

59. Austin American-Statesman

May 20, 1997

Teachers' aides could get tuition waived under bill

By A. Phillips Brooks

American-Statesman Capitol Staff

For 10 years Mike Fillmore, a classroom aide at Pillow Elementary School in Austin, has dreamed of becoming a teacher.

But time and money — especially money needed for college tuition — stymied that dream.

Thanks to the Texas Legislature, money no longer will be a problem.

Starting in this fall, Fillmore and other teachers' aides are eligible for free college tuition to pursue teaching credentials under a bill forwarded Monday to Gov. George W. Bush. To be eligible, teachers' aides must have two years of classroom experience, show financial need and continue to work as an aide throughout college.

"Many teachers' assistants do want to become teachers but in most cases don't have the money — even though they have just as much experience in the classroom as regular teachers," said Fillmore, 31, who runs a computer lab at Pillow.

He said the tuition waiver would allow him to quit his second job and pursue a degree. "This opens up another avenue to attract more teachers, especially African Americans and Hispanics, who are so badly needed in our classrooms as teachers and role models," he said.

That's exactly what bill sponsors had

in mind in crafting the measure, said Rep. Irma Rangel, D-Kingsville, and Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin.

"This is a wonderful bill that will bring more certified teachers into the classroom in areas of critical need, especially in bilingual and special education," Rangel said.

Barrientos said a shortage of home-grown teachers has school districts shopping out of state to fill Texas public schools, which enrolled 3.8 million students this year.

Recruiting out of state "shouldn't be necessary when Texas has a whole lot of teachers-in-training working as teacher aides right in the same community," Barrientos said.

The bill aims to help address shortages in the teaching profession and the underrepresentation of black and Hispanic teachers.

Blacks and Hispanics make up 23 percent of Texas teachers but more than half the teachers' aides. More than half of Texas public school students are Hispanic or black.

High turnover and job dissatisfaction also are depleting the pool of teachers, according to a 1995 Texas Education Agency report. Half the new teachers leave the profession after five years, the report found.

Fillmore said that turnover probably

would not happen with teachers' aides because they enter the classroom with more than textbook experience and are familiar with real-life working conditions.

"Right now, the only role models available to too many black and Hispanic kids are football stars and rap singers," said Fillmore, who wants to be a special education teacher. "They need to see someone else in a different role doing positive things early in their lives."

Though lawmakers filed more than a dozen measures this session aimed at giving Texans free college tuition, this is one of the few that survived and is likely to become law.

The cost is estimated at \$300 million, but it is being paid for with savings from another program so it doesn't require lawmakers to ante up additional money. Savings from a program encouraging students to graduate from high school in three years will be devoted to tuition.

The Legislature also is sending Bush a tuition exemption measure that would extend free college tuition to foster kids on or after their 14th birthday.

Currently, foster children who stay in state conservatorship until their 18th birthday or graduation from high school receive free tuition at state public universities. Bill sponsors said that rule discourages adoption of older children. ■

60. Dallas Morning News

May 20, 1997

DART sees bus monitors as a safe bet

Transit system wants schools to take lesson from HP district

As the boys in the back belt out Greasy Grimy Gopher Guts, DART bus No. 1086 rolls to a halt on Douglas Avenue.

Ulysses Rowe, a 78-year-old Sanger-Harris retiree, ambles out with his portable stop sign to block traffic and escort kindergartner Patrick Tahu to safety. Fellow monitor Ruby Long stays behind, keeping watch over the rest of

the Bradfield Elementary School flock.

Mr. Rowe and Ms. Long make all the difference to Janie Tahu, mother of Patrick and another young Highland Park school district student. "I wouldn't let them ride the bus without Ruby and Rowe," she said, referring to the adult duo as all the kids do. "At this age, they need the monitors."

Thousands of other Dallas-area

schoolchildren aren't so fortunate - they ride DART to and from class without benefit of a supervisor who has the principal's ear. And because public transit buses don't have the traffic-stopping power of school buses, these youngsters fend for themselves when crossing streets up to six lanes wide.

Now DART is trying to put a dent in

English-as-a-Second-Language teacher at Fallis Elementary in southeast Denver, one of the most diverse schools in the city.

In her 8:50 a.m. class of first- through third-graders, Masters and a para-professional work with 12 children: Kostya and Inna from Ukraine; Alex and Anna from Russia; Marrion and Sephora, twins from the Congo; Henry and Anthony from Mexico; Kevin from Korea; Lea from Armenia; and Jasmine from Egypt.

The students have lived in the U.S. for periods ranging from three months to three years. Masters is from Moldova and speaks Russian. In some classes, most of the students are Russian, and she will speak to them in their native language. In this class, however, she sticks strictly to English.

Masters said she strives to create an environment where the students feel safe

trying out their halting English. "They are often quiet and afraid to talk in the regular classrooms," she said. "They feel ashamed, scared the other kids will tease them. But in here, everyone is in the same situation and it relaxes them."

Students who need the time get two hours each day with Masters or another, half-time ESL teacher. More established students get one hour.

Fallis also has two bilingual classrooms for its 70 Spanish-speaking students. Principal Wil Minor works the bilingual students into mainstream classes for an hour or two a day to get them accustomed to studying in English.

According to Minor, who has been at Fallis for five years, immigration is having and will continue to have an impact on staffing. Any new teachers hired will have to be bilingual or ESL-qualified to be seriously considered.

This spring, in fact, Minor is seeking

additional bilingual teachers for the fall, particularly at the kindergarten and preschool level. This could mean some established Fallis teachers without those qualifications will have to transfer out to other schools.

"It's just the nature of what is happening in the neighborhood, and within the school," Minor said. "That's where our growth is."

Immigrants live primarily in two large apartment complexes within Fallis' attendance area, Minor said. But their growing numbers have not driven white families away from the school in large numbers.

In fact, Minor said, "We have (white) families in the neighborhood returning to the school, and non-neighborhood people choosing this school as well. I think people are attracted by the multi-cultural atmosphere." ■

58. Denver Post

May 18, 1997

Some students must balance work, school

By Alan Gottlieb
Denver Post Education Writer

In three years here, 17-year-old Gema Acosta has adapted seamlessly to the fast-paced American way of life.

Acosta, who has a direct, self-possessed manner, doesn't fret about how best to use her free time - she doesn't have any.

The West High School junior finishes her last class at 2:30 p.m. She arrives at her southwest Denver home at about 3:20 p.m. and spends an hour on homework. Then she heads to Jason's Deli in Lakewood, where she works 30 hours each week as a cashier.

"It was hard for me at first to do so much, but I have learned to divide my life into sections," Acosta said between classes one spring day. "I just have to be organized and everything is fine."

Acosta works to pay for gas and insurance for her car, and to ease the burden on her parents. Her two sisters are

too young to work.

Many of the 900 students in West High's bilingual program - most of them recent immigrants - work between 20 and 40 hours per week in addition to taking a full load of classes. Some cook in fast-food restaurants, others clean downtown office buildings or wash dishes.

Acosta's family moved to Denver two years ago, their second stop in the U.S. since emigrating from central Mexico in 1994. Acosta's father, an ambitious industrial engineer "who is always looking to get ahead," moved the family here seeking better opportunities.

He repairs and maintains computer networks for various metro-area businesses, while Acosta's mother shares cashiering duties with her daughter.

Acosta is still struggling to learn English. Her West High classes are

conducted in Spanish, other than an hour a day spent studying English. But she's confident that by the end of her senior year she will have "perfected" English.

"I understand English well, I can write it more or less, but my pronunciation is bad," she said in Spanish.

After she graduates, Acosta hopes to pursue studies in microbiology. She knows she can't afford college tuition right away.

"I hope to go to a community college and get training in secretarial work, or in being a medical assistant," she said. "Then I can save money for a longer course of study in science."

She said she wouldn't dream of asking for help from her family. "We are doing very well economically, but I don't want to be a burden. I want to pay my own way." ■

School-to-Work, Employers, And Personal Values

By Samuel Halperin

If its critics are to be believed, the fledgling American school-to-work movement is a nefarious plot by Big Government, abetted by willful or unwitting industrialists, to control the academic content of learning and dictate the occupational futures of American youths. What's more, opponents from both extremes of the political spectrum contend, our schoolchildren are in danger of becoming pawns in a computer-driven national labor-market information system that will funnel them into whatever jobs the economy needs filled.

This Orwellian prospect lies in the face of compelling success stories from many school-to-work programs here, as well as from long-standing efforts in other democracies. On both sides of the Atlantic, there is a healthy blending of school-based learning and hands-on exposure to the world of work. School-to-work champions can muster persuasive evidence that experience in actual workplaces, and not just classroom instruction, helps young people acquire essential job skills along with the habits of thought and behavior that underlie them.

Instead of regarding school-to-work efforts as key elements of genuine school reform, critics from the political right see a government-directed scheme to control the minds, the values, and ultimately the occupations and earnings of American workers—all of which will allegedly subordinate family values to the imperatives of the economy. For its part, too, the anti-capitalist political left envisages generations of human automatons and worker bees, brainwashed to serve the needs of corporate capitalism in cahoots with government bureaucracies. No longer capable of independent thought and self-realization, our young people are to become little more than cogs in the nation's industrial and economic machinery.

The gap between these baleful predictions and ground-level reality came into sharp focus during recent study missions to Europe and Israel. There, as we are beginning to see in the United States, enlightened businesses and supportive government policies are enabling young people to experience the best of both worlds: high-quality academic learning and

practical experience in the workplace that reinforces classroom study.

Several relevant examples demonstrate persuasively that critics from both sides of the political spectrum are plain wrong.

At ABB (Asea Brown Boveri) in Baden, Switzerland, high-school-age apprentices in the giant Swiss-Swedish engineering firm study in a state-approved and partially state-financed high school located on the factory's premises. When American visitors asked what qualities are essential for success in the workplace and in nonworking life, ABB student responses included: personal competence, self-discipline, independence, creativity (imagination and problem-solving), team effort (social competence, solidarity, communication skills), flexibility, focus on satisfying the needs of customers and colleagues, honesty, and loyalty.

In Zurich, we met with trainers and graduates of the youth-apprenticeship program of the Union Bank of Switzerland. Like its industrial neighbor ABB, this leading Swiss bank has been "training" student workers for over 125 years. What kinds of skills and values does UBS look for in admission to, and completion of, its four-year program? The composite response from both trainer-coaches and graduates: self-initiative, effective team player, ability to concentrate, decisionmaking ability, communication skills, flexibility, professional appearance, good grades in secondary school, staying power, enjoying people. At a cost to the Union Bank of Switzerland of as much as \$23,000 per apprentice per year, over and above what the state pays for secondary education, the apprenticeship program enjoys high prestige with students, parents, and the public at large. (Here, as elsewhere in Europe, requests for enrollment are often triple or more the number of available slots, especially in the more competitive professions.) Moreover, the trend is to ever higher job qualifications, more postsecondary academic specialization, and systematic follow-up through advanced learning opportunities. Indeed, there is now talk in the financial-services industry of creating a "University for Applied Science."

