

Vermont's unelected lawmakers

The Vermont State Supreme Court unanimously ruled this week that the state must provide the same protections and benefits to homosexual couples that it does to married heterosexuals. The new ruling — a breakthrough victory for homosexual-rights activists — means that in the Green Mountain State at least, it is no longer legal to deny cohabiting homosexuals the benefits and protections, from health insurance, to tax breaks, to inheritance rights, that until now have been limited to married couples.

The court has left the next step to the Vermont legislature: whether to legalize homosexual marriage, which no state has done (nearly 30 states have passed laws against homosexual marriage), or to pass "domestic partnership" legislation, which the ruling ensures will be much broader than anything on the books in California or Hawaii, two states with existing domestic partnership laws. Regardless of which way the mostly Democratic Vermont state legislature votes, the legal distinctions between the two — homosexual marriage or domestic partnership — are largely negligible. What counts is that the highest court in Vermont has just decreed that cohabiting homosexuals must have all the legal advantages of wedlock.

Question: What effect, if any, might this ruling have beyond simply expanding the perks and protections of same-sex couples? Writing in *National Review* last month, David Frum examined the impact of similar legislation in France, where the state now allows homosexual couples to enter into a "civil solidarity pact." This pact enables co-signers to file joint tax returns, receive a co-signer's welfare and employment benefits, as well as enjoy the inheritance rights of a husband or wife. Even French citizenship is extended to noncitizen co-signers. To reap such benefits and more, all one need do is sign up for them. Should a change of heart ensue, the pact may be dissolved simply by

giving three months notice in writing. All very convenient, n'est ce-pas?

As Mr. Frum writes, "After two years of haggling, the benefits of the pact have been extended to cohabiting heterosexuals, to widowed sisters living together, even to priests and their housekeepers. The French have crafted a grand new alternative to marriage, one that offers almost all of marriage's legal benefits and imposes many fewer of its legal obligations."

As Mr. Frum sees it, "There is every reason to expect the new pact gradually to crowd out and replace marriage. . . . Gay marriage, as the French are vividly demonstrating, does not extend marital rights; it abolishes marriage and puts a new, flimsier institution in its place."

Whatever the ultimate legacy of the Vermont ruling, it is well worth noting that this radical decree has come from the bench, not the ballot box. Robert H. Bork, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, wonders whether such apparent tolerance for judicial activism reflects a public "ill-informed about the shift in power from democratic institutions to authoritarian bodies" or whether "there is a general weariness with democracy and the endless struggles it entails."

On the Vermont bench, to be sure, there is evidence of an open disdain for democracy. Justice Denise R. Johnson wrote that the court should not even offer the state the opportunity to pass domestic partnership legislation, but rather should simply *order* it to legalize homosexual marriage outright. Failing to do so, she wrote, sends the plaintiff homosexuals to "an uncertain fate in the political cauldron of . . . moral debate" in the legislature. As Mr. Bork points out, any time moral debate in a legislature is disparaged as a "political cauldron," one comes to the brink of ceding control of our moral and cultural fate to what he terms "unrepresentative oligarchies." That, of course, is what has happened in Vermont.

Locking the schoolhouse door

As Alabama Gov. George Wallace once did, Vice President Al Gore now stands in the schoolhouse doorway keeping aspiring students from going through. But whereas Wallace made his stand in 1963 in an effort to prevent black students from entering the best college in their state, Mr. Gore has positioned himself to lock mostly black children and other minorities in the worst primary and secondary schools in the nation.

With his relentless opposition to school vouchers, which he offered in the most recent Democratic presidential debates, Mr. Gore demonstrated how determined he is to condemn millions of minority students, despite the pleas of their parents, to permanent second-class instruction. That's the almost certain outcome given the vastly inferior education they will receive in business-as-usual government school systems. Meanwhile, the teachers' unions, which have exercised monopolistic control over inner-city school systems and are among the most powerful interest groups within the Democratic Party, are ecstatic.

One would be hard-pressed to identify a more glaring, more consequential problem in this country than the utter failure of government education in America's largest cities. Nowhere is this worsening problem more evident than in the nation's capital, where Vice President Al Gore has lived most of his life, including the past 23 years. The failure of inner-city urban school systems has been a long-festering, seemingly intractable problem whose solution has proved to be impervious to more than a decade and a half of "reform." Had the problem merely been financial, it would have been solved a long time ago. Indeed, whether it is Newark, N.J., or the District of Columbia, many of the nation's worst performing students are being warehoused — as opposed to being educated — in school districts that spend far more per pupil than the national average.

In last week's debate, Mr. Gore attacked his opponent, former New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley, for having supported experimental voucher programs. "I personally always opposed the vouchers," bragged Mr. Gore, who himself attended private, elite schools and who exercised choice by sending his children to private, elite schools. "That's been a big disagreement for 18 years between Senator Bradley and myself." On Sunday, Mr. Bradley said he favored continuing the experimental voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland, though he would oppose initiating others. On the other hand, Mr. Bradley did say,

"[I]f those experiments demonstrated that the quality of public education was improved because of the competition [from vouchers], I think it would be very difficult to turn your back on that evidence."

Then Mr. Bradley asked Mr. Gore how he would react to favorable evidence from voucher experiments. Typically, Mr. Gore dissembled, incoherently asserting, "I favor more choice for parents to send their children to whatever school they want to send them to." Favoring more choice while taxing poor families out of the means to choose provides no choice at all. "But the reason I oppose vouchers," the vice president continued, "is because even if you say it's not going to come from public school budgets, it does."

He's wrong. On May 20, 1998, President Clinton vetoed a bill for a multiyear program that would have provided vouchers of up to \$3,200 per year for 2,000 low-income District children to attend the private or public school of their choice. The experimental plan would not have reduced the District public school budget by a cent. What the Clinton-Gore administration feared was that the experiment would have worked, not that it would have deprived the District school system of any funding.

Predictably, Mr. Gore has favored throwing more money at the problem. And he has offered a long list of costly "reforms" that conspicuously exclude any semblance of real competition or any hope for current students for whom the government school experience has been a nightmare. Ever since the "Nation at Risk" report was released in 1983, the nation's public schools have been in the throes of "reforms" which have failed to reverse the downward spiraling of urban school systems across the nation.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Gore's latest "reforms" will delight the teachers' unions. But what will he propose — besides more of the same — five years from now after those "reforms" have replicated the bad experience of the past 15 years? Meanwhile, important time for real reform and real choice will have been forfeited and many more lives will have been sacrificed.

Even George Wallace did not make a political career of standing in the schoolhouse doorway forever, as Mr. Gore seems determined to do, crushing the aspirations and blocking the opportunities that competition provides in every other aspect of American life.

Dear Netiquette

It's the great millennium myth. Internet communication makes everything easier, quicker, and well, less formal. The '90s man (or woman, as the case may be) uses this nonassuming form of communication to get a date, businesses exercise it to develop client interest, and public relations firms hide behind it as a less in-your-face form of lobbying. But even cyberfun may be short lived.

Enter "netiquette," an obnoxious collection of Internet niceties to ensure your electronic message leaves the recipient with warm fuzzies. Good-bye, worry-free e-mail. It used to be that one could communicate with one's friends or clients without having to worry about adding a smiley face to indicate that said sentence really was meant as a joke, or remembering that if one accidentally presses "caps lock," the sentence could be taken as a cyber tantrum. But that was prior to the dawn of Internet manners, and before an e-mail provider could remind one to watch the language, please.

Consider this message received by an e-mailer recently from an e-mail provider company:

"Be careful about sarcasm and humor. Often, what you mean as a joke can be taken as a criticism. Be sure what you say is taken in fun, add smileys (also known as emotions) to the end of your e-mail. Here are a few that will do the trick: Smile :), Laugh :u, Wink ;)."

And if the emotion one has alluded to in said e-mail is less than favorable, join the ranks of the netiquetely challenged. "Write positive," the server reminded. "Use the word 'not' sparingly. Don't write, 'He's not very often late.' Instead, write, 'He usually comes on time.'"

For some, netiquette may have only infiltrated the ranks of their personal e-mail. Others may already be receiving tips from their Internet Miss Manners. (Either way, it may be time for the '90s cyberchatters — and their manners-minded interceptors — to realize there are some emotions e-mail will never convey quite like the live human. So relax with the smiley faces already. Maybe the new millennium will find disillusioned Web surfers and chat-room masters taking on new communication trends: thinking outside the semi-colon and talking face to face.

When Christ joins the race There's room for religion in politics

How many American voters or leaders could quickly name a favorite philosopher or thinker who was a strong influence on their lives? When George W. named "Christ," his answer was instant controversy.

Reader, who would you have said?

What's fascinating about the question is that it's so meaningless in a sound-bite age. No matter which philosopher anyone names, it's all but impossible to make a convincing argument for it in a short period of time in a television "debate." A philosopher, by his nature, engages in extended arguments, dependent on logic and belief.

George W.'s reply actually had the ring of authenticity for one

Suzanne Fields, a columnist for The Washington Times, is nationally syndicated. Her column appears here Monday and Thursday.

basic reason: "Because," he said, "He changed my heart." If there is one thing we have learned about George W., it's that he underwent a religious conversion. He put aside self-destructive behavior, which included excessive boozing. For him, that required a major confrontation with God.

It's not fair to ask a candidate about influential philosophy and exclude his religious beliefs. The separation of church and state in the law does not require a politician or anyone else to mute his religious or philosophical beliefs.

Driving the controversy over George W.'s answer was the argument made eloquently by Allan Keyes that Christ was not political or even a philosopher. To Christians Christ is God, and therefore Truth. But when He threw the

money lenders out of the temple, as the Bible recounts it, that was a profoundly political act. The Romans who crucified Him were engaging in politics, too. Politics, after all, is about strategies of power.

What's going on today in American politics is a provocative debate about the relationship of religion and politics in contemporary America. How candid should candidates be about their religion? That's up to each candidate and for the voter to judge accordingly.

One of the raps against George W. is that he's not "spontaneous." But there was nothing canned in his reply to the philosopher question. It's churlish to argue that it's wrong to express in public a faith if the expression is sincere. One man's faith hardly jeopardizes the

traditions — or the law — of pluralism and religious freedom.

Mike McCurry, President Clinton's former press secretary, told an ABC-TV audience that he would rather hear George W. name Christ than, say, Tocqueville or Kierkegaard because the latter two are so "over-cited" that they have become clichés. I would settle for either of them as well. It was Tocqueville who noted that the moral underpinnings of Christianity (building on Judaism) were necessary for maintaining liberty in a democracy. He identified religion as the springboard for public virtue.

Kierkegaard would have been a more eccentric choice. He's considered the father of religious existentialism, and believed that "a leap of faith" was not enough to

guide behavior; it was equally important to conduct one's life in harmony with the moral teachings of Christianity. He believed the modern age lacked moral commitment.

Maybe, in our debates about a candidate's religion, we should revive the debate about influential philosophers, too. Philosophy is not a popular course in high school or college these days, which is too bad, because the study of philosophy sharpens the mind for arguments to connect public policy to ethical issues.

Discussions of philosophy, like discussions of religion, challenge and enlarge the mind. They force us to probe deeply into political arguments and their impact on society. We have come through an extremely brutal century. The Enlightenment and the elevation of reason over faith, which once held such promise, did not soften or

mellow man's inhumanity to man. This may be the great lesson of the century which dies next week.

The 20th century has been a time of decadence both spiritually and politically. But times of excess are frequently followed by cravings to restore a spiritual order, a rediscovery of the eternal verities. The revival of interest in religion and politics may be an expression of this yearning for renewal.



Suzanne Fields

The philosophers we chose to follow are ultimately personal decisions. William James understood this when he wrote that "philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means."

If George W. Bush has been influenced by Christ because Christ changed his heart and straightened out his behavior, how could any voters hold that against him?

DONALD LAMBRO

A recent poll showing that Texas Gov. George W. Bush is getting the support of 52 percent of Hispanics against Al Gore sent shock waves through the vice president's campaign and his political allies at La Raza, a left-leaning Hispanic advocacy organization.

In a head-to-head poll by the Wall Street Journal, which received little if any national news media attention, Mr. Bush soundly beat Mr. Gore by 52 percent to 41 percent among the largest and fastest-growing minority in the country. Mr. Bush also beats Bill Bradley in this group, but by a smaller margin: 44 percent to 41 percent.

The numbers show that Mr. Bush's "politics of aspiration" is striking a responsive chord among hard-working, culturally conservative Hispanic voters, who are drawn to his message of inclusion, opportunity and achieving the American dream.

It is the very same message that Ronald Reagan crafted in 1980, when he reached out to the nation's immigrant population. Mr. Reagan's landslide 1984 re-election stands as the high-water mark of Hispanic support for a Republican presidential candidate. Mr. Reagan won 37 percent of their vote.

This latest poll is a devastating rejection of those within the party who have tried to make immigrants, Hispanics in particular, a wedge issue. Mr. Bush wants no part of that kind of racial politics, as exemplified by the anti-immigrant ballot initiatives in California that led to a huge 1998 Hispanic vote for Democrats, who took over the state and now threaten to redistrict half a dozen or more Republican congressional seats out of existence.

But the latest numbers also send a devastating signal to the Democrats, led by Mr. Gore and Mr. Bradley, that what the centrist Democratic Leadership Council calls the "politics of grievance" does not work anymore with Hispanics, who boast the fastest new-business creation rate among any minority group in the country.

Hispanics want a larger economic stake in the country. Mr. Bush's tax-rate cuts, his \$1,000 per child tax credits for families, his elimination of death taxes, and other ideas for boosting access to the middle class strongly appeal to this key Democratic voting bloc. President Clinton was re-elected in 1996 with the help of 72 percent of the Hispanic vote.

"A lot of Hispanics dream of owning their own business, and he

Hispanic voters looking to the right



George W. Bush

appeals to that with his message and with his tax cuts for small business people," says Raul Romero, a Houston businessman who is raising funds for Mr. Bush in the Hispanic community.

Unlike the Democrats, Mr. Bush "is not selling quotas or things like that. Hispanics dream of having a stake in the country, so his message that you can be what you want to be is uplifting and inclusive, and they are responding to that," Mr. Romero says.

"Bush has taken a completely different approach to Hispanics. His attitude is 100 percent different. He's not using the wedge that Republicans have used in the past. He's not sending out vibes to Hispanics that 'I'm picking on you,'" said Brent Wilkes, the national executive director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, the largest Hispanic organization in the United States.

"Our organization supports Bush's tax-cut plan. We think it's pretty good and will help Hispanics," Mr. Wilkes told me.

But a major part of Mr. Bush's appeal, says Mr. Wilkes, is that he is reaching out to Hispanics and

personally campaigning for their support in their communities — something they haven't seen in a long time from a Republican presidential candidate. "That in itself explains why he is getting a large share of the Hispanic vote," he says.

Over at the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic organization that tilts heavily toward Democratic orthodoxy, chief spokeswoman Lisa Navarrete says that the polling numbers were much larger than anyone at La Raza ever expected.

She thinks the new numbers represent "a sea change" among Hispanic voters. She admits to being "surprised that the national numbers" are so high so early in the campaign.

"You have a candidate who shows that he wants to be more inclusive, and Latinos have responded well to that," she said. "He never goes into a school where you do not see him with Hispanic children."

Yet there is something deeper going on here, say Hispanic leaders I talked to last week. It is a rejection of the Democrats' paternalistic, government-centered message, and its a rejection of being taken for granted by Mr. Gore and his party.

"Democrats tell us we have to complain and fight for more government programs," Mr. Romero told me. But Hispanics are showing new interest in such ideas as investing for their own retirement, building a business with lower tax rates, and school vouchers to send their children to better schools.

Mr. Gore's ultraliberal campaign manager, Donna Brazile, enraged many Hispanics when she recently characterized the Democratic Party as being made up of "four pillars," including blacks, labor, women "and other minorities."

"She mentioned every group except Hispanics, and I think Hispanics are tired of being taken for granted by the Democrats," said Roberto Deposada, executive director of the Hispanic Business Roundtable.

Such is the level of deep alienation from the Democratic Party that is now sweeping the ranks of the Hispanic community in the presidential race. If it holds up, it could give Mr. Bush the highest Hispanic vote ever achieved by a Republican nominee, and with it, the presidency itself.

Donald Lambro, chief political correspondent of The Washington Times, is a nationally syndicated columnist.



The Hartford Courant.
courant.com

Friday, September 3

Site last updated 09/03/99 2:07PM

FEATURES

- News @ 3 p.m.
- AP State News
- World/National
- 7 Days of News
- Obituaries
- Technology/Enter
- Projects
- Lottery
- Movies
- Restaurants
- TV Listings
- Site Map

CLASSIFIEDS

- Jobs
- Autos
- Homes
- Auctions
- Personals

THE SHOPS

- Visit Our Online Retailers

ABOUT US

- Subscribe
- Guestbook
- Advertise
- Web Staff
- News Staff
- FAQs

SEARCH

- News Library
- CT Internet Directory
- The Net

Courant.Com

HOME CLASSIFIEDS DESTINATIONS THE SHOPS
NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT VOICES FIVE

Lieberman Lays Out School Reform Plan

By RICK GREEN

This story ran in the Courant September 3, 1999

U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman proposed a national education reform strategy Thursday that would reward successful public schools, penalize longtime failures and pump in billions in new federal money.

And although Lieberman remains a supporter of vouchers - where public money is used to pay tuition for students at private schools - that controversial idea is not part of his proposal, which is intended as a compromise as Congress takes up reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The law provides billions of dollars in funding for public schools across the country.

"Two thirds of the American people believes our public schools are in crisis," Lieberman told an invited gathering of educators and students in the auditorium at New Britain High School. "Our public schools are not working for a lot of our kids."

"I am proposing that we streamline and consolidate the maze of federal education programs . . . with more money and fewer federal strings attached, and all of them geared toward raising standards and academic achievement," he said. "Connecticut would quickly be rewarded under my plan with additional funding."

Agnes Gutowski, a sophomore at New Britain High School, listened to all of Lieberman's speech and wasn't convinced.

"He was saying all these things that he plans to do. We'll see if he does it," said Gutowski, who said she would like to see more emphasis on the basic problems her school is dealing with - such as a lack of books and adequate desks.

If approved by Congress, Lieberman's plan would duplicate on the national level many of the reforms under way or now being launched in Connecticut.

States would have to develop clear performance goals and detailed plans for helping the neediest children. There would be substantial increases in funding for training new and existing teachers and more money for teaching English to immigrant students. Successful schools would be rewarded, and schools with long-term low performance could be penalized. It would increase federal education spending by \$25 billion over five years, most of that targeted to poor children.

About 6 percent of spending on public education in Connecticut comes from the federal government. A recent Courant/Connecticut Poll found that

six in 10 state residents give high marks to their local public schools. In the last decade, education reform efforts and student achievement here have won Connecticut national acclaim.

"Connecticut is doing much of what we are talking about here," said Lieberman, who is touring schools around the state the next few days. He plans to introduce his so-called "Public Education Reinvestment and Reinvigoration Act" this month as Congress debates the law's reauthorization.

Gary Huggins, executive director of the Education Leaders Council in Washington, D.C., said Lieberman's plan is too timid. The council is a coalition of commissioners of education and others from around the country pushing for more local control and freedom from government regulations.

Lieberman's "plan is minor tweaking. We need bold reform. We need to free the states," Huggins said. In return for setting high standards and goals, states should have the choice to get there any way they can. This could include vouchers, he said.

[HOME: News](#) · [Sports](#) · [Business](#) · [Entertainment](#) · [Voices](#) · [Five](#)
[Home](#) · [Classifieds](#) · [Destinations](#) · [The Shops](#) · ?

©1999 The Hartford Courant



IDEAS; BEER AND CHIPS? YOU BET!

LOIS M. BARON

SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Monday, October 4, 1999 ; Page C04

The books were an excuse, almost. A cover, so to speak, that would give legitimacy to the meetings.

In February, eight men in Arlington gathered to start their own version of what is often a women-only endeavor: They talked about a book over dinner. Then they cleared the decks for *poker*.

"Despite being in a close neighborhood, there are very few opportunities for us to get together in a social way," said Michael Caudell-Feagan, who administers grants for a philanthropic foundation. "People are invested in the neighborhood, and we run into each other at PTA and church and other places, but there's never time for any intensity."

The men live within a 10-block radius, and most of them have children in the fourth or fifth grade. They figure they'll fit in eight meetings this year as they schedule around traveling for business and such.

"We've picked classic guy books," says Doug McLennan, a NASA scientist, "but I probably wouldn't have read them if it weren't for this group." He hosted the night they discussed "The Killer Angels." The paella they ate had nothing to do with the book, but he served a cherry dessert because the book's Civil War characters were all eating cherries and getting the runs.

"We've gone all over the map," Caudell-Feagan says of reading selections. "But we've determined that the light novel is not our style. What gets us going is something infused with history."

Tony Trombly, a sales rep, likes it that because the group includes men who work as economists, educators, scientists and salesmen, "we get a take on the book that never would've crossed my radar screen."

After spending a lot of time and e-mails trying to select the books by consensus, the group decided that the host of the evening would select the book. "It cut way down on e-mail traffic," says Trombly.

The *Poker* and Book Club isn't the only reading group that men join. Some groups in the area include men and women, and there are other all-men reading clubs. The Cavemen, for example, is a group registered at Politics & Prose, a D.C. bookstore, and its stated intent is "reading the backs of cereal boxes." Sandra L. West, who is writing a book about the history of African American reading groups, reports that a number of men's groups meet in the Deep South, though the closest one to the District she's aware of is in Richmond.

Do the men compare themselves to women's groups? Nah. "We're an island unto

ourselves," Caudell-Feagan asserts with a laugh. "Sometimes we wonder how discussions are tailored or prompted in other groups, but we've let things develop and generate as they will."

Trombly has cooked for his wife's book group. From the start, he didn't want to be like them. "They'd ask questions like 'What do you think the title suggests?'" he says. "They didn't seem that fun. Our discussions are more guylike. We're more like, 'What about when the Indians were shooting at them?'"

Trombly sees the group as a reason to get together for fun under an intellectual umbrella. And these are all men who read anyway. "We're not monster-truck, NASCAR-watching guys," Trombly says. "We're men of the '90s; we don't have that kind of outlet. Our evenings together aren't like primal screaming or getting together to drink and watch pornography. It's just a chance for guys to get together."

He admits that liquor has loosened their tongues for discussions, but it's not an excuse to go to some drunken extreme. "Not that I'm above that," says Trombly.

"We thought the *poker* would balance out the evening," says Caudell-Feagan, who suggested it. He wanted to finally learn to play the game -- something he'd missed somehow in his formative years.

The group doesn't emphasize the food, though serious cooks in the group have set a high standard. And Caudell-Feagan, who hosted the first meeting, set a precedent for matching the meal to the book. For "Undaunted Courage," about the Lewis and Clark expedition, the meal he served included portobello mushrooms shaped like buffalo tongue, "beaver tail" fashioned from quesadillas, dried fruit, and beer from every state along the Lewis and Clark expedition route.

Trombly was up next with "The Purple Dot," and he complained that, in addition to being an "embarrassingly bad book," it gave almost no direction for what to cook. He opted to cement the tradition of a good meal and served whole striped bass.

"But we're getting to the bottom of the batting order," Trombly says. One of the remaining men in the group has threatened to line up cans of soup in front of the microwave when it's his turn.

The ratio of book discussion to *poker* playing depends largely on how much the men like the book. Once all the guys agreed that they hated "The Purple Dot," they settled right down to *poker*. If they like a book, they spend a lot more time talking about it over dinner, and sometimes over *poker*. And just as the book reading serves an ulterior purpose for the evening, so does *poker*. "Looking at us, we are a bunch of guys who could be accused of being overly sensitive, liberal criers," Trombly says. "*Poker* protects us from that label."

Maybe that's why the guys call it their *Poker* and Book Club, rather than their Book and *Poker* Club. But the *poker*-playing experience is ragged. At one end are a couple of men like Caudell-Feagan, who never played before the club formed. At the other end are men like McLennan. He plays down his *poker* abilities, but says he did learn well from his brother, who supported himself through college on *poker* winnings.

The *poker* portion is looser, says Caudell-Feagan. "We talk about the game of *poker* and poke fun at each other. A couple of the guys are quite good at keeping the banter going." Along with side conversations, like where they're traveling, he says they occasionally talk about life, guy-style: "We have these insights that are quickly covered over" with jokes.

Because the men all have busy weekend schedules, they meet on weeknights and fold up by 11 o'clock. "We've been pretty careful not to infringe on family time," Trombly says. "The wives all seem happy that their spouses have this group." Although after the addition of cigars to the lineup one night, his wife decreed that no more "stinky cigar breath" would be joining her in bed.

"We're enjoying the hell out of it," Trombly says. "We're already imagining how we'll still be doing this 10 years from now and how great it will be when our sons join us."

Articles appear as they were originally printed in The Washington Post and may not include subsequent corrections.

[Return to Search Results](#)

[washingtonpost.com](#) [NEWS](#) [STYLE](#) [SPORTS](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [MARKETPLACE](#)



CARD-CARRYING FRIENDS

DALLAS HUDGENS

Friday, February 19, 1999 ; Page N34

"You in or out?"

"I don't think you've got the flush. I'm in."

"Well, guess what? I've got the flush."

"You son of a ..."

The language is universal (that includes the profanities). Flush. Call. Ante up. Raise the stakes. It can only mean one thing. Weekly *poker* game in progress. It could be Thursday night, or it could be Friday night. But you can rest assured the regulars are all at the table, cards in hand and plastic chips stacked in front of them on the green felt tablecloth. Most games are low stakes, keeping the highest one-time bets between 50 cents and \$2. The dealer chooses the game, often a grotesque (but fun) mutation of the basic seven-card stud played in Vegas.

Sure, gambling is illegal. But it's a well-known fact that William H. Rehnquist, chief justice of the United States, plays. And why not? *Poker* night is an institution. It's like a church service that you take a sacred vow to attend. Of course, we are talking about the kind of church that would elect Oscar Madison as its bishop.

"There's almost an obsession with coming to the game," says Don Wallach, who is part of a local group that has been playing on Thursday nights for the past 14 years. "I've known guys who've gotten off a plane from Japan at 7 p.m., and instead of going home, they come here to play *poker*."

Tonight, the group is playing in the home of Philip Schaenman. Eight players (six regulars and two alternates) are gathered around the dining room table. Most are sipping soft drinks. A few nosh on chips and M&Ms.

The games are seven-card high-low. At times, a swollen jackpot quiets the room. But for the most part, there's constant banter. TV. Movies. Politics. At one point, the conversation turns to the group members' allegiance to the game:

"Some of the guys have plots in the same cemetery, and we were thinking of having them arranged in a circle," Schaenman says.

Everybody laughs. Schaenman is dealing, whipping cards through the air.

"It's a release from everyday life," Wallach says. "You get to revert to hanging around in a treehouse with your friends. Plus, I'm a hypochondriac. So, with three doctors in the group, I figure I'm safe."

That's three doctors, an engineer, a physicist and several successful business owners.

Together they make up the Hungarian **Poker** Club, which was named to honor the heritage of two founding members. So, how does a group like this stay together for 14 years? It definitely takes a gelling of personalities and **poker**-playing abilities, not to mention a consensus on how seriously they should approach the game.

The guys in the group will tell you that theirs is not a "serious" **poker** game. If it were, there'd be a lot less chatter while hands were being played. Also, the traditional 9

o'clock break for dinner and more conversation definitely would be out of the question.

"It's just a comfortable evening," says Art Marcus, a psychologist and original member of the group. "These guys are highly intelligent people, and it's fun to be with them. There's always good conversation and an exchange of ideas, whether it's about business, politics, medicine or some other subject."

That's not to say Marcus always prefers conversation to card play. He, Schaenman and another group member, Phil Sandler, are also part of a Tuesday-night **poker** group that was formed 30 years ago. In that game, the focus is on the cards rather than the conversation.

"Several people in our group play as substitutes in some other group," Schaenman says. "That's not unusual. There are interlocking sets of players among groups all over the area. It's like cross-fertilization."

So, what's the lure of **poker**? Isn't it just another game of chance? Well, yes and no. It's true that you have no say in which cards you're dealt. But maximizing the potential of those cards, and the potential of the chips in front of you, requires a combination of skill and psychological savvy.

"It's all about knowing when to drop out, knowing when you have a chance to win and convincing people that you have a better hand than the one that you're actually holding," Sandler says.

A career in the financial world doesn't guarantee success. Nine times out of 10, a **poker**-savvy bike messenger will clean the clock of a green Wall Street dandy. Experience is important. But even more so is the innate **poker** sense with which some people seem to have been born. You can wear your best **poker** face, and it's as if these guys can climb right into your skull and listen to your thoughts. Don't even try to bluff them.

A certain degree of **poker** skill can be acquired by anyone. Mostly, it's an education of trial and error. That means you'll have to watch a lot of people rake your chips over to their side of the table. An experienced tutor can speed up the learning process. To a lesser degree, books can also be useful.

Right now, members of the Hungarian **Poker** Club have only one thing on their minds. Food. It's 9 o'clock, traditional dinner break time, and the smells of a boeuf bourguignon being prepared by Schaenman's wife, Rosa, are drawing sighs and moans from the players.

They fix their plates, pour glasses of wine and then adjourn to the living room, where the conversation turns to business investments. When it's noted that this isn't the atmosphere that most people expect to find at a **poker** game, the players laugh.

"In the old days, these games would have been played in smoke-filled rooms with guys drinking lots of booze," Wallach says.

"Some of our guys drink Maalox," Sandler says. "It's a very sexy group."

They've been together long enough to witness major events in each others' lives. There has even been a death in the group, one of the original members, one of the Hungarians, a man named Richard Koves, who survived a forced-labor camp during World War II. Members of the Hungarian **Poker** Club served as honorary pallbearers at Koves' funeral.

"There's a bond that keeps growing as you experience things together, whether it's funerals or the weddings of each others' kids," says Wallach. "In a way, we're like best friends. We want to help each other. When one of our members had cancer, the doctors in the group facilitated his care."

According to psychiatrist Bruce Smoller, who happens to be a member of the Hungarians, social support networks like this one are rare in today's society, especially among men.

"This **poker** group is like 'Cheers' without the alcohol," he says. "A place where you can be yourself and talk about what you want. All of us have stressful lives, and we need a place like that. **Poker** is just the framework around which it's built."

Piecing that framework together can be surprisingly easy. Sometimes, in fact, it happens by accident. Stewart Wolpin, the author of "The Rules of Neighborhood **Poker** According to Hoyle," has been hosting a Thursday night game in his New York apartment since 1984. Of course, his group of regulars might never have gotten together if it weren't for an evening rain shower.

"We all played on a publisher's softball team, and our game was rained out one night," he says.

"We couldn't decide what to do. So, we went to a guy's house, got out a deck of cards and the rest is history."

Now, Wolpin has become something of a neighborhood-**poker** sage. His book is a fun and useful guide for long-running groups and people who are trying to form their own weekly games. The pages offer advice on everything from betting strategies to proper etiquette and appropriate **poker** munchies. The book also includes the rules for almost 200 variations of **poker**, many of which were probably dreamed up late at night in someone's basement, long after the chip bag had been emptied and the beer had turned warm.

Wolpin says that some of the best **poker** players he has ever competed against were women. But those games took place in Las Vegas. In neighborhood games, he rarely finds women at the table.

"Women that I've spoken to say their sense of competition is at a different level than men's," he says. "They don't see how guys can stay friendly with one another when they're playing for money."

That's not to say neighborhood play among guys is all fun and games. The combination of money (no matter how little) and competition can affect people in odd ways. Wolpin's belief is that **poker** brings out a person's true personality. Sometimes, the happy-go-lucky guy turns out to be quite serious and shrewd. Mr. Bluster and Confidence, on the other hand, often curls up in the fetal position when the chips are down.

When people ask Wolpin how to form their own games, he tells them the best place to

begin a search for fellow *poker* players is at work.

"In any sizable workplace, you can find a half dozen people who know how to play," he says. "So, it shouldn't be that difficult to get a game started. A few people might have to learn, but it's still much easier to start a group in the workplace. You'll know each other's schedules and be able to work around that, even if you only play once a month."

And how will you know that your game has become a success? A sure sign is when guys who are on business trips phone in to shoot the breeze and maybe have someone play a hand for them. The Hungarians are well-acquainted with this practice.

"Nobody likes to miss out on the fun," Schaenman says. "This is a diverse group. It's a *poker* group, a joke group, a psychiatric group. People say, 'You lose money playing poker,' but it's still cheaper than seeing a psychiatrist."

"THE RULES of Neighborhood Poker According to Hoyle" by Stewart Wolpin, \$6.95 from New Chapter Press.

Cutline: The poker buddies: clockwise from lower left, Paul Schwab, Ed Kessler, Marc Magazine, Bruce Smoller, Don Wallach, Philip Schaenman, Phil Sandler and Jerry Cooperstein.

Articles appear as they were originally printed in The Washington Post and may not include subsequent corrections.

[Return to Search Results](#)

washingtonpost.com NEWS STYLE SPORTS CLASSIFIEDS MARKETPLACE

She calls just to say "hi."

click to shop
Neiman Marcus.com

To print this page, select "Print" from the File menu of your browser

[salon.com](http://www.salon.com) > **News** Sept. 17, 1999

URL: <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/1999/09/17/education>

Surprise: Bush could be the "education president"

A longtime school reformer says the Republican front-runner might be the best hope for low-income and minority students at a time when you can't talk about "poor kids" -- to Democrats.

BY JOAN WALSH

The 1970s cliché that a conservative is a liberal who's been mugged might have a '90s update: A conservative is a liberal who has tried to reform public schools, especially for poor kids, and failed.

Almost 35 years since Congress began massively funding education support for disadvantaged students, through the \$8 billion Chapter 1/Title 1 program, the effort is widely judged a disappointment. In most states, poor kids continue to lag far behind their advantaged peers in school achievement, while blacks and Latinos still lag behind whites, and those achievement gaps -- which started to close for a while -- began widening again in the mid-1990s.

So more than a few reformers have begun to flirt with heretofore taboo ideas -- charters, school privatization, merit pay for teachers, even vouchers. And some are even flirting with supporting a Republican presidential candidate, Texas Gov. George W. Bush. Bush's Sept. 2 education policy speech in Los Angeles, in which he committed himself to closing the achievement gap for poor and minority kids and cracking down on the failures of Title 1, was a hit with many education reformers, and some of them will even say it publicly.

Bush won points for both style and substance. "The fact that it was about poor kids and minority kids was right on the money, because that's where the feds are supposed to count," says Kati Haycock, executive director of the Education Trust, a respected Washington advocacy group for low-income education reform. "And he's clearly learned that accountability matters."

But the centerpiece of Bush's accountability plan frightened some advocates: Schools receiving Title 1 funds that, after three years, don't show improvement in low-income kids' achievement will see their federal funding yanked, and given to parents -- to the tune of \$1,500 a year per student.

Is Bush a dedicated education reformer, finally enforcing standards for poor kids? Or is he a right-wing ideologue trying to slouch toward

vouchers -- a word, the New York Times noted, he never used during his speech?

Salon News asked Haycock, who has closely watched Bush's reform efforts in Texas, to talk about the implications of the Republican front-runner's proposals. Although Haycock worked closely on education reform issues with the White House, she's won no friends there by praising Bush's education plans to NBC News and other media outlets.

Judging from his Texas policies, Haycock says, Bush means business. He's used both carrots and sticks to force schools to devise strategies to improve the achievement of poor, black and Latino kids -- and achievement gaps have narrowed significantly in his state. So Haycock thinks Bush deserves a serious look from education advocates -- although she notes that Clinton, too, was a committed education reformer when governor of Arkansas, while as president he has disappointed his former allies.

The big news of Bush's proposal was his notion that if a given school can't make things better for poor kids, we're going to give the money to their parents. How did you respond to hearing that?

