

[The New York Times
Tuesday, November 9, 1999]

Clinton Tips the Scales

By Arlen Specter

WASHINGTON
The ongoing confrontation between Congress and the president on education spending is not only about class size and local control of schools. It also provides the opportunity for Congress to reassert its constitutional prerogative to control the country's purse strings.

Since the Republican-controlled Congress was blamed for the 1995 shutdown of the federal government after a budget stalemate with President Clinton, the delicate balance on separation of powers has been altered. The executive branch gained the upper hand on appropriations because Congressional leaders became skittish about standing firm.

The Constitution provides that Congress shall submit legislation, including spending bills, to the president for his concurrence or veto. If he vetoes, Congress reconsiders and passes a

An education bill is a chance for lawmakers to reclaim their role.

revised bill. In my experience, this is how things always worked.

But since 1996, these constitutional mandates have been violated. White House officials have been allowed to negotiate with Congressional leaders with the idea that the president would approve appropriations bills before they are submitted to the House or Senate. This bastardized practice has degenerated to virtual presidential control as President Clinton has made non-negotiable demands, threatening to insist on them even if it means closing down federal operations because financing for them has run out.

For an illustration of how the president's recalcitrance works out in practice, consider the fate of the appropriations bill for the subcommittee on labor, health and education, of which I am the chairman. Using inflammatory rhetoric, President Clinton has publicly demanded \$1.4 billion to reduce school class sizes, with the

insulting addendum that Congress is indifferent to the education of America's schoolchildren. Congress has countered, saying those federal funds should be directed to reducing class size as the first priority but that local school districts should have the option to use the money for other purposes that they think might have greater benefit for their children.

The public may not care much about the legal points of government procedure and budget negotiation, but people do understand and prefer local control over a Washington straitjacket on schools.

This year, members of Congress who have tried to work out an accommodation with the president have met with brushoffs. Last March, at a meeting on Kosovo, I heard Bill Young, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, ask President Clinton if he would join Congress in elevating the unrealistic caps imposed by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The president ignored the question.

My attempts to get presidential attention for education issues have met a similar fate. At a White House receiving line in July, Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel asked me to support appropriations for the Wye River peace accords and was seconded immediately by President Clinton, who was standing next to him. I replied that I would, adding that first I wanted a discussion with the president on the appropriations bill for the subcommittee I head. The president agreed to meet, but my repeated efforts to schedule the promised meeting were to no avail.

In early August, I attended the president's weekly radio address, featuring his request for more funding for Gear Up, a program to help disadvantaged high school students prepare for college. After saying yes to the president's request for an increase in funding for that program, I again asked him for a meeting to discuss the education appropriations bill. Again, the president said he would meet with me but would not schedule a time.

Now Congress has presented the president with a bill that has \$300 million more for education than he requested, albeit with different priorities, including local control of federal aid that could go to reducing class size.

It is not only on education issues that the delicate constitutional balance on separation of powers has been subverted. Congress is threatened with becoming a eunuch if this imperial president solidifies his executive-branch power grab over the federal purse strings. As usual, public opinion will carry the day. Congress has the high ground here and can win this one if we hang tough. □

Arlen Specter, a Republican, is the senior senator from Pennsylvania.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Gore Outlines \$115 Billion Education Plan

By JUNE KRONHOLZ

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Vice President Al Gore proposed giving pay raises to teachers in high-poverty school districts who agree to participate in training and evaluation programs, a move to address the sticky problem of how to get rid of bad teachers and replace them with better ones.

But in a high-profile education speech delivered in Nashville, Tenn., the Democratic presidential candidate outlined a 10-year \$115 billion education plan that, in many instances, includes programs that already are part of federal law, are under consideration in Congress or are part of the Clinton education agenda. His proposal to turn around failing schools by offering them rewards if they improve student performance, for example, is part of an education bill passed earlier this year by the House.

Mr. Gore also called for tripling the number of charter schools, which are publicly funded schools that aren't part of the regular school-district bureaucracy. He

proposed "increased investment" in programs for disabled students and kindergarten for all children, a plan that accounts for about half his proposed spending. And he proposed giving a bonus to states whose youngsters raise their scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a national test that identifies broad progress in reading, math and other subjects, but isn't detailed enough to identify which schools or even districts are showing improvement.

The federal government already pays many teachers' salaries under the Title 1 program, which provides funding to high-poverty schools, and President Clinton's program helps states hire 100,000 new teachers during the next five years. Under higher-education legislation passed by Congress last year, the federal government also has agreed to repay college loans of students who agree to work in high-poverty schools.

Mr. Gore's proposal gets the government involved in teacher quality by offer-

ing a \$5,000 salary increase to teachers in schools that agree to take part in peer-review evaluations, mentoring programs and the removal of bad teachers. Teachers in those schools who receive certification as master teachers would get an additional \$5,000 increase.

That proposal appeals to the teachers' unions, which complain of low pay, but have resisted outside review of their members—and in the process have come under increasing fire for not dealing faster or better with bad teachers. Republicans have tried to link increased pay to individual teacher merit, but have shied away from proposing legislation because most teachers are paid with local or state funds.

