreadful. He would feel shorter than everybody. He wouldn't know what the jokes were. They would be driving and he could hardly see over the dash. You know?

CALLER: But what does that number mean, though?

KELLY: It just means that he is — he can do the work in that subject of the 11th grade, six month. And that's great. And you can give him lots of supplemental stuff — lots of books in his particular interest, on a higher level. And you can tie him in with the Internet. I know one little boy in I think it's the third grade in Pennsylvania. And he's way up there too. And he's tied in with a Johns Hopkins program by computer.

CALLER: But what — OK, now, what is that program? Is it like — is it a school on the Internet or?

that do this. And you sort of work along with your computer and you E-mail your

results to your tutor back at the school periodically.

So you get enrichment during the year without having to have an enriched program at school.

KELLY: And have all those social pressures — if I had to make a choice between a child having social pressures that he couldn't handle and school work that would be too easy for him, I'd definitely choose the school work that would be too easy.

CALLER: But if I enrolled him in a class like that, wouldn't that even widen the gap between his emotional maturity and his scholastic achievement even further?

KELLY: I don't think so. I think it would just keep him interested in learning.

SUAREZ: But that's a good question, Laura.

KELLY: The kids that I've seen — I've seen kids do it and they just thrive on it.

CALLER: Mmm-hm. OK. And then is there — do we just contact these schools?

KELLY: I don't know. I know — I remember suggesting it to someone and I said I understand they did it at Johns Hopkins, and then she told me that it was a huge success. She contacted Johns Hopkins on her own.

SUAREZ: It's called "EPGY" ...

KELLY: OK.

SUAREZ: ... EPGY — and you can get it ...

KELLY: EPGY, I'm going to take that down.

SUAREZ: ... you can call Johns Hopkins. It's the Educational Program for Gifted Youth, and you need a computer with a modem or at least maybe access to one at school, perhaps.

CALLER: We have one that at home that we're all hooked up to the Internet and everything.

SUAREZ: Well, there you go.

KELLY: You're on a roll, kid.

CALLER: OK. Great. Thank you so much.

SUAREZ: Thanks, Laura.

KELLY: Bye-bye.

CALLER: OK, bye-bye.

SUAREZ: Bye-bye. Laura joining us from Rochester, Minnesota. Shishon (ph) is with us now from Beaverton, Oregon.

CALLER: Hi there.

KELLY: Hello.

SUAREZ: Hi.

Let them — let children of eight and 10 and 12 try new adventures — encourage them.

CALLER: Shishona. I have an observation and a comment about the possibility of discontinuation of this long summer break. I'm a grandmother now. And I remember first of all when I was a kid, summers were great. They were not just, you know, go out and run and play loose, although there was a lot of that. But summer was a time for a different kind of learning. We went to the national parks. We went on nature walks. We went to camp — just all that kind of thing.

It was a different kind of learning; an unstructured kind of learning; a you know, dip your hands into what — get dirty — kind of learning. And I did the same thing with my kids. And I think that that's very, very important ...

KELLY: I do too.

CALLER: ... very, very necessary, especially to offset the kind of necessary regimentation that's involved in schools; that the child needs both the individuality and the regimentation.

KELLY: I — yeah.

CALLER: Pardon?

KELLY: I was just going to say I agree with you so much.

CALLER: And I'm very, very concerned about this idea of lengthening the school year or cutting the time off into chunks. And I'm going to make a kind of a judgmental statement and then, you know, listen and see if you agree. It seems to me that this reflects a lack of imagination on the part of the educational system in general, that I find increasing; that — that more and more regimentation, less and less experimentation, imagination, creativity going on.

And I'm very, very concerned with it.

KELLY: I share your concern. Shishona, the — one of the things that I find disturbing now, and I think kids are in great shape generally. But their imagination is not as great as it used to be because so much is programmed for them from — they don't know how to have a pickup soccer game because it's already done for them. Everything is arranged for them.

CALLER: Mmm-hm.

KELLY: And I think a shorter school year or breaking it in chunks could — could do as you say and tighten up the imagination and the mental boundaries that kids have been exploring in the summertime.

CALLER: Yeah, I — you test a kid's

SUAREZ: Shishona from Beaverton, Oregon, thanks for your call. Our number is 800 989-8255. I'm Ray Suarez.

creativity. It takes imagination. I was a single working mother, and believe me with two kids, it's real hard to do those alternative things for the summer, but you know, you find lots of camps; you find lots of day camps.

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: And you make sure that they're pretty much unstructured or at least, you know, they allow the child a lot of freedom within a structure because kids do need some structure, but ...

KELLY: Sure.

CALLER: ... I'm really opposed to this idea of ending the summer break. I think it's real important.

SUAREZ: Well, Shishona, I think a lot of those summers that you remember and probably, you know, my summers were very much like yours back then — those aren't really reproducible for today's kids when so many of them have two full-time working parents and their summer is going to be institutionalized just as if they were at school.

It's not that serendipity time where you can wander down to the park and see who's there and get in a game if there's some people you know there; or as we would do in Brooklyn, play for a court when all the courts were full. And then just wander home when you felt hungry.

It's just so hard for a kid to find that kind of loose day.

CALLER: Of course it is, and you know, I'll reiterate what I said. I was a single working parent myself, and those kinds of things were not reproducible for my kids. But I think that with more imagination or something, because I'm looking at my grandchildren — there were more opportunities for my kids when they were young than there are for my grandchildren. There were day camps. There were Bible school camps. There were ...

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: ... overnight Girl Scout camps. There was a lot more available it seems to me than there is now.

KELLY: I think that it behooves parents, even as early as September, to start looking at the following summer and what can we do to plan things to make it a little freer. The trip — one of the things that I think is great is putting an eight-year-old on a plane — a non-stop plane — to go even across country to see grandma. It's not going to hurt. They're not going to get off at St. Louis, you know.

You're listening to TALK OF THE NATION from NPR News.

And Henry's next in Detroit,

Michigan. Hi, Henry.

CALLER: Hi. How are you this day?
SUAREZ: OK.

CALLER: I'm a special-ed teacher here in Detroit and your guest speaker made — referred to teachers as "she" and I think one of the problems ...

LAUGHTER

... we do — we don't have enough male teachers.

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: One of the things I'm concerned about is that I know here in Michigan, 75 percent of the children of divorce are awarded to the wife or the mother. And we have children that go through primary school, as well as most of their lives without a male influence. And we need more men teachers.

KELLY: I agree.

CALLER: And I would hope that you would refer to he or she when referring to teachers.

KELLY: Well, let me tell you that I have a really special reason for doing that. Not only are most teachers female, so I sort of tend to take the sex that — just 'cause it's easier to talk that way, of the majority. But my beloved youngest daughter is a teacher. And I consequently always think of teachers as a "she" because I think of her. And when I have the — a day that I can, I pop up to Connecticut and I'm her aide for the day, which I enjoy.

SUAREZ: You know, Henry in my children's elementary school, there are 17 separate classes from pre-K to sixth grade and there are two male teachers in the school. And it's — it's just — I think your suggestion that we need more is quite true, especially for boys probably in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade ages ...

KELLY: Right.

SUAREZ: ... it would be terrific to have a male teacher around. But it just doesn't seem to happen.

CALLER: I know 'cause I do have a very good friend who's in pre-school education and he does evaluations. And he says his reaction — he encourages them. He walks into a room to do an evaluation — is that he gets looks like: "What are you doing here?"

LAUGHTER

You know — are you, you know, a And so what his right of passage was a journey where he walked each flagstone and stopped at year one and opened his little photo thing and looked at oh, there you are having your first bath and all that stuff, so that by the time he got to five, to the age that he was at, he just had a tangible remembering of all the passages

pervert or a — but I'm losing my battery here. But thank you very much for taking my comments.

KELLY: Thank you.

SUAREZ: Henry joining us from Detroit. We're going to talk later in the week about the school shortage in the United States. But we should talk about the kind of people also who are becoming teachers.

KELLY: One of the things that delighted me most — I have four grown children — and my youngest child was making an obscene amount of money — something like \$1600 or \$1800 a week as an assistant film editor for major movies.

And she sat down and wrote a letter to Bank Street College (ph), which trains teachers, and said: "I am tired of making good money in bad movies. I want to be a school teacher."

And she took all her savings and took out a loan and sent herself to school to become a teacher. And taught for four years in the South Bronx, and loved it. I was — I don't know anything any of my children have done that has pleased me more than that. She really had her priorities straight.

And I — at Bank Street, many of the people there were switching careers. Many were 40 years old; a number of men; and many were lawyers.

SUAREZ: And it's probably, you know, truth be told, Marguerite, a kind of gratifying moment to watch your own children do something selfless and noble. You think maybe I didn't do such a bad job.

KELLY: Well, it's just — just such straight priorities. I think, who needs another violent movie, you know?

SUAREZ: My guest is Marguerite Kelly. We're going to take a short break right now. When we return, we'll take more of your calls at 800 989-8255, as we talk about the beginning of the new school year.

To contact us here at TALK OF THE NATION, you can send us E-mail at totn@npr.org or regular mail. Our address here, TALK OF THE NATION Letters, NPR News, 635 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001. Or visit us on the Web at www.npr.org. Look for the "Your Turn" section if you he'd already been through his pre-school graduation all that kind of thing. And at the end of his path I had woven some yarn across too I think I used like shovel or something stuck up in the ground so I had these two poles and I made a web of yarn and I gave him some scissors and he had to cut through and get through that

want to comment on this edition of TALK OF THE NATION, the day's news, or any NPR program.

BREAK

SUAREZ: Welcome back. I'm Ray Suarez.

Today with the new school season upon us we're getting back-to-school advice for parents and kids. My guest is Marguerite Kelly, author of the national syndicated column "The Family Almanac" and the book, "The Mother's Almanac Goes to School."

If you want to join us our number is 800-989-8255, that's 800-989-TALK.

Betsy's with us now from Berkeley, California. Hi, Betsy.

KELLY: Hey, Betsy.

CALLER: Hi, Ray, thanks for the program. Well, I'm sitting here with my son in his first day of first grade, and he by the way has a male teacher and his kindergarten teacher was a male teacher, for the record this is a Columbus public school in Berkeley.

What I wanted to call about is the — I wanted to share something with the listeners about something that's been very helpful in our family in transitioning into a new school year, which has been doing a right of passage or a ritual usually the day before he goes back, and I started this at kindergarten 'cause it was just such a big step and we all felt it and felt like how, you know, there's so many ways to prepare. You can go visit the classroom, and meet the teacher, and you can talk about gee honey what do you think it'll be like and it's all really good stuff, but I just felt like I needed something more.

So I wanted — I wondered if I could just tell people what we did cause I...

KELLY: Please.

CALLER: ... just think it's a great way for a family to do this. So what I did was — in our backyard we have a flagstone path and it's kind of a curving path and so I took some sidewalk chalk and I printed a number on — from one to five for the five years of his life, and then next to each flagstone I made a very simple little photo album of just like a manila folder that I pasted four pictures in from that year of his life.

barrier so it's that sort of primal mythic thing of breaking this barrier into the new life.

KELLY: Oh, I love it.

CALLER: And on the other side of that there was the gate, the neighbor's yard, and on the gate I'd made a big, you know, just stick figure of his new school

and his picture waving and saying hola 'cause he's in a Spanish bilingual immersion program, and a little boy with a lunch box. And it was just — and he got — he touched the gate it was like he made it he made it through, you know, and then we drank a toast and gave him a little present and it just meant so much to him. He talked about it all year and then this year when it was time for first grade it was like can we do it again.

LAUGHTER

CALLER: So I had to make — I made up a different one for this year. But it's very simple, you know...

KELLY: Yeah.

CALLER: ... and every family can make their own, but the idea, I think, is to review what the last year or the last years have...

KELLY: Do you mind if I steal that?

LAUGHTER

CALLER: Please do it take it. I've actually written an article about it for publication if people are interested they can write me and I can send it to them, but I think you get the idea.

KELLY: Oh, that's just so nice.

SUAREZ: Well, Betsy is this something that you imagined just getting through the younger ages with or can you look down the road and see a somewhat longer flagstone path with...

LAUGHTER

CALLER: Yeah, really.

SUAREZ: ... a sort of "Hon' here's your first razor..."

LAUGHTER

CALLER: Yeah, yeah. Well, I don't think he's gonna to let me stop I think I'm stuck.

LAUGHTER

CALLER: I'm trying to keep the price tags on the gifts low because this is gonna to get expensive over the years...

LAUGHTER

KELLY: But children are such concrete thinkers that's a great thing to do.

CALLER: Well, you know, I think that's exactly right there was something about that walk and the pictures and the — and the kind of adventure he didn't know what was coming he didn't know what was at the end. And I have to say for the record that his first day of kindergarten was so very hard. It didn't like solve everything. LAUGHTER

CALLER: But it...

SUAREZ: Well, Carl, it also has some appeal in places where it gets very hot or very cold because heating and cooling buildings is a tremendous expense for school systems, but it's a

SUAREZ: I'm glad you put that disclaimer in, Betsy.

CALLER: Oh, that's a whole other story.

LAUGHTER

CALLER: If anybody has a child who clung to their leg all morning you're not alone.

SUAREZ: Well, how did the first day of first grade go?

CALLER: Well, I haven't heard yet but all I know is when we came into that school yard the feeling was so different. I felt it from one year to the next that all of a sudden we were among friends. It was exciting it was like oh, a place how you doing Ms. Young good to see you. You know it was so different than that awful strangeness and the bigness of his little pre-school bunny hopping into this huge, you know, wolf...

LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: So by June, if someone asked him, an aunt or an uncle, if you like school he would say yes?

CALLER: He's crazy about it. He loves school. He's very excited about his new teacher a little worried his new teacher wouldn't be as fabulous as his first teacher. I mean, these men — this first grade — I mean kindergarten teacher was a phenomenal person.

So he's off to a great start.

KELLY: That's terrific.

CALLER: Yeah.

KELLY: That's the kind of encouragement every child needs.

CALLER: Right.

SUAREZ: Well, Betsy, thanks for your story and a good idea.

CALLER: Thanks for letting me tell it.

SUAREZ: Betsy in Berkeley, California. Let's go next to Seattle. Carl is with us. Hi, Carl.

CALLER: Hello. Yeah, I...

KELLY: Hi.

CALLER: ... can't hear you very well. My comment was — is breaking up the school year. People often think that you have to end the summer then you've got these little ridiculously short breaks in between. My idea is to break it into three semesters for the whole year with three to four weeks in between each time and I'm back in school and I'm about 50-years-old and I find that that's far better in terms of just use of time, use of facilities, and people can take a little more time in terms of breaking up what tough...

CALLER: Well, I think it would average out because I came from the south and it was actually better to go to school 'cause then you got to be cool,

they had to do instead of trying to think of what you gonna to do for three months you only have to think of what you're gonna to do for one month.

KELLY: Have they...

CALLER: Plus, there's also just an inherent efficiency in that aspect because you can go through it a lot faster. My niece is going to college and she's been going to school through all the semesters and she's actually coming out over a year ahead.

So it works and it works for people who want to get through that, but I — the reason I bring this up about grade schools because I'm finding that it seems that everybody has this inertia against the idea because they go all the way back to the grade schools say: well you can't do it there and I'm saying you have to do it there. You have to do it all the way through the system.

KELLY: I don't know any grade school that does it on that basis, do you?

CALLER: Well, no I'm saying that's the problem, I'm saying...

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: ... that they should be doing that...

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: ... bring it all the way up through the whole system. And so certainly we don't live in a society any longer where you can have those long times off in the summer, I mean, I grew up that way, but you can't walk the streets today like the idea when I was a kid and you can't do all those variety of things for a whole host of reasons.

So that's my comment and...

KELLY: Well, I thank you...

CALLER: ... you know I really would like to see people encouraged to think along those lines instead of breaking it up and certainly you can make those breaks in between, like, you could have a month off at the end of December or the middle of December and so on and so on. I mean, there's no need to tie all this nonsense to the football season, the baseball seasons and that sort of thing.

SUAREZ: Or tie it as it originally was tied to the...

KELLY: To the farmer.

CALLER: Right.

SUAREZ: ... seasons of the agricultural year...

CALLER: We're way past that.

KELLY: Right, right.

because a lot — when I was growing up most of the homes didn't have air conditioning at that time. So I think it's — that's sort of a minimal aspect and I do believe that that would even out over the

course of the entire year, because you're going to be heating or cooling it in one way or the other whether you got people in there or not depending on what kind of buildings you've got and what kind of equipment you've got in there.

KELLY: Well, now I like your idea better than breaking up the summer.

CALLER: Yeah, I mean the idea is to have a long enough time off to where you kind of can rest. That's the real organic issue about why to have a break, and you can sort of leisurely move into your own time scale. And then you've got it coming up, you know, a month away, so you're not really at a complete loss as well what'll I do for my second month of the summer. There's a lot of kids that's where they — they just lose it, you know, they don't know what to do and I think most of the kids really do not have any kind of environment where they can have a lot of the advantages that a well-off parent, family can afford them.

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: What you're dealing with here is a more people who really can not utilize that long-term off and it just becomes an aggravation or worse.

SUAREZ: Well, then of course, you have to do the back-to-school ritual three different times across the year...

LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: ... but of course — you're not...

CALLER: Fine.

SUAREZ: ... climbing as high a rate...

KELLY: It's that darn path you've got to go inside...

CALLER: We certainly have a lack of ritual in our life any way so a little bit more would not be bad thing.
SUAREZ: Carl in Seattle thanks a lot for your call...

KELLY: Thank you.

CALLER: Sure.

SUAREZ: ... and your suggestion. He's obviously thought this through...

KELLY: Indeed.

SUAREZ: ... and it's not a bad idea. La Mesa, California is next. Larry, welcome.

CALLER: Thank you, Ray, and you have an excellent accompaniment with Marguerite Kelly and a tea-whistling telephone interviewer.

KELLY: Thank you.

CALLER: After hearing so many excellent suggestions with creativity all
LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: And how did it go?

CALLER: It went really well. They've returned to a school that they've been at since Tory was in kindergarten and I've

over the place I'm a little reticent to make my suggestion now.

LAUGHTER

CALLER: You know, I was thinking that during the summer instead of, you know, moping around and maybe momma and dad are busy working, you know, to support a home and all of that, I think it would be one heck of a good idea if we had a summer camp for all of the kids, okay? It — up till a certain age. It would be part of the educational system and I think that for it to be done, I think the ladies would be the ones to do it, because you know when you think of it, the school is our alma mater that means "other mother." It's only natural that they being home while daddy is working, generally speaking, that they be the ones to push this thing through. What do you think?

KELLY: That's an interesting idea. That's one more to put into the hopper and brood about when we can't get — when we wake up at two in the morning and can't get back to sleep. Thank you, Larry.

SUAREZ: Well, Larry, the one-third of the audience that listens to this program in the car is now trying to keep control of the steering wheel...

LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: ... as women — as you're suggesting that women run sort of a national civilian conservation corps for kids.

LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: Well, I'm sure it's an eye-opener for many people.

CALLER: Oh, but don't forget that during the summer the kids will be canoeing, playing baseball, and all — learning about the flowers and nature, and best of all, the kind of thinking and learning they will do will be more towards socially, don't you see, getting along together in a society — a civil society.

I really do think that it ought to be thought about and maybe done something about.

KELLY: Thank you.

SUAREZ: Larry in La Mesa, California. Thanks a lot for your call. Renny's next in Worcester, Massachusetts.

CALLER: Hey, Hannah.

SUAREZ: Hi, ya Renny.

KELLY: Hey.

sort of sat on the fence from both sides, I mean, I'm the single mother now, but when he was in kindergarten through the time up until two years ago, I was a very active parent volunteer and I ran

CALLER: Hi.

KELLY: How are ya?

CALLER: How you doing?

SUAREZ: Okay.

CALLER: You know, it's funny listening to Larry. I'm making assumptions from the sound of his voice that he's maybe from an earlier era, because I'm sort of here to comment about the previous caller who was a single mother and who was saying that there was a lack of creativity in terms of programs offered during the summer, and you know, Larry sort of touched on the — a point that's very valid. I mean, when his children were young and maybe even that single mother from before was young 'cause she said she was a grandmother, she was probably a minority single parent and she probably existed in an economy where she was not the typical woman out there working in the field.

You know that most of the mothers where at home being supported and had the time to be parent volunteers and had the time to do these Girl Scout programs and be involved even more in the church than they are maybe now or whatever. I don't think that people don't have the creative ideas I think they're out there earning a paycheck and their paycheck doesn't afford for them to send their kids to nice summer camps even if we'd like to.

KELLY: I don't know many people who actually can afford to send their kids to camp, but they are fortunately a lot of little almost peace meal — piecing it and patching activities together which are nice.

SUAREZ: Well, Renny, did you send kids back-to-school this fall?

CALLER: Oh, yes, yes just last week they started Tuesday.

SUAREZ: Oh, they started during August?

CALLER: They started during August, yes. This was their second week of school. KELLY: How old are they?

CALLER: My youngest is six and — that's Amelia, and my middle daughter is eight, that's Hannah, and my oldest son, Tory, was the one who made me call you today.

LAUGHTER

KELLY: Oh, bless his heart.

programs at the school and I put a lot of effort into and then, you know, two years ago when I broke up with their father I went back to school myself, and now I see things from the other side of the

fence. When I was in there doing all the volunteering I use to almost get upset at the other parents...

KELLY: Why aren't they here.

CALLER: ... thinking why aren't they here.