When I read the speech, I said, Wow! The fact that it was about poor kids and minority kids was right on the money, because that's where the feds are supposed to count. He made it clear that he thinks these kids can learn, no excuses, and that he understood the ramifications of continued low achievement. That was just great. I also think that he's clearly learned a good part of the Texas lesson -- even though a lot of that good work was started on [former Texas Gov.] Ann Richards' watch -- that making schools accountable for poor kids really matters.

In other words, if we just say you're accountable and you've got to get better, but there are no consequences -- which is how it's been for a very long time -- I don't think we get their attention the way we do when there are consequences. Now the question is whether the consequence that he's proposing will have the effect that he seems to think it will. I'm not sure.

You mean: Will taking away those schools' funding, and giving it to parents, really help poor kids?

A part of me says, Wait a second, you're talking about accountability, yet what you'd be doing [by giving the money to parents] is in many cases sending dollars to schools where there is no accountability whatsoever, where the kids don't have to take the state exams, where there is no public reporting of data, and where parents may be getting the shaft again -- even though you won't know they are. I mean, if accountability is critically important, then you have to extend it over there.

My point of view is, if a school doesn't get better, there's got to be big-time consequences -- and that can end with pulling the dollars out of the school and sending them someplace else. My own preference is that they ought to go to enable the poor kid to attend a high-performing public school. Because that's the only place where \$1,500 is going to get you anything. But there are some communities where there aren't

high-performing public schools for poor kids. So, in those circumstances, if the school is willing to submit to the state exams and show how different kinds of kids are doing on the exams, then fine. Better to do that than to lock kids into crummy public schools.

Do you worry that this is his stalking horse for vouchers? He didn't use the word, but ...

It could be. It would be naive to suggest that the right has not figured out that this is the easiest way to sell public money going into private schools. Because it makes sense not just to people who were always in favor of vouchers, but to people like me, who know damn well how poor quality most high-poverty schools are. If you say to me: Should we hold poor kids hostage in low-performance public schools? I've got to say: No, we shouldn't. So it is the one place where you can appeal to people who otherwise have their doubts about this. Who knows? I don't know what's in this guy's heart. And that side of it does worry me somewhat.

When I think about a future, 10 or 20 years from now, where Catholic kids are educated separated from Muslim kids and white kids from black kids, even more so than it already is today, I find that frightening. But then the other side of me says: What's scarier, that, or continuing to consign generations more of black kids and brown kids and poor kids to low quality education, and dooming them to lives on the margins? How do you measure the trade-off there? Polls say more and more black folks in particular are saying, These reformers are taking decades to change public education, so thank you, I'll take the vouchers.

And of course in lots of low-income schools we have de facto segregation already, where 100 percent black or minority kids are stuck in a terrible school.

Right. So I guess in the end the question for people like me is, Where does this guy really want to go with it? Is this but one piece, this voucher thing, one piece of a strategy that's really about getting serious about the education of poor kids and really about making sure they are in high-quality schools? Then I'm game to go along, although I'm careful.

Or is it the first step toward a larger, ideological assault on public education?

Well, we don't know, but I have to point out: Bush sure talked about poor kids more in that single speech than a lot of Democrats have so far in the whole campaign.

Here's what I don't understand: We all know the problems with Title 1 funding and the lack of accountability. But in 1994, the Clinton administration presided over an overhaul of Title 1 that was all about accountability. If you read what it was designed to do, it sounds like it was written by the Education Trust.

It was. It was written by the Commission on Chapter 1, which is housed here.

So what happened? Why haven't they gone forward with making sure that those reforms are actually taking place state by state and school by school -- making sure that poor and minority kids actually

get help in school?

What the White House will tell you is that what happened was the '94 elections. With the change in the composition of Congress and the shift in the majority, the ability to be tough on states evaporated, and all of the consensus went away. So they couldn't really accomplish what had been the original design. I just don't accept that as an honest answer. From the get-go they fought very hard against us on the issue of [analyzing] data by race and poverty ...

Looking specifically at how poor kids, or minority kids, do compared with better-off kids?

They fought fiercely against that. They fought fiercely against the suggestion that schools had to make progress for poor kids. That, after all, was supposed to be the trade-off in the '94 law. The idea was the feds would back off from telling schools how they spent the money, but in return parents would be given the information to know whether those schools had made progress with their kids -- with poor kids. Well, all of the regulations the department issued let schools demonstrate progress either by showing that their poor kids' scores went up -- or, if they prefer, by showing that the school average went up. Which means that rich kids's scores can go up, and the school can improve overall, while poor kids' scores are actually going down. So they broke the bargain as far as I'm concerned.

It got to be so nobody would even say the words "poor kids" on the Hill. We'd come in and talk about poor kids and they'd say, "You can't talk about poor kids --"

But now Republicans can talk about poor kids?

It's wild. So all I'm saying is, Right now George Bush's message on education gives me more hope that something might happen for poor kids than what I'm hearing elsewhere. And in Texas they're doing the right things for poor and minority kids.

Isn't there some worry, though, that while test-score gaps are closing, there's too much "teaching to the test," just drilling kids on what they're going to be taught, and it's not measuring learning?

Yeah, but they're designing a new test that's going to be much better, much more rigorous. So they're really doing the right things. One of my staff members, a longtime Democrat, went out to Texas and did advance work on the release of their new education standards, and Bush was there. She came back and said, "This is the first time I've ever done advance work for an event like this with a Republican, but you know what? He's really genuine." So who knows? I don't know what to make of this. The White House isn't happy with us right now, but that's OK. Our job is to call people out on these issues. And people are talking about it.

salon.com | Sept. 17, 1999

[Media](#) | [Mothers Who Think](#) | [News](#) | [People](#) | [Technology](#) | [Travel](#)

Copyright © 1999 Salon.com All rights reserved.

No shortcuts to classroom

ANOTHER VIEW Alternative certification programs won't meet needs.

By Joyce Lynn Garrett

David Imig, president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, once wrote on this page, "The shortage of qualified teachers . . . is tragic. However, suggesting . . . on-the-job training to get people into classrooms as quickly as possible is a bad idea." It's still a bad idea.

The teaching profession is under close scrutiny. School violence is on the rise. The curriculum is more demanding. The student population is more diverse. Now is not the time to put ill-trained teachers into classrooms.

The reasoning behind alternative certification is flawed:

► First, at a time when we are raising standards for traditional programs, we are lowering them for alternative programs.

► Second, there is evidence to suggest that teachers graduating from traditional programs stay longer in the field than do their counterparts from alternative programs. High rates of turnover are very costly to districts.

► Third, it is a mistake to think that everyone can teach. Ask any college graduate about the brilliant professor who could not convey course content in a way that facilitated learning.

► Fourth, evidence shows that teachers well-prepared in both the what and the how of teaching produce better instruction that leads

to higher achievement by students.

Teaching is a complex act. To be good thinkers and problem-solvers, teachers must orchestrate their knowledge and practice in four general areas: assessment, planning, teaching and evaluation. The skills required to do this cannot be learned in a two-week workshop, a summer class or on the job.

Supply and demand in the teaching profession is not as simple as most people think. A recent report from the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, by Linda Darling-Hammond, suggests universities are producing more than enough teachers, but that three out of five do not enter the profession. She suggests the "shortage" is caused because newly prepared teachers are not certified in the greatest areas of need (such as math, science and special education), do not live in geographic areas where teachers are in demand, and do not stay once in the classroom.

Every student deserves a qualified teacher in the classroom. Alternative routes to teaching do not guarantee candidates will enter those disciplines of greatest need.

Rather than finding shortcuts into the profession, we need to recruit more teachers to high-need areas and provide better incentives such as higher standards, better work environments, mentoring and induction programs, increased salaries and greater ease of licensure across states.

Joyce Lynn Garrett is associate dean of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania College of Education, Indiana, Pa.

Teacher shortage spreads as schools paper over problem

OUR VIEW Higher standards, broader recruiting can reinvigorate profession.

In New York, the board of education had to hold three summer job fairs to find teachers for all of its classrooms this fall. Even so, there aren't enough qualified candidates to replace hundreds of unlicensed teachers now assigned to the city's low-performing schools.

Officials in Philadelphia schools spent the month scrambling to fill 500 vacancies. With schools opening Sept. 7, almost 200 more teachers are still needed.

And in Maryland, Schools Superintendent Nancy Grasmick says the state's teacher shortage is so severe, it's time to start recruiting aggressively outside the field, a conclusion Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge reached months ago.

This bad news gets worse. Within the next nine years, school districts nationwide are expected to be short between 2 million and 2.5 million teachers, according to Department of Education projections.

Unless about 200,000 new teachers begin entering the profession annually, schools could be forced to rely on permanent substitutes or uncertified instructors as warm bodies to fill the nation's classrooms. That can only hurt the struggling school-reform movement by undermining efforts to improve teaching.

This isn't merely some doomsday scenario. Already, the hiring of marginally qualified teachers is common: Thirty states allow teachers to be hired on temporary licenses; about 10 states don't even require teachers to complete a college minor in the subject they are assigned to teach, according to a new report from the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future.

Nearly one in three of the new teachers hired in 1994 either had no license or an incomplete license. Even the field of cosmetology has stricter standards, the report found.

Yet what sounds like an impending disaster could be an opportunity — if school districts are willing to make some bold changes.

The path to ending the teacher shortage — while also improving how children learn — lies in restoring the diminished prestige of the profession. How can that be accomplished?

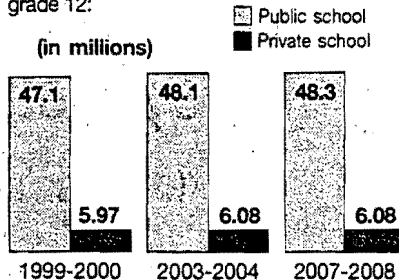
► By luring other promising professionals into teaching. In Pennsylvania, Gov. Ridge wants to sidestep the traditional, lengthy teacher-certification process to bring in out-of-field candidates with good grades, good test scores and determined attitudes to succeed in the classroom. Last week, Maryland's school superintendent unveiled plans for a marketing campaign that would attract other professionals to teaching to help fill the 11,000 vacancies expected by 2001.

► By toughening standards for new teachers. Currently, teacher-certification tests are so lax that they invite marginal performers into the profession. In Georgia, for example, math teachers can miss half the questions on the test and still pass.

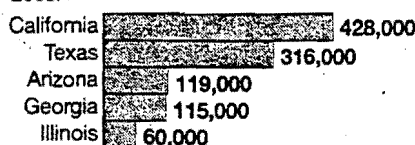
Such mediocre standards don't enhance the profession's appeal. Fewer than one in 10 high school seniors want to teach in the future, according to a study released by the ACT testing service last week. Among blacks, only 6% said they were interested.

More students

This year, more than 53 million children will attend school in kindergarten through grade 12. And rising enrollments are expected to continue through the next decade. Projected growth in school enrollment, kindergarten-grade 12:



Top states for projected enrollment growth and projected number of additional students 1999-2009:



... and more teaching vacancies

A large number of teachers are expected to retire or leave the profession over the next decade, resulting in 2.2 million vacancies. Most common reasons teachers quit:



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; University of Georgia

By Gary Visgarius, USA TODAY

► By recruiting beyond traditional education majors. The Democratic Leadership Council, the centrist wing of the Democratic Party, this month called for the creation of a National Teacher Corps, which would provide future teachers with college-tuition help in exchange for future service in one of the nation's neediest schools. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future suggests starting teacher-recruitment programs in high-need fields such as math and science and creating mentoring programs for new teachers, to improve retention rates.

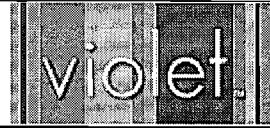
► By ensuring that good teachers keep teaching. Salary raises for all teachers would make the profession more attractive. So would programs similar to those being considered in Florida that use new technologies to measure the effectiveness of teachers — and then link compensation with competence.

None of this will be easy to accomplish. Already, the teachers union and college professors in Pennsylvania have moved to block the governor's plans for attracting outside professionals.

And some critics, including the College Board, have warned that toughening teacher-certification tests could pinch the teacher supply further by excluding some minority candidates who have scored lower on the standardized tests in the past.

But unless teaching can be transformed into a profession in which competence is both rewarded and required, schools will resort to their failed methods for papering over the teacher shortage: bigger classes taught by unqualified instructors.

That's a bleak future no one wants to face.



To print this page, select "Print" from the File menu of your browser

salon.com > **Mothers Who Think** Nov. 8, 1999

URL: <http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/1999/11/08/testing>

Grilling our young

The SAT test coaching industry goes after kindergartners. Little blank slates mean great big bucks.

BY JONATHAN FOX

Six years ago, Michael Hasty was just another anxious parent when he wrote a study guide to help his son pass the sixth-grade math portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). He produced the homemade guide in frustration after school officials told him there were few tools designed to help kids pass the TAAS, a battery of standardized tests that determine graduation, grade promotion and school rankings -- and set the agenda for nearly all school-reform efforts -- in test-happy Texas.

At first, Hasty didn't consider his do-it-yourself math guide more than a family tutoring aid, but when a racquetball partner offered \$100 for a copy to help his son prepare for the TAAS, it didn't take him long to smell a market. Soon after, the Test Masters Company was born, and Hasty, a property tax consultant, was selling thousands of guides nationwide to worried parents, teachers and principals.

Test Masters has since diversified to the Internet, where parents as far away as South Africa pay \$25 and school districts pay \$1,000 a month to access practice exams and receive instant results. About 1,000 people take exams through the site every day. Today, Hasty considers his work a public service -- albeit a profitable one. "It's designed to help children pass the standards, but it's also designed to help children learn math," he says.

But not everyone considers his line of business so benign.

The runaway success of Test Masters has fired up the mammoth SAT coaching industry, already blamed for exacerbating inequality in college admissions and feeding test score hysteria. In the coming months, Kaplan and Princeton Review, the majors of test prep, will launch Web sites and publish printed guides aimed at children as young as kindergartners. They now see the K-12 test prep market as a rich vein of ore worth mining: Kaplan, for example, has funneled \$25 million into product development and marketing for its new Web site.

This big-money march on the lower grades has sparked wrath from critics who say that tests encourage schools to dumb down their curriculum to fit multiple-choice tests that don't measure real learning. They liken test-focused education to a plague of locusts that leaves in its

wake nervous kids, badgered teachers and a black hole where classroom innovation once existed.

Even worse, say opponents of test prep, the products of test coaching companies are accessible mainly to wealthy parents and schools. The massive expansion of companies like Kaplan and Princeton Review will come at the expense of the poorest schools, they say, which will suffer flak from politicians and lose public support when they can't raise test scores as fast as well-heeled counterparts. SAT coaching has already deepened the divide between haves and have-nots; with test prep in early grades, critics predict the gap may intensify sooner and doom lower-income students before they even leave elementary school.

"Schools will get the educational steroid that coaching makes possible," says Robert Schaeffer, public education director for the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (Fairtest), "but they won't necessarily get any better, and gaps between rich and poor communities may grow."

For now, that warning is lost in the din of voices demanding higher educational standards, which currently means a lot more tests -- and by extension, a lot more test prep. Under the Clinton administration, "high-stakes" testing has proliferated. Currently, every state except Iowa has grade-by-grade standards detailing what students must know in English, math, science and social studies. Poor scores on tests aligned to new standards increasingly result in students being retained at their grade level, sent to summer school or denied diplomas while principals are fired and teachers get poor evaluations.

Proponents have seized on Texas and North Carolina, two test-busy states that have raised state and national test scores in recent years, as evidence that standards and tests work. Yet Texas still has the fourth lowest high school completion rate, and both states, which started out low or average in national rankings to begin with, have enacted other reforms that could account for the gains, such as lowering class sizes and raising teacher salaries. Meanwhile, other test-intensive states haven't shown improvement.

The testing juggernaut, supported by campaigners George W. Bush and Al Gore, has flourished under the pretense of bipartisanship: After all, who can be against "higher standards"? Politicians prefer tests as a reform of choice since they are cheaper than, say, addressing the root causes of low achievement or increasing the capacity of low-achieving schools through investments in teacher recruitment and high-caliber instruction.

Along ideological lines, conservatives like the "back-to-basics" thrust of standards and tests, while liberals hope that setting uniform benchmarks will focus attention and resources on poor kids. It's not clear whether that is happening, but kids are definitely taking more tests. State investment in tests will grow from \$165 million in 1996 to a projected \$330 million in 2000, according to Achieve Inc., a partnership of CEOs and governors that leads the standards movement.

Having been shown the money, the SAT test prep industry is moving full throttle to develop products targeting children as young as third grade. This month, Kaplan launches eSCORE.com and will publish study guides for tests in the populous states of Massachusetts, Texas,

New York and Florida. Its rival, Princeton Review, this month launched Homeroom.com, which will soon become a full-service site after pilot testing is finished. And many more players will stake out ground online. "We've just seen the tip of what's going to be a huge iceberg," says Fairtest's Schaeffer.

To no one's surprise, the companies are targeting the insecurities of vulnerable parents and beleaguered educators. Homeroom.com says it can help ensure that "our children have every possible edge in achieving academic success." The Virginia-based edutest.com, which offers incentives for PTAs to sell its wares, warns on its Web site that "many state school systems are unable to meet these standards ... and risk losing accreditation."

Not surprisingly, testing foes are aghast. "These tests are squeezing the intellectual life out of schools, so it stands to reason that some vultures want to make a buck off them," says Alfie Kohn, a former teacher and author of the anti-testing tome "The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and Tougher Standards."

Schaeffer is more pragmatic; he says the companies are simply filling a niche inadvertently created by lawmakers. Indeed, idealistic advocates of standards didn't anticipate an industry would latch onto their reforms. "I certainly didn't hear about it at the little powwows I've sat at over the years," says Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust, a group seeking to improve education for poor children.

The lack of foresight doesn't surprise Schaeffer. "As so often happens," he says, "liberal reformers don't think about the likely consequences of their reforms nor heed the damage they have done." Many conservative backers of standards, he speculates, seek to make public schools look bad and build support for vouchers.

Kaplan and Princeton Review insist their K-12 offerings won't resemble their SAT ventures, which stress "strategic teaching" or "gaming" of tests through sleights of technique. "Why would you have a third grader try to game a test?" asks Photo Anagnostopolous, managing director of Homeroom.com. "You would really be doing a disservice to that child. And if you look at these tests, they're not like the SAT." Where the SAT features analogies and math puzzles, she explains, many K-12 tests gauge mastery of a distinct body of knowledge and skills.

But Schaeffer deems this assurance naive. He predicts K-12 test prep will include gaming tricks such as pacing, knowing which items appear regularly, strategic guessing and formulaic essay writing. "If they don't teach it, they'll be run out of business," he says. Indeed, soon-to-be published Kaplan test prep books for the third grade TAAS and New York's fourth grade exam advise students on all of those "tricks."

Yet Anagnostopolous' point addresses the debate on the merits of testing, which advocates promote as a legitimate learning tool. "Good tests are worth teaching to," says Robert Schwartz, Achieve's president and a Harvard University education professor. "This means tests that require writing and thinking that can't easily be prepared for."

Bad tests, he says, "drive instruction downward toward drill and kill." To many reformers, the TAAS is the most hellish test of all. "If this were all

about the TAAS, I would want to slit my throat and stick pencils in my eyes," says the Education Trust's Haycock, who nonetheless credits Texas for improving poorer schools. In fact, the tests Schwartz praises are rare, found only in a handful of states. Maryland's test, for example, has students explain in writing how they solved tough math problems and performed science experiments in a group. But most other states and big cities use bubble tests that Schwartz says he disdains.

Herein lies a major rub of the standards push: The Clinton administration and groups like Achieve claim to support better-quality tests and the use of measures like grades and teacher feedback in addition to test scores when making high-stakes decisions such as grade promotion and graduation. Then they laud reform efforts in Texas and cities like Chicago, which employ shoddy tests and rely on test scores alone in making crucial decisions, a tactic even test developers deem unfair.

Schwartz also worries that a successful test prep industry will "tilt the playing field even further." After all, how many low-income parents will have access to shiny new test prep sites on the Internet? Schwartz says he is heartened that Princeton Review, like Test Masters, will target parents and schools for Homeroom.com. "To the degree these companies try to come into the school market rather than the rich parent market, it's good," he says.

For now, the larger Kaplan is sticking to the rich parent market. It plans to draw millions of visitors to eSCORE.com next month with an extensive TV, radio and print advertising blitz.

To be sure, online test prep costs much less than tutoring at a "bricks and mortar" center, which averages \$400 a course. Homeroom.com will cost schools less than \$10 per student, and \$30 to \$60 for monthly parent subscriptions. eSCORE.com, on the other hand, will charge \$75 for online counseling and \$20 to \$50 for test "readiness appraisals." Edutest.com gives discounts to some strapped schools and has several clients in rural Virginia, says Steve Hoy, vice president for sales and marketing.

Equity watchdogs dismiss what they see as sporadic acts of charity and say that any costs create inequities. "Even if they target schools, poor schools don't have a lot of bucks," Schaeffer says. "When you're talking about schools that don't have enough money to buy paper, \$2,000 is unreal, but it's nothing to a suburban school."

Eventually, critics say, a pervasive K-12 test prep industry may challenge the standards movement by prompting parents to question whether the tests measure things worth learning and by highlighting the snares of high-stakes testing for all children, regardless of their income level.

"You're going to have kids throwing up on test day," says Gerald Bracey, an educational consultant and Virginia's former testing director. "You're going to have more kids turned off by schooling."

The question, then, is all about timing. How long will the side effects of our latest education fad fester before we establish a system that truly fosters high standards for all?

salon.com | Nov. 8, 1999

[Salon](#) | [Search](#) | [Archives](#) | [Site Guide](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Table Talk](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [Ad Info](#) | [Membership](#) | [Gift Guide](#)

[Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Books](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Comics](#) | [Health & Body](#)
[Media](#) | [Mothers Who Think](#) | [News](#) | [People](#) | [Technology](#) | [Travel](#)

Copyright © 1999 Salon.com All rights reserved.

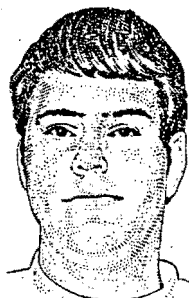
...s of Their Own Home-Schooled Pupils Are Making Colleges Sit Up and Take Notice

They're Among Top Scorers On the SAT, and They A/ Defy Certain Stereotypes The Twins' Academic Rivalry

By DANIEL GOLDEN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
ATLANTA — Jason Scoggins will never graduate from high school, have a class rank or be recommended by his guidance counselor. But Oglethorpe University wants him anyway.

Jason, who is 17 years old, was home-schooled by his mother. After he scored 1,570 out of a possible 1,600 on his SAT college-admissions test—with a perfect 800 in math—Oglethorpe invited him to compete with other top applicants for five scholarships valued at about \$100,000 apiece. Of the 94 prospects in the Jan. 22 contest, eight were home-schoolers, each with SATs above 1,300.



Jason Scoggins

The high scores are no fluke. As the movement grows larger and more diverse, evidence is mounting that home-schooling, once confined to the political and religious fringe, has achieved results not only on par with public education, but in some ways surpassing it. Though home-schooling may never be feasible for most families, the data offer little comfort to those who advocate a standardized curriculum as the best hope for improving American education. After all, each home-based pupil follows a unique lesson plan.

Jason's twin brother, Jeremy, also home-schooled, scored 1,480 on his SAT. "I was afraid we were the rogues of the education community," says Jeremy, who plans to attend the University of Georgia or the Georgia Institute of Technology. "It isn't that way anymore. People know that if we've been home-schooled, we'll do a little better than everyone else."

Though it is hard to track a movement that remains partly underground, advocates say that 1.5 million children nationwide are being taught at home; independent researchers put the figure closer to one million. The federal Education Department estimated the total in 1996 at 700,000 to 750,000; it expects to issue a revised count soon. In any case, home-schoolers far outnumber the 400,000 students attending charter schools, a more mainstream alternative. Total public and private-school enrollment in the U.S. is about 50 million.

The growth in home-schooling reflects not only religious or educational concerns, but also alarm over school violence. Soon after last spring's Columbine High School murders, one home-schooling magazine ran the headline: "Tragedy in Colorado: Isn't It Time Your Kids Were Safe at Home?" This past September, the start of the first new school year since the slayings, the number of registered home-schoolers in Colorado surged 10.1%.

The SAT and the ACT, the nation's other major college-entrance test, have begun asking exam takers whether they were home-schooled. The 3,257 ACT takers and 2,219 SAT takers who last year identified themselves as home-schoolers are fewer than might be expected if a million or more students are being educated at home. But researchers say such students often are reluctant to declare themselves for privacy reasons or for fear of discrimination. Moreover, many taught at home in lower grades later attend high school.

Nonetheless, self-identified home-schoolers have bettered the national averages on the ACT for the past three years running, scoring an average 22.7 last year, compared with 21 for their more traditional peers, on a scale of one to 36. Home-schoolers scored 23.4 in English, well above the 20.5 national average; and 24.4 in reading, compared with a mean of 21.4. The gap was closer in science (21.9 vs. 21.0), and home-schoolers scored below the national average in math, 20.4 to 20.7.

On the SAT, which began its tracking last year, home-schoolers scored an average 1,083 (verbal 548, math 535), 67 points above the national average of 1,016. Similarly, on the 10 SAT2 achievement tests most frequently taken by home-schoolers, they surpassed the national average on nine, including writing, physics and French.

Income and Achievement

With average family incomes of \$40,000 to \$50,000, lower than the \$50,000-to-\$60,000 median rung, the home-schoolers defied the demographic correlation between high incomes and high SAT scores. They also contradict the stereotype that they are strictly rural white fundamentalists. Nearly 4% are black. Another 4% are Hispanic. And their parents have more education than the national norm.

Maralee Mayberry, chairwoman of the sociology department at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas and author of a book on home-schooling, warns that the data only document the existence of a top tier of home-school whiz kids; there also may be an unstudied bottom layer of failures. Still, she says, research has shown that the key elements in effective education are small class size, individualized instruction, and a disciplined, nurturing environment—all characteristics of home-schooling.

Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, says the test data don't cast doubt on the value of teachers. "Why draw any grand conclusions?" she asks, since so few home-schoolers take the SAT and ACT. "I just say I'm happy for them. These are parents who are very highly motivated, teaching their kids at home and doing a very good job," she says. She adds, however, that public schools need to do more to challenge gifted students if they are to avoid losing some of them to home-schooling.

Once in college, home-schoolers appear to be living up to their test scores. Those enrolled at Boston University in the past four years have a 3.3 grade point average, out of a perfect four. Similarly, Georgia's Kennesaw State University found that its home-schooled students had higher-than-average GPAs as college freshmen.

At Kennesaw State, both the president and the vice president of the student government were educated at home. The president, John M. Fuchko III, whose mother began teaching him after he was labeled hyperactive in kindergarten, says home-schoolers will change college as much as college changes them. He predicts that they will pressure colleges to individualize instruction and stop insisting on survey courses as prerequisites for more advanced studies.

"In home-schooling, you don't have to sit for half a year studying something you already know," says the 22-year-old senior. "If you're prepared to go to the next level, you take it to the next level. Home-schooling breeds enterprising people."

That enterprise has impressed many secular colleges, and most have modified their admissions policies to accommodate home-schoolers. A recent survey by the National Center for Home Education, a Virginia-based advocacy group, found that 68% of colleges now accept parent-prepared transcripts or portfolios in place of an accredited diploma. That includes Stanford University, which last fall accepted 27% of home-schooled applicants—nearly double its overall acceptance rate.

Valuable Skills

"Home-schoolers bring certain skills—motivation, curiosity, the capacity to be responsible for their education—that high schools don't induce very well," says Jon Reider, Stanford's senior associate director of admissions.

Despite such inroads, religious colleges still draw a disproportionate number of home-schoolers. For example, at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., 309 students—more than 10% of the student body—were home-schooled for at least a year. Oral Roberts offers a \$2,000 scholarship for home-schoolers, while Nyack College, a Christian school in Nyack, N.Y., provides as much as \$12,000. And this fall, Christian home-schoolers are planning to open their own college in Purcellville, Va.

Skepticism about home-schoolers' credentials lingers, however. The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers warned members last December that the rise in home-schooling creates "significant potential for conflict" with applicants because colleges may need "supplementary materials" to gauge academic preparedness.

In 1997, North Carolina and New Mexico restricted public colleges from asking home-schooled applicants to submit more test scores than regular applicants. But

1/2

that same year, Georgia's board of regents tightened state-college admissions rules for home-schoolers, requiring them to pass eight SAT2 subject tests, which are entirely optional for other students; they also face hurdles in getting financial aid. Georgia's Hope scholarship program pays all tuition at state colleges for Georgia high-school graduates with B averages who don't get federal financial aid. But home-schoolers qualify only retroactively, if they earn a B average as college freshmen.

Exploiting a Niche

The disparity has angered home-schoolers—and helped created a niche for Oglethorpe, which hopes to boost full-time enrollment to 1,000 from 800 and its endowment to \$100 million from \$32 million. "When we started going after home-schoolers, I thought it would be a gold mine," says Admissions Director Barbara Henry. "The trouble is, other colleges started accepting them, too."

Mrs. Henry, who says she used to dismiss home-schoolers as "crackpots" before she got to know them, has positioned Oglethorpe as their home away from home. The school hosts home-school curriculum fairs on its faux-Oxford campus, lets home-schoolers use its athletic facilities, and encourages precocious 14- and 15-year-olds to enroll part time. To stay ahead in the recruitment race, it also has started including home-schoolers in its annual scholarship competition. Last year, for the first time, a home-schooler won one of the full scholarships.

Maggie Bryson, the winner, had become so bored in fifth grade that she refused to go back to school. Her mother, a nurse, shortened her own work hours and began home-schooling her daughter. When Maggie was 13, her mother sent her for physical education to Oglethorpe, where track coach Bob Unger had started a weekly track-and-field class for home-schoolers. Two years later, Maggie began taking academic courses there. With a 1,430 SAT score, including 800 on the verbal, she applied to eight colleges and was accepted at seven, including Oglethorpe.

Now a freshman, Ms. Bryson has an A-minus average and is teaching herself Arabic and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics in her spare time. But she still is adapting to classroom etiquette. "We home-schoolers tend to be very vocal and talk to the professor directly," she says. "It might bother other students a little bit."

Jason Scoggins is no intellectual wallflower, either. He was so infuriated at being ineligible for a "star student" honor given by a teachers' union—the award is based partly on class rank—he consulted a lawyer. He has written to Georgia state universities, criticizing extra testing requirements for home-schoolers. Both he and Jeremy, who have entered into a friendly test-taking rivalry, aced the SAT2 subject tests and have taken so many advanced-placement tests, which are scored on a one-to-five scale and confer college credits, that they could enter college as sophomores.

"I've taken eight advanced-placement exams and gotten fives on all of them," says Jason. "He's taken seven and gotten fives on four of them."

"He can't stand for me to score better than he does," Jeremy shrugs. "So far, I haven't."

Financial aid is likely to determine where the twins go to college, and whether they can afford to live on campus. Their father, Mickey Scoggins, who didn't attend college, supports his wife and five children—the twins, Joshua, 15; Jonathan, 9; and baby Joanna—with his job as a furni-

ture-store manager. But the Scogginses, who own a modest house on a three-acre wooded lot in Monroe, 35 miles east of Atlanta, say they don't have enough money for college tuitions.

The twins have been taught at home since fourth grade by their mother, Ellen Scoggins, who is also teaching Joshua and Jonathan. A devout Christian and former public-school teacher, with a master's degree in education, she believes that academics come first; neither twin may have a girlfriend before college.

Virtual-Reality Frogs

At first, Mrs. Scoggins used a curriculum from Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C., which sells texts and educational services for home-schoolers. Later, she experimented with other materials. The family spends \$3,000 a year on textbooks, computer programs and exam fees and makes extensive use of the local library. The twins use the Internet as well, dissecting virtual-reality frogs for biology. Their mother grades their schoolwork. Jason's grade-point average is 3.97, marred only by a B in Latin. Jeremy is a close second, at 3.91.

In his spare time, Jason participates in 4-H and Gavel Club, a public-speaking organization, or watches his favorite TV show, "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" To his regret, he is a year too young to be a contestant. But he can pursue another lucrative prize—the Oglethorpe scholarship.

In the lobby of the Oglethorpe performing-arts center, many of the contestants are fidgeting, aware that their comments in two seminars, and a writing assignment, will determine their financial aid. (Losers are guaranteed \$10,500 a year, or \$42,000.) But Jason seems serene. "It's almost like a nice philosophical debate with some friends," he says.

Once they split into groups for the first seminar, he is ready. His head cocked to one side, Jason listens as other students begin discussing a subject he has considered before: the travails of American education—and, specifically, the work of E.D. Hirsch Jr., a leading proponent of the idea that schools are failing because there is no national canon.

Jason has another view: Public schools will never excel because they lack "intellectual capital" and have to compensate for too many social problems. "They have drug-education programs that take away from the three R's," he says. "I haven't been in real schools very often. But when I've seen them, they're wild. The parents don't care enough. I know it's said that schools should be agents of socialization. But that's not their role. Their role is to impart knowledge."

The other students gape, astonished by the attack, and somewhat defensive. "My friends are all ghetto kids," says Joseph "Jo Jo" Brisendine from Rockdale County High School in Conyers, Ga. "They're smarter than you give them credit for."

The next day, an ice storm shuts down Oglethorpe's phones. But Dennis Matthews, dean of enrollment management, reaches the Scogginses on a cell phone with the news. Jason has tied for the top score and won a full scholarship. Less demonstrative than the TV millionaires, Jason quietly says, "Thank you." Then he gives his mother, who is coaxing the baby to take a nap, the thumbs-up sign.

2/2

Va. Teacher Sues School Over Banned Books List (Cont. from p. 1)

School officials are not commenting on the case, but Spotswood High School Principal C. James Slye wrote a letter to Newton saying that he objects to three of the 80 books listed on the banned books list:

- "The Joy of Gay Sex";
- "Understanding Sexual Identity: A Source for Gay Teens and Their Friends"; and
- "Women on Top: How Real Life Has Changed Women's Fantasies."

According to the *Post*, Slye told Newton that the book list posted on the classroom door "is considered an extension of an approved curriculum. A teacher's door is not a billboard or a vehicle for the promotion of the reading of such books."

There are a variety of cases that the courts can use to review this case, legal experts point out.

For example, in 1982, a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school boards may not remove books from the school library simply because they disapprove of them.

In a later ruling, the high court found that, where public displays are allowed, the government cannot prohibit certain materials due to content.

But generally federal courts defer to public schools to set policy on instruction.

Legal experts say a more relevant case might be the Supreme Court's 1988 ruling in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (108 S. Ct. 562), which gave school officials the authority to regulate the content of speech in school-sponsored activities—as long as their action is reasonably tied to an educational purpose (ED, June 3, 1999). —Esmeralda Barnes

SAT Accommodations Soar For Wealthy, White Males

The number of students receiving extra time to complete the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) because of a claimed disability has risen more than 50 percent over recent years, according to a new study.

In analyzing data supplied by the College Board—which administers the nearly ubiquitous college admissions test—*The Los Angeles Times* also found that wealthy, white males received special accommodations disproportionately.

For instance, males accounted for only 45 percent of the test-taking population, but 61 percent of the population that received special accommodations.

Similarly, whites made up 64 percent of the test-taking population and 84 percent of those receiving special accommodations.

And children from families with more than \$100,000 in annual income accounted for just 13 percent of the total test-takers but 27 percent of those receiving accommodations.

The disparity has led College Board officials to believe that wealthy students are claiming learning disabilities in order to seize any

potential advantage on the test—and by extension, increase their chances of admission to choice colleges.

The board has allowed special accommodations on the test since 1939.

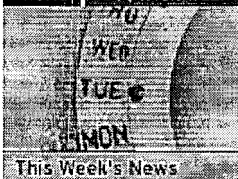
Students with physical disabilities can qualify for changes in format ranging from large-print tests to helpers who read questions and record answers.

Those diagnosed with learning disabilities, meanwhile, can take up to four times longer than normal—12 hours over two days—to complete the test.