Mr. Gore proposed offering grants to school districts to help them build high schools with fewer than 600 students. The administration announced similar plans this fall for schools that many parents see as too big and impersonal.

Those schools would have to offer Advanced Placement courses in return.

John B. Buxton

12/16/99 02:26:48 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Kendra L. Brooks/OPD/EOP, Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP, Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: FYI

FYI on the social promotion front:

**FLUNKING KIDS YIELDS FEW
GAINS, STUDY FINDS
SOCIAL-PROMOTION BAN GETS A MIXED
REVIEW**

By Ray Quintanilla and Michael Martinez
Tribune Education Writers
December 15, 1999

A new study of Chicago's nationally watched ban on automatic promotions for students raises disturbing questions about what happens to pupils who are flunked and suggests the policy has done little to improve their performance.

The authors of the study, released Tuesday by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, were careful not to pass judgment on Chicago's policy of requiring pupils to meet certain academic standards before they can be promoted after 3rd, 6th and 8th grades.

Instead, the authors of "Ending Social Promotion: Results From the First Two Years" raised concerns about the performance of pupils who are retained in their grade level.

The study, which examined pupils' performance from fall 1996 through summer 1998, strikes at the core of the most visible reform initiated by Mayor Richard Daley since the state legislature gave him direct control of the beleaguered school system in 1995.

After Daley gained control, he banned social promotion, the policy of automatically sending pupils to the next grade, even if they are failing. The practice is common elsewhere because many educators believe keeping peers together improves self-esteem and helps pupils having trouble to catch up.

But the ongoing study gave a mixed assessment of the get-tough initiative--a policy that President Clinton has cited as a national model and that school board President Gerry Chico said Tuesday should be required of all school systems nationwide as a condition of receiving federal funding.

"Retained students did no better than previously socially promoted youths. Chicago has not solved the problem of poor performance among students who are retained," the study said.

The study, part of a \$1.7 million research project, found that only about a third of retained 3rd and 6th graders met promotion standards on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills after their second year in the same grade.

Schools chief Paul Vallas said the study's results were outdated because of recent improvements, such as hiring 500 retired teachers and 300 college juniors and seniors to tutor retained pupils.

"The report states that impressive gains are being made and maintained. In addition, the report heaps praise on our summer school program, which has been a significant success," Vallas said.

Chico added that "the bottom line of the consortium's research is that our ending of social promotion . . . is working." But, he acknowledged, "the report is not all wine and roses, and there are points made that we take as constructive criticism."

The study found no evidence that children who repeated the same grade outperformed students passed under social promotions.

The threat of being flunked, however, resonated most among students in Grades 6 and 8, researchers found.

"Our research examined a small window of time. Yet it seems clear that the threat of being retained is more understood by the older children rather than the younger ones," said researcher Melissa Roderick, an associate professor at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration.

Roderick said one of the study's most disturbing findings centered on why many students who made significant academic strides in summer school--and passed--often did not carry that progress into the next grade. One reason, she said, could be that instruction during the regular school year is not as good.

The board has set promotion standards for 3rd, 6th, 8th and 10th grades, but the study dealt only with the three elementary grades.

In response to the study, the reform group Designs for Change called for the public schools to stop flunking students who don't meet standards, particularly in the 3rd grade. Retaining pupils so young can be harmful, the group said.

Donald Moore, the group's executive director, said parents should determine whether their child is flunked. Teachers also should get additional training to help retained students catch up with their peers, he added.

"The philosophy of Chicago's retention program has been that teachers just need to follow a script," Moore said.

Liberties

MAUREEN DOWD

Playing The Jesus Card

WASHINGTON

My father had two prized possessions: a scrapbook full of newspaper clippings about the Irish Catholic who didn't make it to the White House in 1928, and a huge framed photo of the Irish Catholic who did in 1960.

J.F.K. once joked that after Al Smith lost to Herbert Hoover, whose slogan was "A vote for Smith is a vote for the pope," the New York governor had to cable the pope: "Unpack." President Kennedy added that after he refused to help the U.S. Catholic bishops get federal aid for parochial schools, the pope cabled him: "Pack."

Jack Kennedy's shimmering wit could lighten any tense moment. But as he went through his crusade in '60 to convince voters that a Catholic president would not build a pipeline to the Vatican, Catholics held their breaths in fear, murmuring *Please, please, please, let him be president and he'll never, never, never mention religion.*

Kennedy vowed to keep a wall between church and state: "I believe in a president whose views on religion are his own private affairs."

How odd that only 40 years ago a presidential candidate could not win unless he left religion out; now candidates think they cannot win unless they bring religion in.

As H. L. Mencken pointed out, religion "is used as a club and a cloak by both politicians and moralists, all of them lusting for power and most of them palpable frauds."

George W. Bush finally scored some debate points on Monday night by supporting the holy trinity of ethanol, Jesus and soft money. (Didn't Jesus throw those soft-money changers out of the temple?) When the Republican candidates were asked to name their favorite political philosophers, Mr. Bush replied: "Christ, because he changed my heart."