LAUGHTER

CALLER: So much more could be getting done if they were here and now the reality is, you know, maybe it's not that they don't want to be here but they're just exhausted they've worked long hard days and, you know, I mean it's a different reality and there's more of us in the reality I'm in now than the, you know, situation that I was in previous and I made choices to give up things to be in that situation.

But it isn't where most people have a choice to make.

KELLY: But there always are some choices you can make. I am particularly pleased. I'm always bragging about my kids, but my eldest one has two daughters, one is 10 and one is 14, and about three years ago she didn't feel her older child was reading enough so she started a reading club on Sundays, she's a working mom. Started at her house, boys and girls, and this was sixth graders.

CALLER: Right.

KELLY: It went over very well and I think the main reason it went over so well is cause it was boys and girls.

LAUGHTER

KELLY: And she got a bookstore to give a 10 percent discount and they would get the books or get them from the library...

CALLER: Yeah.

KELLY: ... and they each read a different book every week, talked about it, then the younger one said it's not fair there's no book club for me so now there's...

CALLER: You had to start another one? It snowballed.

KELLY: But I know — but there are two book clubs back to back on Sunday afternoon and into the evening and they have cookies and Cokes and...

CALLER: And...

KELLY: ... it's a great social as well as a literary experience.

CALLER: Well, then it sounds like an absolutely wonderful thing that she's able to do and it always impresses me when there are women like her that are

Isn't the short answer simply this: make school available year round those who believe they can do better are free to do so, those who want to use and improve this resource are also free to do so. For us, school is not a necessary evil

able to balance everything and I maybe felt there was a time when I was one of those women, but sometimes you get on this treadmill and you're running and running and you're trying to make a difference...

KELLY: Sure.

CALLER: ... and if somebodies not jumping on that bandwagon with you you can get burnt out just like a teacher sometimes get burnt out.

KELLY: And of course there are times in your life when you can do this and other times when you say, oh not...

CALLER: Well, it's somebody else's turn.

KELLY: ... yeah, it's not my turn.

CALLER: But, you know, I guess what I'm saying is that we shouldn't hold it against the people who are in situations where they don't feel like they can be doing all those things and not that they don't see that they need doing it's not that they don't feel as if they'd like to, and maybe some people just don't even think of them maybe there is a lack of imagination out there I don't, you know, negate her point.

But I think sometimes it's economy driven it's...

KELLY: I agree with you.

CALLER: ... the reality of the world we live in now...

KELLY: Sure.

CALLER: ... a different place.

SUAREZ: Renny, have a great school year.

CALLER: Thank you.

SUAREZ: Best to your kids.

CALLER: And I'm going to school to be a teacher by the way.

LAUGHTER

KELLY: Oh, wonderful.

SUAREZ: Good for you.

KELLY: Terrific.

CALLER: Have a great day. Thank you.

KELLY: Take care.

SUAREZ: Renny with us from Worcester, Massachusetts. I'm Ray Suarez. You're listening to TALK OF THE NATION, from NPR NEWS.

These items from the e-mail bag. Brian writes from Columbia, Missouri: The common denominator for children who "have it all;" support at school, a creative life outside the school, has a parent with significant amounts of time. it is our greatest resource.

KELLY: Very nice.

SUAREZ: And, you know, it can be and it is in many places in the country open six days a week open after 3 o'clock, a place that's sort of a power

I'm a man, I stay at home with our two-year-old. My sister stays home with her one-year-old. My brother's wife stays home with her two boys. It's a sacrifice financially but that's what parenting is about. Why aren't more parents making this obvious choice?

John writes from Medford, Massachusetts or should I say Medfed to be more local: I'm an inner city high school teacher in the Boston area and one of the things that bothers me the most is the since of martyrdom that's attached to teaching especially in the inner city. As your guests said her daughter traded in her lifestyle to teach in New York, this is admirable, however, those of us who teach do so because we love it...

KELLY: Absolutely.

SUAREZ: ... we do not want people's sympathy. I love my profession and I'm proud of what I do. It's truly sad that people feel for whatever reason that those who teach are some how unable to make an honest living in the private sector or are somehow making a great sacrifice in order to be a teacher.

We teach because we choose to do so and I wouldn't do anything else.

Gugermo writes from Coopertino (ph), California and — you see these smart people out here who listen to this radio show: Hello, Ray, EPGY is not at Johns Hopkins but at Stanford, but they're connected with the Johns Hopkins program.

Their program is called the Institute for the Advance — Academic Advancement of Youth, IAAY at Johns Hopkins University. The website for EPGY is <http://hypatia> — which is h-y-p-a-t-i-a.stanford.edu/epgy, e-p-g-y/ and their e-mail epgy-info@epgy.stanford.edu. So go to the Stanford website and it's epgy@stanford and iaay@johnshopkins. These are the enrichment programs for elementary school kids.

And finally, G. Haselbrink writes: In our community school provides the best resource for our children. When it's closed for summer many children and their parents simply lose their best opportunity for learning and enjoying activities and this valuable resource is seriously under utilized.

plant for a neighborhood...

KELLY: It should be the whole community center.

SUAREZ: Marguerite Kelly the writer of "The Family Almanac" syndicated column, author of "The

Mother's Almanac Goes to School" is with me in Washington and Judy is in Miami, Florida. Hiya, Judy.

CALLER: Hi. I've been holding on my drive home from my second day of my 30th year of teaching in downtown Miami in an inner city school.

KELLY: Bless you.

CALLER: And my point to you, Marguerite, is part of these 30 years of teaching I was also a single mother and in my day and age I didn't have a whole lot of choices as a female of what profession to go into.

I love teaching, but I wonder if your daughter would have been able to make that choice had she not had a lucrative position in the first place? There's no way that I could have switched professions even if I wanted to. We would have become homeless.

KELLY: Well, I think that the reason she could go to the school without having a very long term debt was because of her savings. But I — but teaching itself, that was a choice she felt that she could make

should make. She just stuck with it.

CALLER: But my point is though that most of us who go into teaching from the beginning don't have the choice of switching to something because the amount of money that we make is barely enough to have savings if we're raising...

KELLY: Right.

CALLER: ... a family, which is one of the main reasons why men, who are the primary bread winners, can't go into it unless they start out with a lot of money.

KELLY: Yeah...

SUAREZ: Well, Judy, we're going to continue that conversation later in the week when we do a program on the teacher shortage, so I'm glad you called. Judy in Miami, Florida.

Ann in Elizabeth Town, Kentucky wants some quick advice on television, Marguerite.

KELLY: Right.

SUAREZ: How do you limit it or should you even limit?

KELLY: No TV on school nights, sweetie.

SUAREZ: Really?

KELLY: I don't do it.

SUAREZ: That cut and dry?

KELLY: That cut and dry. And no Internet play either then, that's just for school work.

SUAREZ: Well, thank...

KELLY: I'm a toughy there.

SUAREZ: Yeah, you are. Thanks for being with us.

LAUGHTER

SUAREZ: Marguerite Kelly is author of the nationally syndicated column "The Family Almanac" and the book, "The Mother's Almanac Goes to School." She joined me here in Washington's Studio 3A.

Tune into TALK OF THE NATION at this time tomorrow to talk about the nation wide teacher shortage. How it's effecting the quality of education and what school systems are doing to attract new teachers.

In Washington, I'm Ray Suarez. NPR News. Have a great school year.

■

36. Morning Edition (NPR)

09/01/98Section: News: Domestic;

Homework

As school gets underway across the country, children and parents will have to start dealing again with the nightly ritual of homework.

BOB EDWARDS, HOST: Some children have begun the new school year. Whether returning students prefer reading, writing or arithmetic, they're usually in agreement about homework.

MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT #1: I do not like it. It's a big, fat waste of my time, 'cause once I'm finished, I have no time to watch any TV and I have to go eat dinner and then go to bed.

FEMALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT #1: I think that homework's great and it's preparing you for the real world out there.

FEMALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT #2: Sometimes it's OK, but sometimes it's too hard, and then if your

I firmly agree with those academics who have continuously been calling for reform. And I believe standards should be raised at all grade levels. I was more than satisfied with the superior education my daughter received in the public school system. I can recall two particular homework assignments which significantly shaped my daughter's

parents are those working parents, they don't always have time to help you and stuff.

FEMALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT #3: I hate it.

MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT #2: Man, I'll be getting English homework. Then I'll be getting math homework. Then I'll be getting Spanish homework. Then I'll be getting science homework. Man, that's like 20 pages right there.

EDWARDS: These children aren't the only ones with opinions on homework. Two teaching veterans, David Davenport and Alvin Samuels have their views. Samuels says it's an integral part of the U.S. educational system.

ALVIN SAMUELS, HISTORY academic development. As a contributor to a project in which my daughter investigated the growth of mung beans under different treatment conditions, I witnessed her application of the scientific method — a process that she would greatly build upon and utilize during her years as a psychology major in college.

TEACHER, GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL, NEW YORK: As a high school history teacher entering my 30th year in the New York City school system, and as a parent of a daughter who graduated from the public schools, I have become witness to a decline in its effectiveness and success, and recognize the strong necessity for far tougher academic standards for our children.

Over the years, I have become increasingly cognizant of the fact that those students entering high school unable to read, write and perform basic mathematical skills are far too numerous to mention. We perform a huge injustice when we promote failing students. And we do a great disservice when we expect less from our children instead of more.

When our family collaborated on a project to design and construct a newspaper from the days of the Spanish-American War, the library research skills involved in the creation of a periodical such as blocking, printing, editing — in addition to the historical research for this project — provided the foundation and confidence for all future

research papers in college.

Projects such as these stimulated my daughter to exercise her mind outside of the classroom in creative and meaningful ways. I believe that this very same standard of academic education should be maintained for each and every child experiencing our school system.

The chancellor of the New York City Board of Education mandates all students receive between two and three hours of homework each school day. I firmly agree. It is of vital importance for students to complete assignments independent of the classroom. And it is even more vital that parents take an interest in and encourage the same.

If both teachers and parents take an active role in expressing the importance of education, then more than likely their children will prove to be successful members of society. Our children are our future. If we care about their success in the 21st century, we must impose far tougher academic standards.

DAVID DAVENPORT,
PRESIDENT, PEPPERDINE
UNIVERSITY: I've known since our oldest child entered school that I was different from the other parents. At back-to-school night, when a teacher announced that he did not believe in a lot of written homework for first graders, I applauded alone. The other parents turned to stare at me in disapproval.

A few years later, frustrated by the hours of homework our three children were bringing home each night, I wrote the principal to tell him that I felt like my relationship with my children during the week was essentially that of a homework monitor, and I resented it. Nothing,

however, changed.

Now, our oldest child is in high school, where I would expect and support homework, of course. But last June, when our 11th grade daughter got a list of reading and writing assignments to complete during the summer to earn college credit — she is only 15 — I finally figured out my real objection. For most kids, mere acceleration of learning does not enrich his or her education and it can well be counterproductive.

Pressing students to learn to read at age three or four, instead of five or six; or studying geometry in the eighth grade instead of 10th, doesn't necessarily make them smarter and it may rob them of time for other kinds of experiences that would make them better adults. Let's take the idea that top juniors in high school might take an American history course sufficiently rigorous that they could pass an advanced college placement exam. The sales pitch for the course is that it is a way to get college credit inexpensively, and also enable the student to take a lighter load in college or perhaps finish early.

But thinking back to my own educational experience, I remember that we studied history in elementary school, again in junior high, and then again in senior high school — learning more each time. In college, the course involved reading multiple authors and taking a more critical view of history.

I have to wonder if my 15-year-old daughter's understanding of American history is enriched by taking a college-level course now, rather than taking both the high school and college courses in their proper time. I doubt it.

In short, I believe we have confused acceleration of learning with enrichment.

Pushing kids to earn college credit is only the culmination of a series of misguided accelerations in children's educational lives. We have friends who worry at birth whether their child will get into the right preschool. And my own children have been nearly buried in well-meaning, but high-pressure acceleration opportunities of every kind. They feel stressed and I feel cut out of their development. The notion of free time for family, church or other enrichment is all but lost.

My plea to parents is this: Don't be seduced by mere acceleration. Summer school might be right for your child, but so might a long train trip with dad and mom or a visit to grandma. Doing homework every night might not be as important as going to a Bible study class or to Girl Scouts. Working in an ice cream store or volunteering at a hospital might be as much of a learning experience as collecting six units of college credit in the 11th grade.

I doubt that either our workforce or our society will be better off with people who did all their homework and attended summer school but never had time to grow and develop in other ways.

EDWARDS: David Davenport is president of Pepperdine University and the father of three. Alvin Samuels is a high school history teacher at Grover Cleveland High School in New York. He has one daughter.

Thanks to Youth Radio for its assistance. ■

TRADE

37. Education Daily

September 2, 1998

SAT Math Scores Rise, Verbal Scores Stagnate

by Eli J. Lake

The average Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) math score for college-bound seniors rose from 511 to 512 this year, the highest mark in 27 years, the College Board announced yesterday.

But verbal scores remained stagnant at 505, just 6 points above the record lows posted in 1991 and 1994.

College Board President Donald Stewart says the mixed results for the 1.2

million students who took the SAT may stem from greater emphasis on math and science courses in the nation's secondary schools, and an increase in the ratio of test-takers for whom English is a second language.

"We can point to increased math and science study as one reason for the current high in average math score, but the rock-steady verbal is more difficult to explain," Stewart said.

But while the College Board sees more students being steeped in math instruction, critics simply see more test-takers using calculators rather than relying on basic skills.

Starting with the 1993-94 academic year, the College Board allowed students, for the first time, to use calculators on the tests. Since 1994, math scores rose from 504 to 512.

Seppy Basili, executive director of

pre-college programs for Kaplan Educational Centers, believes the rising math scores have a lot to do with the board's new calculator policy, especially since most high school math courses from the mid-80s let students use calculators on exams.

But the College Board disagrees. Gretchen Rigol, the board's vice president for guidance, access and assessment services, said yesterday that "when we introduced calculators, we took great care to make sure the test-taker did not need to use calculators to answer the questions."

The National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest), the board's most outspoken critic, agrees with Rigol. Bob Schaeffer, FairTest's public education director said, "the only advantage calculators give students is to check their work."

Rich And Poor Remain Separate

The chasm between students in the suburbs and the cities, as well as those who are from rich and poor families, narrowed slightly this year, but still is wider than 10 years ago.

In 1988, suburban students scored 14

and 15 points higher than the national average in the math and verbal SAT sections respectively.

In 1998, those scores jump to 17 and 20 points above the average.

In this same period, students from large cities have seen their scores drop further. In 1988, this population scored 11 and nine points below the average in verbal and math.

In 1998, the scores dropped to 13 and 11 points below the average.

Still, urban kids did one point better on math this year than in 1997, when they scored 12 points below the average. Their verbal scores in 1997 and 1998 were the same.

FairTest's Schaeffer attributes the rift partly to the extra money richer families spend on SAT preparation courses.

This subject is a particularly sore one for the board, which —until somewhat recently —claimed the test measured aptitude and that no amount of test preparation would increase SAT scores.

Since 1994, the College Board has changed its tune. Today, it acknowledges the test measures reasoning skills, and that some preparation may result in a tiny

increase in test scores (ED, March 30, 1993).

However, "There is no evidence that there are major benefits from shelling out hundreds of dollars and spending several Saturdays on SAT coaching," Rigol said, citing "numerous studies."

Women, Men Get Closer

Women averaged 496 on their math scores, while men averaged 531. The gap is not as wide for verbal, where women averaged 502 and men averaged 509.

In 1988, men averaged 38 points higher on the math test than women and 13 points better on the verbal. While women are closing the gap on the verbal scores, they remain 35 points behind men on the math tests.

Rigol says the math gap remains between women and men because more women are taking the SATs today than they were in 1988. Today, women make up 54 percent of the test-taking population.

For more information, write Jan Gams, College Board, 45 Columbus Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10023, (212)713-8175; Internet, www.collegeboard.org. —Eli J. Lake■

38. LRP Publications

September 1, 1998

College Entrance Exam Scores Signal Improvement in Student Performance

There's good news for educators concerned about student achievement: scores for the American College Testing program remained steady this year despite a record number of high school students taking the entrance exam for postsecondary institutions.

ACT, the Iowa City, Iowa, non-profit group that measures the scores, said 995,000 students -- about 60 percent of America's entering college freshmen -- took the exam, an increase of 35,000 over 1997.

The fact that the national average score has remained steady or increased slightly, while the tested population has grown, is a positive trend, said ACT president Richard Ferguson. "Whenever there's a substantial increase in the number of students tested, the additional students must be at least as well-prepared as those tested earlier or the average score will drop."

ACT said the average composite score was 21, the same as last year and

up from 20.6 in 1989. By gender, males scored an average of 21.2 and females, 20.9. In 1990, the scores were 21 and 20.3 respectively, indicating that the gap between the sexes is closing.

Ferguson attributed the trend in ACT score averages to the fact that more high school students are taking higher level academic courses. "This period of steady or increasing scores coincides with nationwide efforts to emphasize the need for more demanding college-preparatory coursework," he said. "That emphasis seems to be producing results."

Ferguson stressed that simply taking a certain number of courses would not prepare students for college. "It's a matter of taking the right courses in each sequence, especially the higher level courses," he said. "Students need to know that each sequence is like a ladder they can climb as high as they like, each rung representing greater chances of later success."

ACT studies also showed students

need more assistance with career planning, because many of those in school had "aspirations...out of sync with the jobs that will be available for many of them," Ferguson said.

Despite the huge growth in computer engineering and science jobs available, most students still sought careers in health, business or social sciences such as psychology and law. Only about three percent of this year's college-bound high school graduates picked computer and information science as their first vocational choice.

"These percentages haven't changed in ten years, yet the outlook for the computer field has changed dramatically," Ferguson said, noting that educators, parents and policymakers should do more to help students prepare for life.

"We need to help students start their career exploration at earlier points in their development -- at least as early as the eighth grade," he said.■

39. LRP Publications

September 1, 1998

Administration Urges Congress to Pass High Hopes Initiative

Vice President Al Gore yesterday urged lawmakers to pass a Clinton administration initiative partnering education and corporate leaders to guide students along a college-bound path.

"It's time for Congress to pass our High Hopes Program, which brings colleges and businesses together to provide mentoring and tutoring to young people so they stay in school and study hard for college," said Gore. "It gives them the support, the inspiration and the hope they need to succeed."

Education Secretary Richard Riley said the High Hopes initiative would give middle school students the academic

Meanwhile, the Republican Congress so far has refused to fund the High Hopes Program along with the rest of Clinton's new education initiatives.

guidance they need to realize that college can be a part of their future. Many students and families are unaware of the importance of taking core subjects, such as advanced math and science courses, in middle and high schools to prepare for college entrance exams, he said.

"Students who take high-level courses, including trigonometry, calculus and physics, in high school have a tremendous test advantage," Riley said. "Our challenge now is to get all students prepared for postsecondary education. Research shows that students are more likely to go to college when they receive Much of the funding for the administration's education agenda was to come from an expected tobacco settlement. However, since a settlement

early information about the right courses to take."

Under the proposal, an initial investment of \$140 million in 1999 would be used to establish a program in a single sixth- or seventh-grade class. An incoming class would be added each year, with a five-year goal of serving more than a million students in 2,500 middle and junior high schools. The program would target at-risk youth and provide mentoring, tutoring and other services to encourage them to stay in school and continue on to college.

deal fell through earlier this year, GOP lawmakers now maintain that not enough resources exist to support Clinton's proposals. ■

40. Education Daily

September 2, 1998

News Briefs

by Rebecca S. Weiner

Pa. Court To Hear Voucher Case: A Pennsylvania judge will hear arguments today over whether a school board has the authority to use public funds to pay for students to attend private and religious schools.

Giacomucci v. Southeast Delco School District (98-5805) —which will be argued before the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas —is one of a

number of school voucher cases making its way through state and federal courts.

The district's school board voted unanimously in March to use public funds to pay tuition for any student within the school district who wants to attend a public or private school (ED, April 17).

A coalition of education and civil rights groups and parents filed suit to overturn the school board's decision. The

district estimates it will cost at least \$1.2 million to fund vouchers for children already enrolled in private schools.

The Washington, D.C.-based People for the American Way, which is representing the Pennsylvania parents, filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court Monday to fight a voucher program in Milwaukee, Wis. (ED, Sept. 1). —Rebecca S. Weiner ■

41. Education Daily

September 2, 1998

Prisoners Help South Dakota Wire Schools To Internet

by Jonathan Fox

In South Dakota's Brandon Valley, workers busy wiring the county's four schools to the Internet toil six days a week, 10 hours a day, making \$3 a day.

They aren't standard cable technicians: They sport orange shirts with "D.O.C." on the backs —short for Department of Corrections —and each night, they're bused back to a nearby prison.

As non-violent prisoners, they've been

selected for a unique venture dubbed "Wiring the Schools," which has saved South Dakota schools millions of dollars in telecommunications costs. The program also has won praise for teaching inmates in-demand skills.

While state educators and parents originally were skeptical about the idea of inmates working in schools, the advantages of doing so have largely won them over.

"They're very professional," said George Gulson, schools superintendent of Brandon Valley County, a suburb of Sioux Falls. "If someone told me five years ago that prisoners would wire our schools, I'd probably have said, 'No way, that's not possible.' But I've been proven wrong."

The Price Wasn't Right

Two years ago, the state faced paying an estimated \$100 million to connect its

schools to the Internet and update other wiring. It was Gov. William Janklow's idea to use inmates, who already performed maintenance duties at state fairs, in the state capitol and on state roadways.

Since then, 12 crews of seven inmates —10 all-male, two all-female —have installed state-of-the-art telephone, cable, electrical and Internet services in schools.