In 1994, some 15,000 high school seniors took special versions of the SAT—which was itself more than double the total of students who did so in 1987 (ED, Sept. 2, 1994).

Last year, about 47,000 students who took the test received accommodations, the *Times* reported. —Michael Cardman

Editor's note: Education Daily did not publish Monday, Jan. 17.

[Jobs](#) [Web Connection](#)
[Book Shelf](#) [Subscribe](#)
[Order Special Reports](#)**You can take it with you.****EDUCATION WEEK** on the WEB[HOME](#) [EDUCATION WEEK](#) [IN CONTEXT](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [TEACHER MAGAZINE](#) [THE DAILY NEWS](#) [SPECIAL REPORTS](#) [PRODUCTS & SERVICES](#)**Commentary**

January 19, 2000

Higher Standards, Stronger Tests: Don't Shoot the Messenger

By Robert Schwartz and Matthew Gandal

In the education reform debates of the previous two decades, equity and excellence were too often viewed as competing, perhaps even mutually exclusive, policy goals. Since the mid-'90s, however, the movement to raise academic standards has emerged as a promising vehicle to accomplish both goals. One reason the standards movement has to date enjoyed broad public support is its implicit claim that we do not have to choose between equity and excellence, that our schools can significantly improve the achievement of those whom they have served least well historically while at the same time raising the bar for all. As new assessments and accountability policies have begun to be implemented in several states, the tension between these twin goals of the standards movement have come to the surface, causing some to question the political stability and staying power of this movement.

The tension between equity and excellence has caused some to question the political stability and staying power of the standards movement.

In Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia, to name three recent examples, initial high failure rates on rigorous new state assessments, especially in districts and schools serving large concentrations of poor and minority students, have triggered attacks on the standards and tests themselves, and called for deferral or elimination of consequences based on the tests. In response, policymakers in these states have proposed lowering the passing bar, at least in the first year or two in which tests will count. These actions have in turn precipitated a counterreaction from those who fear that such a move signals a retreat from high standards and will sound the death knell for the movement.

Is there a way to resolve such tensions? Are equity and excellence in fact irreconcilable goals? Can this movement maintain its broad public support as educators and students face much greater accountability for performance? It was in the context of such questions that the third National Education Summit took place last fall in Palisades, N.Y.

The governors, corporate chief executives, and education leaders who assembled began by reasserting their conviction that improving the performance of our schools was the single most important

long-term challenge facing the nation, and that the standards movement represents our best hope for meeting the challenge. What was especially heartening was that there was no bashing of schools or teachers, and no naive assertions that higher standards and tougher tests could by themselves produce significant gains in student learning. The focus of the discussion, and of the action statement adopted by the participants, revolved principally around three questions:

- What will it take to recruit, prepare, support, and retain a quality teaching force capable of teaching to much higher student-learning standards?
- What will it take to ensure that all students, especially those in predominantly low-income and minority schools, will be given the extra help and support they need to meet higher standards?
- How can states best structure their accountability systems to combine incentives for performance with interventions and consequences for failure?

Throughout the summit, participants took the opportunity to describe in some detail the strategies they were pursuing in their states to strengthen the quality of teachers and teaching, and to provide enriched and extended learning opportunities for students who were furthest behind. While the tone of the discussions was generally upbeat, there was a widespread understanding that we are in a race with time, and that it will take a significantly stepped-up commitment from leaders in all sectors if the twin goals of equity and excellence are to be realized.

The Summit Action Statement outlined a set of policy steps state leadership teams will pursue to address the key challenges, as well as a set of sector-specific commitments that governors, corporate executives, and education leaders made to support these policy objectives.

Standards-setting and test development ultimately rest upon human judgment and will therefore never be perfect.

To address teacher quality, the statement considers the arc of a teaching career. It challenges universities to create stronger teacher-preparation programs that provide educators with the content knowledge and skills needed to help students meet higher academic standards. It encourages states to create alternative pathways into the teaching profession to attract the most talented candidates. It makes professional development for teachers already in the classroom a top priority, emphasizing the importance of tying such programs directly to standards.

To that end, education leaders committed themselves to developing salary agreements that give credit only for professional development that is standards-based. Moreover, the statement supports the development of different roles and responsibilities within the teaching profession, and differential pay based on skills and performance. Business leaders have committed to work with 10

states to help them create pay-for-performance incentive plans that build upon lessons learned from such programs in the private sector.

The action statement balances the need for states to provide sufficient help and support for both teachers and students with the need to establish a firm timetable for holding them accountable for achievement. The challenge is to move forward aggressively on both fronts. The statement calls for states to provide increased flexibility and support for principals and teachers as they put in place consequences for results. More importantly, it commits state leaders to work together to ensure that every school has in place a rigorous curriculum and professional-development program aligned with state standards and tests, and it commits states to provide extra help and learning time for students before holding them back or denying them diplomas. (The full text of the Summit Action Statement, which also includes specific recommendations for improving standards, assessments, and accountability systems, is available on Achieve Inc.'s Web site, www.achieve.org.)

The first test of these commitments will come in the quality of the responses states prepare to the action statement, for each state represented at the summit agreed to provide a detailed implementation plan, with targets and time lines, by April 1.

But their pledge to address aggressively the major implementation challenges while holding fast to the principle of accountability represents a strategy for avoiding the false choice between equity and excellence. The summit did not gloss over the fact that, in too many states, there are very real problems with the rigor, depth, and scope of student standards and the alignment of state tests with standards. Our organization, Achieve, was created three years ago to help states strengthen the quality of their standards and tests by benchmarking them against those of other states and nations, and this strategy was endorsed by the summit participants.

The critics who come out of the woodwork when passing rates on tests are low or allegations of cheating rise would rather blame the messenger than take on the shortcomings that standards and assessments expose. Doing away with the tests or the consequences is the easy way out—it allows us to avoid the hard work of improving instruction and restructuring the use of time and resources so that all students are given the time and support needed to meet standards.

Standards-setting and test development ultimately rest upon human judgment and will therefore never be perfect. States can and must seek to continually improve their expectations for students and schools and sharpen their measuring systems to ensure that school reform efforts are aimed in the right direction. While rigorous tests should be the backbone of state accountability systems, common sense suggests that states should not rely solely on the results of one-shot assessments, but should also take into account other measures of student and school performance.

The public still firmly supports efforts to raise education standards, and education remains the top national priority. But patience may be running thin. The concern of all who care about improving

America's schools, and about sustaining support for the public education enterprise itself, should be on ensuring that all of our students have access to well-prepared teachers, challenging curricula, and extra time and help if they need it, not on debating the strengths and shortcomings of tests.

We know from results from the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress that states that have used higher standards to drive a comprehensive reform agenda—states like Connecticut, Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Texas—have seen the greatest achievement gains over the decade. (*"States Committed to Standards Reforms Reap NAEP Gains,"* March 10, 1999.) We also know from the well-documented reforms in New York City's Community District 2 that dramatic gains in student achievement are possible in urban districts that establish rigorous academic expectations and concentrate resources on professional development and instructional improvement. If we focus on those strategies that have the greatest likelihood of improving teaching and learning for all students, as the summit participants urged, and hold firm on high standards and accountability, the results will take care of themselves.

Robert Schwartz and Matthew Gandal are, respectively, the president and the director of standards and assessment at Achieve Inc. in Cambridge, Mass. Achieve was the principal sponsor of the 1999 National Education Summit.

[about this site](#) | [subscribe](#) | [order special reports](#) | [jobs](#) | [web connection](#) | [bookshelf](#) | [feedback](#) | [advertising](#)

© 2000 Editorial Projects in Education
40-41

Vol. 19, number 19, page 60,

[\[Previous Doc\]](#) [\[Next Doc\]](#)

News

▼ GO

Site Index

▼ GO

latimes.com

NATION & WORLD

HELP?

Sunday, October 3, 1999

Department a Haven for Clinton Loyalists

Patronage: Despite its growing importance, Education has highest ratio of political appointees among agencies.

By JUDY PASTERNAK, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON--When Carol Moseley-Braun lost her U.S. Senate seat last fall, she didn't worry long about her next paycheck.

Just before her term expired, the Illinois Democrat signed on as a consultant to the Department of Education at \$453.84 per day.

Her contract called for her to provide expertise on "school construction issues," although the agency has no money to build classrooms.

When Carol H. Rasco wanted out of her influential post as White House domestic policy chief, she also found a lucrative berth at Education. Rasco, who is paid \$125,900 annually, runs a skeletal reading program that Congress has refused to fund. Moseley-Braun and Rasco have plenty of well-connected company: The Clinton administration, which has made improving schools a top priority, is using the government's lead education agency to provide employment for assorted Democratic loyalists.

Although the hiring of political appointees and consultants outside normal Civil Service channels is nothing new in Washington, the patronage system is more pervasive at Education than at any other federal agency.

The smallest Cabinet department, with 4,800 employees, Education has 167 appointees--one to every 29 workers, according to the Office of Personnel Management. The average ratio for Cabinet departments is one to 807.

Previous administrations have considered the Education Department, then an obscure agency that came under little scrutiny, an ideal holding spot for political appointees. The Clinton administration wanted to change all that and, in fact, managed to limit the numbers of appointees during its first term. But since Clinton's reelection in 1996, it has resumed the tradition of packing the department with loyal supporters, campaign workers and their relatives.

At the same time, Education has grown in importance. The department's mission of improving America's schools has moved to the top of the national agenda. Clinton frequently calls it a pressing domestic priority, and polls show that voters agree.

Just four years after congressional Republicans tried to kill the department, lawmakers now are committing more money to Education than ever before, increasing its discretionary funding

ADVERTISEMENT

since 1996 by 46%, from \$23 billion to \$33.5 billion. And, for the first time since the agency's inception in 1979, front-runners for both the Democratic and GOP presidential nominations are promising to expand it.

The Education Department is charged with addressing particular needs and problems in the nation's schools, such as improving student performance, curbing violence and ensuring equal opportunities for poor, disadvantaged students. Local school districts, which receive federal grants, administer the programs.

Education Secretary Richard W. Riley says that the department's new place on center stage is precisely why so many appointees are needed. To launch new initiatives, he said, his hires have "to forge political connections" with governors and school superintendents.

"I'm very pleased with the people we have attracted here," Riley said.

Report Finds Flaws in Patronage System

But, in the past, a high level of political patronage at the agency has not corresponded with effectiveness. In the 1980s and '90s, the department was criticized repeatedly by the General Accounting Office for management problems and lackluster results.

A work force too dependent on appointees can hamper performance because the appointees seldom stay for even one full presidential term, experts say. At Education, it is also common for them to be diverted--for as much as a year at a time--for White House projects unrelated to improving schools. These include the president's commission on race and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's historic-preservation effort. The agency's political ranks are a curious mix: a former Stanford University education dean, a onetime suburban New York school superintendent, the president's goddaughter, the Transportation secretary's sister-in-law and myriad Clinton-Gore campaign veterans. The children of a former Democratic governor, a former Democratic senator and a former Clinton Housing secretary have passed through the department's payroll.

In addition, two men are working at Education despite having been scarred by professional scandal elsewhere. One appointee previously was named in connection with a cover-up of Treasury bond fraud. Another pleaded guilty to theft and possession of forged checks during a campaign.

"Here is a department that is promoting standards and excellence [for schools] but appears to have less of a commitment to high standards for itself," said Paul C. Light, director of the Brookings Center for Public Service and an expert on the federal government.

White House spokesman Barry Toiv said the Clinton administration turned a neglected department into an instrument for helping states and communities improve education. "While Republicans have tried to weaken and even kill the department, the president has improved it with strong leadership and adequate resources so that it can carry out his ambitious agenda for improving our schools and expanding access to higher education," Toiv said.

In 1993, the incoming Clinton administration was cautioned in a GAO report that the tradition of so many appointees at Education created "management challenges."

Increases Began in Reagan Years

Education has accommodated progressively larger numbers of appointees since President Carter created the agency.

According to reports published by Congress, about 75 appointees served under Jimmy Carter in 1980 and about 166 under George Bush in 1992.

The increase began when Ronald Reagan's administration, which wanted to abolish the agency, used Education as a place to stash campaign supporters and appointees who had fallen out of favor at other departments.

Midway through Clinton's first term, Education's inspector general began warning that the department lacked employees with critical computer and financial skills and that it needed people with expertise to oversee outside contractors.

This shortage has continued while increasing numbers of appointees have been added, said Dianne van Riper, who retired in January as the department's assistant inspector general for investigations.

"When you decide to spend a dollar on hiring one kind of employee and not on another, you're making a decision," Van Riper said.

In addition to its growing roster of political appointees, Education has 63 advisory board members--by far the most in the Cabinet, and retains 38 consultants, the second-highest proportion.

One of the consultants, Moseley-Braun, was "concerned, as anyone would be," when she faced the loss of her Senate salary of \$136,673 after election defeat last November, said a former aide, Steven Collens.

She told her Senate staff that she had been promised nomination as ambassador to New Zealand, a process that she knew could take months. She went to Riley.

The secretary offered her a contract to "develop outreach plans and initiatives to convey information on the need for school reconstruction to communities, officials of state and local government, parents, business leaders and school administrators."

Before entering politics--where she became one of Clinton's most dependable votes in the Senate--Moseley-Braun had been an assistant U.S. attorney in Chicago. Her Senate defeat, after one term, followed questions about her personal and campaign finances and her meeting with a discredited Nigerian dictator. Despite Moseley-Braun's lack of education experience, Riley called her "a very logical choice." As a senator, she promoted federal financing for school buildings. Twice, she led efforts to fund school construction, but Congress rejected the idea on grounds that it was a local and state responsibility.

Moseley-Braun's contract called for intermittent employment, allowing her time to pursue other opportunities, such as speechmaking. From mid-January through mid-July, she received \$23,145.84 from the department.

Rasco informed Clinton in 1995 that she wanted out of the hectic environment at the White House. The solution: a job at

Education.

A former middle school counselor and longtime Clinton aide from Arkansas, Rasco had been a controversial choice among the president's advisors as policy chief. Education provided her a similar six-figure salary and a position directing America Reads, a program she helped design while at the White House. But without funding from Congress, Rasco was left to give speeches around the country urging parents to read to their children and calling on colleges to get work-study students to tutor at local schools, even though no money was available to train tutors.

Perhaps the ultimate political plum at Education is held by former Philadelphia Mayor W. Wilson Goode: a \$105,269-a-year post coordinating regional representatives whose public relations jobs are heavy on ceremony and light on substance. Goode served as the mayor of Philadelphia from 1984 to 1992 and as a Clinton fund-raiser in the '92 campaign. "It is somewhat puzzling," said John Puckett, a University of Pennsylvania education professor who monitors Philadelphia schools. "I honestly don't know what qualifications Wilson Goode would bring."

As mayor, Goode had no direct oversight over schools. His authority was limited to appointing some school board members from a pool of nominees. In an interview, Goode said that he has nurtured "a passion for education for 35 years. My wife and I were active in our children's public schools." He also began teaching a political science course at Eastern University before joining Education in 1993.

Goode serves as Riley's Philadelphia representative and also oversees the work of his counterparts and their assistants in nine other regions. The primary responsibility of these officials is to represent Riley at local school events and meetings.

Among the 16 appointees, whose combined salaries exceed \$1.3 million a year, are many Democratic activists: two former teachers' union officials, the wife of a Texas state senator, a former mayor of Berkeley, a longtime friend of Riley's who worked at IBM, a former Senate staff member for Vice President Al Gore and a onetime Vermont House speaker who campaigned for Clinton there.

When George Bush was president, department officials contemplated eliminating the regional representatives. But a former Bush appointee said no one could summon the political will to do it.

Unlike regular government employees, appointees are not required to take Civil Service exams or compete for posted vacancies.

The Clinton administration has had its share of problem appointees. Among them: transferred White House aide Linda R. Tripp and presidential paramour Monica S. Lewinsky, who both got political jobs in the Pentagon's public affairs office. Another: John Huang, who was awarded a political job at Commerce in 1994 through the influence of loyal Clinton donors. Two years later, Huang emerged as a central figure in the campaign-finance scandal.

The Huang saga led Secretary Bill Daley to vow to slash political positions when he took over at Commerce in 1997.

"There is a place for politics in public life, but there is no place

for politics in any of the decisions that are made at the Commerce Department," Daley said at his confirmation hearing.

Appointee ranks at Commerce are down one-third, from 197 in 1996 to 131 this year.

By contrast, the number of political appointees at Education has grown by 19% since 1996, from 140 to 167.

Education is regarded as an executive-branch parking place for friends and campaign workers, particularly those who lack training for other administration posts, said Derrick Max, a former congressional staff member who dealt with education policy before joining the libertarian Cato Institute in 1998.

"You need to be a lawyer to work at Justice," Max said. "You need to know something about health to work at HHS. But everybody went to school."

The biggest growth at Education in Clinton's second term has come in the categories of "special assistant" and "confidential assistant," with salaries averaging \$74,000 a year. The department added 30 such slots--a 28% increase since 1996.

While many of these employees are bright and well educated, it didn't hurt that they also had well-placed friends or relatives.

Sarah Staley, the president's goddaughter, is paid \$58,027 as a special assistant in public affairs. After she'd worked briefly as a reporter, anchor and sales associate at television stations in Greenville, Miss., and Sulphur, Okla., Staley and her mother proposed the idea for "Bill Clinton: Rock & Roll President," a 1997 documentary on VH-1 television about Clinton's musical tastes. Angela J. Wilkins, sister-in-law of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater and daughter of an Arkansas state lawmaker, is paid \$68,570 to prepare briefings for Goode. She previously managed her mother's legislative office, sold real estate and volunteered in the 1992 Clinton campaign. In 1990, her resume says, she spent three weeks teaching night school classes in English, math and office machines.

Judith H. Wurtzel makes \$49.32 an hour as an Education consultant developing a math tutoring program. She is a 1983 graduate of Yale University and a 1988 graduate of New York University Law School. Her father is Alan L. Wurtzel, vice chairman of Circuit City electronics stores, who along with his wife has donated \$171,600 to Democratic causes since Clinton first ran for president.

The two men working at Education who have been linked to professional scandals elsewhere are Donald M. Feuerstein and Sterling Henry Jr.

Feuerstein, 62, joined Education as a special assistant in 1993, two years after being forced to resign as chief legal officer of Salomon Brothers after the firm covered up false bids submitted at Treasury bond auctions. Feuerstein was not individually sanctioned, but was cited by name in a Securities and Exchange Commission report as one of four senior executives who failed to act after learning about the fraud.

The report led Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), now minority leader, to return a 1990 Feuerstein campaign contribution of \$1,000. But Feuerstein's role in the scandal "was never an issue" for the Education Department because he did not face criminal or civil charges, said Education spokeswoman Julie Green.

Feuerstein's connections at Harvard University--where he earned his law degree and raised money for the education school--helped him get his federal job. Feuerstein has since returned the favor. The government pays him a \$91,410 salary, which he said he donates to his alma mater.

He is assigned to research student loan processes and construction tax credits. Apparently, Feuerstein said, he qualified by virtue of his Wall Street work, even though he served as a lawyer, not a banker. "In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, so I'm the finance guy," he said.

Henry became a special assistant in the Historically Black Colleges section after running the Clinton-Gore campaign office in the District of Columbia in 1992. He took a vacation in 1995 to help bring out black voters for a Democratic gubernatorial candidate in Kentucky, where he was indicted for cashing checks made out to campaign workers. Though the amount involved was only \$175, his guilty plea last year on theft and forgery charges brought him two years' probation and a court-ordered ban from Kentucky politics.

Henry, 40, receives \$67,697 a year from Education to develop federal goals for helping black colleges. The department decided that no action against him was warranted, Green said, "due to the nature of the charges and his job performance here." Henry declined comment.

Other appointees at Education have been assigned to duties unrelated to education reform.

In 1997, General Counsel Judith Winston transferred out for a year to direct the president's race initiative, taking with her four special assistants on loan.

"It's not like she was going off on something that had nothing to do with education," Riley said. When asked the connection, he added: "It was a major thrust of the president, and we support the president."

Riley's scheduler, Regan Burke, organized a 1996 White House ceremony to celebrate Clinton's reelection effort while on the Education Department's time and dime, Green said. Burke, whose salary is \$99,474, continues to supervise various White House events.

Stephanie Jones, Riley's Chicago regional representative, is taking a year's leave from her \$93,198-a-year post to organize Mrs. Clinton's Millennium Tour. She is not being replaced.

Even junior staffers are drafted from all sections of the department--while remaining on Education's payroll--for tasks that range from handling requests for the president's appearances to arranging the first lady's travels.

For example, Education special assistants served as support staff for Mrs. Clinton during a Los Angeles synagogue stop, a mosque visit in Egypt and a dinner given by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce on Michigan's Mackinac Island, an annual event for politicians and prospective campaign donors.

Diane Rossi, Education's White House liaison, explained the rationale: "When people go on assignment for the president, the vice president and the first lady, well, they're all very focused on education too."

* * *

Times researchers John Beckham and Robin Cochran contributed to this article.

* * *

Appointees by the Numbers

The U.S. Department of Education, with the fewest employees of any Cabinet agency, has the highest ratio of political appointees to government workers. Overall, Education ranks fourth in the total number of political staffers.

* * *

Ranked by most appointees per number of employees

* * *

Note: Ratios exclude advisory board members

*Excludes ambassadors

* * *

Source: Central Personnel Data File, Office of Personnel Management, March 31, 1999

Copyright 1999 Los Angeles Times. All Rights Reserved

Search the archives of the Los Angeles Times for similar stories about: BILL CLINTON, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (U.S.), POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS, UNITED STATES -- POLITICS. You will not be charged to look for stories, only to retrieve one.



[\[Previous Doc\]](#) [\[Next Doc\]](#)

Homepage • News • Money • Life • Sports • Weather • Marketplace

Point
com
Shop. Buy. Accessorize.

AAA Top Car \$15,000 to 20,000*
as rated in the American Automobile Association's 1999 Autograph® book.



CLICK HERE

SHOP AT
MARKETPLACE

USA
TODAY Life

Freeshop.com
It's a FREE world after all.

bigE.com
Free domestic shipping on everything in the store.

Auction Universe
Name your price on antiques and collectibles.

08/30/99 - Updated 12:09 AM ET

Teacher shortage just doesn't add up

By Gregg Zoroya and Kristen Hartzell, USA TODAY

This is a strange time in America's education of its children. As schools reopen across the country, administrators from central Florida to Seattle are scrambling feverishly to find teachers.

Last year, a physical education teacher who couldn't spell "strenuous" on the blackboard (he wrote "strenous") taught English in rural Georgia. About 2,600 students in New Orleans wasted a year on algebra, earning no credit because teachers were not credentialed for the class. In Orlando, special-ed students are taught by people with no training in the field because there's no one else to do the job.

Yet experts say there are plenty of teachers coming out of universities across the country. Not since the altruistic '60s and early '70s have freshmen - one in 10 - shown such interest in education, they say. The number of graduates prepared to be teachers this year (190,000) nearly reaches the all-time peak of 1972. Teach for America, a nonprofit organization that funnels seniors into two-year teaching commitments at urban and rural schools lacking resources, has seen applications rise 36% in four years.

"What we sense among students is a desire, right out of college, to assume a very significant responsibility that really does make an impact on the world," says Wendy Kopp, the organization's president and founder.

The problem, experts say, is that the nation does a better job of placing cornflakes on grocery shelves across the country than of making sure each classroom has a qualified instructor. "We have a huge distribution problem," says Linda Darling-Hammond, professor of education at Stanford University. "Do we have enough people being produced to fill the need? The answer is yes."

A surplus of teachers generally in the Northwest, Rocky Mountains and Northeast fails to stem shortages in the South and West for several reasons. A checkerboard of licensing requirements discourages interstate moves, as does something as simple as the

Search the web



POWERED BY LYCOS

Inside Life

Books

Lifeline

People

Television

Movies

Music

Careers

Travel

Hot sites

Web Traveler

Health

Science

Crossword

Snapshots

Search

Newspaper

Archives

Our site

Yellow Pages

SAVE \$10 Today
Click Here!
BARNES & NOBLE

Resources[Index](#)[Search](#)[Feedback](#)[What's hot](#)[About us](#)[Jobs at USA](#)[TODAY](#)**Free premiums****USA TODAY****Update****Software**

threat of losing accrued pension benefits and salary credits.

Still, the Clinton administration warns that with the offspring of baby boomers rapidly filling schools and a generation of teachers nearing retirement - and states, led by a Clinton initiative, reducing classroom sizes - 2.2 million more teachers will be needed by 2008.

The result is that schools are in a panic, grasping at market-driven incentives: signing bonuses, stipends, temporarily rent-free housing, jobs convenient to home, mentors to ease the transition and - at hard-pressed Baltimore schools - gradually forgivable \$5,000 loans for housing down payments (plus a low-cost \$1,200 loan for relocation expenses).

And still they can't find enough teachers, particularly in math, science, bilingual education and special education.

For at least three years in California, about every third teacher hired was brought aboard under an emergency permit, a provisional license that enables people who possess college degrees, but no teaching credentials, to work.

"We wouldn't allow a brain surgeon to learn on the job," says Day Higuchi, president of United Teachers Los Angeles, a 41,000-member teachers union. "Why is it OK to let someone who doesn't know what they're doing teach our kids?"

Baltimore, which offered new teachers four weeks of paid training (\$2,500 in added income), still needs more than 100 teachers, and school starts Monday, says Albrie Love Jr., director of recruitment for the city's public schools.

Texas has 10,000 vacancies. "The stopgap is hire substitutes, pay them a daily rate and hope they will be available for work tomorrow," says Annette Cootes of the Texas State Teachers Association.

Seattle's superintendent, Joseph Olchefske, is bracing for a "very substantial people crisis" in the next five years as half the system's 3,000 teachers retire.

Philadelphia schools are offering a \$4,500 signing bonus, payable over three years, to encourage teachers to stick around. But as opening day approaches Sept. 7, they still need to fill 250 to 300 slots. That doesn't count a possible repeat of the horror story of 1998, when more than two dozen new teachers didn't show up for work, says Herb Kaufman, employment director for the School District of Philadelphia.

The city has a hard time competing with the more affluent suburban districts, which pay \$8,000 to \$10,000 more per year for a good teacher, Kaufman says. Candidates will accept a job in Philadelphia but wait for word from the suburbs.

"You can't plan for that," he says.

Denise Martinez has grappled with Orlando County's schools over the education of her 10-year-old daughter, Alexandria, who has a minor

learning disability. In her inclusion program, students with learning disabilities are mainstreamed. Two hours a day, a special-education teacher arrives to give those with learning disabilities assistance.

But a hiring crunch left open 35 slots for special-ed teachers. There was no help for Alexandria when school started Aug. 9.

"My daughter was already getting behind two weeks into school," Martinez says.

A week ago, Alexandria was returned to a full-time class for the learning disabled while the search for special-ed teachers continues.

In Jefferson Parish, which straddles the Mississippi River alongside New Orleans, classes started Aug. 16. Special education is in a crisis. Even after the school system filled dozens of special-ed teaching jobs with staffers teaching outside their fields or still pursuing a credential, about 30 vacancies remain. More than half are being filled by substitutes with only a high school diploma, earning just above minimum wage.

"Special-education teachers are just not out there to find," says Ronald Ceruti, director of personnel.

A shortage of certified math teachers in New Orleans triggered a donnybrook after 2,600 eighth-graders, taught by improperly certified teachers, earned no algebra credit.

"There was quite a stink raised," says Yvonne Mitchell-Grubb, a local parent-teacher organization president. Hundreds of students must take the course again this year.

To make ends meet, states are allowing retired teachers to return without losing pensions. School districts in Massachusetts, Texas, Florida, Virginia and Maryland are shopping in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Spain or South America for bilingual teachers. More emphasis is being placed on teaching as a second career.

People like Suzanne King, 37, a former financial consultant who just obtained a master's in education, are a hot commodity. Six high schools in the Washington, D.C., area came after her.

"It's like a feeding frenzy," she says.

She took a job teaching math at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High in Maryland. When school construction is completed, she'll work a bicycle ride from home.

Critics such as John Merrow - a former teacher and executive producer of *The Merrow Report*, a public TV program that examines schools - say the American system for creating teachers needs an overhaul. Simply pumping billions of federal dollars into hiring teachers won't solve the problem, he says.

"A fair amount of what the Clinton administration is proposing is akin to rewarding the polluters and asking them to clean up the river," says Merrow, whose cameras caught the rural Georgia coach teaching

English with misspellings (the piece airs Sept. 10).

He argues that some school bureaucracies are so calcified that they fumble with applications from credentialed candidates, citing schools in Oakland, Calif., as an example. Educators are too quick to rely on stopgap measures, such as teachers instructing outside their fields, Merrow says. Universities don't use all their education tuition for teacher training. "They take the money and spend half of it on nurses and engineers and doctors."

While a debate rages over whether the shortage is largely illusory, nearly all agree that fundamental changes - such as making benefits portable, certification more uniform and federal assistance available with incentives in crucial shortage fields - would ease the flow of teaching talent from geographical areas of surplus to areas of need.

"Yes, there is" a teacher shortage, says Elizabeth Fideler, whose Recruiting New Teachers Inc. helps schools hire talent. "But you have to break that down and say where it manifests itself: in different places and different placement fields. There is never a shortage of warm bodies."

Contributing: Guillermo X. Garcia, John Larrabee, Anthony DeBarros, Stephaan Harris and Cindy Hall

- [Cover story index](#)

-
- [Go to Life front page](#)
 - [Go to USA TODAY front page](#)
-



online

Click

[Front page](#), [News](#), [Sports](#), [Money](#), [Life](#), [Weather](#), [Marketplace](#)

© Copyright 1999 [USA TODAY](#), a division of Gannett Co. Inc.

A Quiet Roar

*But Chinese Members of a Sect Never Saw
Themselves as Being Enemies of the State*

A1

By ERIK ECKHOLM

BEIJING, Nov. 3 — Has it come to this: that the Chinese Communist Party is terrified of retirees in tennis shoes who follow a spiritual master in Queens?

News So it almost seemed
Analysis here during recent days
 of bizarre scenes of ar-
 rests and flying invective
 against the Falun
 Gong movement.

As security forces worked frantically to round up believers who converged on Beijing to plead Falun Gong's case, the government left no doubt that it intends to wipe out all organized traces of the movement — even if that requires jailing thousands of people who never saw themselves as enemies of the state.

Behind closed doors in recent weeks many Chinese, from professors to cab drivers, have said the government has overreacted. Many say its blunt repression of a spiritual movement that attracted hordes of ordinary people seeking health and happiness will cause lasting social divisions and further erode faith in the party.

But many experts on Chinese politics say China's Communist leaders probably saw little choice.

Their first principle is preserving the rule of the party, which they equate with protecting social stability. And they have consistently tried to stamp out any competing loyalties. "Logically, they had to do this," said Suesheng Zhao, a Chinese-born political scientist at Colby College in Maine who is a visiting fellow at Stanford. "For the Communist Party, the greatest threat is a nationally organized force."

Since its founding in 1992, Falun Gong, a mix of cosmic healing theories, Buddhism and Taoism that promises salvation in a corrupt world, had gained millions of followers — retirees, middle-aged women and even many officials and students, who gathered regularly in public parks to practice their mystical exercises.

"For the party this was a big problem," said Roderick MacFarquhar, a professor of Chinese politics and history at Harvard University. "The party cannot allow the existence of a rival mass organization with control over the hearts and souls of the ordinary people — and exposing their own ideological vacuum."

Although the group was outlawed on July 22, unknown thousands of its core believers have refused to fade away, creating an unexpected crisis and forcing the government to mobilize all its media and social organizations, even bosses in many work places, to engage in ritual condemnations.

In the months since the ban, offi-

cial vilification of the group and its elusive founder, Li Hongzhi, who moved to New York in 1998, has grown ever more shrill — a sign that the eradication campaign has not gone smoothly.

On Saturday senior Communist legislators described Falun Gong as "unprecedented in the 50-year history of the People's Republic in terms of its size of organization, influence, number of illegal publications as well as the damages it brought to society," the New China News Agency reported.

These were strong words for a group that had received little high-level attention before it held an unauthorized vigil in Beijing on April 25, when some 10,000 members from several provinces quietly gathered around the leadership compound to protest published critiques of their movement and to demand official recognition.

By its very existence, this gathering was the most serious challenge to Communist Party authority since the student-led demonstrations of 1989.

When they outlawed Falun Gong, the authorities charged that Mr. Li and a small cabal of leaders had a secret agenda to subvert the nation, though no evidence was offered.

Mr. Li, who keeps in touch with an expanding global following through the Internet, insists he has no political aims. He has never advocated the overthrow of Communist rule, or even a more liberal policy on religion. And his believers insist they just want to be left alone to focus on their inner "cultivation."

But the believers have also been quick to mobilize, in hundreds of smaller protests before and since the giant demonstration in April in Beijing. In China such defiance of authority is inevitably considered deeply political.

Although it has retreated from many spheres of personal and social life, the Communist Party still demands the stated allegiance of every organization. But the more fervent followers of Falun Gong seem to be giving their supreme loyalty to Mr. Li and what they consider his life-transforming theories.

The government brought a variety of criminal charges against Mr. Li and arrested a number of top organizers. Thousands more who persisted in proclaiming their faith have since been detained or harassed in cities all around the country.

In Beijing over the last 10 days, more than 3,000 protesters were rounded, officials said. Many were bused back to the authorities in their hometowns for "re-education," which may mean loss of jobs or time in labor camps.

But the police seem unable to mop up a core of believers, in Beijing and elsewhere, who say they are prepared to risk everything for their faith and have made smart use of e-mail, mobile phones and pagers to communicate with each other and

The New York Times

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1999

1/2

Milken. Among its companies are Leapfrog Toys, a maker of reading and language products; Knowledge Learning, a day-care chain; Teacher Universe, which supports the use of technology in the classroom; MindQ Publishing, which develops multimedia learning systems; and Productivity Point International, which offers technology training for corporations.

"Ten years ago this industry did not exist," said Scott L. Soffen, a financial analyst at Legg Mason Wood Walker, an investment firm in Baltimore. The success of some of the early players — Apollo, DeVry, the Learning Company — was so exceptional that Wall Street was captivated, Mr. Soffen said. "Nothing attracts interest more than an industry group with momentum on Wall Street."

The opportunity to make money in education certainly looks good. The education and training industry accounts for 10 percent of the United States economy, as measured by gross domestic product, according to "The Book of Knowledge," a report issued last spring by Michael T. Moe, director of global growth research at Merrill Lynch. But education and training account for less than two-tenths of 1 percent of the value of the domestic stock market — \$16 billion out of \$10 trillion, so there is plenty of room for growth and for companies to find profits in the education sector. Health care, by comparison, represents 14 percent of G.D.P. and a similar percentage of the value of

the United States stock market.

There are plenty of private companies ready to soak up investors' dollars, said Michael R. Sandler, chief executive of EduVentures, an investment and consulting firm in Boston. Roughly \$6 billion has been invested in private education companies by venture capital firms and other investors, he said, "an enormous amount of untapped market value."

Edison, the much-publicized effort by Mr. Whittle to build a better public school, is a long way from profitability. In the year ended June 30, the company lost \$50.5 million on revenues of \$132 million. Since its inception, Edison's losses total \$113 million.

By taking on the elementary and secondary school market, Edison was somewhat unusual among for-profit education companies. Most efforts are focused on areas where others have already forged for-profit businesses and where it is likely to be far easier to make money — the sale of textbooks and school supplies, for example, publication of learning materials, operation of preschools and delivery of classes and test preparation services over the Internet.

Those are the areas where the partnership including Mr. Weld hopes to succeed. The group, known as Leeds Equity Partners III, will be managed by Jeffrey T. Leeds and Robert A. Bernstein, two former investment bankers at Lazard Freres & Company who were among the early investors in Edison Schools. On the group's board of advisers are

Thomas F. McLarty 3rd, the former chief of staff for President Clinton, and Lamar Alexander, the former governor of Tennessee.