At the Julius Blum firm, a precision

manufacturer of cabinet hardware in Bregenz, Austria, the company's training philosophy is exemplified by two mottoes: "Never underestimate the capabilities of our youth. Rather, find out what they are, and utilize them in helping to create a successful adult" and "A positive role model is the best way to form a young mind."

Blum's 22 full-time and 11 part-time trainers serve the needs of 130 apprentices who, while completing their fourth year of combined schooling and on-the-job learning at age 19 or 20, earn up to \$1,700 a month. Students are offered free Saturday-morning tutoring, a physical-fitness program, and first-aid instruction, as well as bonuses for "personality development" (for example, \$10 monthly for not smoking, \$15 for "proper conduct" in auto traffic). Unlike other youth-apprenticeship programs, Blum's downplays a written contract defining roles for students, parents, and employer. The entire relationship, believes the firm, is built instead on mutual trust. Without trust, no contract is enforceable.

In the city of Bregenz's employer-backed public high school, where many of the apprentices study, and in Blum's own training center, students work on state-of-the-art equipment because, as the firm's educational director says, "We want our students to have the very best technology; if the equipment in the plant is better than in the schools, they will look down on schools." Far from being deprived of independence and personal autonomy, students take from the company's value system the message that "the computer shouldn't be smarter than the computer operator; faster, not smarter." Like other firms we visited, Blum's leaders practice what they preach: "Smart workers are our best asset."

Overall, the Austrian manufacturer has graduated more than 500 students, with only one dropout. The firm has recently opened a high school apprenticeship program with neighboring companies based on the tech-prep curriculum at its U.S. plant in Stanley, N.C. It will be interesting to see whether the same high standards and performance can be successfully transplanted in the New World.

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Teacher cont.

which describe accomplished teaching and form the basis for the assessments, are finished. A similar number are under development.

Since 1995, 595 teachers have been certified, and another 900 are in the process. All of the candidates who meet the board's standards, which are intended to be demanding, are

certified. Approximately 35 percent of the candidates pass the assessments.

In an effort to speed up the process and cut down the costs, the organization's 63-member governing board decided last month to allow candidates to "bank" scores on parts of the assessments. Similar to the licensing process for lawyers and certified public accountants, the new

policy means that teachers who score poorly on a portion of the exercises can retake them, but won't have to go through the entire procedure again.

The board will adjust the fees charged to candidates accordingly, Mr. Kelly said. "We continue to examine ways to make it more flexible and accessible to candidates," he said of the certification system.

Education Week, March 12, 1997

Skeptics Greet Clinton Plan's First Appearance in Congress

By Joetta L. Sack

Washington

House Republicans got their first jabs at President Clinton's 10-point education agenda last week, raising questions on the feasibility of several of his pet projects and the federal government's role in reforms.

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley brought the president's plans to a House Education and the Workforce Committee hearing and faced questions on such issues as higher education tax credits, Mr. Clinton's proposed reading initiative, and national standards.

The session was the first hearing the House committee has held on the president's agenda, but leading Republicans have not been shy about criticizing portions of the plan since Mr. Clinton released his budget last month.

While Republicans say they, too, want to make education a top priority, the two parties have so far found little concurrence on specific plans.

Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., the committee's chairman, said after the hearing that he doubted that several of the administration's ideas would pass, including the proposed Hope scholarships and a plan to help pay interest on school construction bonds.

The Hope scholarships would allow students to take an annual \$1,500 income-tax credit for two years' college tuition, or would let families take an annual \$10,000 tax deduction for as many years as they had students in college. Mr. Clinton has said the plan is intended to make at least two years of college available for all students.

Lawmakers from both parties last week attacked the plan for its minimum-grade requirements.

Students would have to maintain a B-minus average, calculated as a 2.75 on a 4.0 scale, to qualify for a tax break in the second year, Mr. Riley told the panel. "The president wanted to put a meaningful incentive in there," he explained, adding that he would be

open to other suggestions.

But the grade requirement would lead to a huge change in the value of college grades, said Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., who chairs the subcommittee that handles higher education. "Will the Internal Revenue Service be taking a student's report card to see if they qualify for a second year?" he asked.

Democrats Skeptical Too

Some Democrats joined in criticizing Mr. Clinton's higher education package, which includes increases of up to \$300 for Pell Grant recipients, as paying too little attention to poor students.

"I wish we would look at how to put more emphasis on work-study and Pell Grants," said Rep. Dale Kildee of Michigan, the committee's ranking Democrat.

But it costs the federal government \$350 million each time the maximum Pell Grant is raised \$100, Mr. Riley said, adding that tax relief is needed for middle-class students who are also unable to afford college. The proposed tax credits and deductions would be available to families with incomes below \$80,000 a year; reduced tax breaks would be offered to those making up to \$100,000.

Another of Mr. Clinton's favorite campaign proposals, the America Reads program, drew criticism from panel members for using money that they said might be better spent on existing programs or on helping reduce class sizes.

The program would put 1 million volunteer tutors and 30,000 reading specialists into schools. Critics say it would duplicate other federal literacy programs and distract from the need to improve regular school reading programs.

And a \$5 billion initiative to pay up to half of the interest on local school construction bonds could end up costing districts more, owing to the

wage requirements on federally financed construction projects, some on the House panel said.

Any construction project built using federal funds is subject to the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires builders to pay so-called prevailing wages. Some Republicans said that would add about 15 percent to a project's costs. Mr. Riley said he saw no way to circumvent the law.

After the hearing, Mr. Goodling suggested that Republicans might use the school construction initiative as a bargaining tool to reform the Davis-Bacon law.

Consequences Undecided

Some lawmakers also questioned whether the president's proposal to set voluntary national standards in reading and mathematics, along with related new tests in those subjects, would be able to follow through with consequences for schools that failed to make the grade.

"You can have standards and goals, but if you don't have consequences, you won't get there," said Rep. George Miller, D-Calif.

Mr. Riley suggested that a school that repeatedly failed to meet standards could be shut down or taken over under state laws. But as far as the proposed national standards and tests, he said, it would be up to states and school districts to figure out how to solve their problems.

The department "stands willing to offer advice," he said.

Mr. Goodling warned the Education Department not to get too eager in laying its plans.

"I wouldn't move ahead thinking you have the authority without having the total involvement of Congress," he advised during his opening remarks.

The department plans to release legislation spelling out the Hope Scholarship, America Reads, and school construction initiatives late this month, Mr. Riley said.

Critics Say Clinton Pitch Misses Political Point

By David J. Hoff

Washington

President Clinton is fond of saying that improving schools, an issue as significant for him as the Cold War was to his predecessors, deserves the same united front Democrats and Republicans took with the Soviet Union.

"Today, in the information age, politics should stop at the schoolhouse door because our security depends upon our ability to give all our people the finest education in the world," Mr. Clinton told the American Council on Education on Feb. 24.

For more than a month, that sentiment has been a standard part of the president's pitch to educators, state legislators, and business leaders as he stumps for his 10-point "Call to Action for American Education." A similar line drew a bipartisan standing ovation during the president's Feb. 4 State of the Union Address.

But as laudable as Mr. Clinton's premise may be, politicians, political scientists, and historians doubt that his agenda will move forward without becoming embroiled in debates that divide the political parties. Most say that the 10-point plan should be subjected to intense scrutiny and that Democrats and Republicans should fight for popular opinion to support their beliefs.

"That perhaps is the most absurd thing he's ever said," Lamar Alexander, who served as secretary of education under President Bush, said of Mr. Clinton's call to take politics out of education. The former candidate for the Republican presidential nomination said that differences between Mr. Clinton and the GOP are so stark that the issue "needs to be fought out in the political arena."

Mr. Clinton's push for bipartisanship comes soon after an election in which school policy played an unprecedented role.

"It's not surprising and it's not atypical for a president to do that, particularly for a second-term president," Allan J. Lichtman, a professor of history at American University here, said. "I'd say it's not realistic."

"I'm skeptical of Bill Clinton's claim

to leave politics aside in anything," said Rep. Peter Hoekstra, R-Mich., the chairman of the House subcommittee in charge of oversight of federal education programs. "If we can do it, hallelujah, I'm for it. We're preparing with the belief that he will make it a political issue."

Encouraging Overtures

Still, Mr. Hoekstra acknowledged, Mr. Clinton has made some conciliatory gestures toward GOP lawmakers since he first issued his call for a nonpartisan education policy in the State of the Union Address.

For example, the day after unveiling his school agenda, the president invited Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., the chairman of the House education committee, to the White House to discuss each other's ideas. Last week, Mr. Goodling and Sen. James M. Jeffords, R-Vt., the chairman of the Senate education committee, joined first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in a tour of Washington schools to review their need for improvements.

In his speech to the ACE, Mr. Clinton also thanked Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., who preceded him on the program, for refraining from partisan jabs when Mr. Lott suggested Republicans might compromise on elements of Mr. Clinton's plan, such as helping families finance college tuition with tax benefits.

"I was encouraged by the report I got ... about the words that Senator Lott said earlier here today," Mr. Clinton said. "During the Cold War, we had a bipartisan foreign policy because ... the future of the country was at stake."

Despite the promising overtures, officials do not predict the debate over Mr. Clinton's education plans can be so delicate.

Mr. Clinton's agenda includes items Republicans and Democrats can endorse like a call for students to improve their reading and math achievement. But his plan to create national tests that states could voluntarily participate in is "divisive and diversionary," said Michael E. James, an associate professor of history

at Connecticut College in New London.

Likewise, another prong in Mr. Clinton's agenda includes school choice, but it would be limited to public schools and charter schools. That ignores the debate over whether government should finance vouchers to be redeemed in private and religious schools.

"These are legitimate differences among the participants, and those ideas should be informed by research," said Maris Vinovkis, a professor of history at the University of Michigan. "But ultimately they will be decided in the political arena."

Partisan Battles Await

Other portions of Mr. Clinton's agenda will be the subject of legislative debate. The plan to provide \$5 billion to subsidize school construction begs a question that deeply divides Democrats and Republicans: Should recipients of federal construction spending be required to pay union wages?

Two years ago, Democrats boycotted a vote to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that federally funded construction projects pay such wages. But Republicans say the law adds unnecessary costs and headaches to any federally subsidized project.

"It would be very, very difficult to pass a bill that would attach federal regulations to school building projects," Mr. Hoekstra said.

"When you get to the details of policies, it gets very partisan," said Mr. Lichtman, the American University historian. "We have a party system because we don't always agree."