Pressed to elaborate, the Texas governor again showed his inability

to go deep. To borrow a Dorothy Parker quip, he ran the gamut from A to B. Just as in the last debate, when he was asked to expound on a biography of Dean Acheson, he gave the impression that he thought coughing up an impressive name was quite enough.

His mouth curled down into that famous smirky look. "Well, if they don't know, it's going to be hard to explain," he said. "When you turn your heart and your life over to Christ, when you accept Christ as the Savior, it changes your heart. It changes your life. And that's what happened to me."

Translation: You're either in the Christ club or out of it, on the J.C. team or off. This is the same exclusionary attitude, so offensive to those with different beliefs, that he showed in 1993 when he said that you must believe in Jesus Christ to enter heaven. (Mr. Bush has since conceded that only "God decides who goes to heaven, not George W. Bush.")

Dick Morris, the man who told President Clinton that Monica would not play well with the public, immediately proclaimed that Jesus would play well with the public. The pollster enthused on Fox News that W. had "cut right into the evangelical vote."

This is the era of niche marketing, and Jesus is a niche. Why not use the son of God to help the son of Bush appeal to voters? W. is checking Jesus' numbers, and Jesus is polling well in Iowa. Christ, the new wedge issue.

When you take something deeply personal and parade it for political gain, you are guilty either of cynicism or exhibitionism. Exhibit A: Al Gore's skin-crawling speeches at the Democratic conventions about his son's accident and his sister's death.

Mr. Gore has sunk to the same level on religion. On "60 Minutes" last week, the vice president declared himself to be a born-again Christian. And in an earlier interview with The Washington Post's Sally Quinn, he said he often asked himself "W.W.J.D. — for a saying that's popular now in my faith, 'What would Jesus do?'"

When the Kansas board of education removed evolution from the science curriculum testing to make way for creationism, neither Mr. Gore nor Mr. Bush could bring himself to utter a word in defense of scientific truth.

It raises the question of whether the vice president and the governor want Jesus as their personal Savior or political savior.

Genuinely religious people are humbled by religion and are guided by it on the inside. They don't need to wear Jesus on the outside as a designer label. □

Joseph Heller's Legacy

To the Editor:

Re "Joseph Heller, Darkly Surreal Novelist, Dies at 76" (front page, Dec. 14): With all the cultural impact of Joseph Heller's "Catch-22," it should be added that some of us became writers because of it.

AVERY CORMAN
New York, Dec. 14, 1999

Bush and Soft Money

To the Editor:

In a debate this week, Gov. George W. Bush declined an offer by Senator John McCain that the two take a joint pledge against accepting soft money (front page, Dec. 14). Mr. Bush said unless Democrats do the same, it would amount to "unilateral disarmament" and harm the Republican Party.

The Democrats, however, supported the McCain-Feingold bill, but they were outvoted by Republicans. If, under a Bush presidency, the Republican Party continued to be up for grabs to special-interest groups, where would that leave the rest of us?

YVONNE S. ARCHER
New York, Dec. 14, 1999

Give Tripp a Break

To the Editor:

Re "Tripp Not Promised Immunity in Maryland, Starr Team Says" (news article, Dec. 14):

Though I strongly feel that what Linda R. Tripp did was wrong, I see little purpose in prosecuting her, a single mother on a government salary, over an issue that all of us would rather forget.

Mrs. Tripp has already paid a great price, both emotionally and financially, as a result of her poor judgment. It would be cruel to disrupt her life once more with unwanted media attention and what is certain to be a very large legal bill.

President Clinton, who talks a great deal about forgiveness, should put his words into action and grant Mrs. Tripp a pardon. MICHAEL MULLEN
Park Ridge, Ill., Dec. 14, 1999

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Those selected may be shortened to fit allotted space. Send e-mail to letters@nytimes.com, faxes to (212) 556-3622 or postal mail to Letters to the Editor, The New York Times, 229 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036-3959.

Rules of the Playground

To the Editor:

Re "Tag, You're Not It: Tips for a Gentler Schoolyard" (Week in Review, Dec. 12):

Most school gun attacks are not carried out by boys angry at being picked on by their peers. And most victims will never engage in a violent act. Rather, they succumb to the demands of the bully and suffer quietly. They miss endless hours of school, suffer physically and emotionally and, when they feel they have no other option, may commit suicide.

Adults need to take this issue seriously and help these victims, and a gentler schoolyard is just the place to start.

BARRY E. MCNAMARA
Oakdale, N.Y., Dec. 12, 1999

On Gender Identity

To the Editor:

A Dec. 9 news article about the conviction of Pvt. Calvin Glover for the beating death of Pfc. Barry Winchell refers to Private Winchell as "gay," while his companion, Calpernia Addams, is called a "female impersonator."

In fact, Ms. Addams is a male-to-female transsexual who lives full time as a woman, and the name for the orientation of someone who is dating such an individual is unclear.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are complex matters. It is a disservice to our understanding of these issues, as well as to the individuals involved, to force people into preconceived notions of sexuality.

RIKI ANNE WILCHINS
New York, Dec. 9, 1999

The writer is executive director of GenderPAC.