"We really like the post-secondary part of the education business," Mr. Leeds said. He said he believed that schools providing professional training and certification — in business, law, psychology, even medicine — could be operated for-profit. If that training could take place over the Internet, serving students who cannot take time off from work or travel to a central campus, all the better, he said.

Lately, education stocks have badly trailed the market. The best investments have been in companies that offered computer-based training — companies like CBT Group and Learning Tree International.

If primary and secondary school makes for a tough market, however, the need to constantly upgrade the skills of workers means that the most promising for-profit sectors are those where people need more education, after they have finished high school or college and entered the work force, said Dr. Levine, the president of Teachers College.

"I don't know whether these companies can do a better job of educating people," Dr. Levine said. "But they are the most aggressive and creative actors in higher education today. Some of them have shown they can make a profit. And that means that much of this industry is up for grabs."

2/2

The New York Times

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1999

Investors See Room for Profit In the Demand for Education

AI

By EDWARD WYATT

When Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University, met last year with Michael Milken, the fallen junk bond king turned education entrepreneur, it was more than a case of the old school meeting the new.

"The message was, 'You guys are in trouble and we're going to eat your lunch,'" Dr. Levine said, recalling what he considered not a direct threat but a kind of predatory challenge.

Mr. Milken, whose Knowledge Universe companies range from pre-school to corporate training, is not the only one who is hungry. Businessmen like Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft, and Lamar Alexander, the former presidential hopeful and former governor of Tennessee, are flocking to education, bringing with them a flood of dollars. They say they will turn the \$700 billion education sector into "the next health care" — that is, transform large portions of a fragmented, cottage industry of independent, nonprofit institutions into a consolidated, professionally managed, money-making set of businesses that include all levels of education.

While the for-profit education business has been evolving for several years, with the establishment of Christopher C. Whittle's Edison Schools and the University of Phoenix's college for working adults, the transformation is now occurring on a far larger scale. The dissatisfaction with public schools of parents of school-age children and the demands of the economy are fueling a flow of billions of dollars from corporations, pension funds and the general public into for-profit educational ventures.

For-profit companies are setting up law schools and new elementary schools, training factory-floor employees to use computers and taking over the operations of existing junior high and high schools. Their motives,

the companies say, are to wring the waste from a system built largely on public largess and nonprofit benevolence, turning it into an efficiently run and profitable machine — using investors' money instead of tax dollars.

"Changes in education are coming as surely as the Berlin Wall went down," said William F. Weld, the former governor of Massachusetts who is part of a group that has raised \$150 million to invest in for-profit education and training and which hopes to raise another \$100 million by early next year.

Eight years ago, when he was governor, Mr. Weld encountered stiff opposition to the concept of schools managed by for-profit companies. This month, Edison Schools Inc., the Whittle brainchild that operates 79 new and existing elementary and secondary schools in 16 states, including Massachusetts, hopes to sell \$170 million in stock to the public.

"These ideas would not have flown in 1991," Mr. Weld said. "People just couldn't wrap their minds around it. Now we can't put the genie back in the bottle."

Even institutions like New York University and the College Board have formed for-profit subsidiaries to produce and market online courses and other educational services, some of which might be the source of public stock offerings.

In many ways, the race to invest in education marks the triumph of a market mentality that has consumed the nation in the late 20th century. No longer is education, where institutions of learning grew out of religion, the route to spiritual enlightenment. For many students, it is the place to start a business or accelerate their movement up the career ladder.

Wall Street's interest is the result of big societal changes in the past generation. Nearly half of all students in higher education today are over age 25, up from 28 percent in 1970. Many of those students are seeking skills to change careers. Corporations, meanwhile, no longer view training as a cost to minimize but as a competitive advantage to exploit.

As in health care, entrepreneurs assume that they will be able to solve the intractable problems that have baffled government and nonprofit institutions.

"In the business world, we've seen a movement toward the hollowing out of the corporation to cut costs," said Guilbert C. Hentschke, dean of the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. "Now, in a sense, you've got that same process in schools, where dis-

tricts are entering agreements for outsourcing, contracting for services and chartering new schools."

But analysts warn that as Wall Street rushes in, investors might find that the education business does not open itself to the free market as willingly as did health care, utilities or other industries that operated under longtime government regulations that limited competition.

Where for-profit enterprises have been introduced in education, there is little evidence so far that students are performing better, that high school graduates are getting better jobs or that corporations are teaching skills that benefit the individual as well as the company.

"It's difficult to impossible to determine if a for-profit school is doing a better job than a comparable public school," said Henry M. Levin, a professor of economics and education who heads the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education at Teachers College.

So far, at least, "private schools and those public schools that are run by for-profit management typically seek students that are not costly to educate," Dr. Levin said. "That's not cheating. They are playing by the rules of the game. They want to do a good job, but they also want to make a profit. But the result is that you can't really compare them with public schools."

In that sense, if for-profit schools wish to expand they will have to take in less capable students and investors might find themselves on the same road as investors in H.M.O.'s several years ago. Those organizations were initially able to cut costs by offering services to groups of relatively healthy people — employees of big corporations, for example. But as H.M.O.'s began supplementing their growth by recruiting less healthy individuals, costs rose, profitability sank and investors faced big losses.

Companies like Apollo Group, parent of the University of Phoenix, the country's largest private university, have been profiting from education and raising money from the public for several years. In addition, companies like DeVry Inc., ITT Educational Services, Sylvan Learning Systems and General Physics have long offered educational and training services to individuals and corporations, and venture capital investors and companies like Intel and Microsoft have been pouring money into educational start-ups.

Newer investors, however, are viewing a much broader span of learning as potential profit centers. An example is Knowledge Universe, the conglomerate assembled by Mr.

Mr. Havel means that he should have used his unparalleled power and authority 10 years ago to shape post-Communist politics more actively and break old patterns of party authority and cronyism, Mr. Pehe and others said. Unlike Poland and Hungary, where reform thrived inside the Communist Party and undermined Moscow's control, Czechoslovakia in 1989 had a repressive, nearly Stalinist state imposed after the Soviets invaded in 1968 to quell a reformist government.

Mr. Havel now feels that more could have been done to punish the guilty on a legal basis, rather than simply barring thousands of people from jobs with the government on the basis of unchecked secret police files.

And friends say Mr. Havel feels he also could have done more to prevent the breakup of Czechoslovakia, which split on Jan. 1, 1993 into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Mr. Havel also regrets, Mr. Pehe said, supporting Mr. Klaus and allowing him to gain such prominence in politics. Mr. Klaus, as prime minister, presided over a privatization program of state industries and enterprises that is now considered to have been badly tainted by cronyism and corruption.

Mr. Urbanek said: "Of course there are days Havel is really fed up with the job — for example because of the political makeup of the Parliament. He's admitted that he made mistakes in the early '90's by choosing, supporting and recommending certain people for the Parliament and the government. Later it showed that those people were not the right ones."

Under Mr. Klaus and now Prime Minister Milos Zeman, Western diplomats say, Prague has done too little to restructure its economy, reform its judicial and legal system, crack down on corruption, build respect for the rule of law, protect outside investors and pressure politicians to act in the democratic spirit.

"There is a lot of personalized politics," Mr. Pehe said. "People don't yet understand that democracy is more than just democratic institutions, but the democratic spirit of compromise, discussion and tolerance."

Mr. Havel has regularly mentioned, in his speeches, the need for a better moral underpinning to Czech society and the importance of the rule of law.

While Mr. Havel's moral stances have burnished his reputation in the West, his scolding has not always been popular at home.

The American ambassador here, John Shattuck, praised Mr. Havel for his "intense engagement as a political leader," especially lately. "He has been willing to use his political capital to sometimes make unpopular decisions and interventions in Czech politics," Mr. Shattuck said.

While Mr. Havel long had approval ratings of more than 80 percent, they fell to 46 percent last spring, when he threatened a

lawsuit against a writer who accused the president's new wife of having an affair and he talked of resigning. His approval rating hovers now at about 52 percent, according to the Institute for Research of Public Opinion.

In 1996, the death from cancer of his first wife, Olga — to whom, from his prison cell, Mr. Havel wrote the moving and influential "Letters to Olga" — shook him badly, friends say. Less than a year later, in January 1997, he married Dagmar Veskrnova, now 46, an actress known by her nickname, Dasa (pronounced Dasha). While some envied him her beauty, others considered her beneath the role of presidential wife. The tabloids and web sites had a field day.

Mr. Urbanek said: "His second wedding marked the change. That's when his popularity began to decline. Olga was very popular, and the same cannot be said about his second wife."

These issues seem to have calmed. In late September, however, in another indication that his halo is gone, Mr. Havel was roundly criticized here for agreeing to drive a new model car from the Skoda factory, 70 percent owned by Volkswagen and 30 percent by the state, and then driving it about 100 miles an hour, far above the posted speed limit.

The Reviews

Honor, Bitterness And Self-Contempt

Jana Reichlova, a student of 20, says she still honors Mr. Havel. "But he shouldn't have run for the presidency at the last election" in January 1998, she said. "I think he has withdrawn himself and become estranged from the people. His decision to marry Dasa was unfortunate, especially so soon after his first wife died."

Jiri Reinisch, 50, a mechanic, was especially bitter. "I think Havel should have left at the height of his career," he said. "He really doesn't have much to say anymore. And he didn't punish those who should have been punished, the Communist cadres. I believed Havel would bring democracy and justice, but he really disappointed me. All the Communists who stole were allowed to keep their wealth, and today they are captains of industry."

Mr. Reinisch, a short, sandy-haired man, summarized the Havel plight: "He gave people hope but did not fulfill it, and he's not as good as the foreigners think he is. But we don't have anyone to replace him — that's the problem. Nobody here has his reputation abroad."

Mr. Havel himself still maintains a healthy dose of self-contempt, Mr. Pehe said. "On the one hand, he really is a symbol of this transition to democracy, but in many important ways this experiment here has gone wrong, and despite his speeches and warnings, he's associated with what has happened."

Half of Czechs now, Mr. Pehe said, "see Havel as a symbol of the political establishment, of what's happening here that they don't like, of the first 10 years with all its success and failures."

Mr. Havel is resigned to his fate — and proud of his choices. "I didn't become a president thanks to some latent lifelong desire for the presidency," he said in the interview. "I took it as a service for my country. And after 10 years I can say one thing: the service is much harder than I expected when I accepted it."

"The question whether I regret it is like asking me whether I regret that I was born. It's simply a part of my life; I take it as a fact."

While he writes all his own speeches and insists that "I fully use my creativity in my current job," the country's best playwright continues to plot. "That does not mean I sometimes don't step back and look at things from a distance and store this experience in my head for later use," he said.

The New York Times

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1999

2/2

Bush Makes His Push in New Hampshire

GOP Presidential Front-Runner Says He's Not Taking Anything for Granted

By TERRY M. NEAL
and CECI CONNOLLY
Washington Post Staff Writers

MEREDITH, N.H., Nov. 3—Texas Gov. George W. Bush had a mission in New Hampshire this week: to reassure voters that he cares about them and their state.

Bush, who has been blasted by his rivals, not to mention some New Hampshire voters, for skipping two debates and for not spending much time in the state, told one audience: "As we get closer to the elections, it's going to be a full-time presence."

While Bush's advisers have told reporters that he had previous commitments and denied that he avoided sharing the stage with his GOP opponents, privately, some had acknowledged that there was no great desire to attend the debates, where he would be the focus of attacks because of his front-runner status.

At events today and Tuesday, Bush opened his stump speech with an unapologetic explanation for his absence at last week's debate.

Speaking before the Laconia Chamber of Commerce this morning, Bush referred to "a little bit of a flap here last week," and said, "Let me tell you something straight-forward. My wife means more to me than anything. She was being honored as a distinguished alumna of Southern Methodist University. ... There was no question as to where I was going to be and that was by her side thanking her and singing my praises to this great lady."

Later, at a news conference, Bush told reporters if some voters didn't think he made the right decision to "stand by my wife, there are other candidates that they can choose from."

When asked if he was surprised that Arizona Sen. John McCain has been gaining on him in New Hampshire polls, Bush said, "He's a good fella. He's a formidable candidate. I expected there was going to be a contest in this state."

Bush assured voters he was not taking anything for granted in the state's Feb. 1 primary. He came early to several events and did a lot of what aides say he does best: traditional retail politicking—posing for pictures, kissing babies and grandmothers, and answering questions one on one with voters. At one point, he told a woman: "When you get in the voting booth, don't forget who came to ask for your vote."

No one is accusing Vice President Gore of not spending enough time in New Hampshire. After campaigning three days in the state last week, he was back again today, giving interviews and teaching a civics class at Merrimack Valley High School just outside Concord.

In a morning interview on CBS, Gore refused to back away from his impeachment-day assertion that Bill Clinton will be remembered as one of the best presidents in history. "There are some people today who think all these accomplishments and others will be eclipsed by the president's personal mistakes," Gore said on the new "Early Show." "Maybe they're right but I kind of doubt that."

Gore also used every opportunity to continue his now-daily assault on former senator Bill Bradley's plan to provide health coverage to 95 percent of Americans. "The controversy in the campaign these days is about the Bradley proposal that costs more than \$1 trillion and wipes out Medicare," Gore charged during a call-in show on WEVO radio.

A telephone caller from Laconia complained to Gore about the "negative" tone of his campaign, but the

vice president said he will continue pointing out policy differences with his Democratic rival. Said Gore: "If we can't talk about issues, then what are campaigns for?"

According to the latest Washington Post national poll, Bush continues to lead Gore in a hypothetical matchup 48 percent to 39 percent, and holds a similar advantage over Bradley. A new ABC News poll shows Bush maintaining a significant lead over Gore even with Pat-

rick J. Buchanan in the race. Buchanan drew 8 percent of the vote, disproportionately from the Texas governor.

Meanwhile, Bush and Gore remain strong front-runners in their respective primaries, last week-end's Post poll found. Seven in 10 Republicans support Bush, who benefited from Elizabeth Dole's exit from the race. McCain also has picked up some support since Dole's departure, but still runs a

distant second at 10 percent. The other GOP candidates linger in single digits.

Though Bradley is closing on Gore in some state polls, nationally he continues to trail the vice president among Democrats 30 percent to 58 percent, similar to his ratings in a mid-October Post poll.

*Assistant polling director
Claudia Deane contributed to
this report.*

On Federal Role in Education, Bush Walks a Fine Line

By DAN BALZ
Washington Post Staff Writer

For as long as politicians can remember, Democrats have dominated the education issue in national elections, but Texas Gov. George W. Bush is out to change that. As his campaign advisers put it, Bush wants to own the issue for the Republicans in 2000.

Over the past two months, Bush has given three major speeches on education that together offer a new direction for the GOP by marrying conservative ideas with something unusual for a Republican: the assertion of a strong federal role in education.

Like many Republicans, Bush remains skeptical about the federal education bureaucracy. But in contrast to those in the party who not long ago advocated the abolition of the Educa-

tion Department, he has declared that, on education policy, Washington counts and that presidents can make a difference.

"What Bush is doing is contesting the Democratic turf on education in ways that Republicans in Congress and [1996 GOP nominee Robert J.] Dole never did," said Al From, head of the Democratic Leadership Council. "Whether he will do that successfully is open to question."

Bush's effort to neutralize—or capture—the education issue reflects the concern within the GOP about an issue that ranks among the public's highest priorities. What Bush has done this fall, however, is use education to try to redefine the image of his party.

Bush's education trilogy intersects in some areas with proposals offered this year by Vice President Gore, notably in the area of encouraging more character education and religious expression in public schools. But the differences between Bush and both Gore and former senator Bill Bradley, particularly on school vouchers, already have generated an intense debate. Those differences will determine whether the Texas governor succeeds in turning a debate that has kept Republicans on the defensive throughout the 1990s.

"The single brightest line and starkest distinction clearly is on the issue of vouchers," said William Galston, a University of Maryland professor and Gore policy adviser. "The vice president, probably alone among all of the presidential candidates of either party, has been unswerving in his opposition to the use of publicly funded vouchers. Period. And obviously there's going to be a debate about that."

The Bush education policy represents an evolution in the thinking of a governor who has guarded the powers of state and local officials against intrusions from Washington—and who not so long ago belittled President Clinton's involvement in education as gubernatorial, not presidential.

That posture offered Bush and his advisers a challenge when they began discussing what kind of education policy he should embrace as a presidential candidate. Given the GOP's hostility toward a federal presence in education, how could Bush carve out a presidential role consistent with his belief in local control? "It was a difficult intellectual challenge," said Indianapolis

Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, Bush's chief domestic policy adviser.

The problem was summed up by another Bush adviser. "Education is primarily a local responsibility, which we admit, but we did not want to have a weaker message on the national level than he had in the state," the adviser said. "What he has tried to define is what we call a limited but energetic role for the federal government."

That resulted in what Bush advisers call vision from the top coupled with flexibility at the local level. Bush put it this way Tuesday: "The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools. It must be wise enough to give states and school districts more authority and freedom. And it must be strong enough to require proven performance in return."

Bush built his view of a federal role around performance and accountability. Rather than having Washington dictate curricula or establish a national test, Bush would use the Education Department to set standards and hold local schools to account—but give them the flexibility to meet the standards as they see fit.

But for conservatives in his party, he also offers states and local school districts fewer strings and less red tape from Washington, an expanded charter school program, more authority for teachers to restore discipline in their classrooms and strong rhetoric about values. "It's a distinctive view and it's an original view and it's a strong view," said for-

mer education secretary William J. Bennett, who has advised Bush on the issue. "And it's an eminently defensible one."

The model is Bush's proposal to reform the federal Title I program for disadvantaged children. He said he would give low-performing schools that receive Title I money three years to improve test scores. After that, he said he would take a portion of their federal money and make it available to the parents of those children, who could use it for tutoring or for private school tuition, if they wished.

That proposal has drawn more criticism than anything else Bush has offered. Democrats such as Gore and Bradley attacked it by saying it threatened public schools, particularly those serving the poorest children.

Bradley, who voted for limited experiments with vouchers as a senator, said there is "a vast difference" between what he had supported and what Bush advocated. "He's saying I want to gut the funds that go to the poorest public schools unless over the next three years there can be a dramatic change," Bradley said in an interview.

Goldsmith said that view "crystallizes a very substantial difference between Governor Bush and the Democratic opposition." Democrats, he said, project much more pessimism about the ability of schools to improve than Bush, suggesting in their criticism that public schools cannot improve if they are held accountable. More significant, however, is the different view on

vouchers. Democrats, he said, "would insist that a parent continue to send a child to a failing school and that parents would have no choice but to have a child fail."

Bush's Democratic critics said yesterday that reflects an idealized view of the choices available to most parents. Elaine Kamarck, Gore's chief domestic policy adviser, noting that Bush would let children transfer from both low-performing and unsafe schools, said there are not enough available options for most students. "You have to stay and fix these public schools," she said. "Bush's option is, we'll give the parents vouchers and let them go someplace else. My response is, where are they going to go?"

A Bush adviser said, "Our proposals do not see vouchers as an alternative to public education, they see [vouchers] as the end result of a process by which schools are allowed to reform. The goal is to promote improved public schools, particularly for disadvantaged kids."

Conservative GOP rivals Steve Forbes and Gary Bauer also have attacked Bush's proposals for giving too much power to the federal education bureaucracy. "His voucher proposal puts government in the driver's seat," Bauer said.

Bush advisers offer a counter view, saying that the goal is to use the federal government to challenge the power of the education establishment, which Bush sees as resistant to reform unless challenged. "The goal here is not to centralize power," one adviser said. "The goal is to spread it."

JOSEPH SHATTAN

Heroic Churchill

By the close of World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was convinced the Soviet Union had replaced Nazi Germany as the primary threat to Western security. He began bombarding President Franklin Roosevelt with telegrams warning of the "great failure and . . . utter breakdown" of the wartime alliance between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union. But a grievously ill Roosevelt was reluctant to get drawn into a confrontation with Moscow, and his successor, Harry Truman, was initially uncertain about a future U.S. course.

Thus, when Truman invited Churchill — who had lost the first post-war British election and was now leader of the Conservative opposition — to lecture at Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., on March 5, 1946, Churchill seized the opportunity to make his case. Arguing that "there is nothing [the Russians] so admire as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness," Churchill proposed that the Soviets be confronted with an overwhelming display of Anglo-American resolve and strength. Only then would they agree to "the establishment of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries."

Privately, Churchill went even further, calling for a showdown with the Russians as soon as possible, while the West still enjoyed a fleeting atomic monopoly. "[Churchill] believes that now is the time, promptly, to tell the Soviets that if they do not retire from Berlin and abandon Eastern Germany . . . we will raze their cities," Lewis Douglas, the U.S. ambassador to Britain, reported to Washington after an April 17, 1948, meeting with the former prime minister.

HEROES OF THE COLD WAR

But despite Churchill's immense prestige, neither Truman nor his successor, Dwight Eisenhower, was prepared to follow that lead. They considered Churchill's call for a showdown culminating in a grand diplomatic settlement both too "hard" and too "soft." It was too hard because public opinion in the United States would never tolerate a policy of deliberate nuclear saber-rattling. But it was also too soft since the Soviet Union's ideologically based hostility to the West meant no diplomatic settlement with Moscow would likely endure. Far better, they reasoned, to adopt a policy of containment that promised to effect a major ideological change of heart in the Soviet leadership without committing the United States to futile negotiations on the one hand or dangerous brinkmanship on the other.

But Churchill had a powerful case. The containment policy developed by Truman and subscribed to (despite some rhetorical bluster to the contrary) by Eisenhower initially depended on U.S. nuclear superiority, which could be used to offset Soviet conventional-arms superiority. Nuclear superiority, however, was a temporary asset. Sooner or later, the Soviet Union would acquire its own nuclear arsenal, at which point the West would be forced to offset Soviet conventional forces with similar forces of its own.

Did the indolent, pleasure-loving West have the stomach for such a course? Churchill doubted it. He

had seen how the Western democracies sought to appease Hitler rather than risk a conventional war against Germany, and he had no reason to suppose they would behave any differently toward Stalin's heirs. Better to force a settlement now, before Western resolve began to wane.

The questions Churchill raised about the wisdom of merely trying to contain Soviet expansion were never satisfactorily answered during his lifetime — and even Churchill, old and ailing, set them aside during his lackluster second term. But in 1981, the newly elected U.S. president, Ronald Reagan, accepted the validity of Churchill's critique. It was clear to him that containment had not succeeded either in preventing Soviet expansion or in modifying Soviet ideology. On the contrary, when Mr. Reagan came into office it seemed as though the global balance of power was beginning to tilt in Moscow's favor, which Soviet spokesmen glibly interpreted as proof of socialism's superiority.

And detente, the policy the United States adopted under President Richard Nixon in the hope of limiting Soviet adventurism, struck Mr. Reagan as little more than a contemporary version of appeasement. It followed that if the United States ever hoped to win the Cold War, it had to adopt a Churchillian course by renewing its faith in the righteousness of its cause — playing to its economic, technological and political strengths, and seizing the offensive before Soviet gains became truly irreversible.

That is precisely what Ronald Reagan did.

This essay by Joseph Shattan, a former White House speech writer and Heritage Foundation Bradley fellow, is adapted from his book "Architects of Victory: Six Heroes of the Cold War" (Heritage Foundation, 1999).

ERICK GUSTAFSON

Stalkers pursuing Microsoft

Judge Penfield Jackson's finding of fact in the Microsoft case, scheduled for tomorrow, is shaping up to be a big Halloween-like scare. The finding will likely hand consumers a trick — not a treat — as it adds to the howling for increased regulation and control of the successful technology sector. The nightmare will continue with more government lawsuits against the private sector because Congress recently handed the Justice Department an additional \$112 million to continue its campaign of regulation through litigation. House Judiciary Chairman Henry J. Hyde, Illinois Republican, even went so far as to comment that the antitrust division brought in more than 10 times its budget in fines last year. Policymakers apparently have no problem using the Justice Department's economic regulation to generate a revenue stream. All of this is enough to make a person run and hide.

There is little doubt that Judge Jackson's finding will be harsh, and

that Microsoft's critics and competitors will cry Microsoft "broke the law" and should be punished. The ruling will certainly include hyped rhetoric and draw unfounded conclusions; neither of which will be based on a balanced understanding of the evidence or a sound interpretation of the Clayton or Sherman Antitrust Acts. The judge's findings will be influenced more by the circus-like atmosphere that has surrounded this case for the last year than by the cold, hard facts presented inside the courtroom or the technology industry's progress in that time. And for all of these reasons, the finding of fact will threaten innovation in the technology sector and, ultimately, consumers.

Our nation's antitrust laws were written to prevent activities that resulted in clear consumer harm — collusion, anti-competitive pricing

— not to protect firms from America's brash, no-holds-barred style of competition. While consumers might think less of Microsoft and competitors might break out in a cold sweat after reviewing the scintillating snippets of e-mail, there is nothing particularly "illegal" about bad-mouthing or playing hardball with the competition. It is often said that the making of laws and sausage are not for the weak-stomached to watch. Perhaps competition in the technology sector should be added to that list — those who are unable to stomach the world's most competitive market should get out of the kitchen.

The Clayton and Sherman acts were designed to promote equal opportunity in the marketplace, not to ensure equal outcome or to manage competition, as some of Microsoft's critics have claimed. Judge Learned Hand stated, "The

successful competitor, having been urged to compete, must not be turned upon when he wins." It is this sentiment that leads firms to compete vigorously in the marketplace. And, as the U.S. technology sector has amply demonstrated, vigorous competition invariably produces the best result for consumers.

Examine a few indisputable facts and draw your own conclusion. The cost of Netscape Navigator to consumers was \$49 before the arrival of Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Today, both browsers are free. The price of Microsoft's Windows has actually dropped over the past 10 years when inflation and product improvements are taken into account. Both examples are a clear benefit to consumers.

Not only is the government incapable of pointing to genuine con-

sumer harm, it appears no harm was done to Netscape either. The government's own witness, Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Franklin Fisher, has admitted as much on the stand. Moreover, Netscape's stock doubled in value in the three years following the introduction of Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Netscape was also acquired for \$4.2 billion by America Online in March of this year in a merger that shook the foundation of the government's case.

Worse than this particular attack on innovation is the fact that Congress recently appropriated a 12 percent increase to the antitrust division to continue the campaign to regulate through the courts. Flush with tax dollars and brimming with success, it seems unlikely the antitrust enforcers will not target another company. Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich's claim that "the era of regulation through litigation has just begun" is foreboding. It reveals a government strategy to pursue control of the

economy through lawsuits, rather than let consumers and market forces shape the future.

Unfortunately, consumers pay for the work of overzealous antitrust lawyers, and taxpayers foot the bill for the Justice Department's excesses. First, the government's actions have a resoundingly negative impact on our nation's leading economic engine — the technology sector. Second, consumers pay at the cash register as economic regulation restrains the innovative and successful genius of America's free market economy.

The biggest scare is the fact that Judge Jackson may be encouraging regulation that limits America's ability to be the home of the world's leading innovators and all the consumer benefits that come with it.

Erick Gustafson is director of technology and communications policy at Citizens for a Sound Economy Foundation.

Slowly but not surely Education reform fails D.C. schools

Finally. The school governance debate in the District is moving past rhetoric to substantive proposals, thanks to D.C. Council member Kevin Chavous, who this week introduced legislation that, if approved, would reduce, by amendment to the Home Rule Charter, the number of members to the Board of Education from 11 to nine. It would force members elected as ward representatives to win citywide approval in a sort of runoff system, provide for an elected chairman of the board, and delineate members' responsibilities.

Mr. Chavous also wants to strip the education board of its congressionally assigned authority over charter schools and is recommending that the financial control board delay by one year — from June 2000 to June 2001 — return of power to the elected body. Nearly three years ago, in the most dramatic action of its tenure, the control board stripped the elected D.C. Board of Education of all of its authority over the schools, appointing its own emergency trustees. It also kicked out the superintendent, naming a retired Army general as chief operating officer (CEO).

Unfortunately, when the going got rough, the control board walked away from its own model and failed to provide aggressive oversight. Consequently, the city's school system still languishes: On recent standardized tests, the majority of students showed little

or no progress; the superintendent hasn't sufficiently altered long-standing management and academic woes and the elected education board is mired in fractious internal bickering.

"This is not a panacea," Mr. Chavous says of his proposals. "This is not going to bring instant reform. But reform does not occur by us standing still."

**Jonetta
Rose
Barras**

Critics say the Ward 7 representative, into his second term as head of the education committee, has stepped up to the reform plate only because he faces stiff competition in his re-election bid next year. They argue that beyond introduction and a public hearing scheduled for Nov. 29, the proposals are not likely to go very far. To which Mr. Chavous retorts: "I fear no challenger. This has nothing to do with that election."

The question isn't what this will or won't do for Mr. Chavous. But rather, can the proposals arrest the erosion of public education? Do they significantly improve the likely outcome for children? Are they sufficiently comprehensive? And, should elected officials engage in piecemeal amending of the city's governing constitution — the Home Rule Charter?

No, to all of the above. The Chavous bill is too timid. It fiddles and does not fix. Really, what is the difference between 11 and nine? Ward 3 Council member Kathy Patterson thinks five is a better number; the Appleseed Foundation suggested seven. Whatever the number, Council member Jim Graham wants to ensure that "permanent residents" can vote in the election; much of the city's immigrant population resides in his Ward 1.

Furthermore, even if the board's responsibilities are fully delineated, some doofus who has lived in a particular ward for one year can still walk into the Board of Elections and Ethics, complete nominating petitions, persuade a sufficient number of preoccupied voters to punch their cards for him and land up on North Capitol Street deciding education policy for the first time in his life. And with this kind of body, does it matter if the control board waits a year to return power?

The Chavous bill is political fence-straddling. It acknowledges the weaknesses of the current system but wimps out on making the kind of sweeping and radical change that ultimately is necessary to affect the quality of persons serving on the board and the quality of education received by District children and youths. The best thing about it is that it does open the debate. To do more than that, council members must commit to making the hard choices even during an advancing election season.

They must develop and approve, through a consensus process involving residents, the mayor, the financial control board and the elected school board, an omnibus education reform bill. This comprehensive legislation should address not just governance but also administration of the D.C. Public Schools. A new look at the original model offered by the control board could produce a charter-required CEO responsible for the ultimate management of schools under whom a superintendent, acting much like a college provost, would handle academic affairs. The CEO would report directly to the mayor. An appointed board of trustees of persons with unquestionable educational policy-making credentials would advise the mayor and the council; there would be no elected board.

To prevent the piecemeal amending approach the Chavous bill invites, the mayor, council and control board could move quickly to establish a charter review commission. (Oddly, two years ago Mr. Chavous argued against the very method he now advances.) The charter commission could analyze and recommend other amendments — for example, permanently codifying an independent office of the chief financial officer.

If the council is truly committed to education reform, and if it intends to open up the charter for amendments, scheduling a citywide vote on its recommended changes, then it ought to be comprehensive. Because as our mothers often reminded us: Anything worth doing, is worth doing well.

Jonetta Rose Barras' column for The Washington Times appears on Friday.

R. EMMETT TYRRELL JR.

Unresolved agony and angst

If you feel winter's nip in the air, imagine the premonitions felt by refugees in Kosovo these days. To us, there is a thrill attendant with the change of seasons. To the Kosovars, living in tents, subsisting on handouts, there is only fear and misery. Half the homes of the region are so badly damaged from recent hostilities that they will afford only meager shelter at best. Worse still, 300,000 Kosovars are utterly homeless. The international aid promised in June when the guns fell silent has not arrived.

Bottled up on rudimentary roads that are clogged with NATO convoys and returning refugees, much of the international aid remains in Albania and Macedonia. The aid that has come is insufficient to cover roofless dwellings, rebuild collapsed walls, provide heat against the oncoming winter. I remember traveling through refugee camps about this time seven years ago in Bosnia. There a mix of Roman Catholics and Muslims was shivering in damp, cold camps, awaiting refugee relief and some hope of returning home. Everything was in short supply. It was bleak, and the prospect of winter was frightening.

What makes today's reports of Kosovar refugees facing a shelterless winter even more alarming is that as winter creeps in so do the harbingers of the next Balkan war — the fifth in a decade. If matters fumble along as they are,

there will be war between the Serbs and the independent-minded Montenegrins in the spring or summer. The West will be facing still more refugees and the need to renew the kind of warfare against Serbia that heated up our relations with China and Russia.

To be sure, ethnic hatred smoldering over the centuries was fundamental to the war between the Serbs and the Kosovo Liberation Army. The fierce antagonisms of the area are so ancient that in writing "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" in the 18th century, Edward Gibbon remarked on them, adding that the area was one that even the Romans could not pacify at the height of their empire. Yet the Western powers have proceeded insouciant to this history and guided by political abstractions more suitable for a classroom on international politics than a land of continual carnage.

Just the other day, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott was telling us that in the Balkans there is no such thing as ancient ethnic hatreds. It is something he learned from Woodrow Wilson. He and the Clinton administration are advancing a policy that can only exacerbate those hatreds and ensure still more bloodshed and more refugees. Their new policy

AS I UNDERSTAND IT,
WE HAVE TO PROTECT KOSOVARS
FROM SERBS, SERBS FROM THE KLA,
THE KLA FROM RUSSIANS, AND
RUSSIANS FROM THE KLA...



calls for "ethnic mixing." Look at it as the American progressive's international conception of busing. Of course "ethnic mixing" is

totally beside the point. With guns and knives, many of these ethnics have made it abundantly clear that they do not want to live together.

Now, while international organizations bungle the essential task of easing the refugees' plight, people like Mr. Talbott fix their attention on encouraging Serbian refugees to return to Kosovo. Well, it would be nice if they and their erstwhile Muslim neighbors could live together peacefully, but it would be better if there were peace in the region and not increased signs of war. Those signs of war are what should fetch administration attention.

Last week, Montenegro took further steps to break free of its unwanted federation with Belgrade. Montenegro is a coastal province along the Adriatic Sea. It is the last province yoked to Belgrade. Ever since 1997 and the election of Milo Djukanovic as president, it has been agitating for independence. Mr. Djukanovic has been threatening a referendum on full independence.

Last week, Finance Minister Miroslav Ivanisevic announced that Montenegro would adopt the German mark as legal tender alongside the ailing Yugoslav dinar. The pro-Milosevic Socialist Party identified the move as an "act of secession." History has shown how the Serbs deal with secession, and Mr. Djukanovic has promised more such provocations.

What can the West do? Well, when war threatened in Slovenia,

To be sure, ethnic hatred smoldering over the centuries was fundamental to the war.

Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, the West merely dithered. Prior diplomatic sanctions kept the Croats and Muslims undefended. Conflicting guff from the United States and Germany merely encouraged Serbian aggression. This time, with troops in the region, the Western powers might simply station them closer to the Montenegrin border. We might have more NATO ships visit the Montenegrin port. We ought to insist on a peaceful resolution of the problem. But we ought to let the Serbs and the Montenegrins work the politics of their future out for themselves.

This area already has enough refugees. Rather than engage in what our so-called progressives once called "nation building," we ought to be attending to the plight of the refugees. "Ethnic mixing" is even more foolish than "nation building." It is going to be a cold winter for the refugees we already have.

R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. is editor-in-chief of the American Spectator.

On My Mind

A. M. ROSENTHAL

Please Read This Column!

On Jan. 6, 1987, when The New York Times printed my first column, the headline I had written was: "Please Read This Column!" It was not just one journalist's message of the day, but every writer's prayer — come know me.

Sometimes I wanted to use it again. But I was smitten by seizures of modesty and decided twice might be a bit showy. Now I have the personal and journalistic excuse to set it down one more time.

This is the last column I will write for The Times and my last working day on the paper. I have no intention of stopping writing, journalistically or otherwise. And I am buoyed by the knowledge that I will be starting over.

Still, who could work his entire journalistic career — so far — for one paper and not leave with sadnesses, particularly when the paper is The Times? Our beloved, proud New York Times — ours, not mine or theirs, or yours, but ours, created by the talents and endeavor of its staff, the faithfulness of the publishing family and, as much as anything else, by the ethics and standards of its readers and their hunger for ever more information, of a range without limit.