"It's right for the president to urge people to come to some sort of agreement on these issues," Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn., said. "It's appropriate leadership."

But the president's ideas should not go unchallenged, Mr. Alexander said.

"I would like the Republican Party and the Democratic Party to compete to see who can create the best schools in the world," he said. "We all used to do that when we were governors, and it made our states better states."

Clinton Teacher Board Proposal Marks Milestone

By Ann Bradley

Washington

President Clinton's recent call for increased federal funding of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards marks a coming of age for the private group, which has been plugging away for a decade to create a system for certifying outstanding teachers.

Unlike some other education initiatives the president has proposed for his second term—such as new national student tests and a corps of reading tutors—his plan to beef up the teaching board is not expected to set off many political fireworks.

What remains to be seen is whether Congress will be willing to foot the bill. In the past seven years, however, the organization has garnered enough support to receive \$35 million in federal aid.

In his budget proposal for 1998, Mr. Clinton is asking for \$105 million over the next five years in behalf of the nonprofit board, which is based in Southfield, Mich. His goal is to have 100,000 candidates in the process of becoming certified during that period—a number that could yield 35,000 nationally certified teachers, based on the current passing rates for the board's intensive process of voluntary certification.

James A. Kelly, the president of the teaching-standards board, said last week that he "fully expects" to meet Mr. Clinton's goal.

"The scale of the president's proposed support indicates to other funders and state and local partners that this program is for real, it is going to national scale, it is here to stay, and the time is now to start to get aboard," Mr. Kelly said.

Need for Incentives

Mr. Clinton's endorsement followed high praise for national teacher certification from the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, a blue-ribbon panel that issued a report last fall on ways to strengthen teaching. The commission called for the nation to have 105,000 certified teachers—one for every school—by 2006.

Reaching the commission's more ambitious target, which extends four years beyond the president's, is likely to depend on whether policymakers create the right mix of incentives and rewards for teachers to undergo the

board's assessment.

To be certified nationally, a teacher has to complete a rigorous series of exercises over several months. Passing the assessments means, among other accomplishments, that a teacher has a strong command of both subject matter and instructional strategies.

The presidential stamp of approval is the result of cooperation among three Southern governors—one sitting and two former.

Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. of North Carolina has served as the chairman of the teaching board since its founding in 1987. He has close ties to Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, himself the former governor of neighboring South Carolina. And Mr. Clinton has been supportive of the board since his days as governor of Arkansas.

Gov. Hunt also was the chairman of the national commission on teaching. The secretary and the president, Mr. Hunt said, "see the potential in this to raise standards and help every child."

Two Pots of Money

Mr. Hunt had dinner with Mr. Riley about six weeks before the president's State of the Union Address last month. At that time, the governor said, he suggested that increased federal funding for the board be split along two lines.

One pot of money would enable the board to finish its designs of standards and assessments, while the other would flow to states and localities to help them offset the \$2,000-per-teacher cost of the assessments.

That price is steep for teachers. On its own, the board has worked with districts and states to encourage them to subsidize or pay the fees for candidates.

The North Carolina governor said that he was confident state leaders would embrace a federal matching-funds program "to really jump-start it and get thousands and thousands of teachers involved."

"It's pretty clear that governors, on a bipartisan basis, see the merit in this as a real valid credential that stands for performance and accomplished teaching," Mr. Hunt said in an interview.

In his budget request for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, Mr. Clinton did

what Mr. Hunt suggested. He asked the Congress for \$60 million as a direct grant to the teaching-standards board, Mr. Kelly said. The funding would enable the organization to finish setting standards for accomplished teaching, create matching assessment packages, and conduct field tests in 25 teaching specialties—enough to cover 95 percent of American teachers.

The rest of the money, \$45 million, would be administered by the Department of Education in an incentive program to encourage states and localities to underwrite the fees charged to candidates for certification.

Mr. Clinton's budget recommends spending \$21 million a year for five years. The first year, the organization would receive \$16 million, while \$5 million would go to the incentive program.

Every year after that, Mr. Kelly said, the amount allocated to the board would decrease by \$2 million, and the funds targeted for incentives would increase by the same amount.

Congress has supported the national board in the past. Authorized under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the board currently receives \$5 million a year through a noncompetitive grant from the Education Department's office of educational research and improvement.

Congressional appropriators will have to decide whether to increase that amount.

Sen. Tom Harkin, an Iowa Democrat who is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, continues to be a booster of the board, a spokesman said last week. Other backers who sit on appropriations committees have included Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and Sen. James M. Jeffords, R-Vt.

Mr. Hoyer is "definitely supportive of the funding," said Jerry Irvine, his spokesman. "He has been in the lead to get the money in the past."

'Banking' Scores

The organization has completed six assessment packages and will launch a seventh certificate in the fall—for science teachers who work with children in adolescence and young adulthood. Eleven sets of standards,

-more-

WHY TEACHERS DON'T TEACH

*The nation's future lies in its classrooms.
But teachers' unions are driving out good
teachers, coddling bad ones and putting
bureaucracy in the way of quality education*

Call it a little morality play about America's schools. In Act I, a dedicated Los Angeles math teacher named Jaime Escalante becomes a national hero for his work with barrio kids at Garfield High School, a saga chronicled in the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*. In Act II, Escalante flees the Los Angeles school system for Sacramento, taking his devotion and his brilliant teaching skills

with him. Why did he leave? Teacher union officials contend the fame went to his head. Escalante fires back that a major reason was that Los Angeles union leaders objected to his zeal. One problem: He says they chastised him for having too many students in his calculus class. "If you looked into what is going on in this school in the name of the union, I think you . . . would be ap-

palled," the teacher wrote in 1990 to his union president, a year before he resigned and moved.

Escalante's experience is hardly unique. In the 34 years since the signing of the first teacher collective-bargaining contract in New York City, teacher unions have become the single most influential force in public education, their impact felt in classrooms across the coun-

try. Union policies that work against quality teaching are driving many top teachers out of public schools, making it tougher for good teachers who stay to do their best work and leaving incompetents entrenched in many classrooms. And at a time when corporate leaders and others are calling on schools to hold students to significantly higher standards, the intransigence of the unions has slowed the pace

of school reforms, eroding public confidence in the schools and spurring an unprecedented wave of tuition-voucher plans and similarly targeted initiatives. The crisis is so great that Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), plans to propose a radically new model of teacher unionism to his membership (box, Page 70).

Unions entered the teaching profession for a reason: The vast majority of teachers were poorly paid and subject to patronage hiring and other inequities. Organizing made sense. In the past 30

years, laws granting teachers the right to bargain collectively have entered the books in 37 states, and nearly 90 percent of the nation's 2.5 million teachers now belong to either the National Education Association, the nation's largest union, or its smaller, more reform-minded twin, the AFT. (Leaders say that they expect the two unions to begin merging within the next four or five years.)

Many teachers happily pay union dues because they believe the unions have fought for improved pay and working conditions and gave them a professional voice. Unions also offer members a host of attractive benefits, ranging from liability insurance to low-interest credit cards. "The union gives you a sense of professionalism; there's support from people with experience," says Betty Lewis, a veteran reading teacher at the Hopewell Crest School and member of the Hopewell Educators Association in Bridgeton, N.J.

But the nation's schools have paid a large price for the marriage of classroom and bargaining table. By embracing old-style industrial-labor tactics, the unionism of traditional auto plants and steel mills, the AFT and the NEA have given teaching the feel of classic blue-collar work, where winning workers big checks for the shortest possible hours has been

More...

WHY TEACHERS DON'T TEACH, continued... (2)

the aim and the quality of the product is considered to be management's worry. Under this ethic, good teaching is often punished, poor teaching rewarded and bureaucracy placed squarely in the way of common sense, a tangled system played out in schools from New York to California. *U.S. News* looked into some of the most troubling problems:

EXCELLENCE IS NO GUARANTEE

In 1990, Cathy Nelson, a Ph.D. history teacher at Fridley High School just outside Minneapolis, was named Minnesota's Teacher of the Year. But Fridley's students weren't enjoying the fruits of Nelson's outstanding teaching. She had been laid off months earlier, under a union-bargained "last-hired, first-fired" policy. A 15-year veteran and third-generation teacher, Nelson was the least senior of Fridley's five social-studies teachers. Ironically, she had been laid off under the same policy three other times. Her love of kids kept her com-

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PROBLEM TEACHERS STAY IN CLASS

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If quality teaching goes unrewarded in the nation's schools, bad teaching is not only tolerated but often safeguarded to an extent that leaves principals gnashing their teeth and parents in despair. Union contracts grant a myriad of due-process protections against dismissal after teachers have spent two or three years in the classroom, making it tremendously difficult to fire even the most incompetent instructors. And even when a school system

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AFT AT A GLANCE

The American Federation of Teachers was founded in Illinois in 1916.

- **President.** Albert Shanker
- **Membership.** 885,000, largest membership in New York
- **Locals.** 2,500
- **1996 budget.** \$78 million
- **Campaign contributions.** \$5 million from 1989 to mid-1995
- **Top 1995 recipients.** These lawmakers got the most:

- Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y. (\$5,000)
- Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo. (\$5,000)
- Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn. (\$5,000)
- Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- **First strike.** 1946 by St. Paul, Minn., local
- **Famous members.** Albert Einstein, Elie Wiesel, Hubert Humphrey

More...

WHY TEACHERS DON'T TEACH, continued... (4)

Martin Luther King Jr. Academy, a new school with a new curriculum. The Mount Clemens Education Association, the local union, insisted that the school's teachers be paid for several weeks of training in the new curriculum. But a group of younger teachers wanted extra training in math. The school couldn't afford it, so the teachers volunteered to take the training without pay. Veteran teachers rejected the idea, pointing out that unpaid work was forbidden by the union contract. The training never took place.

The drive of a Jaime Escalante is rare in any field, but many public-school teachers want to do the best possible job for their students. Union work rules frequently get in their way. "They tell you what you can't do," says NYU's Viteritti.

Teachers who want to "go the extra mile" often find themselves unappreciated by their colleagues. Patricia Simonds, a 26-year veteran at Truman Elementary in Vancouver, Wash., last year was among the first teachers in the nation to earn an advanced license from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards—a program started in the late 1980s to reward outstanding teachers by creating a system akin to board certification in medicine. President Clinton invited Simonds and other winners to the White House. And the national leaders of both the NEA and the AFT back the NBPTS. But, in contrast to the ceremony at the nation's capital, there wasn't much fanfare at Truman Elementary to celebrate Simonds's national award.

Ultimately, it is students who pay the biggest price. Teachers in two affluent suburban Maryland high schools protested budget cuts several years ago by "working to the rule"—refusing to do any tasks not required of them in their contract. They refused to write college letters of recommendation for seniors in the class of 1992 unless students "first presented addressed and stamped letters to a council member or state legislator urging the passing of taxes necessary to fund salary increases, school programs, etc.," according to a letter to union members. The NEA's Geiger insists that work rules were essential to

counter big differences in teachers' workloads and other abuses. But he acknowledges that many contracts today are "too rigid."