The result, according to project director Ray Christensen, is that classrooms, libraries and computer labs in South Dakota's 650 school buildings will be wired by early 1999 for a total cost of roughly \$12 million.

The crews are carefully screened. Only convicts serving time for minor, non-violent offenses, such as fraud, petty drug charges and check forgery, are permitted in the program.

Because South Dakota has wired schools without using funds from the controversial \$1.28 billion e-rate program, the state also has saved itself a lot of time. "The e-rate has slowed the pace of technology because it's caused

The state provides labor and materials, while schools feed and house the working inmates. Often, if they are too far from their prisons, the workers are allowed to sleep in school auditoriums or in rented trailers.

For the most part, the prisoners like the labor because it makes hard time fly by quicker. "Most of them think it's great," Christensen said. "It's better than being in jail."

The prisoners stay in line, he said, because one infraction puts them back in regular lock-up. Incidents have been few, with one prisoner "walkaway," who was found two days later, and another who attempted to go to the prom with a high school girl that was infatuated with him.

A Second Chance

The initiative also has won acclaim as a rare rehabilitative success story. "Schools to wait," Christensen said. "Schools are really disgusted with what has happened."

Now that the South Dakota classrooms are wired, the schools need to figure out what to do with the new technology.

Although official records aren't kept, Christensen estimates that at least 30 inmates in the program have gotten jobs as electricians after leaving prison. Two electrical firms have standing offers to recruit any program veterans who leave prison, he said.

The attitudes of convicts who work in the program often improve dramatically, Christensen. Inmates usually have backgrounds in which they received little respect, he said. In the schools, though, inmates get much-needed respect, which helps them mature.

One inmate who worked in the program told Christensen: "It's really scary when prisoners get out of prison. I was really scared before about what I would do, but now I know I can make it."

"We'll be able to connect all of our classrooms to the [district] mainframe," Superintendent Gulson said. "With the wiring of the schools they'll be able to do research in the rooms." ■

42. Education Daily

September 2, 1998

Senate Panel Proposes Few Education Hikes

by William J. Cahir

The Senate education spending subcommittee yesterday passed a bill that would increase spending for **Education Department** programs by \$1.5 billion next year, about \$400 million more than a House spending plan.

But in passing the as-yet-unnumbered plan by voice vote, the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee temporarily skipped contentious policy debates on bilingual and special education.

The bill would provide \$30.95 billion in fiscal 1999 for ED, up from \$29.4 billion now. The full Senate Appropriations Committee plans to vote on the plan Thursday.

The House education funding bill, H.R. 4274, would level-fund Title I grants at \$7.49 billion, while yesterday's Senate plan would provide a \$271.7 million increase for Title I, to \$7.67 billion next year.

Like the House bill, however, the Senate bill would provide significant funding for Pell Grants and special ed. but for few other programs. Specifically, the bill would:

- * Raise the maximum Pell Grant by \$100 to \$3,100, fulfilling President Clinton's request. The administration estimates the change would increase Pell Grant spending by \$250 million, to \$7.59 billion over-all;
- * Increase special ed state grants for school-age disabled children by \$499 million, to \$4.3 billion, while boosting overall funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to \$5.3 billion overall; and
- * Provide \$151 million for "a new program to combat the increasing incidence of school violence," according to a bill summary that offered no further details.

Senate spending lawmakers yesterday tried to avoid rocking the boat when it came to funding other education and labor programs.

For instance, the House proposed cutting funding for Goals 2000 in half, from \$491 million to \$245.5 million, and letting states spend that money — normally targeted at helping them develop their own ambitious academic standards — as block grants.

Instead, the Senate would increase funding for Goals 2000 by \$5 million, to \$496 million.

The House bill would cut \$50 million

from the Eisenhower professional development program, but the Senate would level-fund the teacher training program at \$335 million.

And the Senate panel voted to level-fund the summer jobs program at \$871 million, whereas the House bill would eliminate the program.

The Senate's proposal also would:

- * Increase funding for education technology grants by \$39.4 million to \$623.5 million, but falls \$97.5 million short of the administration's request;

- * Raise Impact Aid funding by \$2 million, to \$810 million, ignoring the House proposal to add another \$40 million;

- * Increase Work-Study funding by \$70 million, to \$900 million; and

- * Level-fund bilingual education at \$354 million, while refraining from limiting the duration of bilingual ed to two years, as proposed by the House.

Deferring Rancor

Unlike the House, the Senate education funding bill does not contain any provisions to eliminate the 45-day limits on alternative placements for disabled students who are deemed dangerous to themselves or others, or

commit weapon- or drug-related offenses at school (ED, June 24).

Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., said he would offer an amendment on the Senate

floor to give schools greater latitude to discipline students with disabilities, but he did not offer specifics.

Also unlike the House bill, the

Senate's measure would not require schools to place anti-smut monitors on computers purchased with federal money.

—William J. Cahir■

LOCAL

43. Philadelphia Inquirer

September 2, 1998

Why teachers are staying away from Phila. schools

Low salaries are a factor. What may outweigh them: Rigid policies and politics.

By Dale Mezzacappa

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER Page A1

Heidi Butt didn't have to go far to find her dream school.

It was just two blocks from the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned her teaching degree. University City High School had what she wanted: hundreds of needy students who appreciated what she brought to a classroom.

"The first day, I thought, who am I, this privileged white girl coming in here? But the students embraced me," she said.

Butt, 23, was invigorated by the four months she spent student-teaching biology and math at University City, a place that typifies the problems and promise of inner-city education. She occasionally had a roach in the classroom ("We'll dissect it," she teased), and pondered why so many perfectly bright 16-year-olds had trouble doing simple math problems. But things like that just made her more determined. She loved the students, loved the principal, loved the staff she worked with.

To be sure, suburban districts were pursuing her, with her bachelor's degree in biology, minor in math, certification to teach both, research experience, and Penn master's degree.

And the highest score on the city's test for new biology teachers.

But the factors that lure so many top teaching prospects to suburban schools — higher pay, lower taxes and better working conditions — did not entice her.

Despite all this, Butt will not be teaching at University City this fall. Or anywhere else in Philadelphia.

She will be at Wissahickon High School in Montgomery County, facing students taking physical science and honors biology.

What happened to Heidi Butt is an example of a national phenomenon:

The most qualified, sought-after teachers typically do not end up in classrooms with students who need them the most.

Instead, poor inner-city minorities are most likely to get the underqualified teachers, often without either a college major or minor in the subject they teach.

While poverty is blamed for the low academic achievement of most inner-city students, evidence is mounting that exemplary teaching has at least as much influence on student learning as family circumstances — and well more than smaller class size.

Just last month, a prominent education advocacy and research group released a report summarizing studies in Texas, Tennessee and North Carolina showing that the gap in standardized test scores and other achievement measures between low-income minority students and others could be narrowed with comparable teachers.

"If we went further," said Kati Haycock, director of the nonprofit Education Trust, "and assigned our best teachers to the students who most need them, there's persuasive evidence to suggest we could entirely close the gap."

Philadelphia is Exhibit A in why it is so difficult for urban schools to get good teachers. Over the summer, the district needed to fill more than 600 vacancies — 5 percent of its teaching force. But as of Monday, half the vacancies still were not filled.

And it is not because Philadelphia is being choosy.

Unlike suburban districts that frequently get hundreds of applications

for one job, Philadelphia is likely to hire everyone who applies and meets the basic requirements.

Even so, when school opens next week, the district will be compelled to seek state waivers — as it must every year — so it can staff classrooms with teachers who are less than fully qualified for the subjects they must teach.

Most of these teachers will not be in schools in the Northeast, Chestnut Hill and Roxborough, but in the lowest-income neighborhoods.

Some of Philadelphia's problems are common to urban districts everywhere — lower salaries, larger classes, more troubled students.

But school district bureaucracy, teacher-union rigidity, and city and state politics have created an obstacle course that only the most dedicated or the most desperate job-seekers are likely to complete.

"When I came, I heard all the horror stories," said Marjorie Adler, the district's human resources director, who has spent the last year trying to modernize and rationalize the hiring process.

Anyone wanting a Philadelphia teaching job has to take a special qualifying test, the result of a state requirement that teachers for Philadelphia and Pittsburgh be hired according to a civil service-type ranking to prevent patronage.

Then, Philadelphia teachers must wait, sometimes until summer's end, before learning what school, even what grade and subject, they will teach. And then there is the requirement of living in the city.

According to a district survey of new teachers last year, their job applications were lost in the mail, rude people answered their calls, and they could not

get basic information. Comments about the system ranged from "stressful" to "incompetent" and "frustrating."

Adler, a former deputy mayor, has made headway in professionalizing the operation. For the first time, her office has a recruiting brochure and responds

The district did not forget about Heidi Butt. But the process made her nervous. There was only a slim chance for a science-teaching opening at her dream school, and she got anxious waiting to see what the choices would be.

Summer is when teachers play musical chairs in Philadelphia. In most districts, administrators choose who will fill vacancies; in Philadelphia it is the teachers who get to pick their schools — both teachers who are transferring and those who are brand new.

Vacancies are constantly created by shifts in enrollment and programs, retirements and resignations. Last week, for instance, there were 49 resignations.

Under the teachers' contract, vacancies are first offered to teachers already in the system, some of whom want a "better" neighborhood or a school closer to home.

The time-consuming practice of giving first crack at all jobs to those with seniority wreaks havoc on the effort to hire new teachers. Many new hires do not wait around to see where they might end up when the music stops. Instead, schools open with many vacancies plugged with long-term substitutes.

Those new teachers who do stay in the game find the process of picking a school akin to throwing darts. As they are brought in to select one of the remaining positions, they have just minutes to decide.

If they pick a kindergarten-through-eighth grade elementary school, they do not know whether they will be assigned to teach first graders or eighth-grade math. Most do not meet the principal or other teachers until the first day of work.

Meanwhile, principals have little power to build staffs that would work well together.

"The district should have the prerogative to assign new hires to where they need to go," said James M. Lytle, the former principal of University City High School and new superintendent in Trenton.

The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, however, chafes at giving principals such power, complaining that this would open the floodgates of favoritism.

systematically to applicants.

Even so, worthy candidates get lost. Rosalyn Rice, 21, a Carnegie-Mellon graduate certified to teach both social studies and chemistry, was recruited by the city schools at a March job fair. But, she says, the city did not follow up and

Besides, it is how the system has always worked, even though it goes well beyond what the state code requires to thwart patronage. In Pittsburgh, under the same rules and the same union, principals do have a say in choosing teachers from among the top third of candidates.

In particular, Philadelphia middle schools — crucial years for students — are hurt by this system. Of the 300 vacancies as of Monday, the bulk were in middle schools. "We've told [the administration] we're willing to sit down and figure out a better system," said PFT president Ted Kirsch. But he said, "They've never told me how seniority is a problem. I don't think it is."

The state also contributes to the district's recruiting difficulties, even as it tries to raise standards for teachers and colleges of education. Harrisburg staunchly opposes more state funding, which could help Philadelphia compete in terms of salaries for better teachers.

While there is controversy over whether higher salaries produce better student achievement, it is a fact of life that since Philadelphia's salaries are now among the lowest in the region, attracting top teachers is harder.

Beyond that, last spring's legislation that would allow Harrisburg to take over the district and rein in its finances raises a specter of chaos that is scaring new teachers off.

Additionally, Pennsylvania does not offer certification for two types of teachers that Philadelphia, in particular, is crying for: teachers of children who do not speak English as a first language and teachers equipped to teach middle school.

This came as a surprise to Peter Martin, who was trained to teach English as a Second Language at the University of Pennsylvania and had planned to teach in the city, which has nearly 11,000 students who are not proficient in English.

"It didn't even occur to me that Pennsylvania didn't give ESL certification," he said. It is one of seven states without such certification.

To be permanently hired as an ESL teacher, Martin would have had to go back to school to get certified in something else.

Martin — who speaks English,

even failed to tell her about its test. She accepted a job in Wilmington.

Said Rice, who spent July in the city teaching in a program for at-risk teens called Summerbridge: "I deserve better than that."

French and German and can get by in Spanish, Italian and Swahili — found a job in Washington, D.C.

As for the city's middle schools, they are left begging because elementary teachers typically prefer younger grades, and most secondary teachers want high school jobs. Suburban districts, with fewer openings and more applicants, have less trouble filling their middle school slots, although officials there also complain that most teachers lack training for that age group.

Because there is no middle school certification, education schools do not emphasize working with young adolescents. State policymakers are studying whether to revise certification requirements to address middle school and ESL problems.

State Rep. Dwight Evans (D., Phila.) introduced legislation to forgive up to \$25,000 in student loans for teachers with high grades in hard-to-fill specialties who promise to work in urban and rural districts. So far, the bill has not caught on in Harrisburg.

Gov. Ridge and the state Board of Education are proposing one thing that could help the city: an alternative certification policy designed to recruit second-career professionals. But City Council's insistence on residency for teachers will likely thwart any mass movement of such teachers into Philadelphia, because many live in the suburbs.

Adler's efforts to modernize the district's hidebound hiring system are limited by pressure to slash administrative spending and put all available dollars directly in schools. With the need for 600 to 1,000 new teachers each year, she has just four teacher recruiters.

Other urban districts are spending money to recruit more aggressively. Dallas offers signing bonuses to attract bilingual and math teachers. Baltimore gives new teachers \$5,000 housing allowances.

Adler traveled to Fairfax County, Va., to check out a sophisticated system designed to identify and screen urban teachers who are likely to be successful. To bring that system to Philadelphia, however, would cost money that does not

exist.

Philadelphia did not lose Heidi Butt because of the \$10,000 difference in salary — \$28,676 compared with \$39,076 in Wissahickon. She had made her peace with that. Nor was it working

She chose Wissahickon for two main reasons: one, she feared the district's precarious financial position and the possibility of a state takeover and layoffs.

And two, she was disappointed that there was no vacancy at University City. While the lumbering system later revealed many science openings at other city high schools, Wissahickon had

conditions — she found University City congenial and safe.

While she described the hiring procedure as nonsensical, slow and rigid, even that was not the main reason. As a measure of Adler's efforts, the district answered Butt's questions promptly and already wooed her. "I am feeling incredibly guilty about this exodus, and I keep trying to justify it to myself," she said.

"I know it sounds like I'm copping out, but it would be unfair to me and my husband to pass up a job that I was wooed for to take one which required me to jump through hoops . . . that will pay

kept in touch. And with Butt's top-ranked biology score, she could have picked her school as early as July 12, immediately after the experienced teachers exercised their transfer rights.

me less, and could drop me like a bad habit when money gets tight," she explained. "It frustrates me to think how I really wanted to teach in the city, but they made it so difficult."

She takes consolation in the words of her mother, also a teacher: "Anywhere you go, there'll be a kid to help." ■

44. The Washington Post

09/02/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page B05

D.C. Schools Off to a Better Start This Year

Officials Pleased By Easy Opening

By Valerie Strauss
Washington Post Staff Writer

The District's 146 public schools opened as scheduled yesterday for the first time in four years — amid more moves by Superintendent Arlene Ackerman to restructure the troubled system.

Ackerman, who visited several schools during the day, said that all major roof repairs had been completed before school bells rang and that she was delighted with the enthusiasm she saw from teachers, principals, students and parents.

"This was the third thing we said we had to do to make people start to believe that things could change," she said. "We had to raise test scores, and we did, and we had to have a successful summer school, and we did. Now we've opened schools on time."

The new superintendent has reorganized more administrative functions in her push to make the system more efficient and accountable. Joe Carrillo, brought in a few months ago as personnel chief, is now associate superintendent in charge of a newly created office to oversee the system's emerging relationship with charter schools.

Nearly 20 charter schools, which are publicly funded but operate outside the traditional bureaucracy, are scheduled to open in the city next week.

Carrillo helped oversee firings this

summer in much of the personnel office, long considered dysfunctional. Katrina Robertson Reed, president-elect of the American Association of School Personnel Administrators and a 30-year veteran of the Minnesota school system, has been hired as associate superintendent for administrative services — a newly organized office that will handle personnel, human resources, labor relations and management information systems.

Reed, who was acting superintendent of the Minneapolis school system for six months last year and was in charge of human resources there, recently served as an adviser to Ackerman.

In starting classes on time, Ackerman did have an advantage: There was no judge this year decreeing that repair work could not be done while classes were in session — a ruling that caused the school system to delay opening last year by three weeks.

But at several schools yesterday, there were some teacher shortages because the personnel office did not get the paperwork processed quickly enough, sources said. And at the African-centered School Within a School, none of the 156 students showed up because parents were concerned about the safety of the former Taft Junior High School building in Northeast Washington, where the students were told to report at the last minute because their regular school

building is not ready.

At many schools, though, the first day went just fine, parents and principals said. Ackerman and her staff met daily for three months to make sure the opening went smoothly. They also took the unprecedented step of having junior and senior high school students pick up class schedules in August, so instruction could begin right away yesterday.

At Malcolm X Elementary School in Southeast Washington, new Principal Vaughn Kimbrough rushed around organizing more than 700 students — most of them in uniforms — into classes. The school was visited by Cora Masters Barry, wife of Mayor Marion Barry, who urged the youngsters to study hard.

At nearby Birney Elementary School, Marquette Jenkin, 7, was downright gloomy. Asked whether he was glad to be back, the boy answered, "No." Asked why, he said sullenly, "Because."

But Michael Lynn Jackson, 10, who was hugged by Principal Yvonne Morse, said he was glad to be starting fifth grade. He was escorted to school by his mother and grandmother, the latter counseling, "Everything in life is related to math, so study hard."

ART ph., LUCIAN PERKINS
CAPTION: At Birney Elementary, TAira Phillips, 9, hugs her pal Sabrina Smith, 7, as she talks with her mother before beginning the first day of the new school year. ■

45. Sacramento Bee

September 2, 1998

Lawmakers put schools at front of class: But bills on promotions called flawed

By Marcos Bretón Bee Staff Writer

Although hailed as a crucial reform for education in California, three bills headed for the governor's desk and intended to stop the promotion of students who don't make the grade may have one major flaw.

Even the bills' strongest supporters worry that the reforms ultimately could fall far short of fixing the problem of "social promotion" in public schools — the practice of passing students on to a higher grade even though they are not proficient in their studies.

Likely to be signed by Gov. Pete Wilson, the bills go further than any previous legislation on the issue by establishing that school districts could use substandard test scores and grades to hold back students between the second and sixth grades.

Almost everyone in education expects that if signed into law the bills will drive up the number of students "retained" by their teachers.

Some worry, however, that projections of 250,000 children likely to be retained could prove to be too low. If so, the \$115 million — also approved Monday — for remedial programs to help the students would fall short as well.

"I would anticipate there will be a greater need after the first year," said Assemblyman Michael Sweeney, D-Hayward, who authored AB 1639, which requires that students who are retained participate in tutoring programs.

"I think you'll see more pressure with increased demand

You will see that most parents will want to make sure kids have the opportunity to get the academic instruction they need to stay at their grade level," Sweeney said.

For years, California lawmakers and educators have clashed over the controversial issue of "social promotion" with little success. Often, the debate would bog down somewhere between the desire of lawmakers for tougher standards

and educators' concern that students could be stigmatized by repeating a grade.

Agreement on how many students are not making the grade and what it would cost to help them also has long been a sticking point.

In 1997, for example, the blue-ribbon California Rewards and Interventions Advisory Committee found that as many as 3 million state students were below or well below proficiency levels. The price tag to fix the problem as seen by the committee: \$600 million.

In a state budget process with so many competing interests, that much money simply was not going to be allocated, said Marian Bergeson, the state secretary of child development and education.

The \$115 million approved by the legislature Monday is earmarked for enhanced summer school and after-school programs for students who are retained. It was contained in a bill by state Sen. Richard Polanco, D-Los Angeles.

Bergeson defended the allocation in Polanco's bill as "substantial remediation."

Wilson has 30 days to sign the "social promotion" bills, the third of which is a bill by Assemblyman Howard Wayne, D-San Diego, that spells out the criteria districts would use to determine whether a student should be retained. Wilson staffers said Tuesday that the governor has appeared agreeable to all three.

As currently proposed in the legislation, the State Board of Education would be required to "adopt levels of student performance" based on new state standardized tests for reading, English language and math. The board would require that "minimum levels" of satisfactory performance be met before a student could advance to the next grade.

A pupil's grades also would be taken into account. But in a victory for educators, students who don't meet the still-unadopted standards could be passed

to the next grade if their teacher can state in writing to state officials why they should not be retained.

This provision, as well as the proposed \$115 million for summer school and after-school remedial programs, helped sell the "social promotion" bills to administrators of some of the larger Sacramento-area districts.

General Davie, superintendent of the San Juan Unified School District, said: "The funds will allow us to expand our programs to intervene when we see students not making the grade."

Dave Gordon, superintendent of the fast-growing Elk Grove Unified School District, said: "It was very encouraging that the bill gives teachers discretion. One of our big concerns was that if there were more rigid (criteria) implemented, we would be squandering the experience teachers are paid to give."

Local administrators say it is still too early to determine how many students could be retained. At San Juan Unified, for example, only 1 percent of the district's K-6 students were retained last year.

"I wouldn't even venture a guess as to how that number would be affected in the future," said Davie.

Still, while educators wait for Wilson's signatures and for new policies that will determine which students should be retained, some worry about the effect of the bills.

"I think both low-income and blue-collar kids will be inordinately affected because they're going to schools with the worst facilities and the highest proportion of unaccredited teachers," said Bruce Fuller, co-director of Policy Analysis for California Education.