Arrive in a foreign capital for the first time, call a government minister and give just your name. Ensues iciness. But add "of The New York Times," and you expect to be invited right over and usually are; nice.

"Our proud New York Times" — sounds arrogant and is a little, why not? But the pride is individual as well as institutional. For members of the staff, news and business, the pride is in being important to the world's best paper — you hear? — and being able to stretch its creative reach. And there is pride knowing that even if we are not always honest enough with ourselves to achieve fairness, that is what we promise the readers, and the standard to which they must hold us.

I used to tell new reporters: The Times is far more flexible in writing styles than you might think, so don't button up your vest and go all stiff on us. But when it comes to the foundation — fairness — don't fool around with it, or we will come down on you.

Journalists often have to hurt people, just by reporting the facts. But they do not have to cause unnecessary cruelty, to run their rings across anybody's face for the pleasure of it — and that goes for critics, too.

When you finish a story, I would say, read it, substitute your name for the subject's. If you say, well, it would

make me miserable, make my wife cry, but it has no innuendo, no unattributed pejorative remarks, no slap in the face for joy of slapping, it is news, not gutter gossip, and as a reporter I know the writer was fair, then give it to the copy desk. If not, try again — we don't want to be your cop.

Sometimes I have a nightmare that on a certain Wednesday — why Wednesday I don't know — The Times disappeared forever. I wake trembling; I know this paper could never be recreated. I will never tremble for the loss of any publication that has no enforced ethic of fairness.

Starting over.

Starting fresh — the idea frightened me. Then I realized I was not going alone. I would take my brain and decades of newspapering with me. And I understood many of us had done that on the paper — moving from one career to another.

First I was a stringer from City College, my most important career move. It got me inside a real paper and paid real money. Twelve dollars a week, at a time when City's free tuition was more than I could afford.

My second career was as a reporter in New York, with a police press pass, which cops were forever telling me to shove in my ear.

I got a two-week assignment at the brand-new United Nations, and stayed eight years, until I got what I lusted for — a foreign post.

I served The Times in Communist Poland, for the first time encountering the suffocating intellectual blanket that is Communism's great weapon. In due time I was thrown out.

But mostly it was Asia. The four years in India excited me then and forever. Rosenthal, King of the Khyber Pass!

After nine years as a foreign correspondent, somebody decided I was too happy in Tokyo and nagged me into going home to be an editor. At first I did not like it, but I came to enjoy editing — once I became the top editor. Rosenthal, King of the Hill!

When I stepped down from that job, I started all over again as a Times Op-Ed columnist, paid to express my own opinions. If I had done that as a reporter or editor dealing with the

news, I would have broken readers' trust that the news would be written and played straight.

Straight does not mean dull. It means straight. If you don't know what that means, you don't belong on this paper. Clear?

As a columnist, I discovered that there were passions in me I had not been aware of, lying under the smatterings of knowledge about everything that I had to collect as executive editor — including hockey and debentures, for heaven's sake.

Mostly the passions had to do with human rights, violations of — like African women having their genitals mutilated to keep them virgin, and Chinese and Tibetan political prisoners screaming their throats raw.

I wrote with anger at drug legitimizers and rationalizers, helping make criminals and destroying young minds, all the while with nauseating sanctimony.

As a correspondent, it was the Arab states, not Israel, that I wanted to cover. But they did not welcome resident Jewish correspondents. As a columnist, I felt fear for the whittling away of Israeli strength by the Israelis, and still do.

I wrote about the persecution of Christians in China. When people, in astonishment, asked why, I replied, in astonishment, because it is happening, because the world, including American and European Christians and Jews, pays almost no attention, and that plain disgusts me.

The lassitude about Chinese Communist brutalities is part of the most nasty American reality of this past half-century. Never before have the U.S. government, business and public been willing, eager really, to praise and enrich tyranny, to crawl before it, to endanger our martial technology — and all for the hope (vain) of trade profit.

America is going through plump times. But economic strength is making us weaker in head and soul. We accept back without penalty a president who demeaned himself and us. We rain money on a Politburo that must rule by terror lest it lose its collective head.

I cannot promise to change all that. But I can say that I will keep trying and that I thank God for (a) making me an American citizen, (b) giving me that college-boy job on The Times, and (c) handing me the opportunity to make other columnists kick themselves when they see what I am writing, in this fresh start of my life. □

The New York Times

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1999

Public Interests

GAIL COLLINS

Air Rudy

The melting pot solidifies.

No sooner had the polling booth curtains stopped twitching in New York this week than Rudolph Giuliani took to the air upstate, with the first commercial of the 2000 U.S. Senate campaign. (The race still has no official entrants. But Mr. Giuliani has bought TV time and Hillary Clinton has bought a \$1.7 million house, either of which is as good as an announcement as far as I'm concerned.)

The ad is a basic 30-second rundown of the mayor's achievements as mayor — fought crime, increased jobs, etc. — with shots of Mr. Giuliani and lots of happy New Yorkers. It's notable for only one thing. His euphoric constituents — smiling, waving, walking their babies across the extremely safe streets — all appear to be white. Closer inspection reveals a man who is possibly African-American working on the roof of a building far up in the air.

Mr. Giuliani says there's one shot of the Puerto Rican Day parade. He and his aides were busy all day yesterday pointing out possible minority New Yorker sightings in the footage. "In the shot of the Staten Island ferry, if you look to my left there's a woman who appears to be Hispanic," the mayor said. It was sort of a political version of "Where's Waldo?"

Nevertheless, to the casual observer the ad really does look as if the mayor of the nation's most wildly heterogeneous city was taking a bow for making things safe in Des Moines. It's not the most critical lapse in the history of modern politics, but it is peculiar. Mr. Giuliani's biggest problem as a mayor has been deflecting charges of racial insensitivity. One of his biggest challenges as a Senate

candidate is to mollify black voters, at least to the point that they don't turn out in record numbers to vote against him. Why, then, would he introduce himself as a Senate candidate in a commercial that seems to have turned New York monochromatic?

There are several possible explanations:

- Thanks to the mayor's efforts stimulating the economy, black New Yorkers were too busy working at construction jobs to come down to the ground and pose for the camera.

- The Giuliani camp thinks this is what upstate voters would like to think New York City looks like!

- Whoever made the piece was just sloppy.

- The ad is a perfectly fine portrait of New York in all its glorious diversity, and anybody who thinks otherwise is a dreadful person!

Guess which answer the mayor likes.

"That's got to be your problem," he said, to a suggestion that there seemed to be something missing in the ad. Alerted by my question to an aide, Mr. Giuliani had called to discuss the errors in my thought process and point out the Latino woman on the ferry. It was a brief conversation, although Mr. Giuliani managed to squeeze in the terms "truly absurd," "a reach" and "kind of sick."

Did I mention that the other common criticism of this mayor involves a problem with accepting criticism?

"It's really sad that people look at the world this way," he continued, declining to be distracted from his theme of racial hypersensitivity. Bringing up the whole issue, he added, is an example of "a tired old stereotypical attack on Republicans."

That was a low blow. We're immersed in a presidential campaign that documents every single interaction between George W. Bush and minority voters in breathless detail. (Look, everybody! He's going to another black church!) The media are so excited about this Republican inclusionism that we fall into a swoon every time Mr. Bush says "Hola!"

But Rudy Giuliani isn't Mr. Bush. He's also probably not a political figure who needs any introduction to the voters upstate. The ad actually seems like a waste of money, since you can walk into a cornfield in Iowa and get somebody to tell you that New York City is a much better place these days, and identify who's responsible.

According to a recent New York Times poll, practically all the state's voters not only feel they know Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Giuliani, they've already made up their minds whom they're going to vote for. The election's still a year away, and the undecided-voter pool is vanishing. The way we're going now, the entire election will hinge on a retired appliance repairman in Cooperstown who thinks Jimmy Carter is still President and a couple of unemployed survivalists living near the Canadian border.

If they watch television, there's already an ad coming their way. □

The New York Times

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1999




SEARCH

[Home](#) | [Discussions](#) | [Print Edition](#) | [Archives](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Help](#)

News	Business	Sports
Politics	Travel	Commentary
Entertainment	Classifieds	Shopping
music, movies, art	jobs, homes, cars	
TV, restaurants	rentals	

<http://www.latimes.com/news/metro/19991208/t000112034.html>

[Back to story](#)

Opposing Forces Tug on Teachers

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN

Whither teaching?

Is it blossoming into a true profession, with a body of knowledge and accepted practices that must be mastered? With salaries that rise with accomplishments?

Or is it a grim way station on the way to a real career that is more lucrative, more respectable or, at the very least, less frustrating?

Typical of the crosscurrents that rip through education, there's evidence for both.

Support for the first scenario can be found in the career arc of Celeste Fobia-McClure, a first-grade teacher at a magnet school for music, the Hillcrest Center for Enriched Studies in the Crenshaw area of Los Angeles. Now in her 28th year on the job, she has spent the past seven mentoring younger teachers. Last month, she earned certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

That accomplishment took her two tries and, she estimates, more than 400 hours in which she assembled lesson plans, critiqued student work, demonstrated her skills in a videotaped lesson and provided examples of her interactions with parents and colleagues. In addition, she had to pass tests on academic subjects and cognition.

"This has recharged my battery," she says with infectious enthusiasm. "I'm so impressed with the quality of the people I worked with. To be part of this is the most rewarding thing I've ever done."

The goal of the Michigan-based board, created in 1987, is to promote good teaching by figuring out what it looks like and then certifying those who do it. Support has come from major foundations and the federal government, which have poured more than \$120 million into the effort.

Now, it's achieving critical mass. In 1998, there were more than 1,800 board-certified teachers. This year, 3,000 more joined them.

Thirty-eight states and numerous local districts now offer incentives for teachers to participate. California, for example, hands out a one-time bonus of \$10,000. And the Los Angeles Unified School District grants a raise of 15%. That's led to 118 district teachers achieving certified status, a number greater than in 46 states.

Not everyone is enthusiastic. Some conservatives, notably Chester Finn Jr., a former assistant U.S. secretary of education for research, think the criteria are too squishy and philosophical and promote teaching methods that do little to raise test scores.

But Betty Castor, a former Florida commissioner of education and university president who now heads the board, says: "I want to sit down with Finn and show him what they have to know."

There's nothing easy, she says, about being prepared to write about 52 classics

of literature, which the board requires high school English teachers to do. History teachers must, for example, be able to look at a political cartoon from, say, the 1920s, and write about the issue that prompted it and how it played out.

Castor was in town last week to promote board certification in California. The goal is to have 100,000 such teachers by 2006, and without participation here, that won't happen. She also knows the board must prove that students of certified teachers learn more.

* * *

Meanwhile, a counter-trend is at work: the growing number of teachers working under emergency permits, which in many cases is but a bureaucratic fig leaf that means they walked in off the street. Those numbers are so great--three in four teachers hired in L.A. Unified this year--that "on the job" training is becoming the norm.

The problem is that most don't stick around long enough for that training to pay off, with as many as half quitting in the first year. Teaching in many urban areas has become a temporary job like waiting on tables while looking for that big break in show business.

It's understandable why many quit. One such teacher, who works at a middle school in South-Central, was nearly in tears as she described her experience.

An aspiring screenwriter, she had never taught before and received only five days of training in things such as how to record attendance. When she arrived at the school this fall, she wasn't even given a lesson guide. She had 10 books for 40 students. She's been all but ignored by the principal and her more experienced colleagues. Students curse at her and threaten her. One student who is still in school there slapped a teacher.

Once she taught an entire period in a classroom with blood on the floor and desks--from a student fight. Janitors had been called but didn't show up.

"It's the most horrible, horrible place I've ever been in in my entire life," she said.

Still, she needs the job, so she didn't want her name used. She hopes to stick it out until at least after Christmas. But she's not confident she can. Then, the revolving door will turn and some other aspirant will take her place.



[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)

City Guide

[Restaurants](#)
[On the Town](#)
[Sales of the Month](#)
[Tech Talk](#)
[The Goods](#)
[Top Docs '97](#)
[Consumer](#)
[Coming Up](#)
[Archives](#)
[Best of Boston '99](#)
[Best of Boston '98](#)
[Best of Boston '97](#)
[boston.com](#)
[New England Travel](#)
[Elegant WEDDING](#)

Features

Boston
 Magazine
[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)

They're better than you think! That's the good news. The bad news: Pulling weaker schools up may be dragging strong schools down.

The Shocking Truth about our Public Schools

By Jon Marcus

Anthony McGonigle works at his desk completing a manuscript over which he has been toiling resolutely for a week. His face is rapt in concentration, his lips are pursed, and he is trying hard to shut out the surrounding distractions. After all, his social status, self-esteem, career success, and future financial comfort hinge on the eventual outcome of this process.



Anthony is 10. He is in the fifth grade. Today he is finishing a composition about whales, one of his assignments at MCAS camp, a boot camp to prepare him for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test that will determine whether he and tens of thousands of other Massachusetts kids like him will ultimately graduate from high school.

Already a veteran of the MCAS, Anthony took it for the first time last year. He thinks he did okay, he says, barely looking up from working on his topic sentence. As for his classmates, he says: "Some kids were stressed out."

A lot of Massachusetts children and their parents are stressed out about the MCAS test, so many that there were more elementary school applicants than anticipated for this first-ever drill camp run by the Waltham Public Schools, where young children in small groups study memorization techniques such as Venn diagrams and mnemonic devices-remembering a phrase by learning the first letter of each word, for example.

Their anxiety is understandable. The test, the most far-reaching consequence of the multibillion-dollar 1993 Education Reform Act, is designed to measure whether students have mastered what the act requires every Massachusetts child to be taught. It has become as weighty as a college-entrance examination and, at about 13 hours, is an hour longer than the Massachusetts bar exam. Authorities decreed last month that schools be graded on their performance, and the results can raise or lower property values. Towns with long-standing athletic rivalries now compete over their test scores. In Boston last year, every fourth, eighth, and tenth grader got a recorded phone call from the mayor reminding them about the test and giving study tips. The city also sent a letter to more than 15,000 students, and 8,600 MCAS fact sheets were distributed to public-housing residents. And, of course, beginning with the class now in the ninth grade, students will not be

allowed to graduate unless they pass. "Try not to think about the fact that if you do badly, you'll not only be jeopardizing your future, you'll also be letting down your country," an editorial cartoon showed a teacher deadpan to her class.

"It's a loaded gun," says Erica Kurkjian, one of the instructors at the Waltham MCAS camp. "The joke is, if you can open up a Princeton Review [test preparation program] for the MCAS, you'd be a rich person."

You'd also be too late. The test-prep company Kaplan, along with Simon & Schuster, already plans to publish a parent's guide to the fourth-grade MCAS test in January, complete with practice questions. An eighth-grade guide comes out in February.

This frenzied focus on preparing for the test has obscured its most significant effect, even as the MCAS process comes to a climax over the next few months with the setting of the passing score for high school graduation: It is changing our schools in ways many people probably did not anticipate. Whether this is for the better or the worse is in the eye of the beholder, but if the beholder is a parent in a Massachusetts school district, he or she has virtually nothing to say about it. Local control of schools, once almost a religious credo in America, has quietly disappeared into the maw of the MCAS, whose time and content constraints now nearly entirely determine what will or will not be taught at every public school in Massachusetts.

And while families in high-achieving districts in the Boston suburbs may believe the MCAS generally won't affect them, the truth is that this noble plan to raise up bad schools may be dragging good schools down. Even though wealthy towns may have the most to lose, so far many of them have been the last to notice. Some of the very programs and electives that made many of these schools successful are in fact already gone, or at risk.

"There's a real disjunction between what people know about what education reform once was, and what it's become," says Alan Stoskopf, an associate program director of the acclaimed Massachusetts-based national social studies program "Facing History and Ourselves," which teaches about the Holocaust and civil rights: "Massachusetts public education needs improvement. Who would argue with that? But the Newtons and the Brooklines will suffer right along with the Attleboros and the Reverses and the Brocktons."

This may come as a surprise to most suburban parents, says Dan French, the state's former director of curriculum and instruction, who resigned in part because of his concerns about the impact of the MCAS test. "They may become aware when they find that there are fewer options for their kids," French says. "The general pattern that we're seeing is an incredible reduction in electives."

And that, in turn, may mean an education that kids find dull or parents think is ineffective, says Susan Fay, an eighth-grade teacher in Waltham. Beside, says Fay, "The whole child isn't just math, English, science, and social studies. The whole child is things like social skills. And we don't have time for that any more. Now we're all business. What people are forgetting is, we're not making cars here. We're

building children."

Education is America's preoccupation, and has been since the launch of Sputnik shook the nation's intellectual self-esteem. With the space race long since won, anxiety has shifted to a different kind of global competition-economic-and there has been renewed mistrust of schools. The percentage of Americans who have confidence in public schools has dropped from 58 percent to 36 percent in just the last two decades; a third of parents and 59 percent of employers believe a high school diploma is no guarantee that a student has even learned the basics. The criticism runs in both directions; 81 percent of teachers say parents do a poor job bringing up their children.

The reality is that our kids are pretty smart, and our schools are better than we seem to think. Nationally, SAT math scores have been rising for a decade, and verbal scores are holding steady, even as a larger and larger proportion of the population takes the college-entrance examination; by all rights, under these circumstances, the scores should be declining. Dropout rates have fallen, minority college attendance is up, and more students are going into science and engineering.

Yet schools and teachers have become "the favorite punching bag for just about everybody these days, especially in Massachusetts," says Bruce Stronach, provost at Becker College, in Worcester, who taught in Japan for 17 years and thinks U.S. schools are better. Educators, he says disapprovingly, are depicted as "the Keystone Cops and the gang who couldn't shoot straight rolled into one, churning out illiterate students who can barely trudge through freshman year in college."

In fact, according to assessment tests and other measures, Massachusetts schools are among the nation's best. Students here rank fourth nationally in reading, sixth in math, and eighth in science on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, administered by the U.S.

Department of Education. They scored higher this spring in reading than 69 percent of their peers across the country on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; a third of the state's third graders were at the advanced level, compared to 19 percent nationwide. A Boston College correlation of NAEP results with international tests found that, in eighth-grade science, Massachusetts students performed as well as, or better than, their counterparts in 40 out of 41 other countries, including Germany and Japan; only kids in Singapore were rated higher. More students study algebra and upper-level math and science than the national average, and Massachusetts also has the fifth-lowest high school dropout rate, the nation's highest percentage of graduates who enroll in college, and the third-highest proportion of students who take the SAT. Massachusetts students' SAT results have risen steadily since 1994; last year, they were the highest in a decade.

"We have problems, but they're in specific kinds of school systems, and those tend to be urban systems" with large numbers of low-income, minority, and nonnative-English-speaking students, says George Madaus, a professor at BC and its Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Policy. Nonetheless, he says, "there has been a generalized distrust of all schools and all teachers."

Of course, comparisons of schools are often made across time, rather than across borders, and it's harder to measure whether the quality of education has eroded over the last few decades. If it has, it's done so during a period when schools have absorbed troubled and bilingual students they once would not have been required to enroll. Earlier generations went to school when bilingual education was virtually nonexistent, and when many students left for perfectly respectable industrial jobs that paid well, and were available to dropouts, or they attended vocational programs with no expectation they would go to college or meet high academic standards. The high school graduation rate did not approach 50 percent until the middle of this century, yet while only 20 percent of those graduates went on to college, now more than 62 percent do. Even some of Boston's most notoriously troubled schools have come a long way in a relatively short time. At South Boston High School, for example, more than half of all graduates now go on to college, compared to barely one in 10 in 1972.

Still, "for whatever reason, people always think that things were better in the past," says Stronach. "If anybody actually knew what conditions were like then, they wouldn't want to go back. For those of us who grew up in the '50s and '60s, the past has a rosy glow around it, but if you look at schools-whether it's integration or teaching methodologies-I think things are definitely better today."

Nor, in fact, are students proving unprepared for college. Three federal government surveys since 1983 have found no evidence of a significant increase in the demand for remedial education, and U.S. universities have the world's second-highest graduation rate-more evidence, says former Harvard Graduate School of Education Professor David Breneman, that public schools are doing their jobs. "We've had this strange phenomenon where everybody says our higher education system is the envy of the world, and yet we're saying our public schools are the worst," says Breneman, now dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. "Those two statements seem to me to be fundamentally at odds. How could a magnificent higher education system be built on the back of a failing K-12 system?"

Clarke Fowler, who teaches early-childhood education at Salem State College, is more blunt. "If our teachers are so stupid," he asks facetiously, "how come our kids are so smart?"

So whose purpose does it serve to say successful public schools are failing? Well-meaning legislators, policymakers, and parents who think standards should be even higher, of course, but also people who support alternatives including school choice and voucher programs for private or parochial school tuition. "There are some very powerful forces out there that are doing everything they can to undermine support for public schools in favor of everything from charter schools to profit-making schools, you name it," Breneman says. "The big push from certain quarters seems to be to undercut support for basic public schools."

Adds Alfie Kohn of Belmont, author of the book *The Schools Our Children Deserve*: "If I were going to try to undermine democratic public education, the first thing I would do would be to come up with a

test that makes the schools look bad regardless of what other indicators showed. People without the first idea of how kids learn have adopted a top-down, heavy-handed, test-driven, business-influenced approach to raising standards, which is making great schools worse as the curriculum is hijacked in an effort to raise scores on tests."

Moriah Hoefgen-Harvey knows the impact of the MCAS test more intimately than most other 15-year-old high school students. When she was a freshman at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, she got to choose from a menu of English classes, including college preparatory English and a course called Adolescence and Literature. "I took those because English has always been my best subject," Hoefgen-Harvey says.

This year, freshmen are piled so high with required courses that it is all but impossible for them to fit in electives, or for faculty to find the time to teach them. Rindge and Latin's highly lauded 30-year-old pilot school has already cut 13 electives, its administrators say. And Hoefgen-Harvey had to take a new world literature course that, she says, "didn't challenge me at all. It was preparation for the MCAS test."

She protested by refusing to take the test. "It's just lumping all the kids into one category," says Hoefgen-Harvey. "There's no room for diversity. There's no room for different kinds of learning. People should be able to mold their education to fit their own abilities and interests."

Students have been quicker than their parents to see electives disappearing, or at risk, in Massachusetts schools that are trying to align themselves with the required academic frameworks measured by the test. "Do parents know about the canceling of the English electives? Nope. That's a crime. They'd go ballistic," says Linda Nathan, headmaster of the Boston Arts Academy, who refused to let her own son take the MCAS test last year. "Schools are cutting way back on what they're able to offer."

The well-regarded history curriculum at Lincoln-Sudbury High School, for example, has been threatened with elimination. Danvers has dropped history electives for grades nine and 10 in favor of yearlong survey courses. Brockton High School canceled sociology, psychology, and anthropology. "We tried not to," says Sue Szachowicz, acting housemaster and former head of the social studies department. "I think the kids got a lot out of it. What does a 14-year-old like to talk about more than himself? But they're not in the frameworks. Those programs are being lost all over the place." Beyond eliminating some elective courses, Kohn says, "what escapes detection is how existing courses are being dumbed down in an effort to raise MCAS scores."

Many schools anticipate big changes in their social studies programs once they see the scores from last year's social studies MCAS test next month. Upheavals also are expected in the science wing. While most Massachusetts high schools have traditionally offered a progression of introductory science in the ninth grade, biology in the tenth, chemistry in the eleventh, and physics in the twelfth, the state curriculum requires them to cover all three subjects before the end of tenth grade.

(Concerned about this squeeze, the Board of Education has considered moving the tenth-grade science test to the eleventh grade.)

The most insidious result, says Bob Schaeffer of the Cambridge-based National Center for Fair and Open Testing, is that "schools devolve into being test prep centers focused on the relatively narrow curriculum. The closer you get to tests, the more it's drill-and-kill, meaning it's mind-numbing, it stifles thinking, and it turns kids off."

That's why Tim Wise, a Tufts University researcher on global development and environment, refused to let his own fourth-grade son, Jackson, take the MCAS test last year. "We were shocked and alarmed at the scope and the size of the test and the imposition that it was putting on the curriculum," says Wise, who lives in Cambridge. "It's imposing curriculum that is the antithesis of what a curriculum should be, which is inspiring, innovative, and responsive to the interests and abilities of students."

In May, the Board of Education voted to spread the exams out over four more grades, add a sixth-grade math test, and replace the third-grade Iowa test with a new MCAS exam for that grade. That means students will be tested in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and tenth grades, with a corresponding impact on the amount of class time spent preparing them to pass.

"It's affecting the curriculum in many ways, and on balance more negative than positive," says John D'Auria, principal of Wellesley Middle School, which has consistently posted some of the highest test scores in the state. "In an area like science where we have designed a sequence we thought was in the best interest of our students, that thinking gets undone because of where the board decides certain science testing will take place. We don't want to have to undo all this." Affluent communities with successful education systems often have the most at stake. "In many of those communities, you're seeing maybe 40 to 50 percent of the student body going to the most competitive colleges in the country," says Tom Scott, former Concord-Carlisle superintendent and now director of EDCO, a collaborative of 20 top public school systems, including Brookline, Carlisle, Concord, Newton, Lincoln, Sudbury, and Weston. "That's not to suggest that there isn't room for improvement in every district, because there is. But there is great history and social science in middle and high schools in these communities. Their kids come home excited, stimulated about what they're learning, and they just don't see the necessity for destroying those programs."

This hits home with Tamara Berman, who teaches seventh and eighth grade in Cambridge. "What my kids want to do is cover the 20th century," says Berman. "The way to get them real excited about history and loving history is to give them stuff they want to study. But you're not supposed to teach the 20th century anymore. It's not part of the frameworks" for eighth-graders. Deborah Meier, principal of Boston's Mission Hill School, says teaching almost anything in-depth is harder now. "If the only thing that is going to be measured is what's on the test, then any time you spend five days on the same thing, it's not productive, because there's going to be only one question on that thing."

An even more dramatic case in point is Lincoln-Sudbury High School, whose innovative social studies program has been highly ranked in surveys of alumni, and is similar to the curriculum at private Milton Academy. Students also have been voting with their feet; even though only three years of history is required by the school, the overwhelming majority of students choose to take four. "So when they're sitting in a history class, they're there because they want to be there," says Bill Schechter, a history teacher at the school. "That makes an enormous difference."

The program includes electives such as western civilization, art history, Asian studies, African studies, 20th-century American history, the 1950s, the 1960s, economics, and psychology, and is so in-depth that students in Schechter's class on Henry David Thoreau build a replica of Thoreau's famous cabin on Walden Pond. To prepare their students for the MCAS test, school officials say, Lincoln-Sudbury would have to offer two years of general world history and one year of American history survey classes, leaving only one year for electives, and most of the existing courses would be cut.

"MCAS lowers the bar. It will destroy our elective program. The only things students are going to learn is that history is a drag. It's destroying the discipline in order to save it," Schechter says. "If you could show me that Lincoln-Sudbury had to make the sacrifice because this would help poor schools, I would be swayed," he says. "But this is going to destroy the program at Lincoln-Sudbury, and I don't think that's going to help poor schools."

History teachers at 18 schools have jointly called for overhauling the state social studies framework, which they call a Trivial Pursuit-style list of names and dates; authorities concede that it will likely have to be rewritten. "It is possible to have a common core without requiring an overstuffed survey of 258 topics in two years, and that's what the state needs to do," says Jonathan Landman, a doctoral student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education who is studying the impact of the MCAS test. As it stands, says Landman, the test "is making it impossible to offer the kinds of things a lot of teachers and a lot of districts think are valuable." Take "Facing History and Ourselves," the in-depth, multidisciplinary social studies program on the Holocaust and civil rights whose length varies from one school to another-eight to 10 weeks in Brookline, for example, and a year at Boston Latin School. "Where does a teacher find the time to pause to do the kinds of things I think the Education Reform Act wanted to see us doing, which unfortunately I think has been blanded out?" asks Stoskopf, the program's associate director. "I think we're going to institutionalize mediocrity."

Of course, not everyone agrees that it's a bad thing to reconsider schools' curricula. "They were presumably addressing the needs of students in math, English, social studies, and science before," David Driscoll, the commissioner of education, says wryly. "Then why do they all of a sudden need more time? It must mean they were not addressing their standards. There is nothing that precludes people, from a time point of view, from having electives. In fact, I think it's just the opposite. If they focus on the standards that they should, they will in fact have enough time to have electives."

Even teachers and administrators say there's room to pare some programs. "I'm not impressed by people who complain about the loss of variety and diversity in the curriculum," says Richard Elmore, senior research fellow with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, and a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "Even in the so-called high-performing school districts, which probably aren't as high-performing as they say they are, that turns out largely to be a cover for providing high-class academic content to some kids and not to others. I'm not saying that this effect of the test, if it exists, is necessarily good, because the response may not be in the direction of making high-quality content available for all kids. But anything that reduces the complexity of the curriculum, particularly in secondary schools, is probably more likely to be a net benefit than a cost."

Problem is, says Landman, not enough parents are paying attention to weigh in on one side or the other. "Until your own child is up against the wall and was going to sign up for the course that's been in the school system for 20 years and everybody loves it, and it's not there any more-until that happens-it's not your issue," he says. "When the electives start disappearing, there are going to be a lot of folks in those towns who are going to be up in arms."

A lot of people are already up in arms. Last year, students in Boston, Cambridge, Danvers, and Newton refused to take the MCAS test, almost all with the backing of their parents. Their schools were less supportive, since each absent student gets a zero and pulls down the average. Seven Danvers dissenters, for example, were suspended for three days. That example hasn't discouraged at least 35 parents from trying to organize a boycott of the test this year at the Graham & Parks School, in Cambridge. Anti-MCAS petitions are also circulating in Springfield and in other towns and cities.

When Michigan imposed a similar assessment test, one quarter of that state's eleventh graders refused to take it. In Massachusetts so far, "I think people have to some extent rightly given the Board of Education the benefit of the doubt and said, Yeah, the Education Reform Act called for some sort of assessment to see progress," says Wise, the Cambridge parent who would not allow his son to take the MCAS test. "I think you're only going to see the concern and the activism on it build, and there are going to be a lot more expressions of opposition. People are going to refuse to take this test, especially as the stakes rise."

And the stakes are rising fast. Besides requiring that high school sophomores pass the test to graduate, Driscoll has raised the idea of basing teachers' pay on the performance of their students, something that is being tried in several other states. In Boston, MCAS and other assessment-test scores are now being used to determine whether fifth-grade students are promoted to the sixth grade. "MCAS was intended to be a tool. It was intended to help guide education systems to look at their curriculum and to look at their teaching," says Scott, of the suburban educational collaborative. "Unfortunately, what has now happened is that MCAS has become the be all and end all." This despite a history of scoring errors by the test maker, Advanced Systems in Measurement & Evaluation of Dover, New Hampshire, which mistakenly lowered the results of 50,000 students in a 1996

Kentucky test worth millions in budget allocations to schools, and incorrectly raised the outcomes of low-performing Maine eleventh graders in 1997.

What else lies ahead? Among other things, high dropout rates and cheating, based on other states' experience. Since Texas started to require an assessment test for high school graduation, only half of all black and Hispanic students have made it through the ninth grade to high school graduation three years later. "The Texas test is less challenging than the MCAS, and hence I would expect the impact of the MCAS to be even more severe in Massachusetts," says Walt Haney, a professor at the Center for the Study of Testing at BC, who has studied the Texas assessment system.

Not only are marginal students more likely to drop out if they fail the test in the tenth grade, says Szachowicz, the Brockton social studies head, but there's no incentive for a school to make them stay when it has reason to fear their test scores might lower the district's average. "There's already talk in schools about, Is there a way to eliminate these kids?" she says disdainfully. Making them repeat a grade may not work, either. When New York City schools held back all fourth- and seventh-graders who failed to meet a cut-off score on a standardized test, according to a study by the mayor's office, they made no gains in achievement and their dropout rate went up. "Students are going to get caught in a cycle of remediation where the ones who aren't doing well on the tests are going to be put into programs that just do more drill-and-kill kinds of things" hardly likely to instill a love of learning, says Adria Steinberg, program director at Jobs for the Future, former editor of The Harvard Education Letter, and former academic coordinator of the Rindge School of Technical Arts in Cambridge.

Cheating has been close behind wherever the importance of assessment tests has grown. In Georgia, there were 25 cases of alleged cheating last year, up from one just three years ago. Five schools in Alabama are under investigation. New security rules were put in place in Louisiana after a newspaper showed that improvements in some schools' test scores were statistically impossible. Maryland and Kentucky posted big gains in fourth-grade reading scores, but it turned out they had improperly excluded special-education students. The same thing happened in Connecticut, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Baltimore schools published a teachers' guide to the Maryland assessment tests that included some of the actual questions with slight changes of wording. And in Texas, where the tests have been preceded by pep rallies, and where teachers and principals are eligible for bonuses of up to \$25,000 for raising scores, alleged cheating is under investigation in 12 school districts. Five principals and teachers were forced to resign for erasing wrong answers on their students' tests, and a grand jury has indicted the entire Austin Independent School District for document-tampering, a criminal offense.

Cheating is already under investigation in a dozen Massachusetts school districts where students were allegedly given MCAS questions in advance, or were allowed to take their answer books home and make corrections-even though the test has yet to count toward graduation. In Wakefield, nearly 300 fourth-graders were given a practice test with the same questions they were later asked on the actual exam; school officials say it was a coincidence. There are

complaints that a teacher at an elementary school in Melrose handed her fourth-grade students back their answer books the day after they were tested to correct the grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Since the test was allowed to be given over a week, students in some towns shared the subject of the long composition question on the English test with friends in other towns who had not yet seen it; as a result, next year the long composition question will be given on the same day statewide. And since the same answer books were used for several days of testing, some teachers suspect their students went back and corrected their previous days' work. The book is being revised, and state officials are advising that students be tested in smaller groups so teachers can keep a closer eye on them.

The test itself is still in flux—a moving target, aggravated school officials say. Given only twice so far, it is a work in progress. It has already been reduced in length by 20 percent in response to parent complaints, though it still takes as long as 13 hours. The number of test sessions for fourth-grade students has been pared down and the length of each increased from 45 minutes to an hour; the proportion of multiple-choice questions has gone up, the number of open-response questions has been trimmed, and the reading passages have been reworked in response to criticism that seven out of eight were over the heads of the students being tested. In addition to the state frameworks for history, those for math and science are still under review. That leaves school systems preparing for an exam that may change, and students struggling to answer questions about material they haven't yet been taught. As it stands, for instance, students are tested on the Civil War a week before they're scheduled to cover it in class. "I don't think it's fair," says Dan Gouthro of East Bridgewater, who took the test last year in tenth grade. "In my history class, we studied from prehistory to the Renaissance and most of the questions on the MCAS were related to World War I and World War II." On top of that, the Board of Education has delayed setting the passing grade until this winter, meaning students who receive their scores next month will have to wait to find out if they're doing well enough to graduate.

Driscoll says the passing score will, at the outset, be "reasonable," then raised gradually over time. "The purpose in 1993 was to see to it that kids know and are able to handle standards at a certain level," the education commissioner says. "And you need to stick to that, as the law mandates. To be waylaid by handwringing about increased dropouts or whatever it happens to be is backing down from the responsibility of this statute. There will certainly be academic casualties, there's no question. But what's worse? People who are unable to measure up [on the tenth-grade MCAS test], then have other opportunities [to retake it] in the eleventh and twelfth grade, or is it to continue to graduate kids who don't have the skills to be successful in life?"

Still, fearful of a massive failure rate, the very business groups that lobbied for the Education Reform Act in the first place now are urging a progressive system of degrees including highest honors, high honors, honors, and basic, cutting down on the number of students who would flunk out altogether. The groups, including the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, also think that measures other than the MCAS test should be counted toward a student's high school graduation.

That was, in fact, the original idea. "The system shall employ a variety of assessment instruments," the Education Reform Act reads. "As much as is practicable, especially in the case of students whose performance is difficult to assess using conventional methods, such instruments shall include consideration of work samples, projects, and portfolios, and shall facilitate authentic and direct gauges of student performance."