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Ensuring Patient Safety

To the Editor:

Re "Moving Fast on Patient Safety" (editorial, Dec. 8): When crime was the problem, one response was to hire more police officers. When education was perceived to be substandard, one solution was to hire more teachers.

If there is an issue regarding patient safety — and there is — the response should not be to create a federal center for patient safety or more bureaucratic regulations. Rather, the solution should be to restore the fiscal cuts that have created a burden on hospitals, so they can hire more nurses and thus create a safer patient environment.

NEIL GREY, M.D.
Hartford, Dec. 9, 1999

Help E-Commerce Grow

To the Editor:

A Nov. 30 letter about the policies of the World Trade Organization and positions taken by Microsoft stated that the W.T.O. seeks to "make Internet commerce tax-free." In fact, the W.T.O. has only a moratorium on tariffs for transmissions over the Internet. But it has taken no position on taxes, like sales or value-added taxes, relating to online purchases.

Microsoft is one of many companies supporting this policy and urging extension of the tariff moratorium, because we believe that this results in lower prices for consumers, helps e-commerce grow and avoids discrimination against suppliers in international trade. It's important to note that the W.T.O.'s position does not alter individual countries' internal tax structures and certainly does not make Internet commerce "tax free."

BRAD SMITH
General Counsel, Worldwide Sales
and Support, Microsoft
Redmond, Wash., Dec. 6, 1999

More Parking for Us

To the Editor:

In response to the complaint that police officers in Manhattan often park illegally while escaping punishment ("A Place for Parking Spots, With the Police Winning," news article, Dec. 14), I say why not let them do it. If police officers can park in spaces in which the average citizen cannot, that leaves more legal parking spaces for everyone else.

DANIEL NASAW
Chicago, Dec. 14, 1999



ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

WALTER H. WARFIELD, Ph.D.
Executive Director★ MARCILENE DUTTON, J.D.
*Associate Director*FACSIMILE MESSAGEDATE: November 9, 1999SENT TO: Andy RotherhamFAX NUMBER 202/456-5581FROM: Marcy Dutton

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COMMENTS:

Thursday, November 4, 1999

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CITY STATE

Mike Kienzler, metro editor: 788-1519

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER • SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS



Kelly Huff/The Associated Press

The Rev. Jesse Jackson addresses the media Wednesday after meeting with Decatur School Board President Jackie Goetter and Superintendent Kenneth Arndt to present options of punishment for seven high school students expelled for fighting at a Sept. 17 football game.

Jesse Jackson will rally Sunday in protest of Decatur expulsions

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DECATUR — After unsuccessfully trying to persuade school board members to reinstate seven expelled students, the Rev. Jesse Jackson said Wednesday he will take their cause to the courts and the streets.

The black students were expelled for the rest of this year and all of next year because they were involved in a fist fight at a football game on Sept. 17 between MacArthur and Eisenhower high schools.

Jackson said he will ask a judge to order the students' reinstatement. He said he'll also take their case to Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan and to the State Board of Education. And

the Chicago-based civil rights leader plans a march on Sunday in Decatur to protest the expulsions.

"Next week, we intend to take these kids back to school," Jackson said. "and we hope the doors are open for them."

But school board president Jackie Goetter warned that the students are not permitted on school property, and if they did come back, they would be arrested.

At a town hall meeting Tuesday night that drew a crowd of about 1,000, Jackson called the expulsions "devoid of human feeling" and asked the school board to let the students back in school.

School officials said the brawl was brutal and they are simply enforcing a

"zero tolerance" policy for violence. But the expulsions have drawn criticism from many in the community, including Macon County Sheriff Roger Walker, who has called the punishment harsher than anything the judicial system would do to the students.

"If God enforced zero tolerance, we would not be here tonight," Jackson said Tuesday. "If God himself can use grace and mercy, a school board can use grace and mercy."

Goetter said the expulsions can be reviewed next spring, but there will be no reinstatement before then.

"There is nothing that the Reverend Jackson can say or do during his visit to Decatur that would make me change my mind," she said.

EXPEL

From page 1

happen, but it appears the stage has been set. We will kindly ask them to leave because they will be trespassing, but if they refuse to leave, they will be arrested," Superintendent Kenneth Arndt said Monday night.

He said he would decide at 6 a.m. today whether to reopen the district's three high schools, which were closed Monday to avoid a possible confrontation. Jackson had rallied at Eisenhower High School Monday morning with the same plan of re-enrolling the students, but the district thwarted that effort by canceling classes for all of the more than 3,000 students.

The emergency board meeting came after a meeting including Jackson, Ryan, Arndt and Decatur School Board president Jackie Goetter that began about 10 a.m. and continued until about 5 p.m.

Shortly before 2 p.m., the Rev. James Meeks, national chairman of the ministers division of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, emerged from the administration building and spoke to the crowd about the ongoing discussions.

"We're continuing to talk about how we can get these kids returned to the schools they were just expelled from," he said.