"This raises the false hope that somehow, after years of poverty and poor schooling, we'll have kids totally turned around based on an eight-week summer session." ■

46. San Francisco Chronicle

September 2, 1998

Teaching in Plain English Schools, students struggle with Proposition 227 restrictions

Nanette Asimov, Suzanne Espinosa Solis,
Chronicle Staff Writers

It was math time yesterday at Downer Elementary School in San Pablo, and 6-year-old Omar stared at his workbook, perplexed.

"Que debe de hacer?" asked the first-grader, wondering aloud in Spanish what he should do.

Omar's teacher, Kathleen Madison, said in English, "You start on this page." Omar gazed at his book, uncomprehending. He repeated his question. "Que debe de hacer?"

Madison pointed to the English words and slowly explained: "You go from this page to this page."

That clicked. "OK!" the boy said, and proceeded to fill out the book correctly, counting in Spanish as he did so.

As the first school year of the new English-only era begins across California, children may speak in any language they like. It is their teachers who must use English or risk a lawsuit from angry parents under Proposition 227.

How California teaches its 1.4 million children who speak little English has become the state's most politicized education issue. Most teachers argued to keep — but improve — the bilingual education system used for more than 20 years.

But 61 percent of voters in June agreed with the backers of Proposition 227, who hammered at a single theme: Children can learn English faster if they're taught in English.

Now, amid a bewildering patchwork of official pronouncements and legal challenges to the initiative, parents, teachers and students are struggling with how much English is enough.

The new law lets parents request a waiver from English-only classes, but their children must wait at least 30 days before receiving alternative instruction.

In Madison's class of 20 students, however, not one parent has requested a waiver.

"I'm amazed," she said. "These parents really want their kids to learn

At Santee Elementary School in the Franklin-McKinley district of East San Jose, teachers are required to speak in English 60 percent of the time to satisfy Proposition 227. Virtually all the 740 students are Latino, Cambodian or Vietnamese and about 70 percent speak little English.

One first-grade girl in Pam West's class tugged on West's skirt, plaintively asking, "Maestra? Maestra?" meaning

English."

In Oakland, where school begins Tuesday, Catalina Santillan attended a parent meeting at which district officials explained the blizzard of new options. The classes had complicated titles like "sheltered English," "specially designed academic instruction in English," "primary language instruction" and "mainstream English."

Explanations and waiver forms in Cambodian, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Spanish covered the information tables at Garfield Elementary School. Santillan puzzled about what to do.

Her son, Jaime, is 9. Born here after his family arrived from Mexico a decade ago, he has attended Garfield for years.

Yet Jaime cannot speak, read or write in English.

"I want Jaime to be able to speak English so that he can defend himself outside of the neighborhood," Santillan said. "But I don't want him to lose Spanish."

Her friends Carolina Aguayo and Maria Gallegos also considered whether to request bilingual education. If they stuck with English, they would not understand their children's homework. And they fear their children could grow distant as they assimilate.

But bilingual classes presented other problems. Their children might never learn English, and their test scores could remain low.

Finally, Aguayo said, "Parents should be the ones to teach children their language. And schools should teach them English."

In the end, all three mothers checked off box No. 4: No waivers.

Although Oakland is offering the English classes, it is also one of nine Bay Area districts asking that the state Board of Education exempt them from Proposition 227. The others are Berkeley, Fremont, Hayward, Napa Valley, Palo Alto, Ravenswood City, San Mateo-Foster City and West Contra Costa.

The San Francisco district has not appealed to the state, maintaining that a "teacher."

West responded kindly in English, "Is my name Maestra? No, it's not. Do you remember my name?"

After a moment the girl replied, "Miss West?"

When West gives instructions in English, some children respond immediately. Others watch for cues or wait for the instructions to be repeated in Spanish.

federal court order forces it to provide bilingual education.

At Marshall Elementary in San Francisco, which has been open for a week, teacher Andres Tobar posed a question to the 18 first-graders sitting in a circle on the floor: "Did anyone go to the park last weekend?"

"I went to Dolores Park!" called out a little girl in a blue dress.

"Me, too!" said the boy next to her.

But here's how the conversation actually sounded: "Quien fue al parque este fin de semana?" asked Tobar.

"Yo fui al Parque Dolores!" said the girl, Nelia.

"Yo tambien!" said Carlos.

Each morning, Tobar teaches in Spanish. He reserves afternoons for English.

In districts without bilingual court orders, teachers say they are already having a tough time speaking just in English to children who barely understand the language.

At Brentwood Elementary, in Contra Costa County's Brentwood Union district, Jennie Lund's first-grade students worked on reading and language exercises in English. Last year, Lund would have presented the lesson in Spanish as well.

One little boy was stumped as he stared at the picture of a firefighter and tried to figure out if the word began with "f."

Lund leaned over and said quietly into his ear: "Bombero. Fireman."

Down the hall, teacher Rosie Camacho urged her second-graders in Spanish to sound out their vocabulary words. She said she often gets blank stares when she speaks only in English.

"It is much more difficult for them," she said. "You can see it in their faces, and just me explaining it to them afterwards doesn't help enough."

When a student asked Camacho if he could read a book called "Clifford" in Spanish, she answered, "You don't want to read it in Spanish. Go and get an English book."

As recess approached, the children formed a neat line at the door, and West rewarded them each with a stick of red licorice. Then she said, in clearly enunciated English, "Everybody, go put your candy on top of your desk and get back in line. We can eat the candy after recess."

A few children reluctantly walked to their desks. The rest clutched their licorice even harder — until West

repeated the instruction in Spanish.

Although most parents of Cambodian and Vietnamese children at Santee have opted for classes in English only, most

Latino parents are choosing some form of bilingual education after the mandatory month of English immersion, said Principal Suzanne LaBare.

After the switch, said West, she won't have to count her words quite so carefully. ■

47. Austin American-Statesman

September 2, 1998

New ratings hand out F's on training for teachers Not enough students passed test in 35 of 85 Texas programs

By A. Phillips Brooks

American-Statesman Capitol Staff

Forty-one percent of Texas college and university programs aimed at training future teachers — including two Austin-area institutions — failed to make the grade under a new state rating system released Tuesday.

The first-ever ratings show 35 of 85 teacher preparation programs did not have enough students passing a state teacher certification exam to qualify for state accreditation. The failing programs include St. Edward's University and Huston-Tillotson College.

"The majority of our schools are getting the job done as we wanted," said Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, who helped craft the 1995 law requiring the accountability ratings.

But as Bivins and others applauded the rating system, some questioned whether it could diminish efforts to produce more classroom teachers at a time when the state needs more.

"We are destroying our system of teaching," said Rep. Irma Rangel, D-Kingsville, chairwoman of the House Higher Education Committee. "This amounts to a scarlet letter."

Efforts to produce teachers at historically black colleges and universities would especially suffer, some say. Six of the state's seven traditionally black colleges and universities failed to "The education I received at Huston-Tillotson College was excellent and prepared me to go on to earn my master's at the University of Texas," said Karen Terry, a sixth-grade social studies teacher at Mendez Middle School in Southeast Austin. She was certified in 1988 after graduating from Huston-Tillotson.

In response to the ratings, Huston-Tillotson is raising its standards and accepting only A and B students in its educator preparation program, Loreda said. Only one student met those standards this year; a year ago, the

make the grade. Under the law, schools that do not meet standards for three consecutive years will lose their teaching accreditation.

"This is a clear indication of what is going to happen to minorities," said Judith Loreda, chairwoman of the division of education at Huston-Tillotson, a historically black college.

The new rating system — the first of its kind in the nation, according to Jim Nelson, chairman of the State Board for Educator Certification — is aimed at bolstering teacher preparation programs across the state in the same way the state's rating system for public schools has increased student performance on Texas' achievement test.

The ratings are based on the number of people who passed the educator certification test, called the Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas, or ExCET. The system looks at overall student performance on the ExCET and at specific categories: male, female, black, Hispanic, white and other.

Two grades were awarded — accredited and accredited under review. To receive the passing grade, at least 70 percent of first-time test-takers had to pass the ExCET in 1997-98. Programs also made the grade if 80 percent of students passed on the second try during the 1996-97 and 1997-98 academic years. Huston-Tillotson program enrolled nine students. Historically, the school has allowed C students into the program, many of whom have become "excellent teachers," Loreda said.

"The way it is looking, you are going to have to recruit the cream of the crop. Today, minorities can go into engineering, law and medicine," she said. "Why would they come to teaching to earn \$22,000 a year?"

Texas, with 3.8 million students enrolled in public schools, is facing a teacher shortage because students are passing up teaching for more lucrative

St. Edward's University is appealing its rating because it missed the mark by one student.

"I was caught a little off guard," said Frank Smith, dean of education at St. Edward's. "We only had one student who took the test and failed."

He said the school would appeal its accreditation status. An appeal would likely result in a change in the accreditation rating, said Stephanie Korcheck, director of policy and planning for the educator certification board that released the ratings. Nineteen other schools, including Baylor University in Waco, are eligible to appeal the ratings because they were based on the passing rate of a demographic group containing fewer than 10 students.

Sixteen schools, including Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, the state's largest teachers college, cannot appeal under state guidelines. At Stephen F. Austin, 83 percent of all first-time test-takers passed, but only 54 percent of blacks and 57 percent of Hispanic first-time test-takers passed. Similarly, at Austin's Huston-Tillotson, more than two-thirds of all students passed the test but only 53 percent of black students passed on the first try.

Huston-Tillotson officials and graduates defended the program, saying that ratings should not be based solely on test results.

professionals, Korcheck said. Of the 17,000 teachers the state certifies each year, only half end up in the classroom the following term. In survey after survey, teachers cite low salaries and benefits as the reason they stop teaching, Korcheck said.

Some lawmakers, including state Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, will push for a \$5,000 across-the-board pay raise to boost Texas teachers' salaries to the national average. Texas teachers averaged \$33,000 a year last year, though beginning teachers often make significantly less. ■

48. Dallas Morning News

September 2, 1998

Does the GED pass or fail?

Educators, researchers debate value of alternative diploma

By Brian Boney
Special Contributor

to The Dallas Morning News

Mary Cantrell has definite goals.

She wants to run her own real-estate business, own her own home and be able to buy the finer things such as jewelry. She believes that, as a 17-year-old high school dropout, her chances of reaching those goals are slim to none without more education and academic credentials.

Her first step in the pursuit of those goals is to pass the General Educational Development Test, or as she says, "earn my GED."

"It took a month of deciding, but my fiance encouraged me to get the GED," she said. "When I was trying to find out about earning a GED, I found out that later on you'll need education to get a job. I'm getting the GED to get a better job, to go back to school . . . to get a better life."

But is the GED really the key to that better life?

Employers say it helps, but only to a point. College admissions directors say it makes the academic road smoother. Educators say it's a must. But researchers aren't convinced that it helps everyone. All agree it can't hurt, but none agree on its true value.

Passing the GED serves as a marker that shows prospective employers that an applicant has made an effort to improve his or her life. Having a GED makes applicants more attractive than having nothing at all, but it's only a part of the overall skills package employers have

"We all know it will turn. And when it does, it'll be more difficult if you don't have the credentials," she said. "Training and capability are what the employers look for. They want outcomes. Credentials like the GED will get you in the door, but that's all."

Preparing for college

College admissions directors say the same thing - that the GED doesn't guarantee acceptance, but it is a key component.

"The GED is meaningless if a student doesn't have other academic credentials," said Dr. Shirley Binder, vice president for student enrollment at the University of

come to expect.

In 1992, William Kolberg, former president of the National Alliance of Business, addressed the value of the GED in a speech at the organization's national convention.

"The GED diploma is preferred by employers, many of them, as well as many of our members, who say to me that the GED shows specific accomplishments recently made in computing, in reading, in math skills. . .," he said. "It says to employers, 'Here's a person who came back and tried hard, put themselves together and got through it.'"

Learning on the job

"I haven't seen employers look down their nose at GED graduates," said Carl Henry, a GED teacher at Lincoln Adult Education Center. "They know if students pass the GED, they can read and write. You can't always say that about high school graduates... The GED graduates] know their stuff."

Charles Thrash, manager of employee development for the City of Dallas, said his staff looks the same at earners of GEDs and earners of traditional high school diplomas.

"To us there's no difference, but we're mainly looking at whether they can perform the job for which they applied," he said. "We want to know, for example, if a welder has the technical experience to do the job. In that case, a diploma or GED isn't that important. We'll give them the job, though, with the stipulation that they get a GED. We'll provide them that work environment."

Texas at Arlington. "We ask them to take the SAT or the ACT. And of course they have to pass the TASP (Texas Academic Skills Program). And we need to see their high school transcripts. It's impossible to say someone will never get into college without passing the GED, but not passing makes it much harder. Earning the credentials is important."

According to the American Council on Education, the organization that administers the GED, more than 60 percent of those taking the GED do so to move into post-secondary education. The need to pass the GED for academic reasons is a distinction that educators

Mr. Thrash said Dallas offers its employees flexible schedules, and in some cases provides classroom space in city buildings, in order to advance their education. He said the city benefits because the education level of its employees increases, making them better workers and citizens.

He added that there are too many reasons for not earning a high school diploma to make that an automatic disqualification for employment.

"So many things can go wrong along the way," Mr. Thrash said. "Some aren't citizens when they come to this country, but they're good workers. They bring a lot of talents, even if they don't have a diploma."

But if employers have changed their attitudes toward the GED over the past five years, it's because they've had to, says Laurie Larrea, president of WorkSource, a nonprofit countywide company that works to improve job skills of prospective workers.

"Five years ago, a high school diploma was given more credence," she said. "But because the market is so tight, and because employers are struggling to fill jobs, anyone with credentials can get a job. Employers have lost the distinction between the two."

Ms. Larrea said her company has been cautioning those with whom it works to continue pursuing their education, warning them that the job market won't be so rosy in the future.

impress upon their students.

Dorris Baker, a specialist with the Adult Basic Education Department of the Dallas Independent School District, said students who pass the GED are given more respect than in the past.

"Employers don't look down on the GED. They don't favor the high school diploma more than the GED," she said. "Employers know there are a lot of reasons why people don't finish high school. It's not just that they were lazy or couldn't do the work. Passing the GED shows that they're interested in improving themselves. But they have to go further than the GED and acquire some job

skills, some more specific training."

Dropping back in

Ms. Baker estimated that roughly 4,500 students enroll in GED preparation courses each year. Ms. Cantrell is one of those 4,500. She dropped out one year ago during her parents' divorce, which she said put too much emotional pressure on her to handle school. "The divorce caused a lot of problems. I had a lot of problems at school," she said. "At the time I didn't feel like I could take the pressure."

To further the training of DISD students, the district has formed partnerships with local companies and organizations to provide job training. The district works to provide the academic skills while others provide the job skills.

The latest research regarding the value of the GED supports the need for adding job skills. But it questions the GED's

economic value. A 1996 Harvard University study produced by John Tyler, Richard Murnane and John Willett found that for those who don't pass the GED with flying colors the benefits are minimal. And for non-whites who barely pass, they're nonexistent.

"There is a signaling factor for whites who pass the GED as compared to those who don't. The test is used to differentiate between the two. It's seen as a sign of motivation," said Dr. Tyler, now an assistant professor of education, economics and public policy at Brown University. "For the least skilled dropouts, those who fare the worst in the labor market, it makes a definite difference. It's the first step in the screening process."

The group's research found that the GED is worth only \$1,500 annually for young white GED holders who barely

pass. Non-whites, however, received no boost.

"According to our research, we can't say the GED is working for non-whites, at least those non-whites who barely pass," Dr. Tyler said. "If you compare two non-whites, and one has a GED and one doesn't, we found the GED isn't used as a signaling factor. We think it's because employers use other signals, such as language skills."

As Ms. Cantrell approaches her first attempt at the GED, she realizes the GED won't guarantee riches in years to come. But to her, future earnings are only a part of the motivation to pass the GED. The rest, she says, no one can put a price on.

"I want the respect. Most who don't get a diploma get less respect. People think you don't know anything," she said. "I want to prove I can do it." ■

49. Miami Herald

September 2, 1998

Aiming high: More Dade students are taking college placement tests

By JODI MAILANDER FARRELL
Herald Staff Writer

Five public high schools in Miami-Dade County rated among the top 100 in the country for having the highest number of 1998 graduates taking Advanced Placement exams, an indicator of the increasing number of students here aspiring to go to college.

The county's largest schools — Coral Gables, Braddock, Killian, Palmetto and Sunset high schools — ranked tops among schools across the nation

"It indicates that college is becoming a goal, at the least," said Janice Gams, spokeswoman for the board. "As AP permeates the system, eventually students will respond."

The number of AP exams taken by Florida students has nearly doubled over

administering the greatest number of AP exams, according to a report Tuesday from The College Board, which distributes AP exams as well as the SAT college entrance test.

AP exams are taken here in a wide variety of subjects, including English, European history, foreign languages and physics. Students who score between 3 and 5 on the difficult, essay-driven exams typically are awarded credits by colleges, enabling them to save tuition money and possibly graduate early.

In the past 10 years, with 37,034 students taking 62,955 exams in 31 subject areas this year, Florida is second in the country in the number of AP exams taken by black students and third in the number of exams taken by Hispanics, the board reports.

Scores were not available to determine how many of Dade's 1998 grads achieved scores in the 3-5 range. But in the past, 45 percent to 55 percent of the AP test-takers at those schools have earned results that high.

Dade's school district has been encouraging more students, especially minorities, to enroll in AP courses in the past few years, an attempt to challenge more students and give them the chance to shoot for a college education.

Two Broward County public high schools — Nova and Marjory Stoneman Douglas — as well as the private Pine Crest Preparatory School also made the top 100 schools in the country for administering the most AP exams. ■

50. Raleigh News & Observer

September 2, 1998

State also continues gains

But after making the largest 10-year SAT improvement of any state, North Carolina is still 48th. Some educators call the rank misleading.

By TIM SIMMONS, Staff Writer
North Carolina extended its gains

Tuesday in one of the best-known barometers of school success, posting a

four-point increase in 1998 SAT scores for high school seniors. It's the eighth

time in nine years that the state's Scholastic Assessment Test scores have improved. North Carolina now has the largest increase of any state over the past 10 years — a jump of 34 points. Nationally, average scores increased one point to 1,017 out of a possible 1,600. North Carolina's score of 982 brought it within four points of the Southeast average. But the state's national ranking remains mired at 48th — above only Georgia, the District of Columbia and South Carolina.

After suggesting for years that North Carolina's national ranking on the SAT is a poor way to judge its public education system, state officials attacked the issue directly Tuesday. "The SAT is an important test for students going to college," said state schools Superintendent Mike Ward. "But it would be hard to pick a less relevant number when it comes to judging the entire state." Several national groups have come to North Carolina's defense, with some even trying to recalculate rankings to make the test more comparable among states. Such efforts, such as one released Tuesday by the Southern Regional Education Board, suggest North Carolina would be more accurately ranked about 40th. But any conversion is fraught with problems. The SAT, taken by 40,000 high school students in a state of 1.2 million schoolchildren, is a voluntary test. In some states, as few as 4 percent of high school students take it. In Washington, D.C., 80 percent do.

The rankings also ignore important variables over which schools have no control — such as the average family

income in a state, parents' education levels or the mix of rural, urban and suburban schools. "It's not that the SAT doesn't matter, but it isn't meant to provide apples-to-apples comparisons," said Suzanne Triplett, a former director of North Carolina's testing program who works for the National Center for Education Statistics. A decade ago, when there was little else that could be used to measure schools, the focus on rankings was understandable, Triplett said. But accountability programs have generated a wealth of data since then, and several national exams have been designed to compare student achievement state-by-state.

The one most educators and researchers prefer is the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Sometimes called "The Nation's Report Card," it uses a random sample of students in various grades and subjects. It paints a significantly different picture of the state's school system. In its most recent math exam in 1996, fourth- and eighth-graders in North Carolina scored near or above the national average. An eighth-grade science test that year showed similar results. The report card clearly mirrors two other trends that have emerged from North Carolina's own statewide testing program. First, Tar Heel students have made steady gains since the early 1990s, when the state made a concerted effort to focus on basic skills such as reading and math. And second, the state has a long way to go before its average students master the skills requested of them. The report card, which uses rigorous standards, shows that only 20 percent of North Carolina's

eight-graders are "proficient" in math.

Only 56 percent possess "basic skills." By comparison, the state's standards suggest that almost 70 percent of grade-school children are proficient. The state figures drop sharply in high school, where only 55 percent appear to be doing grade-level work in high school courses such as biology, English and algebra I.

Large gaps between state and national standards also are reflected in the analysis of the SAT data provided by the College Board, the group that oversees administration of the exam. North Carolina students who are in the top 10 percent of their class, for example, lag 27 points behind the SAT average for top students nationally. Students who have an "A" average in North Carolina scored 50 to 65 points behind their peers nationally. The SAT is broken into two sections, math and verbal. The highest possible score in each section is 800. The SAT also can be broken down in other ways.

American Indians, African-Americans and Asian-Americans in North Carolina trail their counterparts nationally, for example, while Hispanic students in North Carolina did much better than Hispanic students nationally.

By using SAT data in this way, and then combining it with the results of other national exams, Ward says, a relatively complete picture of the public schools can be painted for educators, parents and others. "It won't fit on a button, such as the ones I sometimes see among the people who support voucher programs for private schools," Ward said. "The buttons say '48th No More.' That's nice, but it pretty much ignores the reality of things." ■

51. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

September 2, 1998

Freshman enrollment booms at area colleges

UWM, Marquette, others benefit from increase in youth population in 1990s

By Jack Norman
of the Journal Sentinel staff

Paced by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's biggest new freshman class in 13 years, Milwaukee-area colleges begin the school year this week with a bountiful crop of entering students.