MEDIOCRITY GETS THE GOLD

Gil Troutman was raised in western Pennsylvania and went to a local liberal arts college, where he graduated with honors in history. At 23, he joined the social studies

department at General McLane High School in nearby Edinboro. Troutman loved his work. He taught history and economics, coached wrestling and, in time, won awards for his teaching. But in the early 1990s, at 37 and in the prime of his career, he quit teaching to open an insurance business. The main reason: After 14 years, his paycheck wasn't any bigger than that of other teachers in the school at his level of experience, despite his award-winning teaching. Says Troutman: "I wanted to be in a profession that recognizes the level of work you put forth."

Teaching generally doesn't. Unions have barred teachers from being paid on the basis of their performance. They have negotiated so-called single salary schedules that reward teachers strictly on the basis of years of experience and the number of college courses completed. Pushed by unions to equalize pay scales that traditionally favored men over women, whites over blacks and high

school teachers over elementary teachers, the single salary schedule has become a huge barrier to teaching excellence in public education, robbing many teachers of the motivation to excel and driving many of the best out of the profession. "Teachers who do better in college and are rated higher by their principals leave [the profession] at higher rates," says Ann Weaver Hart, dean of the graduate school at the University of Utah and an expert on teacher rewards. "The single salary schedule is a major factor."

The single salary schedule also has led to a huge waste of taxpayers' money. In most places, pay raises are linked directly to the number of college credits teachers earn, usually without any requirement that those credits be earned in courses related to what teachers do in their classrooms. The system—constructed with teachers, not students, in

mind—has led to teachers taking the easiest courses they can find, and a disproportionate number of school-administration courses, since teachers can earn higher salaries by leaving the classroom to do administrative work.

Indeed, most union leaders are loath to have teachers paid strictly on the basis of their performance. "Salary is not what attracts people to teaching and keeps them there," argues Barbara Kelley, a Bangor, Maine, teacher official who is vice chair of the NBPTS. But

"Teachers unions are losing the public battle. The survival of public education is at stake."

ED DONERTY, who is president of the Boston Teachers' Union and believes in reform

Kelley's own story seems to disprove her point. A veteran gym teacher, she raised her salary by several thousand dollars a couple of years ago by earning a master's degree in business. She says she is thinking about leaving teaching and that the degree might help her in another career. The average U.S. teacher salary is \$36,874.

BUCKING THE CALL FOR REFORM

Any number of blue-ribbon panels since the early 1980s have called for reforms in teaching. The latest, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chaired by Gov. Jim

Hunt of North Carolina, is discussing tougher teacher licensing standards, performance pay, stronger dismissal systems and other reforms that might be included in a report to be released next September.

But teacher unions have used their resources to fight reform—and their resources are vast. Such is their influence in state capitals that in many states, the unions are by far the largest contributors to statewide elections. The NEA also spends \$39 million a year to keep 1,500 organizers in the field helping the union's 13,250 affiliates lobby school

More...

WHY TEACHERS DON'T TEACH, continued... (5)

boards, file grievances and do many other things to promote unionism. The union's palatial Washington, D.C., headquarters, renovated in 1991 at a cost of at least \$52 million, is a testament to its power in national politics, where the NEA has wedded itself to the Democratic Party. The union handed out \$8.9 million to congressional candidates between 1989 and 1995, only a fraction of it to Republicans. And the Clinton White House is banking on the NEA playing a big role in this year's presidential campaign. In a 1995 report to the NEA, for example, Clinton pollster Stanley Greenberg attempts to refine the union's message on behalf of the president's re-election. His advice: Hammer home the theme that education is a key to reversing "civic decay."

Politics is not the only arena in which the unions fight off threats to the old system. The AFT and the NEA have waged recent court battles against laws in several states, including a Michigan statute limiting collective bargaining and an Ohio law giving parents tuition vouchers for private schools. And the

unions spend huge sums on public relations: The NEA has budgeted nearly \$14 million to defend schools and unions in fiscal 1996.

But, in response to growing public discontent and recent union defeats at the

hands of Republican-led legislatures, unions are gradually softening their opposition to teacher reforms. Adding to the incentives for change are recent membership studies, which reveal that the unions are out of step with a major-

ity of their younger members, who reject the unions' commitment to industrial unionism and partisan politics. Now some union leaders seem anxious to jump on the reform platform. NEA President Geiger, for example, says his

union is "moving away from hard-nosed collective bargaining." And Geiger says he has joined Shanker in discussing new teacher pay systems with experts and is pushing the NEA to take a larger role in policing its membership.

But many union watchers remain skeptical. The education landscape, they say, is littered with token NEA reform projects designed to give the appearance of reform-mindedness. And local unions mostly lag far behind national union leaders in calling for reform. Still, a handful of meaningful union-backed teacher reforms exist around the nation: the suspension of staffing by seniority in a group of New York City schools; the opening of new Boston schools free of school-board regulations and union work rules; performance-based pay in Cincinnati; and policing of the teaching ranks by peers in Columbus, Ohio.

Teacher unions aren't going to disappear from public education; they are part of its permanent landscape. But as the public's confidence in public education steadily ebbs, and a rising chorus clamors for change, pressure is mounting for teacher unions to merge their goals with the goals of good teaching. "We're losing the public battle," says Ed Doherty, the reform-minded president of the Boston Teachers' Union. "The survival of public education is at stake." To Doherty, the unions' political problem is clear—and so is the solution. The question is whether other union leaders will get the message before it's too late. ■

BY THOMAS TOUCH WITH ROBIN M.
BENNEFIELD, DANA HAWKINS AND
PENNY LOEB

WHY TEACHERS DON'T TEACH, continued... (6)

UNION CONTRARIAN

America's 'most militant teacher' calls for reform

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, was once the most militant teacher in America: Three decades ago, he led the drive to introduce hard-edged unionism into public school teaching. Today, he's still a radical. But he has a very different mission: He's trying to lead his union away from many of the same demands and tactics that

he championed in the past.

Teacher unions' survival is at stake, he says. Unless they show they're working to improve public schools by improving classroom teaching, the unions will wither. "It's like being a strong man on a sinking ship," he says. "Being strong doesn't do you much good." So Shanker, 67, is shaping a new vision of teacher unionism, one that safe-

guards union members but also invests unions with far more responsibility for the quality of the teaching profession. "In the future, teacher unions should be about teacher standards," Shanker says.

To that end, he is drafting a variety of "teacher quality" reforms he hopes his membership will endorse at the AFT's convention this summer. He wants high entrance standards, performance pay, a "streamlining" of due-process protections and other measures that break sharply with industrial union practices now embraced by teacher groups. He wants unions to play a far larger role

in training and retraining of teachers. In his dramatic break with the past, he says he has lost confidence in a first principle of trade unionism — going on strike. "Strikes are political statements. And today, people aren't as sympathetic toward teachers as they were in the past."

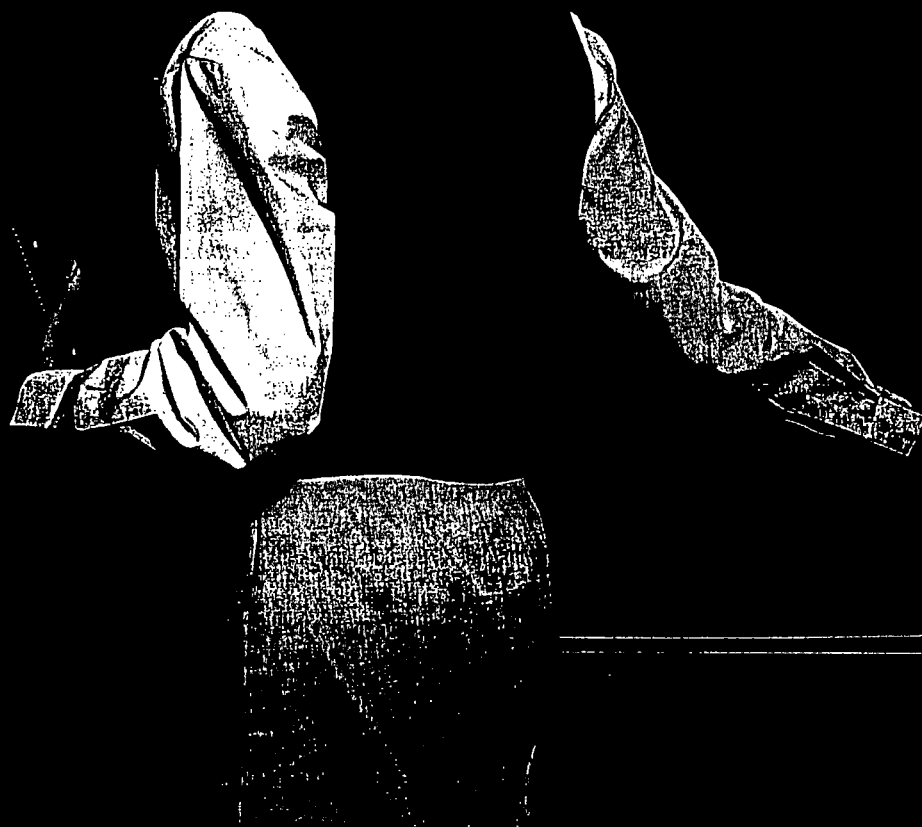
Reluctant buyers. Such views put the bookish union leader, who grew up speaking only Yiddish on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, at odds with much of the teacher establishment. National education groups are uneasy with Shanker's candor about the state of the public schools and

his calls for reform. He knows his ideas won't be simple to sell to his membership: He pushed a similar reform agenda a decade ago but abandoned most of it in the early 1990s. "Convincing people to change has been a damn difficult thing to do," he says. "I would go into a state, talk up reform and as soon as I left, the union attorney would come in and say, 'We've got a great tenure law, let's keep it.'" Seeking reform means new roles and new attitudes for veteran teachers, Shanker notes. "The union guy in Oshkosh isn't comfortable in the role of teacher retrainer," he

says. "He knows how to handle grievances."

But Shaker says he's taking up the reform banner once again because the stakes have risen dramatically in recent years. "Unless we restore the public's faith in what we do, public education is going to collapse," he warns.

If there's hope in getting unions to focus on teacher quality issues, Shanker says, it's the fact that a growing number of union leaders share his anxiety about the future of public schools: "A lot of our leaders believe that we're close to the end of public education. They never did before." — T.T.



WHY TEACHERS

Bill K.