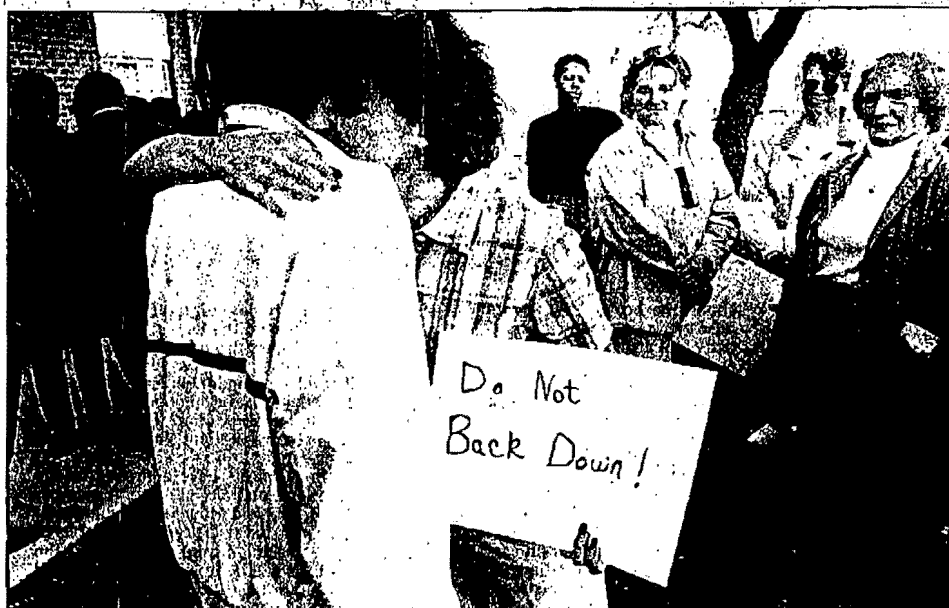
At the time, Meeks' comments suggested that a compromise might be reached for the expelled students to attend alternative schools, although he said the group still favored returning them to their previous schools. After Monday night's board meeting, Jackson rejected any such compromise.

He told reporters earlier, after meeting with Ryan, that during the 1998-99 school year, a majority of suspensions in the district and six of seven expulsions were meted out to black students.

"We walked through a rather arduous process (in the meeting) to rectify and redeem, not to reject our children," he said. "In this case, the punishment does not fit the crime."

"The zero-tolerance policy is rather ill-defined," Jackson added. "A fist fight is different from a gun fight, a knife fight, a rape, a drug bust.... We made some progress on the question of zero-tolerance, a policy that's a phrase that has no foundation."

Jackson said he has not seen a videotape that shows part of the fight that Goetter said endangered hundreds of fans at a football game be-



T.J. Selsman/The State Journal-Register

Suzanne Krupa, a Spanish teacher at MacArthur High School in Decatur, hugs Lateah Pender, one of her students, Monday outside the Decatur School District's administration building. The two put aside their differences long enough to say hello and talk about class, but strongly disagree on the issue of seven students expelled for fighting.

tween Decatur's Eisenhower and MacArthur high schools. The tape led to what are currently preliminary charges of mob action and assault against several people, including some of the expelled students.

Ryan, emerging from the meeting after Jackson, suggested the students be allowed to return to school immediately but under some type of probation for at least six months. He said they should be required to perform community service while staying out of trouble and maintaining good grades.

"Is two years too harsh?" he asked. "Many people would say yes. I happen to think two years is maybe a little too severe. I hope to get this resolved."

Ryan spokesman Dave Urbanek said later that the governor had bought lunch for the participants.

Easily five to 10 local and state police were outside the administration building all day, with at least another handful on the first and second floors inside.

Carolyn Jarrett's son, a MacArthur sophomore, got the day off Monday

when classes were canceled, and her eighth-grade daughter wanted to skip school, too. Jarrett sent her daughter, anyway, but came to the administration building with her son.

Jarrett, who is black, was there "hoping that we can come to an agreement, but it seems like Jackie Goetter and Jesse Jackson are bumping heads," she said. "The kids' focus is too much on this. As a parent, I had to take a stand and insist on going to school."

She favored a lesser punishment and questioned the value of kicking children out of school. Jarrett said that she is well-acquainted with several of the expelled students.

"I'm supporting the district saying there needs to be discipline, but the penalty is too steep," she said. "Three of these boys don't want to be in school. They need to be in school."

Jarrett said she was afraid because of rumors that black and white extremist groups might try to exploit the racial overtones of the situation.

"This thing has turned out to be real messy," she said. "I'm just hoping it'll get resolved fast, before it gets to

be a black-and-white issue, because it's on its way."

Jason Montagne, a white Decatur resident who was downtown Monday and watched the gathering at the administration building for a time but did not participate, also argued that the expulsions were too long.

"When I was in school, seven to 10 days was a fight suspension," he said. "I'd say even six months would be still kind of harsh."

Todd Eggers, a white resident of a neighborhood near Eisenhower High School, was washing his truck Monday afternoon. He suggested that hysteria over school-related shootings and other incidents around the country drove the school board to respond harshly.

"There's a lot of fear in people," said Eggers. "They're looking at it as probably safety. If they are going to kick them out, at least have some kind of alternative (education)."