About 2,680 students start classes today at UWM, 8% more than last year and 48% more than the entering class in 1994, the school reported Tuesday. The figure does not include freshmen who are

continuing from last year.

But UWM, the Milwaukee area's largest university, isn't alone in having a sizable freshman class.

At Marquette University, about 1,740 freshmen started Monday, the biggest entering class in nine years, said John Hopkins, vice president for communications.

When combined with last year's surge at Marquette, the result is a 23% growth in the freshman class in two years, "the biggest two-year increase in history."

Hopkins said.

Strong numbers were posted throughout the area.

Concordia College in McQuon will have its 15th consecutive record freshman class, close to 400 students, up 3% from last year, spokesman Jeff Bandurski said.

Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design is up about 30% from last year, to a record freshman class of nearly 200, said registrar Vita Gebauers.

Wisconsin Lutheran College, in

Wauwatosa, has its biggest freshman class ever, about 125, up 14% from last year, said admissions director Jeff Weber.

Milwaukee School of Engineering is up 20% from last year. The class of about 535 isn't a record, but it's one of the best ever, said Tim Valley, dean of enrollment management.

And while some other schools, such as Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University and Mount Mary College, aren't registering growth, their enrollments are stable and strong, spokesmen said.

What's driving the booming freshman enrollments?

Ask the college officials and they talk about the attractions of their school.

The big UWM increase, for example, prompted Chancellor Nancy Zimpher to issue a written statement saying "it

reflects the expanding recognition of UWM as an outstanding university. More of our prospective students make UWM their first choice for college because they realize that UWM has the quality they want in a location they desire."

But demographics also are a major factor. The youth population is up in the 1990s.

In southeastern Wisconsin, for example, public school enrollments fell throughout the 1970s and '80s but began climbing again in the 1990s, said Bruce Rubin, chief land use planner for the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

The number of high school graduates in Wisconsin jumped 14% from 1994 to 1997 (the latest year for which figures are available), according to the state's Department of Public Instruction.

At UWM, the number of entering freshmen who are African-American rose 8% from last year, to 262, or 10% of the class. The number of Hispanics climbed 13%, to 119, or 4% of the class.

American Indian enrollment was up 69%, but from a small number, jumping from 16 to 27, or 1% of the freshman class. Asian-American freshman enrollment was up 28%, to 131 or 5% of the class.

UWM expects a total enrollment of about 22,450, although numbers won't be available for weeks. That would be the biggest overall enrollment in four years.

Enrollments at UWM and the UW System statewide peaked in the mid-1980s. Fall numbers for the rest of the UW System weren't available Tuesday. ■

52. Richmond Times Dispatch

September 2, 1998

Classroom management 'different today'

Drugs, guns issues not relevant in yesteryear

BY ELIZABETH WILKERSON
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

School safety always has been an issue, but it's one that waxes and wanes with the headlines, a teacher educator says.

"I guess it's the events," said Sandy Cohen, who directs teacher training at the

"It's not things the school is doing wrong" but more of a societal or community problem. "I think it's a dangerous thing to think that only schools need to change — that it's 'school violence.'"

After all, she wondered, if the violence took place in churches, would we be saying that the

churches have to change?

"Kids' worlds are in school, so when a kid acts violently there are two main places to act — school and home."

Nowadays teachers and administrators need to be much more aware of antisocial behavior or signals, and take action before they build to violent actions, she said. "There have to be more supports." Teachers have always managed behavior, but now they need to set the structure and the controls more. "It is different from a generation ago."

The classroom environment needs to balance structure and flexibility. Students need to know what the rules, expectations and consequences are for achievement

University of Virginia's Curry School of Education.

Education schools long have taught classroom management, but the management issues of yesteryear didn't include dealing with students with guns or drugs.

"Obviously, it's different today. It's and transgressions alike, said Cohen. "Along with that comes a great deal of emphasis on understanding what role reinforcement plays, along with what role punishment would play."

Things that could help teachers and children include providing more time for teachers — "a luxury, really" — to talk about their students' problems. "You end up talking about only the most severe." Supports such as mental health services need to be increased, she said, and efforts need to be coordinated among schools, churches and community groups.

Dewey Cornell is an associate professor at U.Va.'s education school and a nationally recognized expert on juvenile violence. He recently published a guidebook, "Designing Safer Schools for Virginia: A Guide to Keeping Students Safe from Violence."

Urban schools have the highest rate of violence, he said, but rural schools have more serious crimes than suburban schools.

He speculates that rural schools are

very different today," she said.

All good teachers know how to manage classrooms, but in many ways the recent acts of violence in schools weren't events that teachers or teacher training could prevent, said Cohen.

less well staffed, have fewer prevention programs and are "more likely to have the view that it can't happen," he said.

"Complacency could be a problem in any school."

Among the violence-prevention programs he cites as particularly effective are:

- conflict resolution and peer mediation programs;
- violence prevention training;
- bullying-reduction campaigns;
- early intervention programs;
- community-based programs, such as recreation programs and mentoring; and
- drug education programs.

"I think some schools are certainly improving," he said. "Other schools I think are being a little complacent and keeping their fingers crossed and hoping nothing happens."

James M. Kaufman, a U.Va. education professor who teaches behavior management,

said many educators think behavior management is something teachers

should learn on the job — "a preposterous notion spoken out of horrible ignorance," he said.

He urges teachers who have student behavior problems to look to their own teaching first. You can't have a good behavior management program without teaching that's appropriate to a student's experience and ability, he said. "If you don't have that, you haven't started where you need to start."

Children in situations where they can't meet expectations, "where they cannot experience excitement," will tend to turn toward trouble. "You're going to disconnect or you're going to be a behavior problem and get out of there."

A much larger although less severe problem, in Kaufman's view, is "the aggression, bullying, coercion in schools that is at a much lower level."

"We start to see the typical as

acceptable. If typical is for kids to shove each other around and call each other [expletive deleted]," that behavior can start to be accepted, he said.

Schools can do more to prevent that sort of mean-spiritedness than they can to prevent shootings and stabbings, he said.

"You can't necessarily see a kid's inner life, but you can see what kids do." ■

53. Washington Times

September 2, 1998

Amazingly, schools in D.C. open on time

By Susan Ferrechio

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Parents and teachers welcomed the sound of school bells ringing across the District yesterday, which for the first time in three years opened on time. "It caught me by surprise," said Anita Weems, whose daughter Amara was sharply dressed in the navy-and-yellow uniform of Birney Elementary in Anacostia. "I didn't expect things to be working out as well as they are this year." Schools Superintendent Arlene C. Ackerman said more good things are yet to come for the 77,000 students in what is often billed as the worst urban school system in the nation. "Everybody in this community

"I'm happy I am not a month behind on scholarships and college applications," said Robert, who is campaigning to serve as his senior class president. Flora Bravo, 46, and Esther Miranda, 50, are relieved their daughters will get more time to study this year at Bell. "I think it is better this year because they will take more time to study," Mrs. Miranda said. The \$80 million allocated in the city budget for repairs to the crumbling buildings was used to hire the Army Corps of Engineers to oversee the work. "Our hope is that the school system has shown itself competent and the [D.C. Council] and Congress will continue to fund the system to continue to make these kind of improvements," Mrs. Rice-Thurston said. Construction work will continue throughout the year on window replacements, boilers and chillers. The opening day was not without its glitches. Workers were still removing asbestos from the Rebuilt building that will house the Bethune-Woodson African-Centered School, one of 11 "school-within-a-school" programs. It had to bus its 165 students to the former

wanted to open these schools on time," said Mrs. Ackerman, who was hired a year ago to reform the system's academics but took over as superintendent after Gen. Julius W. Becton Jr. resigned. The mood was markedly different from last year, when the halls of 147 school buildings were empty while construction workers hammered away at roof replacements and fire-code repairs that dragged on weeks past summer deadlines. Because of the repairs and a now-dismissed lawsuit over building safety, students were not permitted inside until every hard hat and ladder were removed. By the time school doors opened, it was Sept. 22 and parents were Taft Junior High, Mrs. Ackerman said. When the doors swing open for the first time this morning at the Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter School, 60 ninth-graders will begin high school in a cramped basement in Waterside Mall with classrooms separated only by partitions. The new charter school's small but determined staff and legion of supporters found out in midsummer that their permanent space in the mall would not be renovated on time. Last evening, as phones rang, boxes were still being emptied and people scrambled to take care of last-minute details, volunteer Dale Robinson said she was happy but harried, planning to work well into the night.

"It's chaos, exciting chaos," said Mrs. Robinson, president of the board of trustees. The school — one of 15 publicly funded, privately run charter schools opening this year — will move to a larger space in the same building in about a month. At Birney, teachers were relieved to get started on time. Last year, the delay in September forced officials to extend the school day by 30 minutes each day. "Things are pretty much starting on the right foot," music teacher Gary

angry. No so this year. "It's a nice turn of events," said Delabian Rice-Thurston, executive director of Parents United for the D.C. Schools, an advocacy group and the plaintiff in the fire code lawsuit that dictated the late opening last year. Students and parents were all smiles at Bell Multicultural High School, which was shut down repeatedly last year because of a leaky roof. Robert Reyes, 17, a senior at the Mount Pleasant school, was happy the building opened on time so he could begin searching for college scholarships.

Last year he said he "had nothing to do" and was "bored" when his school was closed.

Stanley said. Parents were equally happy to get their children off to school early, but some of their children complained that summer seemed too short. More than 20,000 students were enrolled in the system's summer-school program aimed at boosting scores on reading and mathematics tests. Elementary students who scored more than 25 percent below the basic level on the Stanford 9 achievement test were required to go to summer school, which ended a month ago. Joshua Sands, 8, was one those students and will have to repeat the third grade at Birney. "I'm upset about it," said his mother, Walleeta Sands. "He needed extra help and didn't get it." Other parents were aggravated by the new requirement that they prove residency with three forms of identification. That prevented Darrell Carter from enrolling his four children in kindergarten and the second, third and fifth grades. The children congregated in the lobby at Birney while their father pleaded with Principal Yvonne Morse.

"I guess I'll be taking the day off to find out where my kids are supposed to go to school," said Mr. Carter, a plumber.

Despite some bumps, Mrs. Ackerman touted the first day as "great." "We're on the right track, and we're moving forward," she said, noting that all of the schools opened yesterday with supplies and appropriate textbooks. Mrs. Ackerman, who was up at 2 a.m.

yesterday with first-day-of-school anxieties, said the parents and students she spoke with were pleased with the first day. Von Garland said despite the system's record of late openings, she never doubted her three children would be walking through the doors at Birney

yesterday. "I figured it was going to be right this time," she said. "I think they learned their lesson last year."

Jeremy Redmon, Leslie Koren and Andrea Billups contributed to this report. ■

54. Boston Globe

September 2, 1998

City sets a hard-line policy on truancy

By Beth Daley, Globe Staff

Boston public school police will visit parents of children who play hooky more than three times this year as part of a sweeping plan announced yesterday to put a stop to the system's severe truancy problem.

Boston students have one of the highest rates of absenteeism in the country, with more than a quarter of them absent three or more weeks last year. Some high schoolers don't show up for weeks at a time, able to escape detection because of poor record-keeping and enforcement.

Now, a \$70,000 grant spread among five high schools by Boston Duck Tours will provide unusual incentives for students to get to school on time. At

While suburban schools often track down parents after even one missed class, urban districts around the country have suffered from a lack of money, poor record-keeping, and a massive number of students who cut classes.

Yesterday, parents of high schoolers welcomed the news and said it has been far too easy for teens to skip class undetected. Most high schools have automated telephone machines that call home when a child is absent. But many students simply take the call while their parent or parents are at work. Others show up only for homeroom to be counted present for the day, then leave.

"It's necessary for the school system to get serious," said Sandra Joseph, a

Greater Egleston Community High School, all students will be given watches and alarm clocks. At Boston High, pizza parties and movie tickets will greet students who improve attendance. And English High will enter students with perfect attendance into a raffle for cash prizes.

Meanwhile, more truancy officers will be hired, and police sweeps will increase in areas where truant students hang out, like Downtown Crossing. Local attendance panels will meet with chronically absent students and their parents to help get children to attend regularly.

And if all efforts fail, a tough new promotion policy will give them an extra boot in the rear: failure if a student has Dorchester parent of two teenagers who regularly attend Boston high schools. "A lot of parents don't know their child is absent until they get the report card."

The plan largely revolves around identifying chronic truants early. A three-year, \$214,000 federal grant will pay for four additional truancy officers to make home visits and track down students.

A student's first and second unexcused absence will result in a phone call or letter home. After the third absence, the parent will meet with school staff and sign a plan promising to address the student's absenteeism. If a parent doesn't show up, Boston School Police will visit the home until they respond.

no legitimate excuse for missing more than 12 days a year. Until this year, students could miss as many as 27 days and still be promoted.

"Children have to be in school to learn," Mayor Thomas M. Menino said yesterday in announcing the plan, which involves city, community, state, and school officials. "And if they are not in school they are not going to learn ... If you don't go to school, you don't get promoted. It's simple."

Boston's new attendance policy will be one of the country's strictest. Chicago, which began a new policy three years ago, allows students 20 unexcused absences a year.

After the fourth absence, a parent must meet with the principal and go over the attendance plan again.

Meanwhile, all students truant more than six times during the year will be assigned to one of 25 attendance boards made up of police and social service officials.

Students interviewed on Blue Hill Avenue in Mattapan yesterday said the plan was ambitious.

"I know a lot of people who just don't go," said Charlene Scott, a junior at Boston High School. "It sounds like there might be more kids in school now." ■

55. The Hartford Courant

09/01/98; Edition: 1W NEW HAVEN COUNTY; Section: TOWN NEWS; Page B3

PUBLIC SCHOOLS FINDING A NEW BREED OF TEACHER

By MARYELLEN FILLO
Courant Staff Writer

A combination of factors — including enhanced salaries, changing trends in

employment patterns and the growing popularity of the alternative teaching certification program — have formed a new breed of teacher, who many agree

will bring a fresh perspective to both the classroom and the teachers' lounge.

"I'm cool," kidded Robert Lasbury, a former semi-pro pitcher who will teach

math at Southington High School. Lasbury, who quit college in his junior year to sign with the Colorado Rockies baseball team, said a foundering athletic career and some nudging from a former basketball coach prompted him to make the jump to teaching.

"Baseball changed me a lot. I met so many people and saw so many things. I think my past career will be a good segue into the classroom," he said. "I think my students, especially the males, will relate to me a little better because of my past. I think one of the big things in teaching is to get students to like you first and then they will perform. My baseball career will be a good way to break the ice and establish a rapport with them."

School officials in several towns reported hiring new teachers who are a little older than usual and have worked at some other profession. In Plainville, new teachers include former chiropractor John Montague, who will teach science, chemistry and biology at Plainville High School. In Bristol, a Southington lawyer, Gary Gworek, will teach language arts at Northeast Middle School in Bristol.

Thomas Murphy, a spokesman for the

state board of education, estimated there are about 2,500 new teachers in the state this year, including about 150 who parlayed job experience, bachelor's degrees and the alternative route certification program into teaching jobs.

"These teachers provide a new depth, not only to the classroom but to the teacher's room as well," Murphy said.

The alternative certification program allows degree-holding professionals to take teaching courses and do their student teaching at a special eight-week summer program. The program has provided teachers for hard-to-fill areas such as science, foreign languages and math.

Some critics complain the training is too short and the fledgling teachers are not properly equipped. Others argue, however, that the majority of graduates are qualified for the dynamics of the classroom because they are older, are often parents and usually have management experience.

Mary S. Hyde, who traded competitive corporate life for a desk at Chippens Hill Middle School in Bristol, said she expects both her professional and personal life will benefit her students and

her school.

"Those of us with a past career know what's out there," said Hyde, who decided to pursue teaching after she was laid off as an environmental manager at Stanley Hardware last year.

A high school dropout who went on to get a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a master's in environmental management and policy, Hyde said her past will give her an edge when it comes to working with adolescents.

"A past profession brings a tremendous amount of breadth to the classroom," Bristol School Superintendent Ann Clark said. "These people can explain to students how you use what you learn in the classroom when you go into a career. Students enjoy hearing about other people's experiences."

But Barbara Smyth, president of the New Britain teachers' union, said she thinks students' interest in "second career" teachers will wane.

"I think for the first year or two, students might find it interesting that someone had a previous job," Smyth said. "But as time goes on, you just become another teacher." ■

56. The Washington Times

09/01/98; Edition: 2; Section: E;FAMILY TIMES;WEBWISE; Page E8

Highway links students to the computer age

By Joseph Szadkowski

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The new school year is upon us, and efficiency in learning now includes the mighty Internet as a homework resource, conduit for lessons and place to share information.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Read Write Now! initiative, the Alphabet Superhighway provides a leading example of how the World Wide Web melds the traditional classroom and the computer age.

CREATOR: A team of programmers, educators, designers, information specialists and students created the Alphabet Superhighway in the Educational Technology Laboratory at the University of Delaware. Richard L. Venezkr, professor of computer and information science and linguistics, and Vanu A. Ney, visiting associate professor in the Department of Educational Studies, directed the project.

CREATOR QUOTABLE: "We felt that we could create an engaging, interactive and fun environment that while teaching the users would also be an ongoing learning experience and project

for our students," Mr. Venezkr says.

"We wanted a site that would be easy to navigate, attractive without being garish and filled with useful information that stressed high standards and innovative approaches to education."

WORD FROM THE WEBWISE: Students from kindergarten through 12th grade are contributing to this exciting and content-rich Web site. The main page, the Exhibit Hall, contains seven different areas of information - the Earth, Peoples and Cultures, Technology, Matter & Energy, Space, Mind & Body, and Living Things.

These sections are presented on seven different levels and feature the classroom projects of students from Delaware, New Jersey, Chicago and Istanbul.

Some of the more interesting undertakings include the Everyday Math project by a high school class in Newark, Del. For this assignment, the students designed and planned the materials needed to build a deck. The project explains how the students used various math functions such as basic arithmetic, geometry and simple algebra to turn the design into a structure.

Viewers also contribute to the site's Cyberzine, a magazine by and for children. Students can submit either written or artistic works for inclusion in the magazine's feature story, poetry, news and reviews or art gallery sections. Contributions to the Cyberzine come from all ages and from all over the United States.

The Library area offers an excellent resource and reference stop that includes a dictionary, thesaurus, maps and English composition manual. Other features include an Acronym and Abbreviation list, "how-to" search engine tips, a Directorate of time (to find out the exact time as designated by the U.S. Naval Observatory) and a perpetual calendar to find out on what day of the week any date might have fallen.

More items and links of interest include directories and who's who listings of past and present persons in the White House, Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and justices of the Supreme Court. For the advanced user are two versions of the Periodic Table of Elements.

For those who like a brain teaser,

Challenge Chaser contains word scrambles, anagrams, a graph game and a treasure hunt in which the player searches the Internet to find answers to questions.

Finally, for parents and teachers, the Teacher's Lounge and Parents Place provides ideas, classroom plans and activities to help young people become excited. Both areas have numerous links to other relevant Web sites.

CREATOR KUDOS: Much applause for an excellent site for both user and creator. The Alphabet Superhighway puts forth a well-developed and easy-to-navigate collaborative effort that makes for a great educational experience. The only annoyance is that some large and slow-loading graphics pepper the site and may put off some students who are in a hurry to finish their homework.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: The Alphabet

Superhighway is looking for classrooms to contribute projects to the Exhibit Hall. At this writing both the Matter & Energy and Space halls are without projects. Classrooms can design a project based on the existing subject matters or review the Ideas for Exhibits provided by the site.

Once a project is chosen, the teacher should contact the site administrator through the Teacher's Lounge and the Teacher's Guide to Constructing Exhibits, where all the obvious questions are answered.

Through this area, teachers can submit a Preliminary Information Form and communicate with administrators. This area also includes detailed instructions and ideas on how to guide the classroom in creating the project as well as the technological requirements of

contributing to the Web site.

CYBERSITTER SYNOPSIS: This site encourages users to seek learning opportunities found throughout the Internet. Normal safety procedures, such as monitoring of younger children, apply.

FAMILY FUN FACTOR: 100 percent.

INFORMATION GRADE: A+.

Have a cool site for the family? Write to Joseph Szadkowski at Webwise, The Washington Times, 3600 New York Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002; call 202/636-3016; or send an e-mail message (joseph@twmail.com).

ART Photos (color), A&B) Parents and children can access the Alphabet Superhighway on the Internet by clicking www.ash.udel.edu/ash/index.html. ■

57. Bangor (Maine) Daily News

09/01/98; Edition: ALL;

Back to multiage classrooms

By Brenda Power

Across the country, the same back-to-school rituals are taking place in homes. Parents are rifling through closets, seeing what clothes still fit their child. Children are selecting new notebooks and trying to adjust to earlier bedtimes and the sound of alarm clocks.

For many children, there is also stress associated with returning to school in September. There will be a new teacher, and many new faces in the classroom. It will be days, even weeks, before some children and their teachers feel they know each other well. Teachers feel the same anxiety, wondering what their new students will be like, and how they will learn so many new names and faces so quickly.

But in some Maine classrooms, there is less back-to-school anxiety this year than last. These children and teachers are in multiage classrooms, and they will see many of the same classmates and teachers they waved goodbye to in June.