The nation's future lies in its classrooms. But teachers' unions are driving out good teachers, coddling bad ones and putting bureaucracy in the way of quality education

Call it a little morality play about America's schools. In Act I, a dedicated Los Angeles math teacher named Jaime Escalante becomes a national hero for his work with barrio kids at Garfield High School, a saga chronicled in the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*. In Act II, Escalante flees the Los Angeles school system for Sacramento, taking his devotion and his brilliant teaching skills

DON'T TEACH

with him. Why did he leave? Teacher union officials contend the fame went to his head. Escalante fires back that a major reason was that Los Angeles union leaders objected to his zeal. One problem: He says they chastised him for having too many students in his calculus class. "If you looked into what is going on in this school in the name of the union, I think you ... would be ap-

palled," the teacher wrote in 1990 to his union president, a year before he resigned and moved.

Escalante's experience is hardly unique. In the 34 years since the signing of the first teacher collective-bargaining contract in New York City, teacher unions have become the single most influential force in public education, their impact felt in classrooms across the coun-

try. Union policies that work against quality teaching are driving many top teachers out of public schools, making it tougher for good teachers who stay to do their best work and leaving incompetents entrenched in many classrooms. And at a time when corporate leaders and others are calling on schools to hold students to significantly higher standards, the intransigence of the unions has slowed the pace

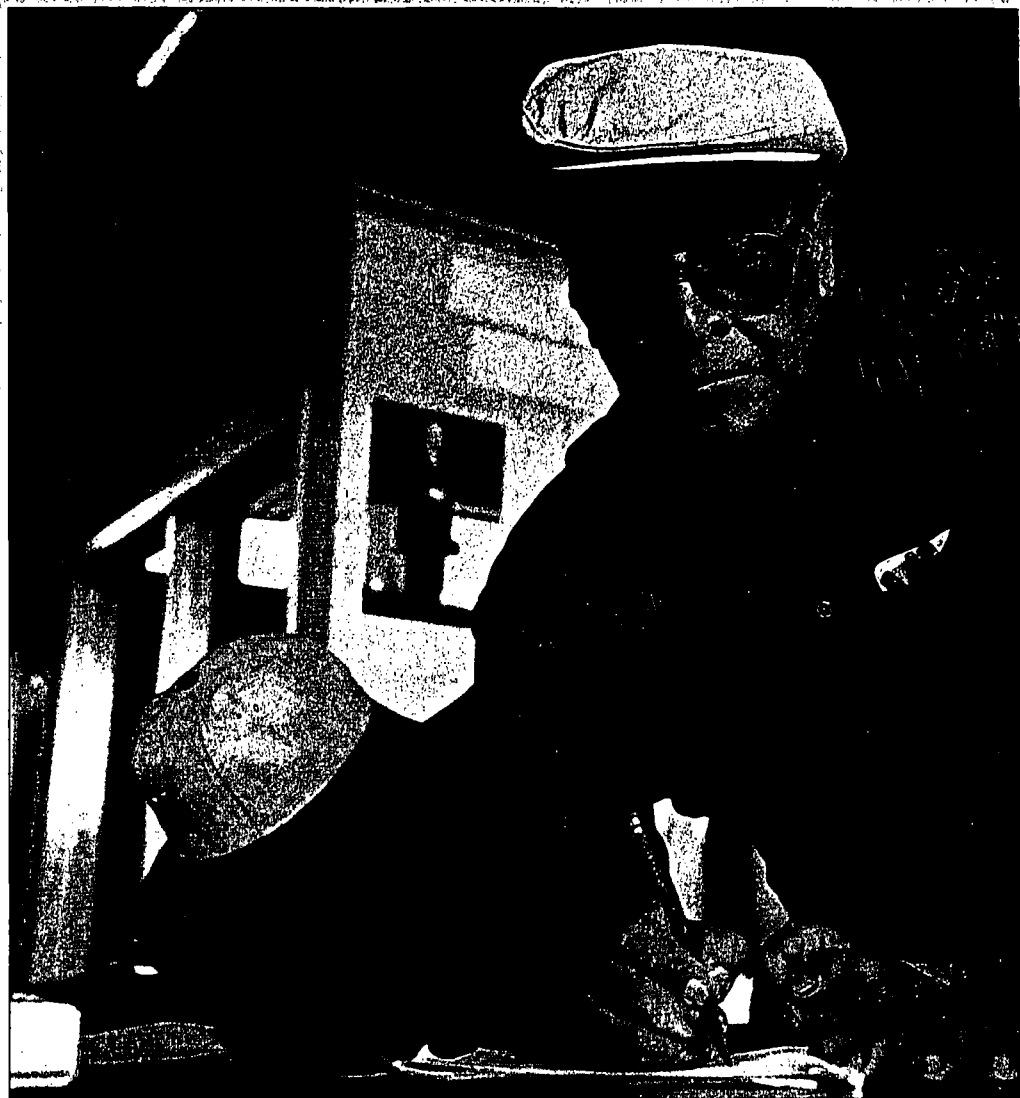
■ CULTURE & IDEAS

of school reforms, eroding public confidence in the schools and spurring an unprecedented wave of tuition-voucher plans and similarly targeted initiatives. The crisis is so great that Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), plans to propose a radically new model of teacher unionism to his membership (box, Page 70).

Unions entered the teaching profession for a reason: The vast majority of teachers were poorly paid and subject to patronage hiring and other inequities. Organizing made sense. In the past 30 years, laws granting teachers the right to bargain collectively have entered the books in 37 states, and nearly 90 percent of the nation's 2.5 million teachers now belong to either the National Education Association, the nation's largest union, or its smaller, more reform-minded twin, the AFT. (Leaders say that they expect the two unions to begin merging within the next four or five years.)

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CULTURE & IDEAS

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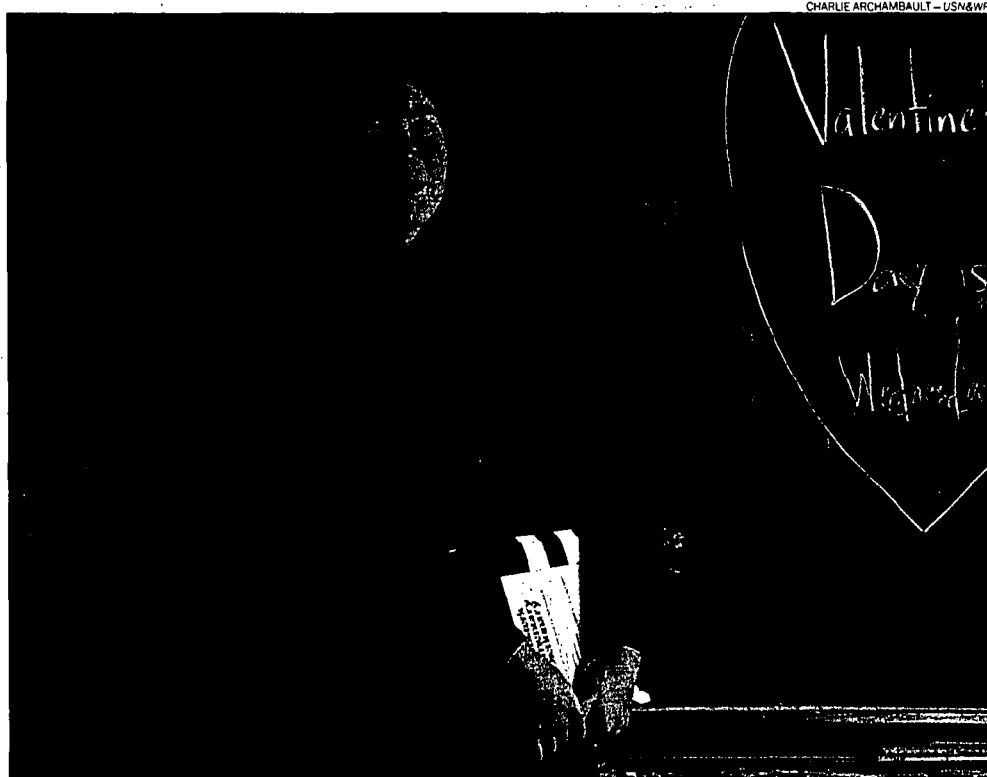
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(\$3,500)

■ **Dues:** \$1 in 1857, \$104 now

AFT AT A GLANCE

The American Federation of Teachers was founded in Illinois in 1916.

■ **President:** Albert Shanker

■ **Membership:** 885,000, larg-

est membership in New York

■ **Locals:** 2,500

■ **1996 budget:** \$78 million

■ **Campaign contributions:** \$5

million from 1989 to mid-1995

■ **Top 1995 recipients:** These

lawmakers got the most:

Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y.

(\$5,000)

Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich.

(\$5,000)

Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo.

(\$5,000)

Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn.

(\$5,000)

Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich.

(\$5,000)

■ **First strike:** 1946 by St.

Paul, Minn. local 535

■ **Famous members:** Albert

Einstein, Elie Wiesel, Hubert

Humphrey

■ CULTURE & IDEAS

Martin Luther King Jr. Academy, a new school with a new curriculum. The Mount Clemens Education Association, the local union, insisted that the school's teachers be paid for several weeks of training in the new curriculum. But a group of younger teachers wanted extra training in math. The school couldn't afford it, so the teachers volunteered to take the training without pay. Veteran teachers rejected the idea, pointing out that unpaid work was forbidden by the union contract. The training never took place.

The drive of a Jaime Escalante is rare in any field, but many public-school teachers want to do the best possible job for their students. Union work rules frequently get in their way. "They tell you what you can't do," says NYU's Viteritti.

Teachers who want to "go the extra mile" often find themselves unappreciated by their colleagues. Patricia Simonds, a 26-year veteran at Truman Elementary in Vancouver, Wash., last year was among the first teachers in the nation to earn an advanced license from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards—a program started in the late 1980s to reward outstanding teachers by creating a system akin to board certification in medicine. President Clinton invited Simonds and other winners to the White House. And the national leaders of both the NEA and the AFT back the NBPTS. But, in contrast to the ceremony at the nation's capital, there wasn't much fanfare at Truman Elementary to celebrate Simonds's national award.

Ultimately, it is students who pay the biggest price. Teachers in two affluent suburban Maryland high schools protested budget cuts several years ago by "working to the rule"—refusing to do any tasks not required of them in their contract. They refused to write college letters of recommendation for seniors in the class of 1992 unless students "first presented addressed and stamped letters to a council member or state legislator urging the passing of taxes necessary to fund salary increases, school programs, etc.," according to a letter to union members. The NEA's Geiger insists that work rules were essential to

counter big differences in teachers' workloads and other abuses. But he acknowledges that many contracts today are "too rigid."