Relying instead on the MCAS test alone also disputes the findings of the National Academy of Sciences that "no single test score can be considered a definitive measure of a student's knowledge. An educational decision that will have a major impact on a test taker should not be made solely or automatically on the basis of a single test score," but instead on a variety of factors including grades, teacher evaluations, and attendance. Meanwhile, Massachusetts' march toward standardized assessment tests comes even as college and university admissions offices retreat from using them to measure applicants. Nearly 300 colleges have stopped requiring the SAT for admission in favor of personal projects, writings, interviews, and evaluations—up by one-third in three years. A two-year government study released this summer showed that the rigor of a student's high school curriculum is a better predictor of whether the student will graduate from college than either high school grades or test scores.

Other states that are revamping their schools have managed to consider other factors in addition to test scores. Vermont, for instance, administers a writing and math test, but also considers student portfolios of art and other subjects, career skills, or verbal presentations. Driscoll said in July that he wanted to expand the testing process in Massachusetts to encompass student portfolios of writing samples, science projects, and experiments, but the next day he said it would be too costly and subjective.

"Those of us who have been involved in education reform saw a much more comprehensive test, a test that perhaps had an array and a portfolio of what children can do, not only what they know but what they can do with their knowledge," says Virginia Anderson, associate executive secretary of the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association. "No single one-shot high-stakes test, no matter how good, is capable of measuring whether a kid is fit to graduate from high school," says French, the former state curriculum director. "We need to return to the original education reform language, which calls for a multilayered assessment system where there are a variety of ways to display one's knowledge. And if it's too expensive, then you're making the choice to sacrifice some kids to the system."

Paul Reville, who cofounded the business alliance, chairs the Education Reform Review Commission, and served for five years on the Board of Education, thinks that everyone should just slow down. "We're going to face a train wreck in terms of the high stakes hitting on this test," he says. "We are concerned that we keep moving toward standards for everyone, but we want it to be part of a system that includes more local control for a period until the frameworks are effective and reliable."

"In theory," Reville says, "it was not the intention of the state to take day-to-day curriculum decisions out of the hands of local education

professionals. It was the intention of the state to be much clearer about what the expectations were."

[HOME](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[PERSONALS](#)

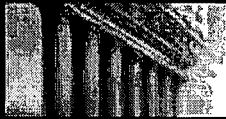
[MASTHEAD](#)

[FEEDBACK](#)

[ADVERTISERS](#)


[Home](#) - [Yahoo!](#) - [Help](#)
BUSINESS WIRE
 for Today's News on the Net

CLICK HERE



Invest on the
WWW

DATEK
ONLINE



JUST \$9.99 PER ONLINE TRADE!

[\[Business \]](#) | [\[US Market \]](#) | [\[By Industry \]](#) | [\[IPO \]](#) | [\[AP \]](#) | [\[S&P \]](#) | [\[International \]](#) | [\[PRNews \]](#) | [\[BizWire \]](#) | [\[CCN \]](#)
Monday December 6, 1:07 pm Eastern Time

Company Press Release

Oklahoma School Shooting: There Is a Copycat Phenomena in Effect, According to Child Psychologist

LOS ANGELES--(ENTERTAINMENT WIRE)--Dec. 6, 1999--A psychologist who has been covering school shootings in the United States said there is a copycat phenomena in effect -- "Kids get in a rage and think of past shootings as a model to impart their murderous rage." This according to Los Angeles child psychologist, Robert R. Butterworth, Ph.D.

According to Butterworth's review of psychological and criminal research, "Children with early delinquent and aggressive delayed emotional and intellectual functioning, a history of being continually disruptive, difficulty getting along with other children, and those who come from homes with disruptive parenting, are most prone to act out their rage through murder," said Butterworth.

According to Butterworth, most children who commit violent crime show an early combination of personality and family factors that include having trouble getting along with playmates, doing poorly in school and having few friends. By the age of 10, they're picking fights and labeled by their peers as social outcasts.

These children typically come from families where parents are poor at disciplining because they are either indifferent, neglectful, or too coercive, or they use harsh physical punishment.

"All the experts that want to blame child shootings on the media, video games or guns have failed to understand the research on violence and children and the role of personality in creating these youngsters," said Butterworth.

"We now know, from numerous examples of child murder in small communities and middle-class homes, that instances of children killing have invaded the heartland of America and that all children are at risk. Research also indicates that children who kill feel that they have no purpose in society, do not believe that they are emotionally important to their parents, and exhibit chronic low self-esteem," said Butterworth.

Butterworth warns that until it is known for certain what makes these child killers tick, it is dangerous to release them into society, especially when there is no solid research indicating that they may be cured and prevented from killing again. "Teaching at-risk children to choose peaceful solutions to their problems sounds great, but it was never designed to curb murderous youth," said Butterworth.

Child psychologist Robert R. Butterworth, Ph.D., has assisted radio, TV and print media since 1984,

Related Quotes		
ADJ	11225.01	-61.17
IXIC	3546.01	+25.38
SPC	1423.33	-9.97
TIX	489.85	+15.74
PSE	832.28	+16.09
delayed 20 mins - disclaimer		
Get Quotes		

find answers and provide insight to enhance understanding of psychological issues related to children and adolescents.

Butterworth has conducted extensive surveys focused on children and youth, social, political and trauma issues. His comments, observations and op-ed articles have appeared in most of the major newspapers in the United States and worldwide.

He has been seen quite often on NBC, CBS and ABC network news, especially during monumental events such as the Oklahoma City bombing, Gulf War, during disasters and violence and psychological reactions to breaking news that relates to children. He has been following the numerous school shootings and commenting on the causes for these tragedies.

Contact:

International Trauma Associates
Robert R. Butterworth, Ph.D., 213/487-7339
(pager-24 hours)
213/388-5167 fax
robert@drbutterworth.net

Related News Categories: [education](#), [entertainment](#)

 [Help](#)

Copyright 1994-1999 Yahoo! All Rights Reserved. Copyright © 1999 Business Wire. All rights reserved. All the news releases provided by [Business Wire](#) are copyrighted. Any forms of copying other than an individual user's personal reference without express written permission is prohibited. Further distribution of these materials is strictly forbidden, including but not limited to, posting, emailing, faxing, archiving in a public database, redistributing via a computer network or in a printed form.

See our [Important Disclaimers and Legal Information](#).
[Questions or Comments?](#)

Dismal test scores impede move to boost academic standards

OUR VIEW Facing criticism, states shift to gradual school reform.

In state after state these days, parents are getting bad news: Their children are failing rigorous state-mandated competency tests in stunning numbers.

The tests are the result of a long-fought battle to measure the performance not just of students but also of their schools. Expose problems, reformers thought, and parents and administrators will demand improvement.

Instead, many now are demanding an end to the tests.

After parents complained to legislators earlier this year, for instance, Wisconsin backed off plans to make passing a statewide test a condition of high school graduation.

Then last week, several school superintendents asked Virginia education officials to rethink their decision to deny diplomas to students who fail the state's rigorous new tests as of 2004. The exams are being challenged by educators and parents, some of whom believe pro-voucher politicians approved them deliberately to embarrass public schools.

And in several other states, parents and some superintendents are pressuring legislators to back away from tough educational accountability, sometimes by going to court.

That's a dangerous course and a needless one. States already are demonstrating their willingness to adjust educational standards without abandoning them:

► Last week, Los Angeles scaled back its plan to end social promotion, which had automatically advanced children from grade to grade regardless of their achievement. The problem: Under the new plan, 350,000 children would have had to repeat a grade.

► In Massachusetts, state education officials set a "D" pass rate on a new statewide test after realizing that 80% of minority children would fail to receive a diploma using a higher cutoff score.

With schools in such stunningly bad shape, a phased approach is unavoidable.

Los Angeles school officials, for example, never gave teachers the help they needed to ramp up fast.

Report card

In 1990, the nation's governors endorsed an ambitious set of education goals for the year 2000. Here's how the nation stands:

The good news:

► Increased percentage of eighth-grade students reading proficiently from 29% to 33%.

► Increased percentage of students proficient in math in grades 4, 8 and 12.

► Increased percentage of preschoolers whose parents read to them regularly from 66% to 69%.

The bad news:

► Percentage of high school seniors who are proficient in reading failed to improve beyond 40%.

► Percentage of high school graduates, age 18 to 24, fell from 86% to 85%.

Source: National Education Goals Panel

And while Virginia's tough tests won national acclaim when they first were approved, the state now is cited by national educators as an example of a place that tried to do too much too soon.

But the fact that some states' standards require modification doesn't mean no standards are worthwhile. Even at its lowered pass rate, Massachusetts still is asking more of students than was previously demanded.

Some believe the next controversy will arise in New York, where beginning next year students will need to pass the rigorous English Regents exam to earn a diploma. Succeeding classes of seniors will have to pass Regents exams in math, social studies and science.

So far, New York appears on the right track. Like Massachusetts, the state has set a low passing score. Over time, it plans to phase in higher pass rates, giving students adequate opportunity to prepare.

New York education Commissioner Richard Mills says it's the parents, not the students, going weak-kneed over school accountability.

Mills is right. Governors may need to address legitimate complaints about testing flaws. But parents and educators need to understand that the days of accountability-free education have disappeared.

High-stakes tests are failures

OPPOSING VIEW Exams are poorly constructed, focus on the obscure.

By Monty Neill

"Stay the course!" That's the slogan offered to defend the use of high-stakes tests in the face of a rising tide of criticism from students, parents, teachers, civil rights activists and educational researchers who recognize that the course leads straight off a cliff.

Of course, many schools need improvement: The U.S. generally does a woeful job of educating low-income and minority students. But test-driven reform often makes the problems worse by undermining both educational quality and equity.

Look at what has happened in Texas, one of the first states to go the high-stakes testing route. The graduation rate for African-Americans and Latinos dropped 10 points to 50%, as students were held back and forced out of school. Though average scores on the state test increased, neutral measures, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading exam, show little or no real progress.

Many new tests are tough but not reasonable or good. They're pegged at a ridiculously high level that many competent adults couldn't

pass. What else explains the high failure rate in communities whose students regularly earn admission to prestigious colleges?

Even in the academic areas the exams are supposed to measure, they mostly focus on factual recall, often of very obscure information. Such tests should not control our children's learning — unless we are training them for "Trivial Pursuit."

The truth is that many of the states that have made the most progress toward the nation's "educational goals" test less and with lower consequences than average. Many excellent schools serving low-income children who go on to succeed in college do not employ high-stakes tests. This demonstrates that schools can be improved without reliance on unreasonable exams as gatekeepers for grade promotion and graduation.

The choice is between high-stakes testing and high-quality education. Across the U.S., a movement is building against the misuse of tests. All of us should hope the resistance forces politicians to change the course before the educational futures of millions of children are further damaged.

Monty Neill is executive director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (Fair-Test) in Cambridge, Mass.

'Only' 5 kids — this time

Just before the start of classes Monday, a 13-year-old child opened fire at an Oklahoma middle school. The good news is that he shot only five, and they were only wounded.

The bad news is that even President Clinton used "only" to describe the casualties. In the past 26 months, nine other school shootings have averaged eight wounded and more than three dead. Against that, five wounded children can seem almost unworthy of attention. When 5,000-plus Americans under age 19 are shot dead every year, the wounding of five actually sounds almost tolerable.

The terrible truth is that the repetition of the story is numbing. Once upon a time, the shooting of five children by another child would have been the crime of the year. Now it is perhaps the crime of the month.

Indeed, we have heard this same essential story too many times in the past few years: An unhappy child, equipped with a powerful firearm (often, as in this case, a fast-firing semiautomatic) acting out unrecognized misery on random targets. From Colorado to Oregon to Arkansas and Kentucky, the pattern is so fa-

miliar it can be recited from memory.

Part of the problem — perhaps the core of the problem — is the inability of parents and teachers to connect with the most troubled kids. Seeing that they are disturbed is not easy, even for the most empathetic educator or patient parent. These days, the signs of instability — slipping grades, threats, obsession with the macabre, even a tendency to brood heavily — can be either a routine aspect of adolescence or the precursor to murder.

At the same time, it is one of the ironies of human nature that having to stay alert all of the time compromises the ability to be alert when it matters. Remaining alert to the signs of children on the brink is hard work, and disturbing, too. Fearing the worst of every sad or angry young child exacts a terrible price.

Laws and limits and lectures all have their place. But nothing can supplant the need to lock on to troubled children. In the increasingly edgy "culture of violence," it is the lapse of adult-child connection — sort of a shared desensitizing — that most powerfully predicts tragedy.

REVIEW & OUTLOOK (Editorial):

Teacher Manifesto

The Wall Street Journal via Dow Jones

Back in one of the icier hours of the Cold War, some obstreperous Prague dissidents got together and signed a manifesto demanding that basic human rights be respected behind the Iron Curtain. For years their only reward was ridicule at the workplace, intimidation by authorities, and other recounted miseries. Later though, when scribes sat down to chronicle the Cold War's end, it became clear that the simple Charter 77 document had been an early beacon in lighting the path to profound change.

Charter 77 came to mind when we learned this week that a group of current and former public school teachers and superintendents from across the land was signing a daring pro-market Statement of Principles for school reform. Revolutions have their course, and we can't help but sense that the humble Statement is a marker in the education revolution that is sweeping the land, one of the first giant cracks in the nation's great public school edifice.

Consider, first, the document itself. Unlike the usual proposals that come from teachers, or their unions, the Statement doesn't see public school reform as the government's job. It sees it as a market challenge.

Thus it reads: Government currently controls the vast majority of schools in this country; our system of education would be improved by a multitude of providers as opposed to a government monopoly. We're accustomed to such language in the context of venture capital. But this is a new one for teachers.

Then there is this: Teaching is a profession and good teachers deserve recognition and compensation based on their performance. In other words, au revoir to the tenure system. And: Children are the reason for education and [the] system's needs must never take precedence over the needs of the children. Taking this to heart would signify a big shift in America's public school system, which too often seems to view schools as job machines for teachers rather than being there to serve children.

As with Charter 77, the Statement's importance lies as much in its signatories as in its content. The most notable is Jaime Escalante, the Bolivian immigrant who became America's most famous math teacher. Three decades ago Mr. Escalante fought public school authorities to show the world that even the poor children of East Los Angeles were capable of becoming math stars; many of us know his story from the film "Stand and Deliver." Now Mr. Escalante is fighting for choice.

Another signatory is Anthony Trujillo, the crusading El Paso, Texas, school superintendent who dissed his state's education establishment by daring to put principals on one-year contracts and -- shocking! -- hold them accountable for their own results. Student performance in Mr. Trujillo's district vindicated his work, but his maverick ways eventually landed him out of a job. Yet another signer is Marva Collins, a Chicago teacher whose demanding high standards ruffled feathers at the Chicago School Board. (For the complete list of signatories and full text of the Principles see www.teachersvoice.org. The signers also serve on an advisory board to entrepreneur Ted Forstmann's Children's Scholarship Fund.)

These are the early dissidents, and the Statement of Principles is their samizdat. There is no doubt that they, particularly those who still work in public schools, will continue to face the

opprobrium of some peers. But it is also sure that other teachers eventually will come along to add their names to the Statement. Making educational entrepreneurs of classic public servants may take a while. But then, so did Charter 77's revolution.

END

REVIEW & OUTLOOK Editorial) --

Asides:

Presidential Games

the Wall Street Journal via Dow Jones

Kenneth Starr told reporters Friday that President Clinton had played games with the law." Mr. Clinton's proposed compromise of the Navy's use of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, announced Friday, shows that he's also playing games with defense. The sailors and Marines of the USS Eisenhower battle group, who were scheduled to go through live-fire combat training here this month, will not do so. Instead, the Eisenhower group will take part in substitute exercises elsewhere in the U.S. and abroad before reporting for duty in Europe early next year. Mr. Clinton's decision comes against the advice of virtually every senior military leader, all of whom understand the danger of playing this kind of game with defense.

SJviaNewsEDGE :PAGE: A34
SUBJECT: WSJ EXEC USA

Copyright (c) 1999 Dow Jones and Company, Inc.
Received by NewsEdge Insight: 12/06/1999 02:49:35
ID

Soccer Moms vs. Standardized Tests

By Charles J. Sykes

MILWAUKEE
After decades of endless gold stars, happy faces and inflated grades, American parents apparently were not ready for a reality check about how much our schools are really teaching our children.

Across the country, new, higher academic standards that states adopted in a spirit of educational

reform are being dumbed down, and supposedly rigorous graduation tests are being diluted or dropped, as evidence mounts that too many students will fall short of the higher expectations.

It is not surprising that more rigorous state standards have come under fire from the usual opposition coalition of civil rights groups, progressive educators and teacher unions. What is striking though, is the opposition from soccer moms.

In Wisconsin, where legislators backed off plans to require a high school graduation test, most of the opposition to the exam came not from troubled urban schools, but from affluent suburbs. A group call-

For some parents,
the word 'fail' can't
apply to their kids.

ing itself Advocates for Education and based in the Milwaukee suburb of Whitefish Bay, insisted, "High-stakes testing will be detrimental to education and unfair to children." Suburban critics in many parts of the state fretted about the pressure that tests would place on children.

After suburban parents lobbied parent-teacher organizations, the State Legislature voted to scrap the graduation test before a single student had taken it.

In New York and Massachusetts, officials yielded to pressure to set absurdly low passing grades for their new tests, while in Virginia and Arizona, state boards of education are already backing away from tests that proved to be too tough for even the so-called better schools. In Virginia, only 7 percent of schools met new achievement standards, and in Arizona, 9 out of 10 sophomores failed a new math test.

For much of this century, the educational establishment has behaved as if it were addicted to bad ideas, indulging its own wishful and romantic thinking even in the face of mounting evidence of failure. The new tests were supposed to counteract the trendy experimentation, watered-down curriculums and questionable teaching methods by introducing both accountability and consequences for failure.

But for decades, the schools had been allowed to obscure the fact that many children were not mastering basic subjects. The constant positive reinforcement of unrealistic grading and easy tests was meant not only for the children, whose self-esteem remained strong in the face of shaky math and reading abilities, but for their parents, as well.

For many of these parents, the new tests were a very rude shock. Accustomed to thinking of educational difficulties as somebody else's problem, they and their school districts suddenly faced the possibility of failure.

As reformers have belatedly discovered, they badly underestimated the extent to which parents as well as teachers and bureaucrats had a vested interest in believing that whatever else might be wrong with American education, their own children were above average. Support for high standards came with an unspoken caveat: they were quite all right when they were applied to someone else's school and someone else's child.

So instead of sounding an alarm about the need to change the way we teach our children, one state after another is fudging the test. And a remarkable number of parents have gone along with the move to ratchet down the standards, expectations and consequences.

Reforming the schools sounded like a good idea until it hit home. □

E-Etiquette

By Letitia Baldrige

WASHINGTON
hen it comes to communication, the difference between today and 10 years ago is like the difference between the first century and the 18th century. A laptop or a gadget that sits in the palm of the hand makes our investments, orders our groceries, pays our bills and hooks us up with a merchant in Hong Kong or an Alpine guide on Mont Blanc. Forget the gentle manners that were taught before the advent of the cyberspace. Gone. Finito.

But even if the traditional forms of civility have evaporated, we still need to greet one another, comfort one another and entertain and learn from one another. In the next century, innovations could allow us to embrace via computer (I wonder what a computerized hug feels like? A robot's kiss?). But in the meantime, let's draw up a set of rules that make the electronic age function more efficiently, predictably, considerately and kindly.

1. Please don't send e-mails that make angry demands on me. How off-putting when you scream: "I must have an answer by 2 p.m. tomorrow. Repeat, by 2 p.m. tomorrow." You don't know what's hap-

Letitia Baldrige is the author of "The New Complete Guide to Executive Manners."

pening in my life, and if you did, you might just change your threatening language.

2. Please don't waste my time with the latest "jokes du jour," sent to hundreds of e-mail addresses, including mine. I don't have time for the jokes, and I am not going to be impressed that you know 200 people to send them to. I start to regard the other names with suspicion. Do they

A guide to cyber-manners for the next century.

have so little work to do that they can read jokes all day, or am I the only one working under inhuman pressure?

3. Please don't order me to visit your Web page. Ask me nicely, and maybe I will. Most important, don't ask me what I think of your Web page. I don't have time to write a thoughtful response, and besides, you might not want to hear what I think.

4. When I e-mail you a thoughtful note, please don't treat it as if it never existed. At some point, you should send me a short acknowledgment: "Thanks for the important info about the oil company merger. Needed to know that. Best wishes, John." It's frustrating not to know

whether or not you received my communication.

4. In my e-mails, I will be careful with my grammar, spelling, sentence structure and punctuation. I realize that if I send a carelessly written missive, I am only diminishing myself in the eyes of everyone who reads it.

5. I will keep my e-mails, those of my staff and those of my children free of foul language.

6. I will not send messages with insulting comments about others. Nor will I spread rumors on line. I realize that what I write in cyberspace, intended for only one other pair of eyes, can be spread to millions of pairs of eyes in a split second.

7. I will send messages of congratulation to those who achieve, messages of consolation to those who are having bad luck and messages of encouragement to those who need jump starts in their lives. In addition, I may write a long, beautiful letter on good stationery.

8. In my e-letters, I will use a salutation and a closing, and state the purpose of the communication up front. I will also add a personal touch: "It was great seeing you at the Convention Hall yesterday" or, "I hope your husband has recovered from his flu by now."

To me, the great promise of cyberspace is speed. Along with the grinding efficiency of it all, just a few thoughtful words can change the entire nature of the communication. Good manners mean a quiet touch of warmth in the cold new techno world. □

The New York Times

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1999

[newsday.com](http://www.newsday.com)



Top News

Sports

Lotteries

International

National

Washington

Business

Wall Street

Entertainment

Health/Science

Regional

List of Recent School Shootings

With PM-School Shootings

By The Associated Press

Some other recent shootings involving U.S. schools:

Dec. 6, 1999 -- A 13-year-old student at Fort Gibson Middle School in Fort Gibson, Okla., wounded four classmates and was still trying to pull the trigger on an empty gun when he was subdued by a science teacher, authorities said. He said "I don't know" when asked why he did it.

May 20, 1999 -- A 15-year-old boy at Heritage High School in Conyers, Ga., opened fire with a .357-caliber Magnum and a rifle on a commons area, wounding six students. He was charged with aggravated assault and other felonies. A judge ordered him tried in adult court. His lawyers are appealing.

April 20, 1999 -- Two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., shot 12 students and a teacher to death, wound 23 before killing themselves.

May 21, 1998 -- Two teen-agers were killed and more than 20 people hurt when a teen-age boy allegedly opened fire at high school in Springfield, Ore., after killing his parents at home. Kip Kinkel, 17, was sentenced to nearly 112 years in prison on Nov. 20.

May 19, 1998 -- Three days before his graduation, an 18-year-old honor student opened fire in parking lot at high school in Fayetteville, Tenn., killing a classmate who was dating his ex-girlfriend. Jacob Davis has been sentenced to life in prison.

April 24, 1998 -- A science teacher was shot to death in front of students at eighth-grade dance at banquet hall in Edinboro, Pa. Andrew Wurst, 15, pleaded guilty to third-degree murder and other charges in September and is serving 30 to 60 years in prison.

March 24, 1998 -- Four girls and a teacher were shot to death and 10 people wounded during false fire alarm at middle school in Jonesboro, Ark., when two boys, 11 and 13, fired from the woods. Police did not suggest a motive. Both boys were convicted of murder and can be held up to age 21.

Dec. 1, 1997 -- Three students were killed and five others wounded in a hallway at Heath High School in West Paducah, Ky. One girl is left paralyzed. A 14-year-old student pleaded guilty but mentally ill to murder and is serving life in prison. When asked why he did it, he said he didn't know.

Oct. 1, 1997 -- A 16-year-old boy in Pearl, Miss., was accused of killing his mother, then going to his high school and shooting nine students, two fatally. He was sentenced to life in prison. The alleged mastermind of the attack awaits trial. Authorities have said the teens were in a cultlike group.

AP-NY-12-06-99 1425EDT

Copyright © Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

[Home](#) | [Top of Page](#)

12/06

Seattle tension mounts

Trade protests turn violent; emergency curfew declared

By Patrick McMahon
and James Cox
USA TODAY

A1

SEATTLE — Mayor Paul Schell declared a civil emergency Tuesday and imposed an all-night curfew on downtown Seattle after protesters shut down an international trade summit and clashed with police who seemed surprised by the ferocity of the crowds.

Tear gas wafted over this usually laid-back city after a day of confrontations between police and protesters who say the World Trade Organization protects corporations at the ex-

Chaos at scene, 19A

pense of ordinary workers and the environment.

To help authorities regain control, Washington Gov. Gary Locke called up two special units of the National Guard trained in crowd control. The unarmed guardsmen will be deployed today.

The curfew went into effect at 7 p.m. Tuesday and will last through 7:30 a.m. today. It covers an expanse of downtown from the Space Needle south to the Kingdome and from Puget Sound east to Interstate 5.

President Clinton was scheduled to arrive in Seattle just after midnight today and to stay in a hotel inside the curfew zone. Reports said some windows in the hotel had been boarded up, and a fire was burning in a trash bin outside.

The WTO's opening ceremony Tuesday was canceled because many delegates — trade ministers and officials from 135 countries — were trapped inside hotels.

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky apologized to delegates. Noting that most demonstrators were peaceful, she said the Clinton administration sympathized with their aims but considered violence "unacceptable."

When protesters began smashing windows and setting fire to trash bins, police moved in with tear gas. Some rubber pellets were fired, and dozens of people were arrested.

The mayor said, "We're doing what it takes to protect the citizens of this city," and he urged protesters to stay home today. Asked whether the groups would honor the request, Ken Hankin of the Direct Action Network said: "It's up to (the police). They have turned our streets into a war zone."

► Labor unions' stance, 3B



By Peter Dejong, AP

Summit shut down: Protesters block Seattle streets Tuesday.

Bush plan: \$135 billion a year in tax cuts

By Owen Ullmann
USA TODAY

A1

Texas Gov. George W. Bush will call today for a \$135 billion-a-year cut in personal income taxes that would provide sizeable relief for all groups, from the working poor to the rich.

The plan, costlier than the congressional Republican tax cut vetoed by President Clinton in September, would create a new 10% bottom rate, lower the middle brackets to 25% and cut the top rate to 33%. A child credit would double to \$1,000.

More than half the savings would go to those making less than \$100,000 a year, and 6 million low-income families would be taken off the federal tax rolls, Bush advisers say.

The front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination timed release of his plan for the eve of his first debate with party rivals in New Hampshire, where tax cuts always play big.

The plan is unusually specific for a major candidate to propose the year before an election. Even before its release, early reports about its contents drew attacks from opponents.

GOP rivals said the plan was too timid; Vice President Gore called for eliminating the \$5 trillion national debt by 2015.

Bush would reduce the "marriage penalty," in which couples pay more in taxes than if they filed as singles. His remedy: a deduction as high as \$3,000. The plan also eliminates the estate tax by 2009.

Bush, who is campaigning as a "compassionate conservative," would eliminate federal income taxes for a single mother with two children and an income of \$31,000 or less.

The Bush campaign estimates the tax cut would cost \$470 billion during its 2002-2006 phase-in. The Republican bill vetoed by Clinton would have cost \$352 billion in that period.

Bush's advisers say the tax cut would be paid out of a \$568 billion budget surplus over five years, not counting money reserved for Social Security.

FBI scours Mexico grave site

tion in the mid-1990s. It funneled billions of dollars worth of cocaine, marijuana and heroin into the USA each year.

President Clinton condemned the killings as "horrible examples" of the violence committed by Mexican drug lords.

The Mexican government requested FBI assistance because of the bureau's expertise and equipment, including ground-penetrating radar, and also because several U.S. agencies have lost confidential sources in bloody killings.

"We've all got informants missing down there," a federal official said late Tuesday.

► Police comb scene, 3A

hundreds of calls from people who say their relatives vanished from Juarez.

"(Callers) want to know what's happened to their loved ones," said Jaime Herveilla of the International Association of Relatives and Friends of Disappeared Persons.

Those related to possible victims can call an FBI hotline at 1-800-338-5856.

Working at the site are 65 forensic experts from an FBI team that exhumed victims of terror in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Most of the victims are believed to have come from Juarez, one of the bases of the so-called Juarez cartel that emerged as the dominant Mexican drug-trafficking organiza-

By Guillermo X. Garcia
USA TODAY

A1

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico — FBI agents excavating a suspected mass grave of drug cartel victims began retrieving human remains Tuesday.

Armed Mexican soldiers wearing ski masks to avoid reprisals protected the site as the FBI joined Mexican officials in the painstaking exhumation of graves thought to contain at least 100 people, possibly including 22 Americans.

Recovery efforts centered on two sites south of El Paso.

Since an informant revealed the graves' existence five days ago, a Texas missing-persons association said it has received

COVER STORY

Church, state and education

High court tackles taxpayer aid to parochial schools

By Tony Mauro
USA TODAY

A1

KENNER, La. — It began here 14 years ago, when two mothers wondered why the same yellow buses that carried their kids to public school also took neighbors' kids to Catholic schools.

Mary Helms and Marie Schneider soon found all the other ways their tax dollars went to help parochial schools: State and federal subsidies helped pay for special education services, cafeteria workers, library books and computers, among others.

On Wednesday, part of the inquiry Helms and Schneider began here goes before the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., in a case that could open the door to taxpayer aid to more than 1 million students in parochial schools across the country. The justices' ruling might al-

so affect voucher programs, now being used on a limited basis in some school districts, that give parents public money to pay for religious school tuition.

"This is likely to be the most important church-state lawsuit to come before the Supreme Court in over two decades," says Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, which opposes public aid to church-run schools.

Also at stake in the dispute is the Clinton administration's \$800 million pledge to provide Internet connections for all classrooms, public and private, nationwide.

Under the \$375 million program at issue before the high court today, the federal government gives local school boards about \$12 million to buy and loan instructional equipment to nearby pri-

ate schools — mainly parochial — nationwide. The rest stays with public schools. President Clinton's Internet proposal would amount to a revamping of that program, and if the court finds it unconstitutional, the Internet access program could be blocked for parochial schools.

"The computers the public is paying for could be used to put out the church bulletin, and that's not right," Helms says. "If we lose, the web of involvement between church and state gets bigger, and there will be vouchers. The First Amendment will be weakened."

The Clinton administration, in a brief submitted to the court, is urging the justices to preserve "a form of federal assistance that is highly relevant for private schoolchildren, and also central to the effort to bring modern technology to all students."

Jefferson Parish parochial school parents led by Guy Mitchell agree, noting that they, too, pay taxes. "The national interest is served when all school children have access to supplementary educational resources and equipment," their brief states.

Helms and Schneider don't see it that way. When parents choose to send their kids to parochial schools, they say, they should not expect government to subsidize or supplement their libraries, classroom equipment or staff. During the year they filed suit, local parochial schools received about 30% of the \$655,671 the federal government sent to Jefferson Parish schools under the main program at issue.

And with tight budgets for schools a constant reality, Schneider says, "the more money goes to parochial schools, the less goes to public schools."

Haves and have-nots

As Helms drives a visitor around suburban Jefferson Parish, which wraps around New Orleans, many parochial schools seem modern and well-appointed, while public schools nearby look to be in disrepair.

"The public schools around here may not have air condi-

tioning, but we're giving millions of dollars to parochial schools," Schneider says.

Parochial schools, Helms notes, can also be selective in picking their students, while public schools must take all comers, including students with costly special needs.

"My tax money may be going to a school that can reject my child," Helms says.

COVER STORY

Helms, 57, is Baptist and Schneider, 71, is Catholic. "I had seven children because of my faith,"

Schneider says. They've chosen to persist in challenging the aid to parochial schools long after their children graduated, even when their action alienated friends and neighbors. "We can't teach kids to obey the laws when the adults aren't doing it," Helms says.

Their lawyers alleged that the federal money given to the local public schools had been used to buy *Mary the Mother of Jesus* and other religious books and then the books were delivered to parochial schools, contrary to the rules of the program that bar such purchases.

Long-held tradition

State education department officials who supervise the program testified that a turnover of personnel had led to some slip-ups, but monitoring keeps the purchases non-religious. School officials also say in legal briefs that the money merely supplements parochial school programs and does not free up funds for religious programs.

Representatives of the parochial school district and the parents defending the program declined to be interviewed.

A federal appeals panel struck down the federal program, ruling that it offered direct aid to parochial schools that could be diverted to religious purposes.

The dispute arrives at the court as a growing number of justices seem ready to endorse greater interaction between public and religious schools and practices. By the end of the current term, the court will also decide a Texas case that asks whether Christian prayers can be said before public school football games. Some believe that the court will allow the prayers as

a form of free expression by religious students.

In Texas, the football prayers are a deeply held tradition, and in some parts of Louisiana, a wide range of public assistance to parochial schools is common.

That tradition dates back to the days of Huey Long, the legendary Louisiana governor who got the legislature to pay for textbooks for parochial schools students more than 70 years ago. The Supreme Court upheld the program in 1930, and public aid to parochial schools has been a fixture here ever since.

But the Supreme Court shifted ground over the years, deciding in 1973 to bar most direct forms of parochial school aid as a violation of the First Amendment, which prohibits government "establish-

ment of religion." But in the New Orleans area, where about one-third of the population is Catholic, most forms of parochial school aid have gone unchallenged in court.

At the federal level, textbook purchases for parochial schools have been allowed, on the theory that the texts can be easily examined for religious content.

But other forms of aid, such as movie projectors, have been barred because they can be used for religious as well as non-religious instruction. A government-loaned computer could be used to connect to the Vatican's Web site from a parochial school here, opponents argue.

In 1985, the Supreme Court said public school teachers could not venture onto parochial school grounds to offer special

education services, for fear that they would inculcate religion or create a "symbolic union" between church and state.

But that decision represented the high, or low, point of separation between church and state in the context of schools. With the rise of conservative justices and the retirement of liberal lions William Brennan Jr. and Thurgood Marshall, the court has changed directions in recent years.

In 1997, the court by a 5-4 vote reversed its 1985 ruling and said public school teachers could offer special ed services on parochial school grounds without creating "an impermissible symbolic link between government and religion." But the exact line between what is permissible and what is not is difficult to discern.

The outcome of today's case is difficult to predict. Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas are least troubled by church-state connections, while Justice John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and David Souter are more inclined to keep the wall of separation high. Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy joined the Rehnquist wing in the 1997 case favoring parochial schools, but are usually regarded as swing votes.

In the case brought by Helms and

Schneider, a federal appeals court panel said it approached the job of figuring out the Supreme Court's church-state doctrine with "fear and trembling." The judges said, "This case requires us to find our way in the vast perplexing desert" of the court's parochial aid precedents.

But those who support public aid to parochial schools are optimistic. Arguing that there has been a "sea change" in the court's position since the 1970s, John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute in Charlottesville, Va., says that today, "It is permissible to aid the educational function of religious schools."

That same argument, if the court adopts it, could be used to vindicate school voucher programs currently under challenge in lower courts.

Gore vows to eliminate debt

He calls his opponents' plans 'risky'

By Sandra Sobieraj
The Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Grabbing President Clinton's coattails, Al Gore cast himself Tuesday as both the only presidential candidate to keep the healthy economy going and an average guy who knows prosperity is fragile.

"My first home when my wife and I were married, when I was in the Army, was in a trailer park in Daleville, Ala.," he said. "Great times, but I saw some other families with lots of kids who were really stretched very thin."

He pledged a strategy, without offering details, to reduce to zero the multitrillion-dollar national debt by 2015.

Though the vice president has often tried to distance himself from Clinton, Gore invoked the president's name several times.

"I'm proud to have been a part of the deliberations that have helped to set this economic policy in place, and I want you to know that I am determined to continue the prosperity and continue the policies that have worked . . . and expand upon them by creating some sweeping changes in the areas in which we most need them," he said.

The United States, after

decades of deficit gloom, posted a record \$123 billion federal budget surplus last year.