Multiage teaching involves a child working with the same teacher for at least two years. For example, a child may enter a multiage class as a first grader, and not leave until they are finished with second or third grade. Each year, new students are added to the mix, as older students leave. Children in multiage classes often span an age range of three or more years.

For teachers, multiage classrooms can be appealing because teachers get to

work with the same students for an extended period of time. Getting to know each child well helps teachers target the best instructional practices for that particular child.

Teachers also enjoy the chance to get to know the parents of their students well. When a teacher works with the same child for two or three years, she has the chance to develop a close relationship with the child's parents.

Parents have more of an opportunity to support their child's learning, because less conference time is needed to get to know the teacher, and more time can be spent addressing specific needs of their child.

Research shows that the academic gains in multiage classrooms are the same as those in single-grade classrooms. Where multiage children leap ahead is in the social and affective realms. Multiage teachers try to foster a sense of family in the classroom. The youngest students in the class have the opportunity to watch and learn from older, more experienced peers. The oldest students have a chance to lead and help teach their youngest classmates.

Some parents are concerned about how challenged older students will be in a multiage class. Most multiage classes include some time where the more capable students are working on different activities than the youngest students. Lessons and projects are regularly

adapted to be more challenging for older students, and less difficult for the youngest learners in the class.

Watch any group of youngsters playing baseball in the waning days of summer, and you'll be amazed at how readily children can adapt the game for kids of different ages. Five-year-olds get extra strikes; older children have to pitch underhand. Learning to make these adaptations and work with others is a skill children develop naturally when they play together, and these skills can be built upon in multiage classrooms.

In real life, we pick our friends based on interests and personality, not on age. My best friend is 10 years older than I. I've never felt "gifted" because I have an older best friend (and she's never felt "developmentally impaired" because I'm younger than her!).

In multiage classrooms, you see similar friendships evolve. There is no reason why a ten year old can't be close to a 7-year-old — siblings have that closeness all the time.

Many small rural schools in Maine have always had multiage classrooms, simple because there are too few students to fill single grade classes. Multiage classrooms have even been mandated in some states, notably Kentucky and Oregon. They aren't a mandate in Maine, which is a good thing. It's not an instructional style that all teachers, parents and students would be

comfortable with, and Maine has a strong history of local control in schools and parent choice.

Fall is a favorite time of year for many people. There is a crispness in the air.

Children have new clothes, new book bags and new hopes for the school year. One thing that isn't new for many of these children is their teacher, and that makes the back-to-school transition a lot more

enjoyable for everyone.

Brenda Power is an associate professor of literacy education at the University of Maine.

■

58. The Las Vegas Review-Journal

08/31/98; Edition: Final; Section: NEWS; Page 7A

Number of teacher strikes down, charter schools up, trends show

As the school year begins, few teacher strikes if any are causing delays, more students are attending charter schools and

-The number of teacher strikes has dwindled over the past few years. School boards and union officials say both sides have become more cooperative in their approaches to bargaining.

Also, "Many school districts are addressing pay and benefits issues because of the increasing teacher shortage," said Jamie Horwitz, spokesman for the American Federation of Teachers.

-About 200,000 public school students will attend more than 1,000 charter schools, up nearly 300 schools from last

year. native- language instruction for people whose home language is not English is restricted in California and elsewhere.

An alternative to private schools, charters are public schools, generally small, allowed to operate outside many of the usual rules and regulations. Schools may stress a subject area, such as the arts or sciences, or have a stronger emphasis on core subjects.

-In California, it's the beginning of the end for bilingual education because of Proposition 227, although a federal judge has made an exception for San Jose schools. In Chicago, bilingual education will be limited to three years per student.

Trends in schools this fall:

But in Durham, N.C., Spanish-speaking students in some high schools and middle schools will get reading and writing classes in their own language. The idea is that those skills have to be learned in the language where students are most proficient. Many didn't acquire those skills in their home countries.

"We're using Spanish for native speakers as a bridge to acquiring literacy in English," said Portia Wilson-Whitaker, in charge of programs to teach English as a second language. ■

59. New York Times

September 2, 1998

Poorest New Jersey Districts Race to Be Ready for Preschoolers

By MARIA NEWMAN

Just a few days before the start of the new school year, the Superintendent in Phillipsburg, N.J., learned that two of his special-education teachers were quitting. Then, after the bombings at two embassies overseas, he and his elementary school principal had to negotiate with the Department of Defense about increasing security at temporary classrooms they were leasing in an old armory.

If that was not complicated enough, workers had to try to cope with sinkholes that developed during the summer at another school in time for the first day of classes today.

The start of a new school year typically brings headaches, but this year, Superintendent Thomas Seidenberger in Phillipsburg, like his counterparts in 27 other districts, is also struggling to meet a strict deadline to submit plans for the arrival of thousands of new students: 3-

and 4-year-olds who will be required to be in half-day preschool in the fall of 1999.

For Phillipsburg, a district that is already too crowded, it could mean setting up another 25 new classrooms.

In May, the State Supreme Court ordered New Jersey to begin half-day preschool programs in the poorest districts beginning in September 1999.

The program is expected to involve 33,000 students in the 28 districts.

The court's directive was part of the settlement of a 1981 class-action lawsuit on behalf of Phillipsburg and other districts that sought to equalize financing between the state's poorest and wealthiest school systems.

As part of the settlement, the poorest districts received well over \$248 million in extra financing last year, but now they face the formidable task of making many changes required by the court.

The ruling reflected the national trend

toward providing classes for younger children. At least 33 states now spend some funds on preschool programs, and about two dozen have substantially increased such spending in recent years. In New York City, 14,000 4-year-olds will be enrolling in prekindergarten classes this month, although officials have had to place about a third of them in private and parochial schools because there is not enough classroom space in public schools.

For the next few months, officials in the 28 New Jersey districts affected by the court ruling will face a series of deadlines to show they are making progress.

Last week, they had to give the state's Education Commissioner their plans for management teams at each school made up of teachers, parents and community leaders who will share budgetary and operational decisions with administrators. By Nov. 2, they must submit details of

where they will place the new students, whether they will have enough qualified teachers and what curriculum they will follow.

And by January, they must submit five-year plans for any new construction and other educational programs they want financed.

The regulations guiding implementation of the court's decision say that districts can apply to the

Steve Block, director of the school reform initiative for the Education Law Center in Newark, which brought the original lawsuit on unequal financing, complained that Commissioner Klagholz had met with the superintendents as a group only once since the court's decision in May, and that the regulations were coming down too fast and with very little input from the districts. "People are struggling to put it all together on time," Block said.

But state officials noted that the regulations are the result of a lawsuit in which the districts won almost everything they wanted.

"These are not deadlines set up by us, but by the court," said Peter Peretzman, a spokesman for the Commissioner. He also said the Commissioner had met recently with Superintendent Seidenberger, the newly elected president of the Urban Superintendents' Association, and that the meeting seemed to go well.

While many officials in the 28 districts are complaining about the pace, almost all acknowledge that they have already benefited from the court decision. The new funds have enabled many of the districts to buy technology and equipment previously unheard-of in their districts.

Only 15 of the 28 affected districts offer a full day of kindergarten, while 4

Commissioner for extensions on deadlines, but that ultimately the Commissioner has the authority to order any necessary changes if districts are not complying.

"It's impossible," said Peter Carter, the Superintendent in Irvington, one of the 28 districts. He said he wrote a letter to the Commissioner last week telling him the deadlines were "professionally and humanly impossible to meet." The offer a half-day. The others offer a mixture of full-day programs for some students and a half-day for others. A few work with community-based groups to provide preschool programs for some students.

Many superintendents are considering accepting help from the groups, as allowed by the court ruling, but they all worry about what standards to follow, and whether the groups can provide teachers who are qualified to provide an adequate academic program.

District officials say they will have to consider every detail, from how many waterproof pads to order for cots for napping 3-year-olds to what kind of training the teachers should have.

"A 3-year-old is not a 4-year-old a year younger," said Carter, of Irvington. "A 3-year-old is a baby."

Not all the districts feel unprepared. Two years ago, the Newark school district, the largest of the 28, began offering full-day kindergarten for all eligible students after the district was taken over by the state for corruption and poor performance and was put under the direction of a new superintendent.

This year, Newark will provide preschool for 830 4-year-olds with the help of three nonprofit, community-based groups, but that is just a small fraction of the estimated 4,200 who will be eligible in September 1999.

Commissioner, Leo F. Klagholz, has not responded, he said.

Carter said that his district of 8,100 students was already overcrowded, and that it now had only half-day kindergarten and no preschool classes. He said school officials would be hard-pressed to find the space for the 3- and 4-year-olds, especially since they have no idea how many new students there will be.

In Phillipsburg, a district of 3,500 students whose high school takes students from five surrounding school districts, the main problem, as in many others, will be finding space for more students.

Already, 11 trailers are being used for classes. The district is trying to rent two old elementary schools that the neighboring Pohatcong district is vacating because they were considered too old and dilapidated.

"We're praying to get a discarded building," Superintendent Seidenberger said. "We're landlocked. We have no room to grow."

And certainly, educators say, the value of preschool is clear. Gerald Kohn, Superintendent in Vineland, in Cumberland County, said that his district did not offer preschool and that kindergarten students there are much less prepared than those in a poor Massachusetts school district where he worked that had a full day of preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds. He said the Vineland kindergartners are also less prepared than those in Millburn, a wealthy school district in New Jersey where he also worked, where parents could afford to send their children to private preschool programs.

"Preschool is what makes a difference in a poor school district," he said. ■

60. Houston Chronicle

September 1, 1998

TSU agrees to pay feds \$10.5 million

Payment settles debts caused by improper aid to students

By LYDIA LUM

Texas Southern University will pay the federal government about \$10.5 million to settle debts caused by students getting financial aid improperly, school officials said.

Terms of the settlement still are being finalized. But payments are likely to stretch over 10 years without forcing

TSU to tap into \$10.4 million in state bailout funds, TSU President James Douglas said.

Douglas said he and his staff are deciding how TSU will budget for those payments.

The \$10.5 million to the government is the penalty for financial aid overpayments made beginning the 1993

fall semester through the 1996 spring semester, said **Department of Education** spokesman Roger Murphey.

"We continue to have concerns about TSU, but we are working with them to resolve all the matters," Murphey said.

In 1996, the **Education Department** began requiring TSU to issue federal grants and work-study monies up front to

students, then file for reimbursement. A department review had determined that TSU administrators had doled out the financial aid without getting proof the students were eligible.

Last year, the Education Department also began requiring TSU to issue federal loans up front to students and file for "The idea is to wipe the slate clean and move forward," Douglas said. "We won't begin payment of the (\$10.5 million) settlement immediately because now we are needing a lot of money for this reimbursement process."

The president said he won't consider resorting to the emergency state funds because "if the university is responsible for creating the problem, it's my responsibility to manage the problem, to manage the debt."

He compared the situation to having car trouble. "If the car breaks down, you may not know right away where you're going to get the money, but you find a way," he said.

The Education Department had estimated TSU's total liabilities at \$40 million, figuring the amount of financial aid improperly issued, plus penalties and

reimbursement.

Douglas said he and others are negotiating with the government to end the reimbursement process during the 1999 spring semester and have the government resume funneling the financial aid directly to students.

That change would help TSU better fines. TSU had initially offered the Education Department \$1 million to settle the matter.

TSU's total tab to the government is actually \$15.1 million, Murphey said, but \$4.6 million was paid in June. That chunk was a loan payment TSU owed for borrowing monies to build campus apartments. But amid negotiations over the financial aid matter, the housing loan was included in the total to lower the interest rates in both matters, Douglas said.

He said he was "thrilled we are about to reach a settlement and move on," saying that the financial aid problems have hindered efforts to recruit students.

State appropriations are based on enrollment. Douglas predicted about 7,000 students will register for classes this semester. Official figures won't be

finance the \$10.5 million in reparations, the president said. The reimbursement requirement is forcing the university to cough up about \$3 million each semester for student Pell grants and work-study funds, he said, adding that he was unsure how much more was issued each semester in loans. available for at least a week.

Several state and federal lawmakers, including U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Houston, and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, were among those assuring the Education Department that TSU can settle its bill.

State Rep. Garnet Coleman, a Houston Democrat whose district includes TSU, said the deal gives the university more time to pay the tab than the government has given to other schools in such a predicament. The standard deadline is five years, rather than 10, Coleman said.

"The positive side to this is that the hit is still minimized," he said. "We all believe this is something that is manageable by the school. I'm a little more confident that things are moving along." ■

61. San Francisco Chronicle

September 1, 1998

Governor Says Schools Must Test All Students Limited-English exemption vetoed

Robert B. Gunnison,

In a slap at Bay Area school officials, Governor Pete Wilson vetoed a bill yesterday that would have exempted pupils with limited English skills from statewide academic achievement tests. "It is inappropriate to deny one class of individuals the opportunity to participate in the educational benefits of the test based solely on the individual's English language proficiency," the governor said in his veto message. The bill, supported by San Francisco Unified School District, would have exempted from testing "limited English proficient" pupils with fewer than 30 months of English instruction. Wilson announced the veto as the Legislature inched toward the Monday recess of a session that so far has been largely devoid of major accomplishments. Election-year ambitions, rookie leadership, and political struggles between a lame-duck Republican governor and a slim Democratic majority were a recipe for inaction, delay and inability to reach

Greg Lucas, Chronicle Sacramento agreements. Among the victims were a \$1.7 billion bond that would have prohibited any spending on a new peripheral canal in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and a so-called school accountability program that Wilson wanted. The bond bill crashed amid finger-pointing and name-calling between Wilson and Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, D-San Francisco. On the school bill, lawmakers from both parties agreed in broad terms on the need for the measure, which would create a program to track pupil performance. But Wilson denounced the effort as "toothless" in a letter to the bill's author. Without an agreement, \$40 million of state money for schools will remain in state accounts. Also defeated was a measure that would have repealed the Smog Check II and revived the less-restrictive and cheaper biennial smog inspection program that existed previously. The smog bill, opposed by Wilson, was bottled in an Assembly

Bureau

committee for the rest of the year. On the politically hot issue of health insurance, Democrats sent Wilson measures that seem certain to be vetoed. One would prevent health maintenance organizations from denying care to critically ill patients without a second physician's exam. The other would create a new state board to oversee HMOs and other health plans. Last month, the Legislature defeated Wilson's plan to blend existing state agencies to regulate the industry. Wilson's late afternoon veto of the school testing measure yesterday provoked a sharp response from Assemblywoman Carole Migden, D-San Francisco, who said his rejection of her bill "will demoralize students, cost taxpayers millions of dollars and will only tell us what we already know, that they cannot read English." But Wilson said Migden's measure broke an agreement with lawmakers made last year about how the test would be administered, and "would compromise the value of the data

obtained this year." Results of the new test released in July showed California pupils read, spell and calculate below the national average, but 20 percent of those tested do not understand English. All California pupils in grades 2 through 11 took the exam this spring in reading, language, math and spelling to show comparisons between schools and individual pupils against a national average. Several other states use the same exam, but only California, with 1.4 million pupils listed as "limited English proficient," requires all pupils to take the tests in English. In July, School officials from San Francisco and Berkeley filed suit in an attempt to prevent the results from being made public because they included non-English speaking pupils. But a judge eventually allowed the state to release the scores after individual districts made the results public. Wilson contends that testing all children in

English sets a standard for measuring progress. Proposition 227, approved by voters in June, severely limits bilingual education in California, so more pupils will be receiving instruction in English. In their lawsuit, lawyers for Berkeley and San Francisco schools warned that immigrant children risked being steered into less-challenging classes if their low test scores were put in their school records. Judge David Garcia ruled last month that the state cannot force schools to place 1998 scores in the records of children who have been in the nation less than 30 months, or make academic decisions based on the scores, or even give the scores to parents. Migden's bill also would have exempted pupils who entered school with no reading skills and had been enrolled for fewer than 180 days. Wilson said this hurt "pupils from highly migratory families and effectively excludes these pupils from participation

in a fundamental component of the state's education system."

In other action, the Assembly sent Wilson a bill that would require health insurance plans to offer the same benefits to domestic partners as they provide dependents.

The bill by Migden was passed 41 to 36, with a smattering of Republican support. A similar bill was vetoed last year, and it is likely Wilson will reject it again. "There's no requirement for employers to offer it," Migden said. "The only requirement is for insurers to offer domestic partner benefits as part of the plan for selection by employers."

Voting against the measure was Assemblyman Tom McClintock, R-Simi Valley, who said, "This is a mandate on health plans. Every time you place a mandate on a health plan, you're increasing the cost of insurance."

62. Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader

September 1, 1998

Grants aim to desegregate schools

\$3.85 million may draw diversity to 8 magnets

By John Cheves

HERALD-LEADER STAFF WRITER

The Fayette County school system yesterday announced a \$3.85 million, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education that local officials hope will strengthen eight of the district's magnet schools — and win attention from more minority parents.

The magnets are a key part of the district's efforts to desegregate the public schools. Faced with some schools that remain predominantly white or black, school officials have opened 20 magnet programs — including 11 last year — to offer specialized curriculums and attract students from diverse neighborhoods across the county.

However, the magnets are enjoying only mixed success in attracting racially diverse student populations. For this school year, 361 black students applied to enroll in the district's magnet programs, a 43 percent drop from the 1997-98 school year when 634 black students submitted magnet applications.

That's where the grant comes in, officials said yesterday. Eight magnet elementary schools, with a combined student population of 3,500, will use the money to hire new math, science and reading specialists, purchase new

computers, expand a volunteer-tutor reading program, and install dance and music facilities, among other improvements.

The schools were chosen because they need to improve their diversity, said Superintendent Peter Flynn. They include predominantly white Clays Mill High Intensity Learning Center Magnet, Stonewall Traditional Magnet, Veterans Park Math, Science and Technology Magnet, Rosa Parks Language and Communications Magnet and Linlee/The Academy at Lexington, and predominantly black Booker T. Washington Montessori Magnet, Russell Magnet (M.I.A.M.I.) and Russell Cave Model Magnet.

Also, \$189,000 will be spent on an aggressive marketing campaign, including television and radio spots, to win the attention of minority families who have been reluctant to apply for their children's admission to the magnets, officials said.

Cathy Bell, principal of Veterans Park, said improving the magnets will do plenty to market the schools, even without a formal advertising campaign. Her school will receive \$217,854 to improve academic and technology training, and parents of all races will

notice those changes, she said.

"Marketing is fine, but you know what's the best thing? Word of mouth," Bell said. "Because of word of mouth, we already have had numerous families move into our neighborhood so their children can be enrolled in our program, and these are families from all different backgrounds."

But the predominantly white magnets will continue to struggle with black recruitment if their treatment of black families doesn't improve, said Sam Jones, member of the Buffer Group, which formed last year to demand racial equality in the school system.

"One of the things that discourages black people from attending these schools isn't so much the quality of the education, but it's the attitude that greets black students and their parents at white schools," Jones said.

"It's not hostile, but it's condescending," Jones said. "I'm not asking for you to roll out the red carpet if I'm a black student. Just don't treat me like I have leprosy. And if I'm a parent, don't treat me like the village idiot."

Still faced with a 1972 federal desegregation order, the Fayette County schools are one year into a three-year redistricting plan to bring minority

enrollment at each school to 12 percent to 35 percent of student enrollment. The

Even among the eight magnet schools sharing the federal grant, Veterans Park — which is 84 percent white, according to 1997-98 school data — enjoys a shiny, year-old building with new computers and equipment. Russell Cave — which is 42 percent white, 44 percent

concern is that schools that remain predominantly black historically have black and 13 percent Hispanic — uses a 72-year-old building and some aging equipment, including outdated Tandy computers.

However, the school district has remodeled Russell Cave's building and is planning to upgrade its computer

received less attention from the school district.

laboratories. The school isn't ignored, said Principal Della Burrus.

"Not with our faculty and staff," Burrus said, laughing. "If we don't get what we want, we make sure to holler about it." ■

63. Associated Press

09-02 5:10a

Census report: S.C. public school spending in line with national average

By CARRIE ARMSTRONG
Associated Press Writer

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - While South Carolina's SAT scores and teacher salaries lag, the Palmetto State spends about the same percentage of its public funds on education as the rest of the country, the U.S. Census Bureau says.

Nationally, about \$276 billion, or 30.9 percent of government spending, went to public schools in fiscal 1997. South Carolina allocated \$3.9 billion, or 30.4 percent of its expenditures, for education, the Census Bureau said in a report released today. The figures include federal, state and local money.

The news came the day after South Carolina learned it once again came in last in the country on average Scholastic Assessment Test scores.

On education spending, South Carolina came in next to last compared

with the 14 other states that make up the Southern Regional Education Board: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

Georgia led the way with 40.7 percent going to education, while Maryland came in last at 27.2 percent.

Nationally, Utah was tops with 44.4 percent, and New Hampshire ranked last, designating only 18.8 percent for schools.

However, comparing percentages doesn't necessarily give an accurate picture when it comes to how much money is actually spent on public education. Breakdowns like South Carolina's annual InSite report can give a better idea of how much reaches the classroom.

South Carolina was the first state to

use InSite, a school-by-school report showing where every education dollar is spent.

The results for the 1996-97 school year, which were released last month, show \$4.12 billion went directly into local districts, while about \$31 million went to the state Education Department.

The InSite totals are higher than the census numbers because they are calculated by academic years instead of fiscal years.

InSite showed South Carolina spent \$5,701 per student, up from \$5,433 the year before. Spending on classroom instruction and support like librarians increased to \$3,758 per student, up from \$3,553 the previous year.