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Frank Fuhrig can be reached at 788-1530 or ffuhrig@sjr.com.

"We're all tired — physically and spiritually," said the Rev. Thomas Walker of Decatur, who waited all day as members of the school board met with the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Gov. George Ryan. "We want a positive answer."



Jackson pushes return, Decatur board says no

Alternative schooling compromise rejected

By FRANK FUHRIG
STAFF WRITER

DECATUR — The divisions in Waverly Waller's city were plain to see Monday morning at the corner of Cerro Gordo and Main streets.

He arrived at the Decatur School District's Otto C. Keif Administration Building to join other residents who spent the day outside to show support for seven students expelled for two years after a Sept. 17 brawl at a football game.

Inside, school board members and district administrators met for seven hours with Gov. George Ryan, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and local and national representatives of Jackson's Operation PUSH/Rainbow Coalition activist group.

The expelled students are black, as were all but a handful of the supporters at the administration building Monday.

At one point, they were joined on the sidewalk by about 10 teachers holding placards urging the school board to maintain the expulsions. The teachers were all white, said Waller.

"The first thing everybody says is to keep race out of it," he said. "This is not a black-and-white issue; this is a Decatur issue. But when I came here this morning, you couldn't help but see the two factions."

The district called an emergency school board meeting Monday night, after which school officials agreed to reduce the expulsions and allow the students to attend an alternative school.

Jackson rejected the compromise and said he would march with the students to their high school today and demand they be allowed to return.

"We certainly hope that doesn't



Photographs by T.J. Salsman/The State Journal-Register

The Rev. Jesse Jackson leads Roosevelt Fuller, one of the seven expelled Decatur students, to Eisenhower High School Monday.

See **EXPUL** on page 3

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Jackson: 'It's all or none'

Governor to meet with school, Rainbow/PUSH officials over expulsions

By BILLY TYUS and KEN DICKSON

H&R Staff Writers

DECATUR, Ill. (Nov. 8) -- Gov. George H. Ryan has convened a meeting of school and Rainbow/PUSH officials to discuss the dispute over the expulsion of seven Decatur high school students.

As of presstime, high school classes were going ahead as scheduled. But Decatur school Superintendent Kenneth Arndt said a final decision to cancel classes will be made before 6 a.m. after consulting with police and district administrators.

If classes are canceled, Arndt said it will be only at the high school level.

Arndt said Ryan called him at home Sunday night to arrange the private meeting, which is set for 10 a.m. in the Keil Building.

"He told me he was watching the news, and he wants to help resolve the problem," Arndt said of Ryan. "Hopefully we'll get a lot of this addressed and resolved."

The news report Ryan was referring to was coverage of a Sunday march and rally organized by the Rev. Jesse Jackson to garner support for the students who were expelled following a Sept. 17 fight at Eisenhower High School.

During that event Jackson announced plans to walk with the expelled students to Eisenhower in hopes of having them reinstated. If they are not allowed in, he and other members of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition called on other high school students to walk out in protest.

"I challenge parents of school children," Jackson said during the rally. "If these seven can't go, the rest can't go."

"It's all or none."

Mark Allen, field director for Rainbow/PUSH, said the protest at Eisenhower was still on as of presstime.

Sunday afternoon, in a scene reminiscent of the civil rights marches of the 1960s, Jackson led the crowd through the streets of Decatur in support of the students before gathering at Eisenhower. While march organizers estimate the crowd at about 5,000, Decatur police are estimating it was 1,200.

Jackson told the crowd to stand behind the expelled students because one day a similar situation could face their children. He asked that parents keep their children out of school if the students aren't allowed to return.

"Tomorrow when the sun rises, we will rise and bring our children to school and stand here until a change comes," he told the crowd. "We will meet here at 7:30 and stand here until it closes if we have to.

"Have your children behind you."

The Decatur school board voted in early October to expel the students for two years in connection with a Sept. 17 fight at Eisenhower. The school board has said the expulsions could be reviewed at the end of the school year and their reinstatements based upon participation in a community-based tutoring and service program.

Board members said they were enforcing their "zero-tolerance" policy toward violence in the district when issuing the expulsions.

School board president Jackie Goetter said Sunday the district is bracing for today. She said all students will be required to show IDs to get into high school and if the expelled students show up, they will be asked to leave.

If the students do not leave when asked they will be arrested, Goetter said, adding that a walk-out would not be in the best interest of the student body.

"If he's suggesting a walkout, it will possibly endanger more students," she said. "That would be an awful thing to suggest to students.

"Schools belong to them and they're there to learn (and) it needs to be a normal day for them," Goetter said.

Decatur School Superintendent Kenneth Arndt said administrators are taking "every precaution" at the district's three high schools this morning.

Jackson acknowledges the students' fighting was wrong but also argued the school board's decision is excessive and represents "an abuse of power."

"If there is some hell in (the students), let's love the hell out of them," he said. "Let's teach the hell out of them.

"And lets educate the hell out of them."

Chicago Attorney Lewis Myers said he expects to file a lawsuit today against the board on grounds that there is no written "zero tolerance" policy, and that there was no notice of violation or a means for an immediate appeal. The board passed a zero-tolerance resolution but it does not appear in the student handbook.