"Look at the difference!" Gore said of his tenure with Clinton. "We turned the biggest deficits into the biggest surpluses."

On the other hand, the U.S. government has a \$5.6 trillion national debt, built up by years of deficits.

Gore labeled the economic proposals of his leading rivals, Democrat Bill Bradley and Republican George W. Bush, "risky schemes" that would "put our prosperity at risk" by pushing up interest rates and threatening recessions.

Bradley, also campaigning in New Hampshire on Tuesday, defended his costly universal health plan, the prime target of Gore's offensive.

"The American people are not going to be scared away from wanting health care for all Americans," Bradley said at Keene State College.

Bradley's spokesman, Eric Hauser, questioned why Gore would boast of rosy times.

"I doubt the 44 million Americans without health insurance and the tens of millions who can barely afford it think that everything is perfect," Hauser said.

Bob Bixby, executive director of the Washington-based Concord Coalition, said Bradley's and Bush's proposals are no more risky than Gore's because all three rely on projected budget surpluses. The coalition is a non-partisan group that favors balanced budgets.

Schools' New Watchword: Zero Tolerance

A1 By DIRK JOHNSON

CHICAGO, Nov. 30 — Just as two 16-year-old girls began quarreling over a magazine in the lunchroom at Curie High School here, an assistant principal stepped in to lay down the law.

No punches had been thrown, no hair pulled. But the incident became a part of the girls' official record. They were "written up" for the infraction, banished to a detention room for the rest of the day and told that their parents would be notified.

"You have disrupted the lunchroom," the assistant principal, Rochelle Wade, told the girls.

Their punishment reflects a widespread crackdown on misconduct in American schools. A zero-tolerance approach — much of it directed at behavior that administrators would once have dealt with solely by issuing a rebuke on the spot — has been brought on by school shootings from coast to coast and by officials' fear of bias lawsuits arising from policies that provide for discretion in punishment and its severity.

While precise national figures on school punishment are sketchy, experts agree that as a result of the new approach, the country is witnessing a vast increase in detentions, suspensions and even expulsions, in which the ousted offenders are typically made to attend

alternative schools. In Chicago, the expulsion rate has jumped nearly tenfold in the last three years.

Beyond a crackdown on weapons and drugs — zero tolerance for which typically means automatic expulsion — the new school-conduct ethos has profoundly changed views about what was once deemed usual, if annoying, behavior by adolescents. No longer is the

playground scrap or the kickball tussle deemed a rite of passage best settled by a teacher who orders the combatants to their corners, hears out the two sides and demands apologies and a handshake.

Under the new get-tough policies, aggressive behavior like pushing, shoving or general rough-

housing is typically viewed as violence, and teachers are often forbidden to resolve any physical confrontation with a lecture. Instead, they must file a report with administrators, so that a uniform policy can run its course: punishments for specific offenses are themselves very specific, and rare is the student who is granted leniency.

A recent report by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program of the United States Justice Department found that the vast majority of schools now had zero-tolerance policies not only for crimes like gun possession but also for infractions like using tobacco.

Proponents say a tough, uniform approach to even these lesser infractions is necessary to create an atmosphere of discipline in the schoolhouse. "The issues are different today," said Gerald Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. "Years ago we didn't have hundreds of knives and guns in schools."

Evidence in support of the proponents' argument comes from Baltimore, where a new policy requires that disruptive behavior bring suspension or expulsion, with assignment to an alternative school. Officials there say the hard-line approach has brought a 31 percent drop in criminal activity in the city's high schools.

Zero tolerance for weapons possession and other crime aside, some educators and psychologists maintain that rigid discipline sometimes treats youthful rambunctiousness as behavior that is all but criminal. They condemn the absence of discretion in the disciplinary process.

Gil Noam, a professor of education at Harvard University, has criticized what he calls a "heavily bureaucratized, cookbook approach" to resolving individual cases with blanket policies.

"It's understandable where this is coming from," Professor Noam said of pressure that has been mounting on schools to stem violence, especial-

ly after the spate of school shootings over the last two years. "People are very concerned about safety. Parents demand these stricter codes. And it sells well."

But the loss of discretion, and of on-the-spot resolution, can mean "a lost moment to teach children about respect," he said, and a missed chance to inspire their trust of authority figures.

In New York City, school safety officers have been under the supervision of the Police Department since last year, and now offenses on school premises there more frequently lead to arrests. That has raised the eyebrows of William C. Thompson Jr., president of the city's Board of Education, who said at a recent board meeting: "For the kind of thing like a fistfight on the school grounds, I don't understand why it would trigger an arrest. But there does appear to be an increase in arrests for things like fistfights. That's a concern."

In Chicago, the get-tough policy is largely the creation of Paul Vallas,

the chief executive of the school system, who has won praise for improving test scores and bringing order to classrooms. Punishments range from detention to two-year expulsion, and the disciplinary code applies to students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: if a student gets into trouble with the police on Saturday, the school will take action on Monday.

The zero-tolerance policies largely grew out of the Safe and Drug-Free School Act of 1994, which stipulates that schools must expel any student found with a weapon, or lose federal aid. Those policies have now gone well beyond drugs and weapons, with many schools having adopted a comprehensive set of standards that apply even to dress codes.

The policies' uniform approach, which mostly removes discretion, is intended to ensure fairness and protect schools from lawsuits maintaining that a student was treated with bias.

Mr. Tirozzi, of the school principals' group, said the number of such suits had soared in recent years. "If you treat Johnny one way, and he's black," Mr. Tirozzi said, "and you treat Joey another way, and he's white, you've got a problem."

The tougher approach has won praise from many experts on adolescence, who say youths must learn that unacceptable behavior means certain punishment.

One school safety consultant, Charles Ewing, a professor of law and psychology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, urges educators to suspend any student who even threatens to engage in violence.

"You must look at kids as potential violent actors," Professor Ewing said. "You must develop an absolute zero-tolerance policy. Unacceptable acts must be met swiftly and harshly. It's the only hope we have" of subduing school violence.

Another backer of the new approach is William Damon, director of the Center on Adolescence at Stanford University, who says students are hungering for the clarity of tough, consistent rules.

112

"You need a consistent policy that is firm," he said, "and you need follow-through."

But Professor Noam, of Harvard, said schools bent on discipline should not forget about justice. Not every mistake, he said, must necessarily mean severe punishment.

"Surely there are consequences for actions," he said. "But when a police officer stops someone for speeding, he doesn't write a ticket every time."

And some experts on child development say the new prevailing attitude tries to instill unnatural docile behavior in normal, spirited adolescents.

Michael Gurian, a family therapist who is author of "The Good Son" (Putnam, 1999), argues that rigid disciplinary policies have "essentially criminalized" the sort of aggressive behavior that is normal for young people, especially boys.

"We have confused aggression and violence," Mr. Gurian said. "Every primate is aggressive. There is nothing wrong with being aggressive. There is something wrong with being violent."

Joan First, executive director of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, a Boston-based group

that focuses on children at risk of dropping out of school, said the new policies reflected a broader anti-youth sentiment prevalent in America. She noted the practice of sending many juvenile criminal defendants to adult courts.

"Raising a child is about patience," Ms. First said. "It seems to me that zero-tolerance policies are the ultimate impatience."

Further, Donald Moore, executive director of Designs for Change, a private group that studies education, said most expulsions had nothing to do with drugs or violence. Mr. Moore said some schools were dropping truants from the rolls, in part out of a desire to rid themselves of marginal students and so improve test-score averages.

Some critics of the tougher policy, including Mr. Moore, say troubled students are simply being set adrift, destined to cause problems that will exact a much greater toll later. Precisely that view has been advanced by the Rev. Jesse Jackson in his protest over the expulsion of six students after a brawl among football spectators in Decatur, Ill.

But as Mr. Vallas points out, in Chicago (and many other districts) expelled students are quickly en-

rolled in alternative schools rather than being "expelled to the streets." For infractions that fall short of expulsion, the offenders are generally held in school and put through a rigorous academic and physical boot camp, where they are given plenty of book work and sometimes required to scrub floors, clean windows and mow grass.

The Chicago school system makes the rules clear to parents and teachers. They are discussed at assemblies. They are posted on the walls of schools. They are printed inside notebooks given to students. Mr. Vallas says he gets few complaints.

At Curie High School the other day, some students said they were grateful for the strict approach. "I feel safer at school than I do at home," said Chameka Cole, a 16-year-old junior.

But Salvador Farias, a 17-year-old star football player who had missed a big game for his involvement in a graffiti prank, said the policies were written by people who had forgotten the ways of the young.

"Isn't it natural to have fights in school?" he said. "I mean, I'm not saying it's right, but why is it so surprising that teenagers would act a certain way?"

7/3

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1999

National

The New York Times
ON THE WEB[Home](#)[Site Index](#)[Site Search](#)[Forums](#)[Archives](#)[Marketplace](#)**Click here to register and win.**

No purchase necessary. Must be 18 or older.

November 23, 1999

Group Sends Book on Gay Tolerance to Schools

Forum

- [Join a Discussion on Teaching Morality](#)

By ERICA GOODE

In a move likely to fuel debate over how secondary schools should handle the issue of homosexuality, a coalition of medical, mental health, educational and religious organizations announced Monday that it would send the nation's school superintendents a booklet informing them that there is "no support among health and mental health professional organizations" for the idea that homosexuality is abnormal or mentally unhealthy.

The Just the Facts Coalition, representing the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Education Association, the American Psychological Association and seven other groups, said the 12-page booklet would be mailed today to the heads of all 14,700 public school districts in the United States. The coalition said the booklet "provides information that will help school administrators and educators to create safe and healthy environments in which all students can achieve to the best of their ability."

The publication also expresses concerns about the potential harm posed by "reparative therapy" and other techniques intended to change sexual orientation.

"I think this is a history-changing moment," said Kevin Jennings, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, a New York organization devoted to ending anti-gay bias in the schools. "The entire mainstream education and mental health establishment has said that it isn't lesbian, gay and bisexual students who need to change, it is the conditions in our schools that need to change."

But conservative groups attacked the booklet, saying that it was based on politics, not science.

"They're saying they want to present factual information on

healthsh

Up to
40%
natural hea
prod

Shop

Selection

Search healthst
products or hea

In the N

- Natural H
- FREE He
- Stress Ma
- Browse he
conditions

40% Off

Alive@heal
Natural Heal

Adverti

homosexuality, but we believe that they're presenting propaganda," said John Paulk, a homosexuality and gender analyst for Focus on the Family, a Colorado Christian group that holds Love Won Out conferences where reparative therapy is endorsed and participants are taught how to combat what they say are pro-gay messages children receive in schools.

Janet Parshall, chief spokeswoman for the conservative Family Research Council, also condemned the coalition's mailing. "If they're going to talk about 'the facts,' here's a fact: All the major religions of the world consider homosexuality wrong," she said.

Deanna Duby of the National Education Association, a leading union of school teachers, said the coalition was formed after members heard about the Love Won Out conferences and decided a response was needed. Ms. Duby, who helped create the booklet, said the publication was approved by the education association's leadership, including its president, Bob Chase.

Most of the organizations represented by the coalition, Ms. Duby said, had already passed resolutions on their own condemning reparative therapy and endorsing the need for "safe environments" for gay students.

The booklet, "Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation & Youth," is divided into chapters, including sections on how sexual orientation develops; reparative therapy, "transformational ministries" and other religion-based efforts that try to help homosexuals change their sexual orientation; and laws protecting gay men and lesbians from discrimination.

"Because of the religious nature of 'transformational ministry,' " the booklet advises, "endorsement or promotion of such ministry by officials or employees of a public school district in a school-related context could raise constitutional problems."

The publication states that "therapy directed specifically at changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving changes in orientation."

Five of the organizations in the coalition contributed money to print and distribute the booklet, as did Michael Dively, a philanthropist and former member of the Michigan Legislature who is gay.

Responding to the booklet, Paulk, of Focus on the Family, said that no scientific studies had been done on reparative therapy, and that organizations that have "debunked" the technique were acting on the basis of political motives, not scientific evidence.

Paulk also defended his organization's efforts to promote in schools the conservative view of homosexuality as abnormal.

"Parents don't want their children being taught about homosexuality, period," Paulk said. "We believe that homosexuality is something that should be talked about in the home. But in the worst-case scenario, if it's going to be presented in public schools, we want

equal time."

But Bruce Hunter, director of public affairs for the American Association of School Administrators, which represents public school superintendents and is a member of the coalition, said his organization agreed with the message of the booklet. Still, he said, the publication is likely to be used by school administrators "based on community values."

"There are many communities in this country that are just too conservative for that, and I trust superintendents to know their communities," Hunter said. "On the other hand, when push comes to shove, occasionally you have to stand up, and we would hope they would stand up for tolerance."

Click here to register and win.

No purchase necessary. Must be 18 or older.

[Home](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Search](#) | [Forums](#) | [Archives](#) | [Marketplace](#)

[Quick News](#) | [Page One Plus](#) | [International](#) | [National/N.Y.](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) |
[Science](#) | [Sports](#) | [Weather](#) | [Editorial](#) | [Op-Ed](#) | [Arts](#) | [Automobiles](#) | [Books](#) | [Diversions](#)
| [Job Market](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Travel](#)

[Help/Feedback](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Services](#) | [New York Today](#)

[Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company](#)



[SF Gate Home](#)

[Today's News](#)

[Sports](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Technology](#)

[Live Views](#)

[Traffic](#)

[Weather](#)

[Health](#)

[Business](#)

[Bay Area Travel](#)

[Columnists](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Conferences](#)

[Search](#)

[Index](#)

Jumps to:

GO

No Advance Notice

Program Cuts Prices For Teachers' Homes Federal subsidy for living 3 years near schools

Meredith May, Chronicle Staff Writer

Wednesday, November 24, 1999

San Francisco Chronicle
CHRONICLE SECTIONS

Want to buy a home in the Bay Area for \$53,000?

Become a teacher.

Today the federal government will begin offering homes at half the market rate to public and private school teachers who agree to live in struggling neighborhoods for at least three years.

The Teacher Next Door program is a copycat of the two-year-old Officer Next Door program, which relocated 2,750 beat cops across the nation into urban fixer-uppers -- including a \$53,000 townhouse in Pittsburg, for what amounts to chump change in the Bay Area's blistering housing market.

Now teachers can cash in.

"The idea is to lift some of these neighborhoods by pulling in community leaders," said Larry Bush, spokesman for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. "It's also a way to help teachers buy a home and help urban school districts retain teachers."

The new program comes at a time when an economic boom is pricing low-salaried teachers out of the Bay Area and forcing some school districts to experiment with rent subsidies. It offers an alternative for teachers who are willing to live in the tough neighborhoods where they work.

The discount properties are dwellings that were seized by the government from low-income homeowners who failed to pay their federally insured mortgages. They are in neighborhoods politely referred to by bureaucrats as "revitalization areas," which means the poverty and crime rates are higher, and boarded-up homes are commonplace.

[Get a printer-friendly version of this article](#)

Teachers in the Bay Area's tightest housing markets, such as San Francisco and Santa Clara, will have a hard time finding local listings, because sky-high home costs have priced those areas out of the federal program, Bush said.

Buyers are more likely to find bargain homes in Richmond, East Palo Alto, Pittsburg and Oakland.

The first homes for teachers went online today. Not one is currently listed in the Bay Area, but there is a three-bedroom Fresno home for \$17,000 and a four-bedroom, two-bath Sacramento home selling for \$35,000. A new list comes out every Wednesday.

Teachers must live within the school district jurisdictions where they teach, must have teaching credentials and must be employed full-time. Teachers bid on the homes online, and winners are chosen by lottery. They can move in with a \$100 down payment if they choose a federally insured mortgage. All sales are "as is."

After three years, teachers can sell the homes for market rate.

"Some of these homes don't look so good, then others are really nice," said Amanda Moore, a property manager with Golden Feather Realty Services in Oakland, which contracts with the federal government.

"One I remember had a sink in the kitchen, but no refrigerator or stove," she said. "Then one beautiful home in Fairfield just sold for \$120,000."

More than 100 officers have snapped up low-cost homes in California since the program for police began in 1997, including a \$36,000 home in West Sacramento and a \$55,000 two-bedroom home in Richmond. Median home prices in those cities are \$113,000 and \$155,000, respectively.

And there have been some gems. Last year, a San Diego police officer bought a three-bedroom ranch home in Oceanside for \$52,500.

"What a wonderful idea," said Joan Davenport, associate chairwoman of the Teacher Education Department at California State University at Hayward. "When you live in the neighborhood where you teach, you become an automatic role

model. You bump into parents at the store, and parents have an easier time relating to you."

Teachers get one week to compete for the homes over the Internet. New Northern California listings are posted to the Golden Feather Web site on Wednesdays, and interested buyers bid electronically until 4:30 p.m. Tuesday. The winning bid is posted on the Internet.

But teachers may be hesitant.

"Teachers are mostly women, and I just don't think they'd feel safe moving to a troubled area," said Connie Knott, who teaches at Deer Valley High in Antioch. She lives with her three children in Concord, which she felt was safer than the Antioch flatlands yet more affordable than the new developments in the hills.

"I don't know if teachers would want to raise their kids in an environment that isn't healthy for them," she said.

The program might not be for everybody, but it definitely will attract some, said Jose Lopez, who prepares future school administrators at the Department of Educational Leadership at Cal State Hayward.

"It might attract the first-time teacher or someone who is thinking about switching careers," he said. "We have trouble getting teachers to move to the Bay Area because of the cost of housing, so this sounds like a really great idea."

Most teachers in low-income neighborhood schools do not live in the same areas as their pupils, he said. If they did, they would gain a better understanding of their students' lives outside class. It would also allow them time to join after-school activities or coach, because they would not have to commute after work.

"At first I thought it was a little strange, but it all depends," said Carol Podney, a teacher at Cragmont Elementary School in Berkeley. "Some of those neighborhoods aren't as bad as people think, but some are. It would take a special kind of person."

Federal housing officials are hopeful the Teacher Next Door program will be as popular as its officer counterpart. Many of the beat cops moved their families into the run-down neighborhoods, and several female officers felt

safe enough to do it, Bush said.

To help ensure success, housing officials are working on ways to bring the program into counties with some of the highest home prices in the Bay Area.

"We are exploring other options for San Francisco and Santa Clara, like building housing for teachers, or joining with businesses to help with down payments," Bush said.

HOW TO FIND HOMES

Teachers searching for half-price homes in Northern California can access the list at: www.hud.org/g2/nca/ or www.goldenfeather.com/special.htm. Teachers can also call the western regional office of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department at (415) 436-6532.

©1999 San Francisco Chronicle Page A19

Chronicle Sections ▼

GO

AA-SF Gate

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Mission @ 3rd, SF
thru FEB 13 2000

BAY AREA

NOW 2

www.YerbaBuenaArts.org

National**The New York Times**
ON THE WEB[Home](#)[Site Index](#)[Site Search](#)[Forums](#)[Archives](#)[Marketplace](#)

Wines of distinction.

December 3, 1999

Academic Standards Eased as a Fear of Failure Spreads

Forum

- [Join a Discussion on Ideas on Contemporary Education](#)
-

By JACQUES STEINBERG

The tough academic standards that state policy makers and others have invoked over the last three years as they imposed high-stakes tests on students are beginning to yield uncomfortable results: few of the students are making the new grades, many are at risk of dropping out or being held back, their parents are venting frustration and school systems are beginning to pull back.

The states are acknowledging that, often because of financial concerns, they have not put in place the training programs for teachers, the extra help for students and the other support necessary to meet suddenly accelerated standards. In some instances, they have also suggested that they may have expected too much, too soon.

The state that is believed to have retrenched the furthest is Wisconsin, which acceded to parent demands last summer that it withdraw a test that every student would have had to pass to graduate from high school. But at least a half dozen other states and large districts are also moving to soften the expectations for students that have been drafted, in every state except Iowa, in at least some form and in some grades.

After it was announced last week that only 1 out of 10 Arizona sophomores had passed a new state math test last spring, the Arizona Board of Education agreed to the loud demands of parents at a meeting in January that it reconsider the test.

In October, the Virginia Board of Education agreed in principle to revise a policy it had only recently adopted that obligated schools, as a condition of accreditation, to show that 70 percent of students were meeting state testing requirements by 2007. After only 7 percent of Virginia schools met that standard last spring, in the



Adverti

second year of the test, the board has proposed waiving some sanctions against those schools that have failed but are able to demonstrate progress.

Massachusetts, having established a sweeping new curriculum with rigorous new tests, set the passing grade low last month -- in a range described as at the bottom of "needs improvement" and just above "failing" -- when it calibrated an exam required for high school graduation.

New York, too, has set a low passing grade -- 55 out of 100 -- on its college-preparatory Regents English exam, now required of all high school graduates, and teachers here have objected that grading guidelines for the tests are overly generous.

And Los Angeles school administrators, who calculated that they would have had to hold back nearly 1 of every 2 students if they went through with a plan to end automatic promotions in all grades, said this week that they were now considering whether to erect such gates in just two grades.

"The standards movement has moved from the early stages to the stage where the consequences are on the verge, if you will, of being tested," said Jerome T. Murphy, dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "People are backpedaling."

"I'm of the view," Murphy added, "that backpedaling is smart when you are heading over a cliff."

The idea of setting high standards, and writing tests to ensure that they are met, has been advanced by a broad chorus of policy makers and educators, including Murphy. The advocates believe such policies offer insurance that students in rich and poor schools alike will cover the same ground, as well as a tonic to a nation that has grown weary of its children's academic shortcomings.

But in moving rapidly to put such expectations on the books -- of the 49 states that have standards, no two exactly the same, all but 14 wrote them in the last three years -- the states have been criticized by teachers, parents and students for being slow to put in place, and pay for, the proper support structures to help them meet the high goals.

Many teachers report being unprepared, and at times confused, by what the states have written. They maintain that more money needs to be spent on professional development and smaller class sizes. Students complain that they are being tested on material to which they have not yet been exposed. And parents lament that their children are being penalized for the failings of adults.

"Teachers and principals simply do not know how to do what they are expected to do with the new standards," Richard F. Elmore, a professor at the Harvard School of Education, said this week in Washington, at a conference marking the 10th anniversary of the first national education summit meeting. "Until you can walk into the average classroom in the average school and find the content being taught in a way that would help the average student meet the

standard, it is not fair to penalize the students."

That the politicians are tuning in, and responding, to such rumblings was obvious in October, when many of the 24 governors who gathered at an education summit meeting in Palisades, N.Y., conceded that they had been taken aback by the demoralizing effects of their new policies.

In urging them to stay the course, the organizer of the meeting, Louis V. Gerstner, chairman of the International Business Machines Corporation, asserted: "We understand the pain. And we're going to have to deal with it. But we're not going to deal with it by backing off."

At the end of the two-day gathering, the governors were among the signers of a mass pledge that, if carried out, would give students and teachers the very underpinning they have requested, including help for struggling students before they are held back or denied diplomas.

But the political ramifications of widespread student failures are already beginning to be felt, and many of the states, and school systems, are reassessing policies that have hinged on the belief that all students should be able to vault over high bars -- and not merely clear minimum hurdles.

Indeed, some experts believe that the states have routinely confused minimal standards with lofty goals, and while preparing students for the former they are demanding that they meet the latter. Others maintain that it remains to be seen whether schools, working on their own, can succeed in lifting all students to meet rigorous academic standards, in light of outside factors like family and neighborhood.

The implementation of the new policies has led to some awkward, and confused, moments.

The five-member school board in San Diego, for example, voted unanimously in February 1998 to begin holding back third graders who could not read at grade level and eighth graders who had failed at least one course, beginning in June 1999.

But by June, the board had yet to agree on a way to measure grade level, so it let all the third graders pass. Of the 1,400 eighth graders who had failed at least one course, 700 were still deemed to be failing at the end of summer school, said John de Beck, a board member and former high school teacher.

And yet, in what de Beck labels an "educational disaster," half of those students were retained and half were passed on to ninth grade -- with no ready explanation from administrators. Now the board is re-examining the entire policy, with some members hungry to repeal it.

In Massachusetts, Anna Ward, a parent of two daughters in the Cambridge public schools, said she had yet to distill the rationale of the state board of education in setting the passing grades on the new state tests, including the passing grade on the high school exit exam:

220, on a test with a minimum score of 200 and a maximum of 280.

"My initial reaction was that they're just playing around with these numbers and they're not addressing the educational problems," said Ms. Ward, an administrative assistant in the mathematics department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "It feels arbitrary to me. I don't think that this test is going to indicate whether my child has what it takes to be a graduate of high school."

While Massachusetts was seen by some as easing the burden on students it had once threatened to punish, Todd Bankofier, a member of the Arizona Board of Education, said he was undaunted by the results of his state's new math test, which 89 percent of all sophomores failed.

"When we fired this missile, we knew we had to guide it," Bankofier said of the new testing program. "It's going to take some left turns and some right turns, but it would be wrong to turn it completely back."

Priceless collectibles



icollector
www.icollector.com

[Home](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Search](#) | [Forums](#) | [Archives](#) | [Marketplace](#)

[Quick News](#) | [Page One Plus](#) | [International](#) | [National/N.Y.](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) |
[Science](#) | [Sports](#) | [Weather](#) | [Editorial](#) | [Op-Ed](#) | [Arts](#) | [Automobiles](#) | [Books](#) | [Diversions](#)
| [Job Market](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Travel](#)

[Help/Feedback](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Services](#) | [New York Today](#)

[Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company](#)

Tests That Cheat Students

By Alfie Kohn

The allegations that some New York City teachers may have cheated to raise their students' test scores should surprise no one — partly because of similar accusations elsewhere but also because of the enormous pressure on educators to produce better results.

We would do well to look at how heavy-handed demands for "tougher standards" and "accountability" not only invite cheating but also cheat children out of opportunities for meaningful learning.

Almost every state has issued standards mandating what all students at a given grade level must know. Apart from embodying the dubious premise that all children must develop at the same pace, these stand-

ards are often marked by an extraordinary specificity. A typical state document might say, for example, that children at a particular level must be able to use the Reader's Guide and know about zygote formation — an instructional approach that promotes rote recall ahead of understanding.

The standards can be ludicrously unrealistic. One in Virginia, for example, says fourth graders are required to "evaluate the social, political, and economic life in Virginia from the Reconstruction period to the 20th century... and its impact on politics and government, the economy, demographics, and public opinion; the impact of segregation... and the economic and social transition from a rural, agricultural society to a more urban, industrialized society." And that's only one standard in only one field — for 9-year-olds.

Other states use the same sort of lofty language but then give students tests that fall far short of what it promises. A Massachusetts standard stipulates that 10th graders "will understand the meaning, implications,

and import of historical events while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history." But here is a question students must answer to

single test score.

Researchers in Colorado asked some fourth-grade teachers to teach a specific task. About half the teachers were told that when they were finished, their students would have to "perform up to standards" on a test. The other teachers were simply invited to "facilitate the children's learning." At the end, when all the students were tested, it turned out that students in the "standards" classrooms did a poorer job on the task.

Every hour spent on such exam preparation is an hour not spent helping students to become critical, creative, curious learners.

A few years ago, a middle-school teacher in Cambridge, Mass., devised a remarkable unit. Every student picked an activity that he or she cared about and became an expert in it. Each subject, from baking to ballet, was researched intensively, described in a detailed report and taught to other children. The idea was to hone researching and writing skills while also heightening children's appreciation for the craftsmanship involved in many different activities. It was the kind of experience that people look back on years later as a highlight of school. But thanks to the new state standardized exam, that unit has been struck from the curriculum. The teacher is too busy helping students master prescribed material.

Some officials are sincere in their desire to use standards and testing as a way to close gaps between white and black, rich and poor. The reality is that many second-rate schools in the inner city are becoming third-rate as students are drilled day after day to pass the tests.

The most promising models of teaching have trouble surviving in such a climate. Central Park East Secondary School in New York holds students to genuinely high standards by asking them to prepare projects exhibiting their learning. Deborah Meier, the school's co-founder, attracted worldwide attention for its extraordinary success with a largely poor, African-American population. Recently she commented that judging all students in New York on the basis of the Regents exam "will spell the slow demise" of schools like hers.

Small wonder that some parents and students around the country are simply refusing to be part of the testing programs. In the last year alone, boycotts have sprung up in several states. These acts of civil disobedience — along with less admirable responses like cheating — will probably grow until the message is heard: Raising scores is completely different from helping students to learn. □

The pressure for scores shoves good teaching aside.

show they are meeting this standard: "Which individual led independence movements in 19th century South America: (a) Simon Bolivar, (b) Fidel Castro, (c) Francisco Pizarro, or (d) Gustavus Adolphus?"

Many states are giving so-called high-stakes tests: A student who has not crammed names, dates and facts into short-term memory is denied a high-school diploma regardless of academic record, or an elementary student must repeat a grade based on a

The New York Times

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1999

Essay

WILLIAM SAFIRE

Great Game's Victims

WASHINGTON

The newly emboldened Russian military has now embarked on a modern version of what Rudyard Kipling in 1901 called "the Great Game" — that struggle against the West for economic and political power in the Caucasus and Middle East.

A war on terrorism out of Chechnya is its excuse. Next week's elections to the Russian Parliament are the immediate cause of the systematic massacre of the dark-skinned Muslim troublemakers. The blood-thirstiest of the Russian politicians are getting the most support, if we can believe the easily rigged polls.

But there is another, longer-range game afoot. That is the old imperialist urge by Moscow to dominate the sources and lines of supply of Caspian Basin and Iranian oil and gas, and thereby to gain a stranglehold on the economic life of its adversaries.

A map tells the story. Chechnya lies astride one of the key pipelines into Russia and out to a Black Sea port through Turkey's Bosphorus to the Mediterranean. That's why Moscow says it must be denied independence, no matter how many die.

The U.S., aware of Russia's ambitions, is encouraging an alternative to supply lines through Iran, Iraq and Russia. We support a proposed energy trail through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Although it has not happened, President Clinton said yesterday it would be seen as "one of the most important things that happened this year."

Russia is putting great pressure on Georgia, independent after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Adjacent to Chechnya, Georgia has been resisting occupation by Russian troops who want to take charge of its border; that would undermine the West's proposed pipeline. Georgia's reformist president, Eduard Shevardnadze, has survived three assassination attempts that many think were K.G.B.-inspired.

Moscow recently entertained Tariq Aziz, Saddam Hussein's man. In return for Russia's support in resisting U.N. inspection of its nuclear weapon development, Iraq has cut its permitted production of oil. That has helped keep up the price of oil — it has doubled this year — and has given Russia the money it needs to support 100,000 troops in Chechnya.

Those are the undercurrent events. On the surface, residents of besieged Grozny, the Chechen capital, have been ordered to get out of

town lest they be pulverized by bombs — but no cease-fire was offered to let them get out safely. Thousands will die along with relatively few terrorists.

One Baltic leader said this was like answering the terrorist hijacking of an aircraft by shooting down the plane. Clinton sternly warned that such slaughter of civilians would mean "Russia will pay a heavy price for those actions."

What price? Only that its threatened atrocity "will further alienate the global community from Russia." What a weak-kneed response. The time to list the consequences is before the massacre. Such as:

1. Disinvite the Russians from next week's scheduled meeting of the Group of 8 foreign ministers.
2. Dispatch a trade-and-aid delegation to Georgia immediately.
3. Describe the suspension of the next I.M.F. loan to Russia for what it is — retaliation for atrocity, and not for economic inaction that saves Russia's face.

Russia's reborn dream of empire.

4. Withdraw our scheduled Export-Import Bank guarantees.
5. Point out how Arab oil producers, now paying lip service to their Muslim brethren in Chechnya, are financing Russia's attack with their OPEC-induced shortages and inflated oil prices.
6. Begin drawing down oil from our brimming strategic reserve, replenishing the reserve when world prices drop.
7. Move quickly to bring the Baltic states into NATO. Russian imperialism is still alive and growling.

Russia has a way of responding to credible threats. What happened when John McCain and George W. Bush made plain they would withdraw from the ABM treaty if the Russians refused necessary modifications to allow limited missile defense? Russia's Duma, after four years, decided to take up ratification of Start II.

Cluck-clucking and hand-wringing have no effect. Mass killing is no game, great or otherwise. Diplomatic and economic pressure can save lives. □

The New York Times

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1999

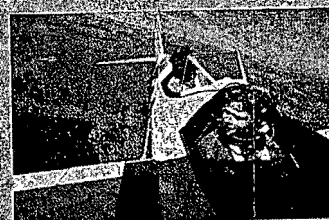
THE
EDU

SPECIAL REPORT

PART

1

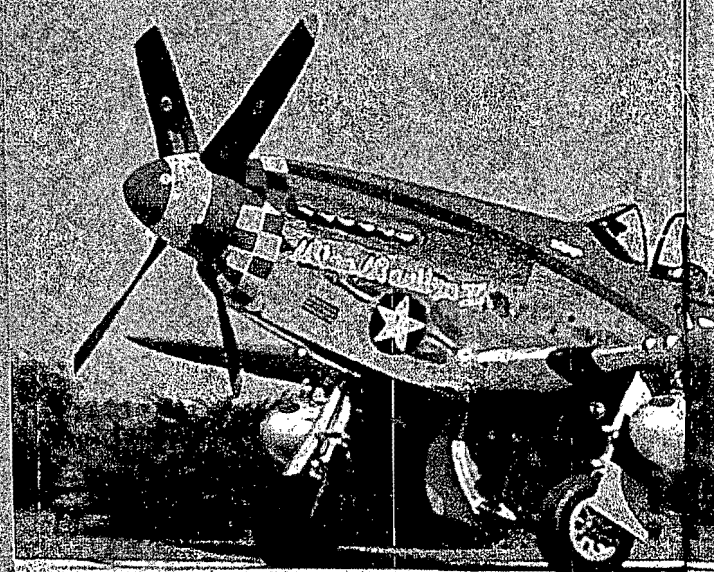
To ensure a pool of future employees, American companies are taking education into their own hands.



UNTIL A FEW months ago, 13-year-old Becky Bernes had never been on an airplane. "She's been dying to fly," her mother says.

Becky got her wish in July, when she not only flew in a private plane but even got to take the controls for a few moments. And in August, she took to the skies again, this time in an open-cockpit 1943 Stearman owned and piloted by Jim Porter, a Chicago businessman who heads two Internet companies.

"I don't know if we made an Amelia Earhart out of her, but we tried," says



Young Eagles

SPONSORS

Experimental Aircraft Association, S.C. Johnson & Son, Phillips Petroleum, Lockheed Martin, Jaguar Cars

AGES 8 to 18

HOW IT WORKS

Gives kids free flights in private planes in the hope of motivating them to learn about aviation.

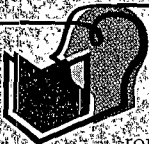
By Dawn Stover

PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN B. CARNETT
ICON FELIX SOCKWELL

BUSINESS OF CATION



Jeff Williams, co-owner of this P-51 Mustang, gives flights in his restored warbird to Young Eagles like Becky Bernes of Oswego, Illinois.



SCIENCE & MATH EDUCATION

SPECIAL REPORT

Porter of the teenager who donned a flight suit for the takeoff from an airport in Aurora, Illinois. Says Becky: "It was pretty cool."

Especially since the flights didn't cost her a penny. They were part of a program called Young Eagles, which aims to give a million kids between the ages of 8 and 18 a free flight, and is already halfway to its goal. Sponsored by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, the program is intended to spark interest in aviation and motivate kids to learn the skills to become pilots. "It can be a life-changing experience," says Mick Manny, vice president of development for the EAA.

More than 22,000 pilots have volunteered to take Young Eagles flying, including some of the nation's first African-American fighter pilots (the "Tuskegee Airmen"), who share their experiences with kids from inner-city Chicago. Before taking kids for a spin, the pilots spend time pointing out such equipment as rudders and flaps, explaining how they work, and discussing the basic aerodynamics of flight.