MEDIOCRITY GETS THE GOLD

Gil Troutman was raised in western Pennsylvania and went to a local liberal arts college, where he graduated with honors in history. At 23, he joined the social studies

Teaching generally doesn't. Unions have barred teachers from being paid on the basis of their performance. They have negotiated so-called single salary schedules that reward teachers strictly on the basis of years of experience and the number of college courses completed. Pushed by unions to equalize pay scales that traditionally favored men over women, whites over blacks and high



Not everyone with 10 years' experience "has the same level of expertise. Some people just do the job better than others do."

GIL TROUTMAN, who won awards for teaching, which never translated into a higher salary for him

department at General McLane High School in nearby Edinboro. Troutman loved his work. He taught history and economics, coached wrestling and, in time, won awards for his teaching. But in the early 1990s, at 37 and in the prime of his career, he quit teaching to open an insurance business. The main reason: After 14 years, his paycheck wasn't any bigger than that of other teachers in the school at his level of experience, despite his award-winning teaching. Says Troutman: "I wanted to be in a profession that recognizes the level of work you put forth."

school teachers over elementary teachers, the single salary schedule has become a huge barrier to teaching excellence in public education, robbing many teachers of the motivation to excel and driving many of the best out of the profession. "Teachers who do better in college and are rated higher by their principals leave [the profession] at higher rates," says Ann Weaver Hart, dean of the graduate school at the University of Utah and an expert on teacher rewards. "The single salary schedule is a major factor."

The single salary schedule also has led to a huge waste of taxpayers' money. In most places, pay raises are linked directly to the number of college credits teachers earn, usually without any requirement that those credits be earned in courses related to what teachers do in their classrooms. The system—constructed with teachers, not students, in

■ CULTURE & IDEAS

mind—has led to teachers taking the easiest courses they can find, and a disproportionate number of school-administration courses, since teachers can earn higher salaries by leaving the classroom to do administrative work.

Indeed, most union leaders are loath to have teachers paid strictly on the basis of their performance. "Salary is not what attracts people to teaching and keeps them there," argues Barbara Kelley, a Bangor, Maine, teacher official who is vice chair of the NBPTS. But

"Teachers unions are losing the public battle. The survival of public education is at stake."

ED DOHERTY, who is president of the Boston Teachers' Union and believes in reform

Kelley's own story seems to disprove her point. A veteran gym teacher, she raised her salary by several thousand dollars a couple of years ago by earning a master's degree in business. She says she is thinking about leaving teaching and that the degree might help her in another career. The average U.S. teacher salary is \$36,874.

BUCKING THE CALL FOR REFORM

Any number of blue-ribbon panels since the early 1980s have called for reforms in teaching. The latest, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chaired by Gov. Jim

Hunt of North Carolina, is discussing tougher teacher licensing standards, performance pay, stronger dismissal systems and other reforms that might be included in a report to be released next September.

But teacher unions have used their resources to fight reform—and their resources are vast. Such is their influence in state capitals that in many states, the unions are by far the largest contributors to statewide elections. The NEA also spends \$39 million a year to keep 1,500 organizers in the field helping the union's 13,250 affiliates lobby school boards, file grievances and do many other things to promote unionism. The union's palatial Washington, D.C., headquarters, renovated in 1991 at a cost of at least \$52 million, is a testament to its power in national politics, where the NEA has wedded itself to the Democratic Party. The union handed out \$8.9 million to congressional candidates between 1989 and 1995, only a fraction of it to Republicans. And the Clinton White House is banking on the NEA playing a big role in this year's presidential campaign. In a 1995 report to the NEA, for example, Clinton pollster Stanley Greenberg attempts to refine the union's message on behalf of the president's re-election. His advice: Hammer home the theme that education is a key to reversing "civic decay."

Politics is not the only arena in which the unions fight off threats to the old system. The AFT and the NEA have waged recent court battles against laws in several states, including Michigan, statute limiting collective bargaining and an Ohio law giving parents' tuition vouchers for private schools. And the



STRIKE IN SAN DIEGO. Some union leaders now

unions spend huge sums on public relations: The NEA has budgeted nearly \$14 million to defend schools and unions in fiscal 1996.

But, in response to growing public discontent and recent union defeats at the

UNION CONTRARIAN

America's 'most militant teacher' calls for reform

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, was once the most militant teacher in America. Three decades ago, he led the drive to introduce hard-edged unionism into public school teaching. Today, he's still a radical. But he has a very different mission: He's trying to lead his union away from many of the same demands and tactics that

he championed in the past. Teacher unions' survival is at stake, he says. Unless they show they're working to improve public schools by improving classroom teaching, the unions will wither. "It's like being a strong man on a sinking ship," he says. "Being strong doesn't do you much good." So Shanker, 67, is shaping a new vision of teacher unionism, one that safe-

guards union members but also invests unions with far more responsibility for the quality of the teaching profession. "In the future, teacher unions should be about teacher standards," Shanker says. To that end, he is drafting a variety of "teacher quality" reforms he hopes his membership will endorse at the AFT's convention this summer. He wants high entrance standards, performance pay, a streamlining of due-process protections and other measures that break sharply with industrial union practices now embraced by teacher groups. He wants unions to play a far larger role



AFT'S SHANKER seeks reform



are questioning the use of labor tactics that arose from industrial worker traditions.

hands of Republican-led legislatures, unions are gradually softening their opposition to teacher reforms. Adding to the incentives for change are recent membership studies, which reveal that the unions are out of step with a major-

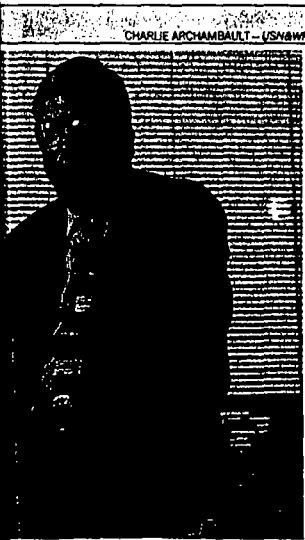
ity of their younger members, who reject the unions' commitment to industrial unionism and partisan politics. Now some union leaders seem anxious to jump on the reform platform: NEA President Geiger, for example, says his

union is "moving away from hard-nosed collective bargaining." And Geiger says he has joined Shanker in discussing new teacher pay systems with experts and is pushing the NEA to take a larger role in policing its membership.

But many union watchers remain skeptical. The education landscape, they say, is littered with token NEA reform projects designed to give the appearance of reform-mindedness. And local unions mostly lag far behind national union leaders in calling for reform. Still, a handful of meaningful union-backed teacher reforms exist around the nation: the suspension of staffing by seniority in a group of New York City schools; the opening of new Boston schools free of school-board regulations and union work rules; performance-based pay in Cincinnati, and policing of the teaching ranks by peers in Columbus, Ohio.

Teacher unions aren't going to disappear from public education; they are part of its permanent landscape. But as the public's confidence in public education steadily ebbs, and a rising chorus clamors for change, pressure is mounting for teacher unions to merge their goals with the goals of good teaching. "We're losing the public battle," says Ed Doherty, the reform-minded president of the Boston Teachers' Union. "The survival of public education is at stake." To Doherty, the unions' political problem is clear—and so is the solution. The question is whether other union leaders will get the message before it's too late. ■

BY THOMAS TOCH WITH ROBIN M. BENNEFIELD, DANA HAWKINS AND PENNY LOEB



CHARLIE ARCHAMBAULT - USA/AMR

based on tougher standards.

in training and retraining of teachers. In his dramatic break with the past, he says he has lost confidence in a first principle of trade unionism—going on strike. "Strikes are political statements. And today, people aren't as sympathetic toward teachers as they were in the past."

Reluctant buyers. Such views put the bookish union leader, who grew up speaking only Yiddish on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, at odds with much of the teacher establishment. National education groups are uneasy with Shanker's candor about the state of the public schools and

his calls for reform. He knows his ideas won't be simple to sell to his membership. He pushed a similar reform agenda a decade ago but abandoned most of it in the early 1990s. "Convincing people to change has been a damn difficult thing to do," he says. "I would go into a state, talk up reform and as soon as I left, the union attorney would come in and say, 'We've got a great tenure law, let's keep it.' Seeking reform means new roles and new attitudes for veteran teachers," Shanker notes. "The union guy in Oshkosh isn't comfortable in the role of teacher trainer. He

says, 'He knows how to handle grievances.'"

But Shanker says he's taking up the reform banner once again because the stakes have risen dramatically in recent years. "Unless we restore the public's faith in what we do, public education is going to collapse," he warns.

If there's hope in getting unions to focus on teacher quality issues, Shanker says, it's the fact that a growing number of union leaders share his anxiety about the future of public schools. "A lot of our leaders believe that we're close to the end of public education. They never did before." —T.T.

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		Box Number	
Description of Item(s)	Oversize newspaper titled "Inquiring Minds: Creating a Nation of Teachers as Learners." Entire newspaper retired.		

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AN EDUCATION WEEK SPECIAL REPORT '93

Inquiring Minds

Creating a Nation of Teachers as Learners

FINANCED BY A GRANT FROM THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

New York Times, August 5, 1996, P. 5B

Where Teachers Share Trade's Tricks

By GEORGE JUDSON

NEW HAVEN — On a Monday in July, Prof. Peter A. Barile Jr. stood in a lecture hall on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University and faced 31 students on their first day of summer school.

Most of the students were teachers themselves. The others were preparing for teaching jobs. The course, a curriculum workshop, would help them throughout their careers, he told them, because they would learn that creating a good curriculum requires knowing a school's mission.

"I know there are some teachers whose mission is to get 35 years, retire and get out," he said. "That's sad. I heard one teacher say, 'Only 22 more years to go.'"

"What you want," he said, "is your last year to be as exciting as your first year. Because that's one year in the life of a child."

Every summer, teachers go back to school for reasons ranging from love of learning to state regulations that require graduate study. Some go abroad, take courses in an academic specialty, or study the philosophy of education. Most, however, take courses like Dr. Barile's, which focus on the practical aspects of teaching.

These courses are often criticized, in and out of education, for not giving teachers in-depth knowledge of the subjects they teach. Yet the courses remain the major forum where teachers escape the isolation of the classroom to share what experts call the "wisdom of practice," the tips and tricks that make teaching a craft as much as a profession.

As Dr. Barile suggested in his sober opening, good teaching depends, in the end, on personality and commitment. "The human quality, the personality, the passion for what you do is vital for a teacher," he said one day after class. "The knowledge background is essential, but the belief in what you're doing for these kids for the year is most important."

The class had 26 women and 5 men, all but a few elementary teachers. Like many summer courses, the workshop was compressed: four hours a day for two weeks. The

schedule was not as intense as it might seem. The second half of each session was free time for the class to work on group projects, and most of the work would be done at home.

"Can we choose our own partners?" several teachers called out as Dr. Barile began to assign the projects — designing various curriculums — the first day. Dotted around the lecture hall were groups of friends attending the class together.

"No," he said. "You have to learn to work with different people."