District administrative costs dropped from \$74 per student in 1995-96 to \$70 per student the following school year. ■

64. The New York Times

09/02/98Section: Metropolitan Desk; Section B; Page 2, Column 1

School Sign-Up Plan Praised

By JACQUES STEINBERG

A week before New York City's 1.1 million public-school children are to descend on their new classrooms, their principals opened their doors yesterday to register students new to the city, the school system and, in some instances, the country.

In contrast to the protracted, confusing crush that has characterized the registration gantlet in years past, when the inspection of transcripts and immunization forms was often relegated exclusively to opening day, parents and

But this year, the Board of Education scheduled periodic casting calls for new students in July and August, and every

school officials recounted a generally smooth experience yesterday.

At Public School 22 in Flushing, Queens, for example, where registration forms have been translated into Greek, Vietnamese, Chinese, Urdu and eight other languages, virtually all 10 families that showed up at 9 A.M. yesterday were able to enroll their children within an hour.

They included Shefaka Raufi, 5, a prospective kindergartner newly arrived from Afghanistan. Though there were no forms in Shefaka's native language of public school is scheduled to be open for registration every day this week, from 9 A.M. to noon.

Fershin, an 8-year-old neighbor, Nadia Nabizada, proved an able interpreter.

"It was easy," Shefaka's mother, Aziza Raufi, said afterward.

For years, the Board of Education offered only limited registration before the opening of school — and then, only for prospective kindergartners, for a few days in the spring — leaving the bulk of families seeking to enroll or transfer students no choice but to compete with any number of other distractions on the first days of school.

Gloria Wagner, the principal of P.S. 24, another crowded elementary school in Flushing, said that the early effort had

enabled her staff to plan better than before, anticipating weeks ago that the school would need to add another fourth-grade class — and to move a kindergarten class, as a result, to another

school.

Asked yesterday if he was ready to go back, Zamir Zayfert, age 8, stopped bouncing a tennis ball at Bowne playground in Queens only long enough

to signal his ambivalence, with a shrug.

"Say, 'Yes,' Zamir," his mother implored him. "You know you have to learn."■

65. The New York Times

09/02/98 Section: Metropolitan Desk; Section B; Page 2, Column 1

Teachers Imported From Spain To Teach Spanish in the Bronx

By RANDAL C. ARCHIBOLD

It may seem odd, in a city with more than a million households in which Spanish is spoken, that the Board of Education has gone all the way to Spain to find people to teach Spanish.

But that it did, hiring seven experienced teachers for a pilot program that will send them to two school districts in the Bronx to teach Spanish to middle school pupils.

The Spaniards, all of whom have been teachers for at least four years, waved off warnings from friends about the perceived dangers of the city (a few were advised to see the films "Fort Apache, the Bronx" and "The Bonfire of the Vanities"). They had fears about finding affordable housing on their \$29,654 annual salaries (most have settled in apartments near Pelham Parkway in the Bronx). And they heard American schoolchildren can be unruly in comparison to Spanish schoolchildren.

But a sense of adventure and a desire to teach in a diverse environment overcame any concerns, and they arrived a couple of weeks ago, around the same time as a group of Austrian math and science teachers. Both groups start work when school opens next Wednesday.

"I heard in general that the kids misbehave in terms of respect," said Miguel Angel Casado Arroyo, 44, who is on leave from his job teaching English as

a second language at a private school in Bilbao, Spain. "It may be true or not. But I think if we respect them, they will respect us."

The arrival of teachers from abroad marks the beginning of a renewed experiment that could develop into a trend. Education officials in Scotland and Switzerland, hearing about the 25 Austrians who will teach this year, also have contacted the New York City Board of Education about sending teachers to the city to fill vacancies in math and science instruction, said Gary Barton, who oversees teacher hiring.

As in previous years, a handful of foreign teachers, from places like Germany and Switzerland traveled to New York on their own this summer and found jobs in the system, which is seeking to fill 300 vacancies before school opens.

The Spaniards will help alleviate a shortage of 30 to 40 teachers of Spanish, who are difficult to find because New York City requires that they not only speak the language but also have 36 credits in the subject in college, Mr. Barton said.

The seven Spaniards are part of a program sponsored by their country's Education Ministry, which sends several hundred teachers to schools across the United States to teach Spanish and bilingual education each year. They will

stay for two years and work in middle schools in Districts 10 and 12 in the Bronx.

This is the first time Spain has sent teachers to New York City since a failed program in the early 1980's. That program was discontinued after the teachers complained of a lack of advice and support both from their Government and the New York City Board of Education.

But last year Education Ministry officials contacted the board about sending a small group on a pilot basis. After a lengthy exchange of letters, Lillian Hernandez, the director of the board's Office of Bilingual Education, and the superintendents from District 10 and 12, Irma Zardoya and Mary Rivera, flew to Spain and came back with commitments for the seven teachers.

Ms. Hernandez said the teachers would receive more support this time than the ones in the previous program. They will take a course at Columbia University's Teachers College to learn their pupils' cultures.

Officials from Spain's consulate in New York also plan to keep close tabs on them. The consulate paid for the students' traveling expenses, housed them in the Vanderbilt YMCA in Manhattan for two weeks and helped them find apartments.■

INTERNATIONAL

66. Financial Times

09/02/98: Edition: USA Edition; Section: US AND CANADA: Page 7

College intake's ethnic mix grows

By Adrian Michaels

This year's US college intake has higher grades and is more ethnically diverse than previous years but there is a

growing gap in the preparedness of different ethnic groups, according to a study released yesterday.

The report, by the College Board, a

national education association, looks at the scores of the 1.2m students who took the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and left high school this year.

"This year minority students are a record one-third of the SAT population," said Donald Stewart, board president. But while college-bound black and Hispanic students "continue to make progress", the report states that their levels of course study are substantially below those of white and Asian students.

The report states that SAT students took an average of 19.2 year-long courses in school before going to college, but this figure dropped to 18.1 for black and

Hispanic students and climbed to 19.6 for white and Asian students.

SAT scores in the suburbs are above the national average and rising, while scores in urban and rural areas are falling further below the average. Mr Stewart said the growing disparity was "particularly troublesome" because 40-50 per cent of black and Hispanic students who took the SAT lived in large cities.

The survey also says scores of students from less educated families are

falling further below the national average, while scores from well-educated families are rising further above it.

Almost a third of state expenditure went on education in 1997, the US Census Bureau announced yesterday. State governments spent nearly \$276bn on education out of a total nationwide expenditure of \$893bn. Public welfare accounted for 23 per cent at \$203bn. ■

COMMENTARY

67. Columbia (S.C.) State

September 2, 1998

Vouchers can be used to improve education

By JAMES F. CAHALAN

Special to The State

E. Ray Moore (The State, July 17) concedes that school vouchers would lead to improvement of education in both private and public schools because schools would be forced to raise standards to compete with better schools. Most private and religious schools cost less per student than public schools. Therefore, each student moved into a religious school by a voucher program would save between \$1,400 and \$3,200. That money could be used to hire more teachers, build better libraries and add extracurricular activities and new technology in the public schools.

Despite these advantages, Mr. Moore opposes vouchers because he fears they will lead to corruption of religious schools and because he thinks they will foster dependency among those who use them.

And yet, what greater dependency could there be than that on the public

Like so many conservatives today, Mr. Moore continues to accept at face value the terms and concepts liberals have developed to channel and control political debate and solutions. The problem is not that "federal money" might lead to corruption of private schools. The problem is the idea of "federal money."

There is no such thing as "federal money." It is my money, your money, your neighbors' money. The big-government crowd wants you to think

school system? Few can escape it. Most parents cannot afford private schools, and home schooling is simply unrealistic for most families.

But the monopoly of the public schools is even worse than suggested. Religious schools are available least where needed most — in urban ghettos. Thirty years ago, religious schools provided opportunity for poor, urban families who wanted to give their children a quality education, a sense of discipline and freedom from the influence and violence of gangs. But the congregations that supported those schools left the inner cities, and the churches and schools followed or closed.

Cities like Philadelphia and Jersey City lost 50 percent of their religious schools, leaving inner-city families with no alternative but the looming disaster of a full generation raised with far substandard education. A voucher program would revive those religious schools and offer hope again where there that, because the federal government takes our money, it belongs to the politicians and to the bureaucrats. They want you to believe that those people have the right to attach conditions on the use of money when they ever-so-generously give it back to us.

Mr. Moore buys into this liberal thinking and, therefore, in pursuit of keeping government out of the private school system, urges that our only hope to avoid corruption is to refuse to take our money back. That is not the solution.

is none now.

Mr. Moore fears a new entitlement. But the public school system was our first, and remains our best and most democratic, publicly funded entitlement. Vouchers would not create a new entitlement; they would preserve and restore the best one we already have.

Mr. Moore's greatest fear is government corruption of religious schools. He confuses vouchers, which are grants to parents and/or students, with grants to the schools. Grants to schools do threaten government interference, but school vouchers do not. Many veterans have used government grants under the G.I. Bill to attend secular and religious schools. Those schools have not been subverted.

He thinks we must prevent government from corrupting religious schools. Of course we must. If government regulation is harmful, then we must reduce or eliminate government regulation.

The real solution is quite simple. Don't give the money to the federal government in the first place. Reduce taxes and leave the money in state, local and private hands. And implement good ideas, such as the school voucher program to fix the mess in our public schools.

Mr. Cahalan holds a doctorate in history from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a Georgetown businessman and, with his wife, owns Mansfield Plantation Inc. ■

68. St. Paul Pioneer Press

September 2, 1998

School starts to terrorist attacks, U.S. has better things to worry about

Rhonda Chriss Lokeman

Contrary to opinion polls and news reports, not every American has an opinion about "that woman, Ms. Lewinsky," her presidential paramour or the president's bright but enabling spouse.

To the man who gave this country a "don't ask, don't tell" approach to sexuality in the military, millions of Americans seem to have adopted a "didn't ask, not surprised, don't care" position with regard to lies about his affair with the former White House intern.

Here, after all, is a man who, weeks before his grand jury testimony about Monica Lewinsky, stopped a presidential motorcade and got out of the limo to embrace model Christie Brinkley.

This gets old after a while.

So, we interrupt this day's edition of Monica mania to bring you this news bulletin: Vacation is over. School is in.

Many Americans are far too busy getting children back to school to worry about the latest bimbo and dumbo eruptions in Washington.

Some parents, including yours truly, have been much too busy making sure that backpacks were filled with the appropriate school supplies. We've spent weeks scouring the malls for back-to-school clothes and have wrestled small, uncooperative feet into new

sneakers and patent leather shoes.

Our time was spent going over supply lists and making certain not to purchase "college-rule paper" instead of "wide-rule paper" or vice versa. We have turned cities upside down looking for notebooks that must be "yellow, spiral, 70 sheets" only to find out that such an item is available only on the black market by some guy who sells them out of his van.

The final weeks of August were spent hiking and biking trails, visiting theme parks, lakes and oceans, and otherwise trying to squeeze out the final remnants of family vacations before getting down to serious stuff like sharpened No. 2 pencils and Brownie vests.

Who has time to keep up with Bill and Hillary's domestic problems when we've domestic chores of our own?

It took U.S. strikes in Afghanistan and Sudan to cause many Americans to look up from raising families, running households and trying to make a living.

When President Clinton returned to Washington from Martha's Vineyard to tell the nation about a U.S. military response to the Osama Bin Laden terrorist network, accused of being responsible for the U.S. Embassy bombings in Africa, now that got some people's attention. Rightly so.

When Defense Secretary William Cohen warned terrorists via the airwaves

that there would be "no safe place, no safe refuge from the long arm of justice," and when Gen. Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, described the U.S. military action as "an act of self-defense for an imminent threat," it did lift some Americans from personal distraction.

But how odd it was to see Shelton and Cohen speaking in Washington about a foreign theater at the exact time that Roy Romer, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was in Chicago talking about the theater of the absurd, Clinton and Lewinsky.

Romer, his address broadcast live via C-SPAN, said, "We need to get this issue behind us, so we can get back to the business of America."

Not to excuse whatever crimes emerge from Ken Starr's grand jury probe, but some Americans are trying to get back to business. Some are simply trying to survive day to day.

Far from the capital paparazzi who have made Monica the new Diana, citizens in the Carolinas were tracking Hurricane Bonnie and Texans were under water from Tropical Storm Charlic.

There is in this country a parallel universe where Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr is only a freak show, one not every person can spare the time to duck into. ■

69. Investors Business Daily

September 2, 1998

Teacher Training In The Tank

In 24 years as a school administrator, I never once received a query from a teacher-training institution requesting an evaluation of its product. Call it complacency. Worse, call it apathy.

Not a week goes by, it seems, without some new study lamenting the poor showing of American students. Students fail for a number of reasons. But poor teacher training is one that is continually overlooked.

Until the mid-'60s, earning a teaching license took effort. It required considerable course work in teaching methods and included rigorous student-teaching experience.

I recall two six-week sessions under the tutelage of highly qualified, demanding "master teachers." Every lesson required a detailed plan and a thorough evaluation of its success or failure.

Student teachers were barred from taking extra courses and urged to drop part-time jobs so they could focus on learning their profession. Ten-hour workdays were the norm. It was tough.

But we left college ready to teach.

Teachers aren't trained that way anymore. Many colleges no longer define what it means to be a "master teacher." Theory has overtaken hands-on training. Clear and complete guidelines essential for a neophyte teacher's success are out the window. Schools, desperate for teachers, will take almost anyone just to fill classrooms.

During my tenure as principal of an

elementary and junior high school in northern California, I interviewed nearly 1,000 graduates from dozens of teachers colleges. Most were critical of their student-teaching experiences.

One conscientious young man from Sonoma State University begged me to place him with a qualified master teacher at my school. He had suffered through six weeks with a permissive, disorganized young teacher who taught him nothing. Such experiences, I found, were all too common.

Part of the reason for this: No teacher training is required to be a college professor. High-quality teaching is simply not a priority at America's colleges and universities. Despite the growing demand for a "back to basics" curriculum in schools, that philosophy is sneered at by liberal-leaning faculties in education schools.

In fact, education professors have strikingly different priorities from the public they supposedly serve. A '97 poll by New York-based Public Agenda found that just 37% of education professors believe maintaining discipline

is important for a schoolteacher. Just 19% of ed-school professors think teachers should stress correct punctuation, grammar and spelling. And only 12% believe that expecting student punctuality is important.

A statewide panel commissioned to overhaul teacher training in California made its report earlier this year. It's pretty good and offers some helpful suggestions for improving training.

But before our colleges and universities can provide the teachers America needs, there needs to be some housecleaning. Here are some of my recommendations:

Eliminate the unconscionable practice of training teachers in unproved and often untested fads such as "whole language" reading instruction, "inventive spelling" and "new math."

Recruit "back to basics" professors to provide ideological balance.

Impose a far more rigorous and systematic process for defining and selecting master teachers. Good teachers have told me over and over that the key to their success in the classroom was a

strong student-teaching experience.

Place teaching on as high a pedestal as research and publication.

Make ed-school professors accountable for their product - the graduates they're placing in America's classrooms - through routine and systematic evaluations.

Require every applicant for a teaching credential to pass a subject-matter competency test. This would weed out many people who have no business setting foot in a classroom, as the recent widespread failure of teaching applicants in Massachusetts made abundantly clear.

In short, raise the bar. There can be no better way to help good teachers secure the status and remuneration they deserve.

Without serious restructuring and ongoing evaluation of our teacher-training colleges, American education is doomed to continued mediocrity.

Ray Parnay is a retired principal and former district superintendent of the Forestville Union School District in Sebastopol, Calif. ■

70. Boston Globe

September 2, 1998

Test scores may reflect change in teaching

By Sandra Faiman-Silva Bridgewater

State higher education chairman James Carlin, citing three reasons prospective teachers are doing so poorly on teacher tests, fails to include the most fundamental factor ("Test score analysis released," Metro, Aug. 18). US educational philosophy and teaching methods implemented in K-12 classrooms since the 1970s have radically changed, departing drastically from pre-1970s instructional techniques that

emphasized rote factual learning methods in mathematics and writing competency instruction.

Today's K-12 students are taught to "think" and not simply to memorize. Our students, although often poorly grounded in basic math and literacy skills when they come to our colleges, are more thoughtful, sensitive, and sophisticated adults. Rather than simply mastering multiplication tables or diagramming sentences, as we did routinely in 1950s

and 1960s classrooms, today's students spend 12 years asking "Why?" "How?" "What does this all mean?"

Is Carlin aware of these educational trends and how they might relate to low test results on state-sponsored teacher tests? Perhaps Carlin needs to listen to the experts on our state college and university campuses before he administers bogus tests whose results mean nothing, or plays the "blame game" for which he is notorious. ■

71. The Washington Times

09/01/98; Edition: 2; Section: E:FAMILY TIMES:HOME-SCHOOLING TODAY; Page E6

Packaged curriculum or do-it-yourself?

By Kate Tsubata

Many home-schooling parents swear by the carefully constructed, pricey programs a family can buy for each home scholar. One woman I know put three teen-agers through one particular program and gives glowing testimony to the program's effectiveness.

Her eldest graduated from high school at age 16 and enrolled at a Christian

university, where she not only is pulling great grades, but has a job, lives in her own apartment and is conducting a long-distance courtship with her fiancé.

The second child, who was held back one grade in the course of regular school, has been accepted, at age 19, at the same college, which he enters as a freshman this year. Her third is on an accelerated track and also is doing well.

For some families, the prepared curricula are wonderful aids to home teaching. Parents like the texts, the workbooks, the testing process, the correspondence with teachers and the support system.

Students can go as fast, or as slow, as they wish. This flexibility gives them control of their learning and makes grading and college applications a bit

easier because of the similarity to standard schooling.

On the downside, these programs are expensive. A family easily can spend hundreds and even thousands of dollars per student for the books and other services. Also, some families do not use the traditional educational structures in their home education plan. They may be operating according to core curriculum methods or using the unschooling approach to education.

These families may prefer to create their own learning plans by searching out materials and resources that fit their unique structure - and their budgets. This process can be exciting.

It begins with some brainstorming. The family members discuss their wish lists of subject areas to cover. Do not expect children to know in advance what is covered in a certain subject. They may not say, "I want to study geology and physics," but, rather, they may talk in

Yard sales. Families periodically want to get rid of textbooks, encyclopedias, reference books and other materials. Also, if you happen upon a box of old National Geographic magazines - buy them. National Geographic is one of those timeless sources of great articles and photos on nations, history and natural phenomena.

Home-school conventions. One of the biggest attractions at any gathering of home scholars is the opportunity to recycle learning tools. Pass on those that your children have outgrown, and pick up the ones you think you will be using. This type of exchange is a real plus for home educators on a budget.

Libraries. Most libraries hold periodic book sales, with reference works, literature, magazines and even audio

terms of "I want to learn about diamonds" or "I want to find out how astronauts know they're going to get to the moon."

The brainstorming step may take weeks or months. Anything may stimulate a child's interest: a movie, a book, an interesting experience. As the child asks more questions about it, the parent can ask, "Do you think we should study that?" As the student realizes that the answers to the questions lie in a certain academic area, the child is motivated to delve into that topic. Thus, the student makes the decision about the academic subjects to study.

Do not assume that a child is too young or too old to study a topic. If he shows interest, he can study virtually anything. At what level he will be studying depends only on his academic skills. Try not to let your concepts get in the way of letting the child's interests guide the subject choices.

Also, do not worry about what you recordings on sale. For as little as \$1 per book, you can pick up some great materials.

Gifts. Many home-school families will give away the expensive materials, computers, programs, charts and other educational tools they no longer are using. Let people know that you home-school, and you will be surprised at some of the gifts you receive. Even families that do not home-school will give you valuable materials simply because they know you will use them.

Public agencies. Public information offices of various government and academic institutions can be good resources for free materials. Maps, reports, brochures, books and free services are all available to the public. It does not hurt to make a phone call or

know. So many parents believe themselves incapable of helping their child in subjects they remember as being difficult. The truth is, you can relearn these subjects, side by side with your child.

Dealing for many years with mortgages, interest rates, car mileage rates and cost-of-living wage increases has probably made courses such as algebra much more understandable to you now.

After deciding on the subject areas or a general direction (core) that each child wants to pursue, the search for materials begins. Here are some little-known places where you can find resources at very reasonable costs:

Thrift stores. Many thrift shops have a book section. You may be surprised to find everything from children's books to Gray's Anatomy to zoology.

send a letter requesting information on materials available to the public.

Finally, let your children decide on a daily and weekly schedule for themselves and then draw up their study plan. You will be surprised by how well they keep to the schedule they designed.

Whether you choose a commercial curriculum or you create your own, you and your children should implement it with full enthusiasm. Whichever path you choose, you can experience pride and satisfaction in your accomplishment. Take on some new challenges, and have a great year.

Kate Tsubata, a home-schooling mother of three, is a free-lance writer living in Maryland. She can be reached by e-mail (Kate@huskynet.com). ■

72. The Baltimore Sun

08/31/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: EDITORIAL; Page 9A

Charter schools, competition at work

By Neal R. Peirce

IN ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., the Metropolitan Ministries Academy, a charter school, has opened inside a homeless shelter, working with children who're often deeply scarred by their parents' poverty and personal misfortunes.

In Boston, although teachers unions are often hostile to charter schools, unionized carpenters and electricians in the Dorchester neighborhood have donated tens of thousands of dollars of

their labor to restore an unused convent for the new Neighborhood House Charter School.

The Colin Powell Academy, a charter in a blighted area of Detroit's East Side, is tailored specifically to its neighborhood, requiring uniforms and a strict code of conduct. Its students have posted a 22-point gain in fourth-grade reading, 57 points in fourth-grade math, and 13 points in fifth-grade science.