The initial \$1 million for Young Eagles was donated by Sam Johnson of S.C. Johnson & Son, himself an aviator. Additional funding to run the program has come from companies such as Phillips Petroleum, Lockheed Martin, and Jaguar Cars. But these are just a few of the businesses that are sponsoring programs designed to get children more interested in science and technology—programs that go

far beyond simple infusions of equipment and money.

Every company wants to be known for good citizenship in its community, but it's no coincidence that most of the companies promoting science and technology education are involved in high-tech industries, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, aerospace, and automobile manufacturing. "We're investing in our own future," explains Marsh Faber, education marketing manager for general-purpose products at Hewlett-Packard, which spends \$8 million annually on K-12 educational programs. "If you're in a high-tech business, you can't survive unless you have an attitude of life-long learning." Not only do companies like Hewlett-Packard want to encourage students to become science-literate consumers who will be able to use and appreciate high-tech products, but they also hope to remedy a growing shortage of highly skilled workers.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently predicted a three-fold increase in the number of technology-based jobs by 2006. The fastest-growing careers are in the fields of computers and medicine. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care services will account for 3.1 million new jobs between 1996 and 2006, the largest increase of any industry during that period. Meanwhile, computer and data processing services—the fastest-growing industry—will add more than 1.3 million jobs.

At the same time, results of recent surveys have

shown that the performance of U.S. students in math and science doesn't measure up to that of students in other developed nations. That's worrisome to companies that don't want to go abroad to find their next generation of employees, which is why many companies are working to improve the way science and math are taught here.

Business has a long history of involvement in pre-college education. In 1917, the National Association of Manufacturers lobbied for the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, which called for standardized testing. When the Soviets launched Sputnik in 1957, industry reacted by demanding more engineers and scientists. And throughout the 1980s and '90s, corporate contributions to education have been rising steadily. Organizations such as the National Alliance of Business, the Business Roundtable, and the Corporate Council for Mathematics and Science Education have pressed for educational standards and reforms.

Individual companies have also stepped forward to sponsor innovative educational projects. Examples:

Tenneco Inc. Through the Jefferson Davis High School Educational Collaborative, Tenneco employees volunteer at the inner-city high school. In addition, the company provides students with part-time jobs and college scholarships. The dropout rate at the school has declined dramatically, and college enrollment has soared.

Toshiba America. The Toshiba America Foundation provides grants to teachers for special projects. For example, at the Alhambra High School in California, students have constructed DNA fingerprints as part of a project that culminates with solving a crime and identifying a mysterious pathogen responsible for a disease outbreak.

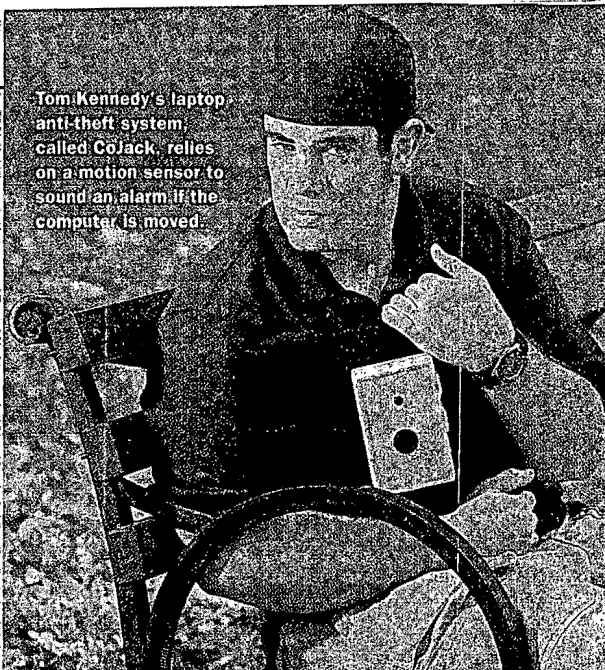
Intel Corp. Intel sponsors an annual Science Talent Search for young geniuses. The nation's oldest and most prestigious pre-college science contest, it awards college scholarships of up to \$50,000 to 40 high school seniors who carry out research projects of their own design.

Bayer Corp. The drugmaker has a variety of programs that support volunteer work by employees, including the Bayer Science Forum in Elkhart, Indiana, which brings students to a company laboratory to conduct hands-on experiments. According to a recent survey by Bayer and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), 51 percent of science teachers believe it is "very important" for students to be exposed to scientists and engineers, and another 29 percent believe it is "essential."

Exxon Corp. The Exxon Education Foundation is working with the NSTA to establish a network of "key leader" teachers who can provide materials and support to their colleagues. The ultimate goal is to have at least one science education advocate in every U.S. school.

Many of the best industry-sponsored programs focus on teachers rather than students. That's because few teachers have adequate training in science. "Students won't be excited about science unless their teachers are," says Susan Elko, manager of professional development

Tom Kennedy's laptop anti-theft system, called CoJack, relies on a motion sensor to sound an alarm if the computer is moved.



INVENTIVE PROGRAMS

INVENTIVENESS IS A QUALITY valued by many companies. Several are working with the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) to spark interest in invention through nationwide contests.

The Duracell/NSTA Invention Challenge, now starting its 18th year, annually gives away \$160,000 to students in 6th through 12th grade who build working prototypes of battery-powered inventions. The goal is to teach problem solving, says Kathleen Holmay, a Duracell consultant. The company also hopes to connect its battery products with school activities, she concedes.

The 1999 high-school winner, Tom Kennedy of Randolph, New Jersey, invented a laptop computer anti-theft system he calls CoJack (above). Also taking top honors was eighth-grader Iliana Jaatmaa of Frederick, Maryland, who invented a battery-powered map that uses pulleys and sliding pieces to show how the supercontinent Pangaea split into today's continents.

For students in 3rd through 8th grades, Sears' tool division sponsors the Craftsman/NSTA Young Inventors Awards Program, which annually gives a total of \$70,000 to 12 children who invent a new tool or rethink an existing one. The winning 1999 inventions include a Christmas tree waterer and a shoe dryer.

The world's largest K-12 science competition, the Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards Program received 3,680 team entries this year. This contest asks students to envision technologies that could exist 20 years in the future. Among the 1999 winners: a handheld breathalyzer that instantly tests for strep throat.

In a move that may be slightly self-serving, the electronics company's contest for the year 2000 will focus on computer literacy. Students will be asked to design Web pages that illustrate their ideas for the future. —D.S.

Toyota Tapestry

SPONSORS

Toyota Motor Sales
U.S.A. and the
National Science
Teachers Association

GRADES K-12

HOW IT WORKS

Annually awards 50 grants of up to \$10,000 apiece to individual teachers, to implement innovative projects in environmental education and physical science.



In a project led by teacher Simon Hauger (driver's seat), students at West Philadelphia High School are designing and building a full-size electric vehicle with help from advisers at the University of Pennsylvania.

programs at the Merck Institute for Science Education, which focuses on grades K-8. The institute has formed partnerships with four school districts in New Jersey and Pennsylvania near the company's facilities.

Merck & Co. created the institute in 1993, with a 10-year, \$20 million commitment. Why? Because the company's success is built on innovative scientific research and development, which requires scientists of the highest caliber, whose interests in the

natural world were stimulated at an early age," explains Chairman Raymond V. Gilmartin. And, he

adds, the daily choices people make about issues such as medical care and environmental protection very often require basic scientific knowledge.

Like many efforts to reform science education, Merck's work focuses on learning through experiments and hands-on experiences that demonstrate how real science is done. In one workshop, for example, third- and fourth-grade teachers learn about electricity by building simple circuits from wires, batteries, and light bulbs. Later, the teachers build cardboard houses and "wire" them with lights, fans, and switches. "When you light that bulb yourself, and you see how the connections are made, you understand it much better than just looking at a diagram in a book," says Elko.

Merck also encourages employees to volunteer in local schools. One teacher told her students that a scientist would be visiting their classroom, and asked them to draw a picture of the scientist in advance. Most of the pictures showed men. The scientist turned out to be a woman, and she wasn't wearing a lab coat or pocket protector.

To measure the impact its programs are having, the Merck Institute works with a consortium of university researchers who evaluate its performance. "One of the things they have documented is that science is being taught more frequently and for longer periods of time," says Elko. "If we can prove that something really substantive comes from this model, then we can disseminate it to other corporations."

For teachers who already have a good understanding of science, there are other programs that can help spark students' interest. For example, a number of corporations award small grants to individual teachers for innovative classroom projects. The largest national grant program for K-12 science teachers is the Toyota Tapestry program, sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. and administered by the National Science Teachers Association.

Each year, the program gives 50 awards of up to \$10,000 apiece to teachers who propose one-year projects with a focus on environmental education or physical science. Over the past nine years, Tapestry has awarded 343 grants

What businesses can do
to promote education www.popsoci.com

totaling more than \$3.4 million. Another program, Toyota Time, gives grants to math teachers.

Among this year's Tapestry grants: A "Crabs Count" program at Walsh Intermediate School in Branford, Connecticut, will have teens monitor the population of non-native Japanese Crabs that are upsetting the ecological balance of Long Island Sound. In Miami, students at Dr. Michael M. Krop Sr. High School will build a solar-powered remote-controlled "Robo-Boat" that will take water samples in local waterways too dangerous to reach by manned boats, and radio data to students on shore. And in Tucson, students at University High School will work with local astronomers to produce the first scientifically reliable "light map" of their city's skies. The students will present their map to local governmental agencies to help shape future zoning codes for lighting.

A survey of teachers who received Toyota Tapestry grants between 1991 and 1998 found that, as a result of the grants, 99 percent of the teachers were more enthusiastic about teaching science, and 97 percent had seen an improvement in student attitudes and interest in science.

At Hewlett-Packard, education managers have come up with an entirely different way to increase student interest in science—by matching students with mentors who are company employees. It all began with David Neils, a software developer who volunteered at an elementary school in Fort Collins, Colorado. Neils realized that many of his colleagues at work would also like to volunteer but didn't have time to visit a school on a regular basis. So he set up a "telementoring" program that enabled employees to communicate with students via e-mail. The program became so successful that Neils had to quit his software job to become the full-time director of the International Telementor Center. Hosted by Colorado State University, the center is funded by Hewlett-Packard, The Packard Foundation, and Merck. The cost, only about \$2 per student per week.

To participate in the telementoring program, a teacher creates a project that involves a maximum of 10 students. The project can be anything from building a hot air balloon to researching a career path. The students then correspond with their mentors to get help in carrying out the project. For example, students in Nancy Merchant's computer-aided design class at the Sabin Skills Center in Milwaukie, Oregon, get advice from Hewlett-Packard engineers on how to design and manufacture their own bicycle pump or skateboard truck. "The kids really listen to them," says Merchant.

Some 1,500 Hewlett-Packard employees now have pen pals in grades 5 to 12. And this fall, 150 Merck employees began participating in a pilot program with the four school districts partnered with the Merck Institute.

"I feel it's really critical for adults to be working with our youth," says Neils. "What we want in our workforce are people who can operate at or near their potential."

HOT JOBS FOR BEYOND 2000

THESE ARE the 10 occupations with the fastest employment growth projected between 1996 and 2006. As you can see, a good education in science and technology will become increasingly important. —D.S.

OCCUPATION	JOB INCREASE
Database administrators, computer support specialists, and all other computer scientists	118%
Computer engineers	109%
Systems analysts	103%
Personal and home care aides	85%
Physical and corrective therapy assistants/aides	79%
Home health aides	76%
Medical assistants	74%
Desktop publishing specialists	74%
Physical therapists	71%
Occupational therapy assistants and aides	69%

SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Unless our educational system turns around, we will become a nation of burger flippers.

While most people would agree that it is a good thing for employees to volunteer their time, not everyone thinks business has any business being in the classroom. After all, they say, schools are not intended to be job training centers. But funding shortages at some schools have created an opportunity for corporations to promote products, ideas, and values to captive audiences of youngsters. In one glaring example, School District 11 in Colorado Springs will receive \$8 million under a 10-year contract that calls for the yearly consumption of 1.68 million bottles of Coke products.

But that's not all. A recent McGraw-Hill math textbook is filled with product brand names. The privately owned Channel One News, which gives schools free video equipment in return for the promise that students will watch a daily package of 10 minutes of news mixed with two minutes of commercials, now reaches a potential audience of 8 million students. Thousands of schools are getting free computers and Internet access from ZapMe Corp., which flashes ads at students who use the equipment. And a Hershey-sponsored curriculum called The Chocolate Dream Machine offers lessons in science and nutrition.

The basic problem is that although everyone agrees that education is important, few taxpayers are willing to see their contributions to schools go up. That's why it's more important than ever that business do its part—but as a long-term investment, not for short-sighted promotional purposes. As Secretary of Education Richard Riley likes to say, "Better education is everybody's business." ♦

The Washington Times **Opinion**

Published in Washington, D.C.

5am -- August 30, 1999

www.washtimes.com

FRONT PAGE

POLITICS

OPINION

INVESTIGATIVE

Other Sections

INTERNATIONAL

BUSINESS

LETTERS

SUBSCRIBE

GO

Decline of teaching and learning

By Martin Gross

Excerpts from Martin Gross' new book, "The Conspiracy of Ignorance: The Failure of American Public Schools."

American 8th graders from 200 schools were excited about pitting their math skills against youngsters from the United Kingdom, Spain, Ireland and four Canadian provinces. All were given the same 63-question exam, and students were also asked to check "Yes" or "No" to the statement: "I am good at math."

The "self-esteem" which permeates our schoolhouses was apparently ready to pay off. The great majority of American youngsters claimed they were good at math, while only one-fourth the South Korean youngsters believed they were competent.

Many of the test questions were quite simple. One asked: "Here are the ages of five children: 13, 8, 6, 4, 4. What is the average age of these children?"

How did the superconfident American kids do on this no-brainer? Sadly, 60 percent of our youngsters got the answer -- 7 -- wrong.

When the full results came in, the Americans were shocked. We came in last while the South Koreans won. But paradoxically, the losing Americans did vanquish the Koreans in one category: self-esteem.

The American education establishment is equally self-confident, but their self-esteem is also challenged by the results. In 1998, American students did very poorly in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). "U.S. 12th graders performed . . . among the lowest of the 21 TIMSS countries on the assessment of mathematical general knowledge," reported the Department of Education, which pointed out that our high schoolers only outperformed students from Cyprus and South Africa.

Domestically, how well do our kids do in general knowledge?

The federal National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test results show an appalling ignorance across the academic spectrum. Two out of three

17-year-olds did not know the meaning of the Emancipation Proclamation. Even fewer had heard of the War of 1812, the Marshall Plan that saved Europe, or Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

In science, the majority could not figure out that a shadow cast by the rising sun would fall to the west. On a map of the world most could not locate Southeast Asia.

But if students are failing, surely teachers can hold their own in the world of knowledge. Correct?

Hardly. Of 1,800 education graduates seeking teachers' licenses in Massachusetts, 59 percent -- three out of five -- flunked the screening test. Results were "painful" and "abysmal," said the state education chief. Many were unable to write a complete sentence and spelling aberrations such as "horibal," "compermise," even "universel," were common.

Surveys show that parents and business are increasingly unhappy about the poor quality of public education, as they should be. Children who fail to achieve a college education will lose some \$20,000 a year in income as adults. David Kearns, former CEO of Xerox estimates that poor schooling costs business some \$50 billion a year in remedial work. In 1999, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan warned that the weak state of public education -- from kindergarten to senior high -- endangers the continuation of American productivity.

But if our youngsters are failing, how are we able to maintain our high-tech dominance?

Mainly because our technology runs heavily on foreign talent. Overall, some 45 percent of the 13,000 hard science Ph.Ds in America are awarded each year to non-Americans. In computer sciences and engineering, foreign input rises to 50 percent.

It is not because Americans have been stingy in their support of education. That cost has risen twice as fast as inflation over the past 30 years. We have spent billions on smaller classes, on twice the number of teachers, on language labs, computers, Internet hook-ups, magnet schools. We have implemented such new theories as "open classrooms," "team teaching," the "new math," even "teacher empowerment." To attract better teachers, we have increased salaries. Teachers now earn \$40,000 on average, and those in New York and New Jersey earn over \$50,000, and \$55,000 in Connecticut.

What have these trillions wrought? Has public schooling improved?

There have been no significant gains, and under present management there is little hope for the future. No reforms have worked because they have not attacked the core of the problem: the makeup, theories, personnel and operation of the education establishment -- some 5 million "professionals," from classroom teachers to state education commissioners.

That Establishment has proven to be an unscholarly, anti-intellectual cabal best described as a conspiracy of ignorance, one determined to maintain and protect its false

teaching theories and low academic standards.

(However, it is not a conspiracy of malice. Most educators are well-meaning if undereducated people.)

In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville explained that Americans had a "middling standard" of education that was effective. Nowhere in the world, he said, were there so few learned people, yet so few ignorant. Today, his comment should be turned on its head. Circa 2000, nowhere in the developed world are there so many ignorant schoolchildren as in America.

Here then is a Bill of Indictment of the Education Establishment, problems which cry out for true reform:

- The licensing of teachers is ineffective, requiring knowledge at the lowest possible level.
- The school curriculum is weak, short on history and geography, deficient in composition, spelling and grammar, and backward in science and math.
- Teacher training is lax. Undergraduate education is little better than that offered by two-year community colleges.
- Tenure protects the most inadequate of teachers.
- Teachers' unions are political organizations masquerading as professional groups.
- The American schoolhouse is excessively psychologized --staffed with 125,000 guidance counselors and school psychologists.
- Would-be teachers usually come from the bottom third of high school graduates.
- There is no "profession" of education. Laypeople who teach do as well or better as do graduates of education colleges.
- The field is top heavy with overpaid administrators.
- Many educators have low expectations for students, resulting in poor performance, especially among minority youngsters.
- The lack of separation between elementary and high school, in salary and training, makes scholarship difficult in secondary education.
- The doctor of education degree, the Ed.D. held by many principals and superintendents, is an inferior one that requires little academic knowledge. The master of education is equally hollow.
- Many schools resist programs for gifted students, claiming that "tracking" is an "elitist" concept.
- By promoting "self-esteem," teachers create false complacency among their students.
- Brilliant college graduates without education credits are locked out of teaching in public schools, forcing them into private schools and colleges.
- The establishment dislikes proven traditional methods, favoring unproven new ideas like failed "whole language" reading over time-tested phonics.
- Parents are fooled by blatant "grade inflation" and overexpanded "honor rolls."
- Parents, PTAs and elected school boards have abdicated their powers to the hired help, the

- education establishment.
- State legislators, who have the ultimate power, are often cowed by glib educators, neglecting their duty to students and parents.

I intend not only to provide insight into the problem, but will offer detailed recommendations for improvement. If that is successful, instead of public education collapsing of its own false weight -- as is now the case -- it can once again become a monument to a knowledgeable democratic people.

Martin L. Gross' latest book is "The Conspiracy of Ignorance: The Failure of American Public Schools," to be published by Harper Collins in September.

[FRONT PAGE](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [OPINION](#) | [INVESTIGATIVE](#) | [INTERNATIONAL](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [LETTERS](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#)

Copyright © 1999 News World Communications, Inc.

Politics

The New York Times
ON THE WEB

[Home](#)

[Site Index](#)

[Site Search](#)

[Forums](#)

[Archives](#)

[Marketplace](#)



January 4, 2000

Democrats Vary Subtly on Education Goals

Related Articles

- [Bradley and Gore Renew the Battle \(Jan. 4, 2000\)](#)
- [Campaigns: White House 2000 -- Democrats](#)

Forum

- [Join a Discussion on The Democratic Party and the Presidential Campaign](#)

By JODI WILGOREN

When it comes to education, the difference between the Democratic presidential candidates is not so much what they have to say as how often they say it.

Both Vice President Al Gore and former Senator Bill Bradley want to expand early childhood education. Both would dangle dollars to entice quality teachers to work in impoverished schools and would pump money into after-school programs.

But while Mr. Gore has made education a central issue of his campaign, Mr. Bradley has subtly woven it through the themes of child poverty and working families, which form two of the four pillars of his platform.

Mr. Gore began the race with an education address and recently rolled out what he has called a sweeping plan to "revolutionize American education" with an infusion of \$115 billion over the next decade.

Mr. Bradley's education proposals add up to \$90 billion for 10 years, but he has yet to devote a full speech to the subject or release a comprehensive education plan.

"Bradley doesn't seem that interested in the topic," said Michael D. Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of the nation's 50 largest school systems.

Mr. Bradley seemed more focused on health care, Mr. Casserly said.



Gorgeous
gifts for
her



watcher



frag

leather

- * All items in stock for delivery
- * Free ship packaging

Click here to win the As Diamond™ \$1 Million!

NASDAQ Tick

Advertis

It might be a shrewd strategic decision in a primary fight where there is little substantive disagreement. Mr. Gore, endorsed by the nation's two teachers' unions, wants to mobilize a core Democratic constituency on one of its favorite issues; Mr. Bradley hopes to capitalize on voters' anger over health care, an issue on which the vice president might be vulnerable because of the failure of the Clinton administration's health plan.

Larry J. Sabato, a political scientist at the University of Virginia, said both candidates "have made the correct calculus for their campaigns."

With education topping the list of public concerns in several polls, it has been a frequent focus of speeches and debates among candidates in both parties, even though the Department of Education represents only 7 percent of the federal budget and the federal government controls only \$1 of every \$10 spent on education.

"If one is running for any office, from dogcatcher to president of the United States," said Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University, "you absolutely have to have an education platform."

Despite all the attention, several education experts say they are disappointed with much of what the Democratic candidates have proposed for recruiting teachers and improving student achievement. They say many of the ideas are incremental and avoid complex issues -- from equity in financing to bilingual education -- that are vexing school superintendents, mayors and governors.

"If we invest more money in doing the same stuff, we're likely to get the same results," said Amy T. Wilkins of the Education Trust, a Washington group that focuses on closing the race- and class-based achievement gap. "It's like old wine, new bottles, but more old wine. So we get a bad hangover."

Another potential headache is developing from the frequent tangling over the question of taxpayer-financed vouchers for private schools.

Backed by the two teachers' unions, which ardently oppose vouchers, Mr. Gore has hammered Mr. Bradley for his votes in the Senate to support voucher experiments in Cleveland and Milwaukee.

But Mr. Bradley has said that, unlike several Republican contenders, he does not see vouchers as the solution to public education's problems. In any case, vouchers involve a fraction of the nation's students and have little to do with who is president.

"For me, it's a distraction," said Susan Fuhrman, dean of the school of education at the University of Pennsylvania. "It doesn't get to the core of serious educational problems in public schools."

On the more substantive education questions, the two candidates have similar philosophies but offer slightly different routes to solving the same problems.

Both are emphatic about the importance of prekindergarten initiatives, which research has shown are crucial to long-term success in school. Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, also wants to expand preschool programs.

Mr. Gore promises to give states \$50 billion over 10 years to set up preschool programs -- some operated by private groups -- for every 4-year-old and an unknown number of 3-year-olds.

Mr. Bradley proposes \$2 billion a year for infant and toddler programs, plus a doubling of money for the Head Start program over four years so all eligible poor children can enroll.

The Gore plan would help working-class families, whose children currently have the lowest preschool attendance rates. But several states already have aggressive plans in the works for 3- and 4-year-olds, so Mr. Bradley's program for birth to age 3 fills another gap.

"When one talks about expansion, one can't escape the need to improve quality at the same time," said Ms. Fuhrman, who also runs the Center for Policy Research in Education. "It's not just prorating out what's currently spent by the numbers of children."

The two candidates also echo each other on the need for better teachers in impoverished urban and rural schools.

Mr. Bradley suggests a loan forgiveness program for 60,000 college graduates and scholarships for 10,000 high school seniors who commit to teach in disadvantaged schools for four or five years, estimating the cost at \$1.3 billion annually.

Mr. Gore would go further, using federal money to offer \$5,000 and \$10,000 bonuses to teachers in impoverished districts, in addition to a loan forgiveness program and money for training second-career teachers.

But neither candidate deals with the questions of how to recruit better candidates into the profession, retain quality teachers in difficult schools or improve teacher-education programs.

"We need incentives for people to enter high-quality training programs," said Tom Corcoran, co-director of the Center for Policy Research in Education. "We need incentives for universities to treat teacher education seriously and not treat it as a cash cow."

For after-school programs, Mr. Gore vows to "dramatically increase" federal spending, but offers few details. Mr. Bradley suggests spending \$1 billion to replicate a New York program at 2,000 sites nationwide, and another \$300 million to get older people to volunteer as mentors. In New York, an after-school program has been used to reinforce lessons taught during the day.

In some areas the two candidates do not cross paths.

Mr. Bradley wants to spend \$400 million on the nation's network of community colleges.

Mr. Gore has a list of proposals that lack clear price tags: creating small high schools, charter schools and a Web site offering advanced placement courses; establishing teacher certification tests; and establishing a high school exit examination.

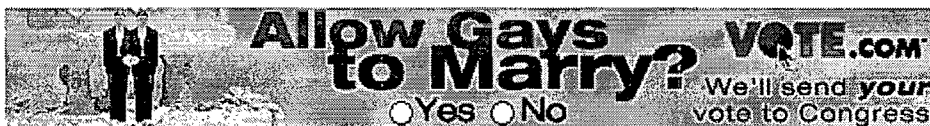
Over all, the biggest distinction is a strategic one, concerning how a president -- or, at least, a presidential candidate -- should consider education.

Mr. Gore sees it as a centerpiece, the key to his broader campaign theme of extending prosperity throughout the country.

"Nothing will do more to help close the gap between rich and poor than lifting up our worst schools," said Bruce Reed, the White House domestic policy adviser. "Education is too important to the country's future for the next president to leave it to the local level."

While talk of school reform fills two of the eight pages of Mr. Gore's stump speech, Mr. Bradley rarely discusses the subject directly. Typical of his approach was the anecdote with which he opened a recent speech. Recalling a Minnesota fourth grader who told him that she had skipped breakfast that morning because it was not her turn, Mr. Bradley focused not on education but on children too hungry to concentrate and teenagers who think they must carry guns.

"In dealing with education, you are dealing with poverty and you are dealing with hunger and you are dealing with preparation," said Eric Hauser, Mr. Bradley's press secretary. "It's an attempt to see education as part of a larger picture, because it is part of a larger picture."



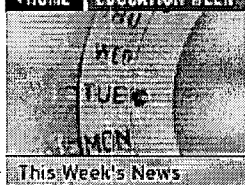
[Home](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Search](#) | [Forums](#) | [Archives](#) | [Marketplace](#)

[Quick News](#) | [Page One Plus](#) | [International](#) | [National/N.Y.](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Science](#) | [Sports](#) | [Weather](#) | [Editorial](#) | [Op-Ed](#) | [Arts](#) | [Automobiles](#) | [Books](#) | [Diversions](#) | [Job Market](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Travel](#)

[Help/Feedback](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Services](#) | [New York Today](#)

[Copyright 2000 The New York Times Company](#)

Jobs Web Connection Book Shelf Subscribe Order Special Reports	Lessons of a Century	Now a book!
EDUCATION WEEK on the WEB		
HOME	EDUCATION WEEK	IN CONTEXT ARCHIVES TEACHER MAGAZINE THE DAILY NEWS SPECIAL REPORTS PRODUCTS & SERVICES



This Week's News

Across the Nation

View the accompanying chart, "2000 Presidential Candidates: Profiles and Education Policies."

January 19, 2000

Who Stands for What On Education?

By Erik W. Robelen

Washington

Four years ago, Republicans vying for their party's presidential nomination were virtually unanimous in their position on the U.S. Department of Education: Get rid of it.

**CAMPAIGN
2000**

That stance fairly well summed up, at least symbolically, their assessment of the federal government's role in education. It also set a tone that many argue did little to help the party's reputation on school issues.

But as the 2000 presidential campaign builds steam, the rhetoric sounds markedly different. Today, talk of eliminating the department has practically disappeared from the Republican lexicon, including that of most of the party's six presidential candidates.

In fact, Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, who is considered the front-runner for the GOP nomination, has made clear that the question for him is not so much whether there is a federal role in schools, but how that role can be redefined.

"Here you have for the first time in my memory a Republican candidate who acknowledges and talks about a federal role in education," said Christopher T. Cross, the president of the Council for Basic Education and a former assistant secretary of education in the administration of President George Bush, the candidate's father.

That kind of talk, meanwhile, softens the contrast between Mr. Bush and the two Democratic candidates for president, Vice President Al Gore and former U.S. Sen. Bill Bradley of New Jersey.

That is not to say that substantive differences do not exist within the current presidential field. But with the crucial Iowa caucuses set for Jan. 24 and the New Hampshire primary for Feb. 1, the challenge for this season's crop of candidates seems to be differentiating their messages and styles on education issues.

Mr. Gore has made education a centerpiece of his campaign, articulating an array of fairly detailed proposals. He would spend an additional \$115 billion over 10 years for universal preschool, subsidized teacher salaries in impoverished areas, smaller schools

and class sizes, and the creation of a national teacher corps to attract new teachers to high-need schools, among other purposes.

As for Mr. Bradley, after what many deemed a sluggish start on his education agenda, the former senator has in recent weeks started talking more frequently about the subject. He has proposed some new education programs, but on a more modest scale than Mr. Gore's plans.

For example, Mr. Bradley would spend \$2 billion a year on a plan to support early-childhood education, \$1.3 billion a year on an effort to encourage new teachers to teach in poor urban and rural areas, and \$400 million annually to improve access to community colleges.

The Reform Party's most prominent candidate so far, the television commentator and former Republican White House aide Patrick J. Buchanan, has limited his comments on education mostly to advocacy of school vouchers and voluntary school prayer.

'Extremely Important'

As it did in 1996, education is clearly emerging as a prominent concern in the 2000 campaign.

An NBC-*Wall Street Journal* poll conducted in December found that a presidential candidate's plans for public education were among the top priorities for voters, and the issue was ranked "extremely important" by 56 percent of those surveyed. By comparison, experience in dealing with foreign-policy issues, for example, was "extremely important" to 42 percent.

"Education has risen steadily in recent years as a public issue, and is now at or close to the top of the American people's domestic-policy concerns," said William A. Galston, a professor at the University of Maryland's school of public affairs and a former aide to President Clinton who is now advising the Gore campaign.

Mr. Galston argues that the vice president's agenda for education clearly eclipses Mr. Bradley's and demonstrates a greater commitment to education. "It is more extensive, more comprehensive, more expensive than the Bradley approach ... and it goes into considerably more detail," he said.

For his part, Mr. Bradley sought last week to distinguish his philosophy from Mr. Gore's.

"Al Gore and I have very different views on education," he said in a Jan. 10 statement from Iowa. "I believe we need to improve education at every stage in a person's life, from birth to adulthood. I also think a student's success depends on more than just a bunch of education programs from Washington. ...

"You can either look at education in terms of where people live their lives," he said, "or you can think of it as a box called education, unrelated to everything else."

Mr. Bradley has argued that education is infused in other proposals

he has put forward, such as those on child poverty and working families.

Vice President Gore's platform appears to have resonated more powerfully with at least some of the institutional education powers, notably the nation's two main teachers' unions, which have endorsed him.

But Lamar Alexander, who abandoned his bid for the GOP nomination last August and has since endorsed Mr. Bush, said that Mr. Gore's approach is far too intrusive. "Gore is sure he knows what is best for local schools," said Mr. Alexander, who was secretary of education under President Bush.

Republican Contenders

On the Republican side, Mr. Bush has been the most aggressive in reaching out to a broad audience on education. He has a clear record in Texas that has emphasized statewide standards, assessments, and accountability for results. He has talked extensively about the importance of helping public schools.

"He thinks there's a more significant [federal] role in making sure the public schools are improved," said Eric A. Hanushek, a professor of economics and public policy at the University of Rochester in New York and an adviser to the Bush campaign.

"He's a governor who's run public schools," Mr. Hanushek continued. "He wants more [school] choice ... but that's something different from [saying] the obvious, only answer is vouchers."

A cornerstone of the governor's approach is heightening federal demands on school districts and states to improve student achievement, while consolidating many K-12 programs into five funding categories and offering enhanced flexibility in spending federal dollars. Gov. Bush, however, has not proposed any spending increases.

Other Republican candidates have also talked about education, but not nearly as much, or in as great detail, as Mr. Bush.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona, considered Mr. Bush's main GOP rival, has outlined several proposals for education. The largest is an experimental voucher program that would be funded at \$5.4 billion over three years. His campaign is also drafting a proposal to provide about \$1 billion annually in tax breaks to teachers rated "excellent" by states.

Mr. Bush's education agenda, meanwhile, has riled some of his more conservative rivals, including Gary L. Bauer, a former undersecretary of education in the Reagan administration.

"The Bush move to the squishy center is seen most clearly in his embrace of big-government, Washington-knows-best nostrums on education," Mr. Bauer wrote in a *New York Times* opinion piece last October.

Some educators say they are pleased, though, that most of the GOP discussion of public education and educators has shifted from the critical remarks of some previous campaigns.

"I don't hear at all the education-bashing," said Philip D. Bell, the superintendent of the Hudson and Litchfield school districts in New Hampshire, the state that, along with Iowa, has been most immersed in the campaign so far. Eric A. Witherspoon, the superintendent of Iowa's 32,000-student Des Moines public schools, added that he was encouraged that education was getting so much attention. For him, what comes first, though, is a candidate's personal commitment to the issue.

As he put it: "Does this really seem to be an issue that's near and dear to a candidate's heart?"

School Vouchers

The debate over publicly funded tuition vouchers, traditionally a dividing line between Democrats and Republicans, is still a defining issue in this year's campaign. But it's a little more complicated than before.

For one thing, Mr. Bradley, who retired from the Senate in 1997 after three terms, voted at least four times during the 1990s in favor of experimental-voucher proposals, such as one in 1994 that was aimed at low-income families.

Vice President Gore has put the former senator on the defensive in recent months for those votes, and has stressed that he himself opposed every voucher proposal during his 16 years in Congress.

Mr. Bradley has stated that he does not believe vouchers are the answer to public education's ills.

In the GOP, vouchers are a staple of most of the candidates' education platforms.

"Real school choice means public schools and private schools," Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes said in a September speech to the National Baptist Convention. "Charter schools and Baptist schools. Home schools and parochial schools."

Gov. Bush, however, has been more cautious in his comments on school choice. He promotes public charter schools vigorously, but he has linked his own voucher proposal to the \$8 billion Title I program for disadvantaged students.

Under Mr. Bush's plan, if a school receiving Title I dollars was identified as failing and did not turn around its performance after three years, the district would be required to let parents use that Title I money, coupled with state money, to move their children to other public or private schools.

"This turns the voucher issue off into a different direction," said Tom Loveless, the director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "It places the

other side in the place of arguing that kids should be forced to go to failing schools. ... That really is a hard argument to defend."

Still, the Texas governor's approach has come under fire from fellow Republicans as well as Democrats. Mr. Forbes and Sen. McCain, for example, argue that three years is too long for a child to stay in a failing school; Vice President Gore insists that vouchers would launch a "downward spiral" by draining money from the public system.

Mr. Bell, the superintendent from New Hampshire, finds the Democrats' support for raising education funding more appealing than Mr. Bush's plans.

"[Gov. Bush] has emphasized charter schools, failing schools, and parental choice," he said. "That doesn't resonate as well with public school folks."

Note: Mr. Buchanan is currently the leading candidate for the Reform Party presidential nomination. The party will choose its candidate by a ballot mailed out this July to members, those who signed petitions in support of placing a Reform Party candidate on a state ballot, or anyone else who requests one. The convention is tentatively scheduled for Aug. 10-13; a two-thirds vote of the 599 delegates could overturn the ballot result.

PHOTOS: Democratic presidential candidates Bill Bradley and Al Gore, at left, shake hands before a debate in Iowa, as do leading GOP rivals John McCain and George W. Bush at a candidates' forum in Michigan.

—Photos by AP/Wide World

[about this site](#) | [subscribe](#) | [order special reports](#) | [jobs](#) | [web connection](#) | [bookshelf](#) | [feedback](#) | [advertising](#)

© 2000 Editorial Projects in Education

Vol. 19, number 19, page 1, 27, 29