Many of the teachers had taken courses taught by Dr. Barile, the

Restoring a sense of mission to education.

chairman of Southern Connecticut's education department, or knew him by reputation, but here he was more genial master of ceremonies than professor; seven of the nine days were led by guest speakers drawn from his connections over three decades as a teacher and administrator.

First, Sharon Lehr, a fourth-grade teacher from Madison, Conn., where Dr. Barile had been superintendent, trained the class in Talents Unlimited, a teaching method that is supposed to develop critical thinking.

A morning was spent in a computer laboratory. The superintendent of Connecticut's vocational schools, Jose Lopez, came to discuss multicultural education. Bob Wolfe, Dr. Barile's assistant superintendent in Madison, came to talk about turning around elementary schools. And Rose Cretella, an associate of Dr. Barile's at Southern, visited to discuss her specialty, death education.

Some of the teachers had expected practical lessons on how to plan a curriculum. But selecting materials, Dr. Barile would say later, "is really a matter of common sense and not relying on a salesperson." He wanted them to focus on setting and carrying out a school's goals.

Each day began with attendance, the teachers raising their hands. "Hey, how many of you do that in your own class?" Dr. Barile asked on the fourth day, trying to take attendance over the noise of conversations. "I don't feel like shouting over you."

It was Ms. Lehr's last day teaching Talents Unlimited. One wall was covered with fantastic paper creatures, the result of an exercise that develops children's communication skills. "We ask them to do the same things as the kids, so they can see it from their perspective," Dr. Barile said.

There had been other exercises, too, like listing qualities that made a teacher memorable.

"Creative," one person said. "Empathy." "Understanding." Ms. Lehr added her own favorite: "Passion." All the qualities, she noted, had to do

with personality and attitude. And like a Martha Stewart of the classroom, she had tips for any occasion: dividing up the teachers for an exercise, she noted that a quick way to place children in groups is to deal out a deck of cards and then call out a grouping based on cards drawn.

For doing these exercises, the teachers were not only earning graduate credits but also receiving certification from Talents Unlimited. The program's critical thinking skills are meant to be taught throughout a school's curriculum, but it was unclear to some teachers how useful the training would be, since their schools did not use the program.

More...

Where Teachers Share Trade's Tricks

continued...

For new teachers, said Valerie Anton, who teaches gifted pupils in schools in Beacon Falls and Prospect, any chance to trade ideas with other teachers was important. "It's an opportunity to see other teachers and talk," she said. "It's sometimes what I most get out of a course."

New subjects were met with interest. Mr. Lopez, with a sharp tongue for educational fads and jargon, seized their attention. "Multicultural education is important, it's needed, but it's also a political animal," he said. Planning a curriculum around it "is a political problem: whom am I going to offend, so whom do I need on the committee?"

Mr. Wolfe, an elementary principal in Durham now, took the class through the process of improving a school. The key, he said, was to raise expectations, because then teachers fixed in their ways would want to change — or to leave. He, too, had an attention-getter: "I have never lost a teacher-dismissal case," he said.

On his list of rules for educators, No. 1 was, "Passion rules." He asked the teachers how many had principals with passion. Half a dozen raised hands. He asked how many had principals who lacked passion. Half the class raised hands.

On the last day, groups of students presented their curriculums, as if to a Board of Education. Members of a group presenting a science curriculum based on butterflies dressed up as the stages in a life cycle: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, adult.

Ms. Lehr had cautioned the teachers to protect children's self-esteem by neither praising nor criticizing their projects in class, eliminating comparisons. The best comment, she said, is, "That's interesting."

Dr. Barile took that approach as he commented on the presentations. Sometimes props are appropriate, sometimes not, he told the butterfly crew. "The key is that the audience thinks it's well thought out," he said.

With class dismissed, summer vacation began for some teachers; a new course would begin the next Monday for others. Dr. Barile left them with encouragement to continue their studies. "The worst thing we can do," he said, "is say we've done that and we know all the answers."

Good-Bye, Mr. Chips

Talented teachers are tough to find and even harder to keep. But the success of public education reforms may hinge on getting better teachers into the classroom.

BY ROCHELLE L. STANFIELD

Nicki Smith isn't a morning person. But these days, she said, "I like getting up in the morning and I love being here" at the Jamestown Elementary School in Arlington, Va., where she's been the principal for three years.

It was not always thus. Indeed, Smith went back to school to become a principal six years ago, she said, largely because she found being a first-grade and reading teacher in East Palo Alto, Calif., so frustrating and discouraging.

That says a lot about what is wrong with public education today and may hold the key to correcting it. The secret ingredient in school reform, reformers have finally realized, is teachers—getting good ones and keeping them happy, motivated, learning and, most important, in the classroom.

Accomplishing this is a national issue, maybe a national emergency. Even President Clinton and Republican presidential nominee Robert Dole faced off over the caliber of teachers during their first televised debate on Oct. 6.

"I just don't believe we ought to be out there running down teachers and attacking them the way you did at the Republican convention," Clinton said to Dole, referring to disparaging remarks in Dole's acceptance speech at the San Diego convention. "I think we ought to be lifting them up and moving our children forward."

Dole insisted that he wasn't bashing teachers but one of their unions, the National Education Association (NEA), which overwhelmingly supports Democratic candidates, financially and otherwise. "Let's turn the schools back to the teachers and back to the parents and take it away from the National Education Association," he said during the debate.

However, most education experts contend that focusing on the teachers' unions, both the NEA and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), is just a political sideshow. The real problem, they insist, lies with teacher competence and the quality of the teaching environment.

If the country is to raise education

standards for students—as polls show the public wants and as policy makers and politicians say the economy demands—it must also hike the standards for teachers. That will require dramatically upgrading the skills or replacing a sizable portion of the country's 2.4 million public school teachers. Also, an enrollment spike will require an additional 20,000 or so teachers each year for the next decade. With retirements and replacements, education planners conclude that two million new teachers will be needed by 2006.

Nicki Smith came to the Washington area because her husband, Marshall S. Smith, who was dean of the Stanford University School of Education, signed on with the Clinton Administration as Education undersecretary. Now he's acting deputy secretary, and one of his jobs is figuring out what the federal government can do to promote good teachers and excellent teaching.

"The federal role may be more of a bully pulpit, prodding role, stimulating small amounts of money," Marshall Smith said. "This is a problem that is spread across the entire country—50 different states, 15,000 district jurisdictions that need to be involved in ameliorating this problem and creating a really effective and well-trained teaching force for the next century."

"This is a manageable crisis," he added. "I think we know what to do, but we have to buckle down and do something about it."

By demanding accreditation of education schools at colleges and universities, states have the power to upgrade the training of teachers. By improving their own licensing procedures, states can make sure that only well-prepared teachers show up in the classroom.

More...

GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS, continued...(2)

Turning adequate teachers into good ones and keeping the great teachers, however, is the job of the school districts and the individual schools that create the all-important teaching environment. Surprisingly, money is not the central consideration, although it can be part of the problem.

"What usually happens is the money

and the environment are both poor in the same place," explained Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor at Columbia University Teachers College in New York City and executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, which recently released a comprehensive report on improving the nation's teaching force. "There is no shortage of teachers in Scarsdale, N.Y. There are long, long waiting lists in most affluent districts because they pay more and they have great working conditions."

It was the working conditions in poor, predominantly minority East Palo Alto that drove Nicki Smith from the classroom. Not the poverty, however, or the lack of resources or even the poor physical environment, she said.

And it certainly wasn't the children. "It doesn't matter what kind of home they have," she said. "We had a lot of drugs, and the kids saw terrible things—like people being shot outside their windows—but they still came to school wide-eyed and cheerful, thinking they were going to learn, that it was going to be terrific. And then we did them in, because we weren't terrific."

What frustrated her most, she continued, was the management style. East Palo Alto had a hierarchical system heavy with middle managers. It discouraged the cooperation and collegiality vital to the

Jamestown Elementary School principal Nicki Smith was so frustrated teaching first grade that she went back to school.

team effort that a successful school must promote. New teachers received no support or mentoring, she said, and experienced teachers received no positive reinforcement.

"Really idealistic young teachers came in and worked hard and would get overwhelmed or discouraged because they got no support. Being good was not rewarded," she said. "Getting along with the administrators, having your kids be quiet in the cafeteria, those things were what got you credit."

Such counterproductive management is commonplace in rich and poor, urban and suburban school districts. Darling-

Hammond's commission discovered. "Great teachers have few incentives to stay in the profession," the report concluded. "In the vast majority of districts, the greatest status accrues to those who work farthest away from children."

GETTING GOOD TEACHERS

Lisa Plansky, 26, a freshly minted fifth-grade teacher at Murch Elementary School on Washington's affluent northwest side, was asked why she became a teacher.

"A lot of it is selfish," she responded. "I really like the feeling I get doing it. There's a real sense of making such a difference when you're able to see the light turn on in a child's eyes—I get it—and when you can instill in a child the sense that someone believes that they're going to be able to do great things."

Plansky's enthusiasm is not unusual, but in many cases, it's not long-lasting. To many Americans, there's something almost magical about being a teacher—at least in the abstract. This is true both for youngsters and people in mid-career who yearn for a switch from some other profession or are forced to do so by downsizing. The education establishment is looking to both pools to fill the growing need for teachers.

Considering all the negativity about

public education these days, a surprising number of young people say they want to become teachers. The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Horatio Alger Association conduct periodic surveys of teenagers to determine "the mood of American youth." In 1996, as in previous years since 1983, teaching was the second most popular career choice after being a doctor.

More...

GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS, continued...(3)

The aura begins to dim, however, even before would-be teachers enter the classroom. Only 60 per cent of students who start out in undergraduate teaching programs complete them, according to data cited by the commission on teaching. Only 60 per cent of these graduates actually enter the teaching force the next year, and only 70 per cent of those who enter are still teaching three years later. Over all, that's a 75 per cent attrition rate.

Critics, many of whom disagree on how to repair it, concur that the system for preparing and recruiting teachers is badly broken and that the blame, for once, cannot be pinned on the federal government.

A lot of "dull and poorly educated people come through the teacher colleges and certification [licensing] process," Chester E. Finn Jr., a vocal critic of current education practices who is a fellow at the Indianapolis-based Hudson Institute's Washington office, said. "It's a crummy system, which won't fire [bad teachers], which doesn't know how to hire [good teachers] and which then puts them in a working environment that they wouldn't want to work in."

The cycle of failure begins with the education schools. "Students teach pretty much the way they've been taught," deputy secretary Smith, who spent many years in teacher education, said. "And an awful lot of teaching in an awful lot of colleges is pretty boring, pretty dull."