Colin Powell Academy's close attention to curriculum is what most

schools of Detroit's sprawling 180,000-student system simply can't offer, Deputy Superintendent Arthur Carter told the Detroit News. "This is the history of American education," said Mr. Carter. "In the beginning, public schools were one-room schoolhouses with lay {school} boards."

Detroit has turned so friendly to reform that the city's school board last May approved seven new charters. There's said to be a new "charter politics" in town: teachers unions opposed, but

preachers in favor.

In California, the Legislature in April passed a bill permitting up to 250 charter schools in the 1998-1999 school year, and 100 more every year afterward. The new legislation, removing all sorts of impediments unions and professional education groups seek to impose, now ties California with Michigan for the nation's strongest charter school law, according to the Washington-based Center for Education Reform.

None of this means charter schools, financed by taxpayer funds but independent of central school administration, are welcomed everywhere.

Only a dozen or so states — Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Texas, South Carolina, Louisiana, Florida and Pennsylvania among them — make it relatively easy to

It's been a tragic mistake, the team argues, to apply the business world's mass production/distribution process to school governance and construction. Smaller-scale neighborhood schools provide a learning environment in which students are known by name, are more accountable, participate more in class and extracurricular activities.

The pedestrian friendly, old-town environments of the New Urbanist movement could mesh well with the charter school movement, suggest Mr. Garber, Mr. Anderson and Mr. DiGiovanna. Charter schools' inability to secure affordable, safe, quality facilities

start charters. Many states limit the numbers of charters, oblige sponsors to get the blessing of the local school board, or impose extensive regulations.

And the more charters spread — the country now has close to 800, serving some 150,000 students — the more dust they stir up. Take Washington, where 19 charter schools are now open and many more are in the works. Three principals and some 100 teachers have quit the public schools to work for charters. Critics are saying it's wrong for the public school system to have to compete with charters for personnel and dollars.

Competition, though, is precisely what the public schools have lacked for so long. Why would thousands of parents, as in Washington, think of dispatching their children to charters, often cramped into temporary space, lacking the standard playing fields, gymnasiums has been their biggest problem. New Urbanist design for neighborhoods could place school facilities within or close to libraries, playgrounds, public meeting space and restaurants.

That way, if a charter closes, the space is easily adapted for other neighborhood needs. And some charters will close because they can't attract enough students, because of mismanagement, or because they fail to meet student performance objectives.

One is left with a gnawing doubt, though: Will charters, as teachers unions and school boards routinely argue, in fact, harm the public schools?

auditoriums? Precisely because they think the scrappy upstart educators behind the charters will provide more personalized, dedicated education for their kids.

Smallness, indeed, is the key, argue three development consultants — Michael Garber, R. John Anderson and Thomas DiGiovanna — in a just-published monograph titled "Scale & Care: Charter Schools and New Urbanism."

They contend that the growth of schools with enormous attendance, combined with impersonal, bureaucratized central control, has alienated the children, families and even the communities. The number of schools in the nation has plummeted 68 percent since 1930, even as the K-12 population has grown 64 percent.

Not so, argues Harvard economics professor Caroline Hoxby. She found that in regions where parents have more choice, through charters or parochial schools, there's a small but significant increase in the reading and math scores of children in the regular public schools.

Americans instinctively support open competition. It works in business. With contracting out, it helps control government service costs. Now we're finding it works in education, too.

Neil Peirce is a syndicated columnist. ■

73. Raleigh News & Observer

09/01/98; Edition: Final; Section: Editorial/Opinion; Page A11

Ease off the student accelerator

By DAVID DAVENPORT

MALIBU, Calif. — I've known since our oldest child entered school that I was different from the other parents. At back-to-school night, when a teacher announced that he did not believe in a lot of written homework for first-graders, I applauded - alone. The other parents turned to stare at me in disapproval.

A few years later, frustrated by the hours of homework our three children were bringing home each night, I wrote the principal to tell him that I felt like my relationship with my children during the week was essentially that of a homework monitor, and I resented it. Nothing, however, changed.

Now two of our children are in high school, where I would expect and support

homework, of course. But last June, when our 11th-grade daughter got a list of reading and writing assignments to complete during the summer to prepare for an advanced college placement test and to earn college credit (she's only 15), I finally figured out my real objection: For most kids, mere acceleration of learning does not inherently enrich his or her education, and it can well be counterproductive.

Pressing students to learn to read at age 3 or 4 instead of 5 or 6 or studying geometry in the eighth grade instead of 10th doesn't necessarily make them smarter. And it may rob them of time for other kinds of experiences that would make them better adults.

Let's take the idea that top juniors in

high school might take an American history course sufficiently rigorous that they could pass an advanced placement college-level exam. The sales pitch for the course is that it is a way to get college credit inexpensively and also would enable the student to take a lighter load in college or finish early.

But thinking back to my own educational experience, I remember that we studied history in elementary school, again in junior high and then again in senior high school, learning more each time. In college, the course involved reading multiple authors and taking a more critical view of history.

I have to wonder if my 15-year-old daughter's understanding of American history is enriched by taking a

college-level course now rather than taking both the high school and college courses in their proper time. I doubt it.

I believe we have confused acceleration of learning for enrichment.

Peer pressure is drawing more and more students into such an approach. Indeed, 15 times more students take the advanced placement exams than when I was in high school, and the number has doubled in just the past 10 years. These kids, who have been pushed from birth to achieve, believe that their college applications won't measure up if they don't include advanced placement and accelerated courses.

So they line up - at Malibu High School, where my daughter is a student,

I doubt that either our work force or our society will be better off with people

40 kids crowded into the summer school class - to get a head start on earning college credit.

Of course, classes should be available to kids who are behind in their course work, but it is not necessarily healthy or productive for kids who are already in the middle and fast lanes of learning to spend all their summer hours in school.

Pushing kids to earn college credit is only the culmination of a series of misguided accelerations in children's educational lives. We have friends who worry at birth whether their child will get into the "right" preschool. And my own children have nearly been buried in well-meaning but high-pressure summer school and formal acceleration who did all their homework in summer school but never had time to grow and

opportunities of every kind.

They feel stressed and I feel cut out of their development. The notion of free time for family, church or other enrichment is all but lost.

My plea to parents is this: Don't be seduced by mere acceleration. Summer school might be right for your child, but so might a long train trip with dad and mom or a visit to grandma. Doing homework every night might not be as important as going to a Bible study class or to Girl Scouts. Working in an ice cream store or volunteering at a hospital might be as much of a learning experience as collecting six units of college credit in 11th grade.

develop in other ways.

■

74. Memphis Commercial Appeal

09/01/98; Edition: Final; Section: Viewpoint; Page A7

EDUCATION IDEA SEES FREE TUITION

By Reed Branson

Free community colleges may be the sleeper issue in next year's statewide elections in Mississippi.

While candidates were clawing for attention last month at the Neshoba County Fair - an early political testing ground - with standard anti-crime themes, there was little evidence of new vision or fresh ideas.

But one idea that is likely to appeal to education groups, many business leaders and anxious voters in a global economy is being floated and simply awaits a political sponsor.

Olon Ray, director of the state's community college system, is discussing with key constituencies the idea of throwing open the doors of the state's two-year schools to students who exhibit academic and personal responsibility.

The big questions are cost and how the program would be funded. Ray is still working on those, but expects to present an affordable proposal. Full-time tuition at the state's community colleges averages \$972 a year.

Ray was part of the first generation of his family to continue his education beyond high school. Northwest Mississippi Community College in Senatobia was his gateway to higher education, including Ole Miss and The University of Southern Mississippi. and ultimately a doctorate.

Ray went on to run Biloxi's public schools and advise Gov. Ray Mabus on education issues. Seven years ago he became the top administrator in the community college system.

More than 127,000 people attend full- or part-time classes at one of the state's 33 community college campuses or branches. They earn associate degrees and transfer to four-year universities or gain technical expertise in a variety of trades.

About four years ago, Ray says, the Republican whom Mabus had defeated in a gubernatorial election - Tupelo merchant Jack Reed - approached him with the idea of opening the doors to community college.

Today, Ray is floating the idea in general terms and promising specifics in the near future. But he stressed he is not talking about simply extending high school to anyone who wants it. Rather, he wants to eliminate tuition for students who prove in high school they can achieve academically.

Too many families, says Ray, have no generational habit or role models for higher education. Increasingly, unskilled jobs are moving overseas and American companies are looking for workers with higher skills and ability to learn.

"The time is here," he says. "We're kidding ourselves if we think the present state of education will carry us into the

21st Century."

The plan will invite criticism from the quarters already reluctant to provide adequate funding to public schools. Universities may at first feel threatened as well, though Ray believes this plan would more likely encourage a non-college-bound student to consider college and less likely rob universities of their freshman classes.

Ultimately, he hopes, it would increase the talent and number of students applying to universities.

Politically, the idea seems to answer deep-rooted voter anxieties about an economy that appears strong at the moment but always reminds us of the uncertain future.

Lawmakers here are typically quick to embrace tuition credits and prepaid tuition programs. Georgia Gov. Zell Miller, a Democrat, survived a Republican landslide throughout the South in 1994 by promising free college to good students.

The North Carolina Senate has approved a bill that would waive two years of community college tuition for graduates of the Class of 1999 if they attend a community college full-time.

Voters are ready to think about learning and higher education in new ways. Political leaders will not be far behind.

■

EDITORIAL

75. The New York Times

09/02/98 Section: Editorial Desk; Section A; Page 30, Column 1

Improving Security in the Schools

A draft proposal to give New York City's Police Department significant new control over security in the schools offers a compromise to a long-running disagreement between Schools

The tentative plan, reportedly agreed to by both sides, offers a way out of the stalemate. In a radical move, 3,200 school safety officers would become Police Department employees but remain unarmed. Since the school bureaucracy has done a dismal job of selecting and training safety officers, a Police Department takeover makes sense.

Even so, Dr. Crew would retain the final say on where the safety officers are deployed, and principals would still

Chancellor Rudy Crew and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. In earlier years, the Mayor has pushed for more police in the schools and more control over school security matters. Dr. Crew has resisted control most security and disciplinary decisions in the buildings, such as suspending students for unruly behavior. That makes sense because security should be addressed within the context of a school's educational mission.

The plan would not increase the number of regular police officers already patrolling 130 schools at the invitation of the principals. Nor would any school be assigned a police officer absent a request from a principal. That is also appropriate.

sending more armed officers into schools and has long argued that educators cannot be cut out of school security decisions.

The issue of police in the schools has been controversial in many minority communities where high levels of suspicion exist about police tactics.

Many details are still being negotiated, such as the need to maintain confidentiality of student records. But the schools need help improving security, and the Police Department is the place to get it. ■

76. The Baltimore Sun

08/31/98; Edition: FINAL; Section: EDITORIAL; Page 8A

New year, new leader for Baltimore schools

Booker's challenge: New CEO must create stability even as he continues to change system.

FOR THE PAST three decades, Baltimore's public schools have been in constant turmoil. Superintendents have changed frequently; there have been endless reorganizations. A state-mandated overhaul last year created more ripples — but also a rare opportunity for radical improvement in the city's dysfunctional education system.

Now comes the moment of truth. As some 100,000 students report to classes today, Robert Booker, the recently hired chief executive officer, will begin new procedures and programs that seek to alter the school system's culture. Among concepts to be introduced are strict performance evaluations of principals and teachers.

Such measures may be commonplace elsewhere. In Baltimore, they are unprecedented — and essential for turning around the school system.

"We don't have a lot of time," says J. Tyson Tildon, the school board's chairman, referring to the system's need to prove that reforms are working.

For Dr. Booker and the board, the new school year will be a balancing act.

They must create stability amid continuing change and adjustments. Unless a well-functioning, basic infrastructure is established, Baltimore may again fall victim to a curse of its past: a pendulum swing of philosophies and practices when the top leadership changes again. The school board's role is crucial in making sure this doesn't happen.

It is encouraging that Dr. Booker has identified stronger parental support groups as one of his first priorities. Parents and guardians must take a more active role at home and in schools if the education system is to make good on its promise of a turnaround that benefits every child.

Increasing adult involvement will not be easy, though. Only about 70 of Baltimore City's 184 schools currently have accredited PTAs.

"I will be aggressive in increasing PTA membership," Dr. Booker pledges.

If need be, "I will ask the principal to knock on the doors in the neighborhood."

The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance also has pledged to work to boost parental involvement. Leaders say they hope to attract more than 5,000 parents and other adult volunteers to city schools by the end of the 1998-1999 school year.

Rallying the teachers will present another challenge.

The Baltimore Teachers Union, so far, generally has cooperated with the school board's efforts to improve education standards. But friction has increased as it has become evident some underperforming teachers will be placed on probation. Tensions also are likely to intensify once negotiations begin in November on a new teachers' contract.

Dr. Booker, much of whose career has been in fiscal management, wants the freedom to address the system's problems. This includes flexibility in personnel assignments.

When it became apparent that the

schools would open today with a shortage of about 100 teachers, he caused a minor panic at the schools' North Avenue headquarters by saying he wanted central administrators with teaching experience to help out in classrooms. "The classroom has to be the first priority," he noted.

Dr. Booker projects the image of an unflappable veteran professional. "You deal with a problem by being calm," he said recently, adding he wants to listen and lead by example.

In the end, though, the new school chief is likely to be just as impatient about the need for better results as a more

excitable executive.

As they report to classrooms, students, teachers and staff ought to be on notice that it isn't business as usual. More than ever before, their performance will be under scrutiny as internal and external assessments are made about the success of Baltimore's school overhaul. ■

77. Lancaster (Pa.) New Era

08/31/98 Section: COMMENTARY; Page A-6

Computers in the schools can aid educational growth

The computer revolution is quietly but relentlessly taking over our schools. Students returning to Lancaster County schools this week will find more computers in classrooms and web sites in every public district and most private schools.

As a Friday New Era story noted, Manheim Central will be sending computer games home with fifth and sixth graders to help improve their reading skills. Warwick will be adding computers to wood and metal shop classes. Solanco will be using collapsible, easily-movable computers in English classes.

These and other computer additions

are designed to help students learn everything from math and science skills to how to read and write.

Most students, growing up with computers and video games, readily accept the technology as a learning tool. Computerizing classrooms is sometimes more of a challenge for teachers. Many parents are struggling to keep up.

One caution: Computers can never entirely replace traditional educational methods. Books are still important. Electronics is no substitute for memorizing basic rules of grammar and mathematical formulas.

A New Era story earlier this summer highlighted the importance of basic math

computations (without the aid of a calculator) and reading and writing skills to today's military. Recruiters don't want students who don't know the essentials.

Business leaders testifying before a committee reviewing Pennsylvania's academic standards last week said too many job applicants, with high-school diplomas, fail math tests targeted at those with an eighth-grade education.

To the degree that computers help students better prepare for college or the world of business or the military, they can be extraordinary resources. But computers should be kept in perspective: they are just one more tool in the educational tool box. ■

78. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

09/01/98; Edition: FIVE STAR LIFT; Section: EDITORIAL; Page B6

NO MORE EXCUSES

EDUCATION

The 1998-99 school year isn't exactly the most propitious moment in the history of public education.

Last year's schoolyard shootings shook the nation. President Bill Clinton's plans for putting 100,000 new teachers in the classroom are tied up by a congressional leadership more interested in helping private and parochial schools with vouchers than public schools with teachers.

In Missouri, recent state tests show that only about a quarter of third graders are proficient in reading and writing, and the results in math are even more discouraging. Only 8 percent of 10th graders are proficient in math on the challenging Missouri Assessment Program test.

More daunting still are the educational challenges in the St. Louis public schools. The district is starting the school year with about 270 teacher vacancies - partly because it hasn't done much

recruiting. In addition, despite last Friday's pep rally, the district is almost certain to fall short of state accreditation standards when it is evaluated later this school year.

Yet, there may actually be more reason for hope than despair - at least when looking at the big picture.

For one thing, people often don't realize the extraordinary gain in achievement that minority students have scored nationwide over the last two decades. A recent report by the Rand Corp. found that blacks made unprecedented gains and substantially closed the achievement gap with whites on the National Assessment of Educational Progress between 1971 and 1996 - with the biggest gains occurring during the years when schools were desegregated.

In addition, some big urban school districts seem to be deciphering the indecipherable - how to improve achievement in schools with a high

proportion of poor students. Chicago, Memphis and El Paso have all made important strides. The common themes among these experiments are improved teacher training and greater accountability for individual student performance.

Both the Missouri and Illinois Legislatures took important steps last year to improve education. Illinois passed a long-sought law to bring greater equity to school funding by raising the base - providing more money for the poorest districts. Many Metro East districts will benefit, including the beleaguered District 189 in East St. Louis. Whether the additional money and the consolidation of storied Lincoln High at East St. Louis High School will result in better education is an open question.

The Missouri Legislature took the even bolder step of passing a bill that would provide a way to end court control of the St. Louis schools while continuing funding for the desegregation programs

with the best results: magnet schools and the city-county transfer program. The Legislature also opened the door to

Last week, the three members of the new, transitional school board in St. Louis were appointed - James H. Buford, president of the Urban League, Thomas B. Klevorn, a Monsanto executive and Lisl King Williams, director of career services at Washington University Law School. They seem like good choices.

For the time being, the main job of the transitional district is to figure out whether St. Louis voters are more likely to approve an increase in the property tax or sales tax to raise the approximately \$20 million a year needed to trigger an additional \$40 million in state aid. That money would be needed to make up for lost desegregation money once the desegregation court case is settled. The transitional board also oversees the switch to a smaller, seven-person school board.

The transitional board could have a much bigger role in a couple of years. It takes over the district entirely if St. Louis loses accreditation from the state. In that event, the St. Louis School Board appoints Mr. Buford, drops off and the governor appoints a chief executive to

charter schools - a sensible way to experiment with school choice - and took steps to provide more state money to run the district.

Robert E. Bartman, state commissioner of elementary and secondary education, warned the St. Louis district last December that it was in danger of losing accreditation because of scandalously low graduation rates and low student achievement. The city schools lost the warning letter a couple of times, but finally the state and city met to begin addressing the problem.

The state offered to provide the city with a team of experts, like the one it provided with good results to the Wellston district. The city has been slow taking up the state's offer, but is moving in that direction.

There is really no excuse for the city's entering a new school year with a big teacher shortage for the second consecutive year. Cleveland, which is in even worse shape educationally than St. Louis, has figured out how to recruit teachers for inner-city districts. Last year's shortage should have provided St. Louis with plenty of warning.

A measure of how well the School Board is doing will be the

inner-ring suburbs that have been left out of past education funding reforms.

implementation of its plan for improving the education at 10 of the poorest performing schools. Some of these schools will be totally reconstituted with new faculties. One of the 10, Vashon High School, offers the School Board a big opportunity. Voters approved \$30 million for a new Vashon last spring. If this School Board is wise, it will use the money not just to build new walls, but to educate the students more successfully. A shiny new building, full of lagging and failing students, is unacceptable.

St. Louis School Superintendent Cleveland Hammonds Jr. complains that the failures of the city schools are front-page news while the accomplishments get little attention.

Mr. Hammonds is a hard-working superintendent and may have a point. But defensiveness isn't going to get the job done. Mr. Hammonds and the School Board have the tools to make major improvements. If they don't get the job done now, a new board is waiting in the wings. There is no more time for excuses. ■

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A Good Year for Schools

California legislators left Sacramento early Tuesday morning after writing a significant record of achievement in 1998, greatly enabled by a \$4.4-billion state surplus. There is some question whether lawmakers should have voted to spend so much of the revenue bonanza when the stock market was in chaos and economic warning signs were flashing nearly everywhere. Even so, Republican Gov. Pete Wilson and Democratic leaders in the Legislature were correct to push a broad education agenda this year, highlighted by a \$9.2-billion bond issue placed on the November ballot to build and repair facilities from kindergarten through graduate school.

The Legislature also enacted other public school reforms, some of them long championed by Wilson. They include lengthening the school year to 180 days, allocation of \$250 million for new textbooks and banning the automatic advancement of poor-performing pupils from one grade to the next. Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Los

Angeles) called it "the year of education," and he deserves much of the credit for finally shepherding the bond measure through the Legislature.

Villaraigosa and Senate President Pro Tem John Burton (D-San Francisco) were effective in other matters as well. In the final hours of the session, they managed to achieve two major goals, shared with Wilson, that had been fraught with conflict and controversy. Those are approval of \$235 million to underwrite a significant farm-to-city water transfer agreement in Southern California and \$245 million for the purchase of endangered old-growth redwood forests in the north.

There are still some loose ends. Wilson succeeded in blocking, for the third consecutive year, pay raises for the majority of state workers because of an impasse over Civil Service rules. And no agreement could be reached on overall reform of health maintenance organizations. Those items definitely should be on the 1999 agenda.

Both Villaraigosa and Burton were new to leadership, but in the end they held their own with the governor. Their major achievement in fashioning a \$76-billion budget was to blunt Wilson's initial demands for a \$3.6-billion tax cut that would have used up much of the budget surplus. Eventually, the Legislature approved a more moderate mix including \$1.4 billion in tax reductions. Further cuts were approved for future years, but they are contingent on even rosier economic conditions than the state has enjoyed in the past several years. Even better than a tax cut would have been more spending on long-term investments such as school facilities, transportation and natural resources.

While the basic California economy seems strong, there are obvious concerns. It would not take a dramatic downturn to plunge the state budget back into red ink again just as a new governor takes office, as happened when Wilson became governor in 1991. Wilson now leaves because of term limits. But if Democrats