Goetter questions the merits of the lawsuit.

"We followed state law and board policy," she said. "The students were all afforded due process."

Prior to the march a local crowd milled about the Church of the Living God, PGT Temple 3 for about an hour before "reinforcements" appeared in the form of 11 charter buses from Chicago filled with marchers.

Along the march route, the group sang African-American spirituals and at some points walked arm-in-arm, carrying signs that read "Students Learn Best When in School" and "Goetter Must Go."

Ada Jackson, whose son played football for MacArthur this past season, said she was at the MacArthur-Eisenhower football game when the fight erupted.

"These kids should be in school," she said. "And it's not right that just because they're boys and they're black that people assume they're in gangs. It's not so."

Joan Pettyjohn, 57, sat on the steps to her porch and watched the crowd pass in front of her home in the 1700 block of East Wood Street.

"This is something, isn't it," she said, admitting it makes her think of the 1960s. "But what right has Jackson got coming here? It's not his problem."

Spectator Jennifer Storm, 24, said the whole issue has been blown out of proportion.

"This is a school issue, not something that is all of this," she said.

Leland Jones, 46, of Decatur said this past week has made the Decatur school board look very bad.

"See my son there," he said pointing to a youngster in a stroller. "What's it going to be like for him when he gets in school? Some things need to change. Two years is too long."

Life in the neighborhoods appeared to resume as soon as the crowd

passed.

Despite the church-like atmosphere, security for the march was as tight as local law enforcement officials could make it because of concern for the safety of Jackson and the marchers.

In a news release faxed to area media Saturday, Decatur police Cmdr. Richard Ryan said the police department had received unconfirmed information that a counter demonstration by a white supremacist group would be mounted or some form of extreme violence would occur at the rally. He said an investigation could not eliminate either threat.

Involved in Sunday's security operation were more than 100 officers from the Decatur Police Department, Macon County Sheriff's Office, Illinois State Police, Illinois Secretary of State Police, and U.S. Department of Treasury Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Ryan said.

Bomb squads from the secretary of state's office and ATF stood by at Cantrell and Jasper streets but they were not needed. Secret Service agents also mingled in the crowd.

The biggest problem encountered early Sunday was parking violations by people trying to get to the march, Ryan said.

Meanwhile, Jackson led the group in prayer and rallied their support for change.

Martha Hood, 74, stood on a folding chair and repeated phrases as the reverend sought acknowledgment from the crowd.

"I just hope God will be with all of us," she said.

The Rev. Thomas Walker said he was proud of Decatur on Sunday.

"People have showed a lot by taking a stand on this issue," he said.

Goetter said she saw parts of news reports and was called down to Eisenhower after the rally to do a television interview.

"The Rev. Jackson still doesn't have all the facts," she said. "He's making his decisions and plans with erroneous information -- it wasn't a school yard fight."

Two board members, Jeffrey Perkins, who voted against the expulsions on Oct. 1 and 4, and Terry Robinson, who has said the term of the expulsions is too long, each joined Jackson on the stage for the rally.

"That's unfortunate," Goetter said. "We take an oath at the beginning of our (school board) terms that once the majority of the board has decided something, we all stick by it. That's not happening now."

A few blocks away Sunday afternoon, about 50 people joined Decatur City Councilwoman Betsy Stockard in a separate march against violence.

After seeing a video of the fight, Stockard reversed her opinion and began supporting the school board's decision to expel the students.

Stockard's group walked Eldorado Street from Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to 16th Street and back.

Howard Colebar of Decatur brought a number of homemade signs proclaiming, "Peace," "Love" and "Jesus."

"I came for healing in our community," he said. "It hurts to see us fall apart."

His wife, Pat Colebar feels if Jackson has the students' best interests at heart, he would encourage them to follow the rules.

"I am surprised by all the people here," Stockard said. "It told the girls we might do this alone. It makes us feel good."

O'Neka Reed, 10, helped convince Stockard to march. "We're marching to stop the violence," she said.

Herald & Review Staff Writer Ron Ingram contributed to this story.

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U.S. Looks to French School Model

By ANJETTA McQUEEN AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Rochelle Weisberger of North Potomac, Md., feels lucky to be able to send her son, 5, and daughter, 3, to preschool, but she knows that many American families don't have the chance.

"I see a lot of people who don't give their children this start, quite honestly, because of price," said Weisberger, who is now trying to find full-day preschool for her daughter before she returns to work Monday as a software tester. "My kids love it and they've learned so much."

But efforts to expand preschool programs have bogged down in debates over the quality of U.S. programs and the public responsibility to provide them.

In France, preschool is available to everyone; and if the United States is going to compete globally, it should expand its own preschool access, a group of education advocates said Thursday.

France pays the equivalent of \$7 billion a year to send nearly all 3-to 5-year-olds to voluntary, all-day preschools that focus on learning and the arts.

The United States does spends about \$11 billion on programs that are not mandatory and are targeted to poor families. Others can pay tuitions ranging from \$1,200 to \$8,000.