Plansky and a classmate, Judy Herr, agree with that assessment. Herr, 48, who returned for a master's degree in teaching at the American University after a career in the health care financing field, described the coursework as "academically rigorous" but detached from the real world. "School systems ought to be more responsible for educating the teachers," she said. "Then you wouldn't get this division between the ivory tower and what really goes on in the classroom."

Education schools haven't shaped up, because no one's made them do it. Of the 1,200 schools of education across the country, only 500 are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a Washington organization that reviews the

operations of education schools, which, for the most part, voluntarily seek its imprimatur. Arkansas, North Carolina and West Virginia have mandated NCATE accreditation for their education schools.

"It's kind of scandalous," NCATE president Arthur E. Wise said. "The only professional school on a university campus that has a choice about whether or not to be accredited is the college of education. The colleges of medicine, law, architecture, nursing, social work, engineering—they don't have a choice anymore."

ACCREDITATION CARD

The story, however, is a little more compli-

cated than Wise's statement implies. Most states have a separate, sometimes complementary but often rival, accrediting process. Usually it is less rigorous, one reason some inadequate schools choose that route. But NCATE for many years had a reputation as a generator of massive, incredibly burdensome paperwork. For this reason, many premier schools of education, including those at Stanford and Harvard University, don't have NCATE accreditation.

States are also responsible for licensing or certifying teachers. Gordon M. Ambach, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington, pinpoints that power as the lever to achieve both improved education schools and better-qualified teachers.

"What drives the schools of education are the requirements for the license," Ambach said. "If you put in a requirement that a teacher, in order to be licensed, has to have a bachelor's degree in a substantive subject area, and a master's degree [in teaching] on top of that, and has to have an internship of a year or more, then the institutions will do it."

Sounds logical. And it's happening in some states, but that approach is far from universal. The commission on teaching discovered that 23 per cent of high school teachers—30 per cent of math teachers—don't even have a college minor in the subject they teach. As a result, 56 per cent of high school students take physical science courses from teachers lacking a science background. Not surprisingly, the proportions are much higher in inner-city and rural schools than in suburban districts.

Most education specialists attribute these statistics to teacher shortages, which will get worse over the next decade as enrollment surges.

Darling-Hammond sees a federal role in encouraging would-be teachers in shortage areas by providing federal college scholarships or forgivable loans, such as the National Defense Education Act loan she used in the 1960s to become an English teacher in an inner-city high school.

Others say plenty of teachers are trained, they just don't make it into the teaching force. Two pots of federal money—Title II of the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act and the 1994 Goals 2000: Educate America Act—could be used to reform accreditation and licensing procedures. But those programs, under fire in the Republican Congress and thus minimally financed, have many other, more urgent tugs on their funds. Wise would like to see the federal government ante up a small pot of money to provide incentives for schools of education to undertake

reforms similar to a program that helped reform medical education. That also is unlikely in a time of budget cutting.

While states bear responsibility for accreditation and licensing, school districts do the actual recruiting of licensed (or, in many cases, unlicensed) teachers. And that process, according to Darling-Hammond's commission, is a real mess. "Especially in large districts, public school hiring practices are a case study of systems so consumed with procedures and paperwork that they forget what they are trying to do," it contended.

More...

GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS, continued... (4)

The commission blames outmoded bureaucracy; the Hudson Institute's Finn blames the unions. "The ground rules currently stipulate a union hiring hall, factory-style workforce," he said. "Mass hiring of swarms of people through a bureaucratic process which inevitably relies on paper credentials. They don't check to see if [the applicants] can teach. They don't check to see if they know their subject matter."

Darling-Hammond concedes that union bargaining agreements may perpetuate some of the logjams but insists that they didn't cause them. "If you go to nonunionized states, you will find the same bureaucratic, ineffective school organizations that you find in unionized states," she said. "That was the norm for how we taught people to construct and manage school systems for many years."

Finn suggests that public school systems adopt the hiring practices of private schools, which, he said, "handpick their teachers and make sure that a person knows how to teach and knows their subject."

Arlington principal Smith says she pretty much selects her teachers. So do at least some principals in Washington, which is regarded as one of the most dysfunctional urban school systems in the nation.

Plansky said that she got her job because her principal—after a long, in-depth interview—personally requested her services from the Washington central office. Such procedures can't be too unusual because the Washington school system has a printed form called the "personal request form."

However, both Plansky's school, Murch, and Smith's Jamestown Elementary are considered flagships on which many teachers seek a berth. For troubled schools in both districts, the hiring process is much less exacting, the object often being a last-minute scurry to secure a warm body to stand in front of a class rather than to find the most highly qualified professional.

Most education reformers are calling on states and school systems to raise the standards for teachers. They believe if

you make it harder to become a teacher, more good applicants will apply. NEA president Robert F. Chase agrees. "People are kind of drawn to professions that do have standards and have people that are well-regarded because of the standards they have to meet," he said. "I know our members are looking for that kind of professionalism."

Standard-setting in education is very controversial. Most reformers advise the federal government to steer clear of the process. But once high standards for teachers are set, the federal government could promote their adoption, many education specialists agree.

If high standards will help the teaching profession in the long run, they may cause problems in the short run. "Will it make the chore [of preparing and hiring teachers] more difficult? Yeah, it will," Chase said. "Do I have a magic answer as to how we might be able to resolve it? No, I don't."

KEEPERS

Getting good teachers actually may be the easy part. The real challenge lies in keeping them.

Plansky is as enthusiastic about her job as a teacher can be. But even she wonders how long she can sustain that fervor. "In many ways it's a thankless job," she acknowledged. "Touching a child's life, for me, is reward enough. But I do wonder, in 10 years is that going to be enough?"

For new teachers such as Plansky and Herr, standing alone in front of a room filled with 25 wriggling children with no support from older, more experienced hands can quickly dim the magic of teaching. For teachers returning for the 20th year to the same room to confront yet another group of 25 wriggling children and having little, if anything, beyond a decent salary and pension, to show for those 20 years, the magic probably is a long-departed memory.

Overcrowded classrooms, mountains of paperwork and unfathomable rules can lead to burnout. In inner cities particularly, those detractions are compounded by crumbling schools, shortages of supplies and equipment, enormous discipline problems and often real physical danger.

None of these problems is insurmountable, school reformers insist. "Educators and gutless politicians have turned this into a highly complicated issue," Bella Rosenberg, assistant to AFT president Albert Shanker, said. "It's not."

Providing support for new teachers is simple: Set up a mentoring system. All it takes is money (to pay the mentors extra and to add teachers to relieve the mentors of some of their teaching load) and a teacher-friendly school administration. Both commodities are often in short supply.

Montgomery County, Md., where Herr teaches, used to have a formal mentoring program, but that fell to the budget ax. Luckily for Herr, an informal support system developed at her school, Fields Road Elementary in Gaithersburg. "I feel that there's a support group, because the staff has been terrific as far as being helpful and welcoming," she said. "People are

More...

GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS, continued...(5)

very generous sharing things, curriculum, planning, help with individual students. I don't feel alone."

Across the Potomac River, Arlington County also eliminated its mentoring program, which Nicki Smith says is unfortunate. "New teachers should have some support no matter what, and it isn't built in," she said. "It would be nice to be able to pay another [experienced] teacher a little extra to be responsible for them."

An added attraction of a mentoring system is the money and the prestige it gives to the experienced teacher. It is one way to reward a good teacher who sticks to the classroom. There are others, but few school systems employ them.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, for example, has developed an advanced certificate for veteran teachers, somewhat like a board specialty for doctors. In most states, those who pass the rigorous process get extra pay and other perks. The program has been in effect for only two years, however, and fewer than 400 teachers have gone through the process.

"You have to have higher standards, the prospect of a career and a brass ring," the AFT's Rosenberg said. "Not where you basically max out after 10 years and what you do the first day is the same thing you do in year 30."

Good teachers also have to keep growing, learning the latest techniques and how to use the new technology. Such "professional development" is a well-recognized need in school systems. But they rarely get serious about it, spending less than 3 percent of their budgets on training.

"A good deal of what passes for 'professional development' in schools is a joke—one that we'd laugh at if we weren't trying to keep from crying," the teaching commission quoted a professional development expert as saying.

Other problems will require fundamental overhaul of the school management system, at least, if not major changes throughout society. On average, there are six administrative staff members for every four teachers in American classrooms, the highest ratio of nonclassroom to classroom personnel in the industrialized world. Some of the blame for this situation falls indirectly on the federal government. Federal aid programs for specific purposes have reporting and auditing requirements that spawn administrators and coordinators to manage them. The poorer the school district, the more federal aid it's eligible for and the greater the number of administrators.

Nicki Smith recalled how East Palo Alto school officials would "write huge grant [proposals] for things. When they got the money, they would hire someone to manage it," she said. "But the money didn't get down to the schools. We didn't even get enough paper."

The commission on teaching recommended dramatically reducing the schools' administrative overload and shifting half of the \$80 billion spent on this bureaucracy into the classroom. Teachers with greater power over school decisions could then replace the multiple layers of managers.

"We've got to change the way schools

operate," said G. Thomas Houlihan, a former teacher, principal and school superintendent who now serves as senior education adviser to North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., a Democrat who is chairman of the teaching commission. "For every problem out there, somebody has found a solution. In our state, we're moving forward with bringing the principles of quality management to our schools." But that won't work in every case, he acknowledged. "There's no cookie-cutter approach."

Indeed, a dilemma confronting inner cities is that the school system has provided a jobs market and a ladder to the middle class for many minority families. Wholesale downsizing of some education systems could create economic havoc in some communities.

The really tough issues confronting inner-city schools won't be solved within the school system. "It's going to take a greater partnership between schools and communities," NEA's Chase said. The NEA is convening representatives of a variety of urban institutions—such as ethnic organizations, civic associations, social service agencies, the federal Education, Labor, and Housing and Urban Development Departments—to work out a plan for dealing with the overlapping problems surrounding urban schools, he said. "Schools can't be islands that are isolated from the real world."

Within their walls, however, the schools do have to confront the discipline issue. "It's not complicated. The discipline issue is what started driving people from wanting to teach in inner cities," Rosenberg said. "The overwhelming majority of kids in urban schools want to do the right thing, get an education. But you've got a handful of kids—thugs really—running some high schools, and no one wants to do anything." She suggested a strong system of alternative schools for kids with disciplinary problems. "If you turned [discipline] around, a lot of teachers would find [inner-city schools] challenging and would become activists and all that," she said.

To improve education, most reformers agree, the nation has to upgrade its teachers. That means better preparing them to teach, supporting them in the classroom, making schools a nicer place to work and giving them a voice in the running of the schools. The teachers and administrators in a school "have to have a vision together. That makes the difference between a good school and an awesome school," Nicki Smith said. "But the bottom line is the kid. And it's our job [as teachers] not to let anybody fail."

True—but it's the job of the whole education system not to let the teachers fail. ■