"We kept asking people how they came to this acceptance of preschool as a universal norm," said Allyson Schwartz, a state senator from Pennsylvania who joined a U.S. delegation that toured French preschools in January. "It was so accepted there they couldn't remember. To them it was such as odd idea -- that we would question the need for families to have quality care and preschools for children. They thought we were the odd ones."

In America, 55 percent of families send children to preschool -- either to Head Start programs for the poor or private schools affordable to better-off families. French attendance is near 100 percent.

States, which control the bulk of U.S. education policy, are just beginning to consider creating programs for all young children, regardless of income.

Georgia, New York and Vermont have passed laws to create statewide preschools. New Jersey's prekindergarten program is part of its state funding law.

None of these schools are compulsory, as is first-grade nationwide and some kindergartens.

Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., who chairs the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, is proposing a \$7 billion program to help states create tailored, voluntary preschool programs.

"Whereas Head Start is targeted to needy people, this would be available to everyone," said Joseph Karpinski, Jeffords' spokesman.

Even proponents concede that most states would not be willing to fund universal preschool.

"No one is proposing we take the French system and start imposing it on the U.S. system," said California's state education chief, Delaine Eastin, who is a strong proponent of tailored preschools that would be open to all children.

The French system, she said, is national and stresses immersion in French culture over the cultures of immigrants; the United States can replicate the system's idea of universal access if not all of the content.

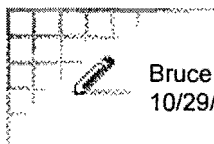
The report -- released by the French-American Foundation -- called on U.S. policy-makers to also follow the French example of promoting preschool programs, coordinating and clarifying federal and local responsibilities and giving teachers better training and pay. Israel, Sweden, Italy and other nations offer universal access to preschool, said Eastin.

Some critics worry the push for universal, high-quality educational preschool will put greater demands on underpaid, undertrained workers, or divert funds from children whose parents cannot afford private programs. Others call universal preschool anti-family or convenient day care for the affluent. And others question the research touting early childhood learning and the ability of public systems to handle more programs.

"To expand the public schools' responsibilities when they aren't meeting the goals we have already given them seems foolish," said Darcy Olsen, an analyst at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington. "This is a false promise."

AP-NY-10-29-99 0247EDT

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Bruce N. Reed
10/29/99 09:32:09 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Leanne A. Shimabukuro/OPD/EOP@EOP, Deanne E. Benos/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc: Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP, Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP
Subject: Cleveland High School Closed

Keep an eye on this

----- Forwarded by Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP on 10/29/99 09:31 AM -----



Barry J. Toiv

10/29/99 08:58:46 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP, Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP, Minyon Moore/WHO/EOP@EOP
cc: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
Subject: Cleveland High School Closed

Cleveland High School Closed

By M.R. KROPKO Associated Press Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) -- Authorities ordered a high school closed today after they uncovered an apparent plot by students to stage "violent acts" there.

According to a published report today, several South High School students admitted planning an attack with guns and explosives, similar to the one carried out by two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., last April.

"We're talking about a plan to disrupt the school with violent acts," Mayor Michael R. White said Thursday night at a news conference at City Hall.

A South High student learned of the plot Wednesday morning and alerted her parents. One of the parents notified the school. The Plain Dealer reported today, citing a source close to the investigation. The school has 1,500 students.

On Thursday, some students dressed in black got the attention of school security officers. They were questioned about the

rumored attack and were sent home with parents, the newspaper said.

At Columbine, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, killed 13 people and wounded 23 others at the school on April 20 before killing themselves.

South High's homecoming game and dance scheduled for tonight were canceled.

Police and school security checked the high school locker by locker Thursday night for weapons and explosive devices, White said. None were found.

But White said some "documents" that were found Thursday appear to be evidence of a planned attack. He refused to specify what those documents were. Eleven students at the school face possible disciplinary action, the mayor said.

The Plain Dealer reported that some students gave written statements to police. The statements said they planned to use guns, which were to be obtained from a gang, and homemade explosives to kill teachers, administrators and fellow students, the newspaper said. It was unclear whether the students had already obtained any weapons, the paper said.

According to the statements, the massacre was planned for just before noon today, with students opening fire in the school cafeterias and the principal's office. The students planned to conclude with a suicidal shootout with police in a courtyard, the newspaper said.

"This is a matter that is literally unfolding minute to minute," White said. "We have an obligation to only communicate what we know to be true and to keep the conjecture and rumors at bay until we know what is going on."

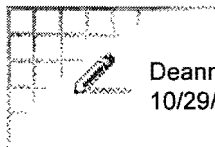
As a result of the investigation, security at all 120 schools in the 77,000-student district was being increased today.

South High School is to reopen Monday with additional security officers and hand-held metal detectors to scan students before they enter, he said.

AP-NY-10-29-99 0815EDT

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Deanne E. Benos
10/29/99 05:55:42 PM

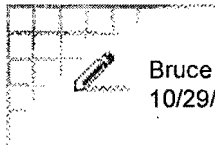
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To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc: leanne a. shimabukuro/opd/eop@eop, eric p. liu/opd/eop@eop, andy rotherham/opd/eop@eop
bcc:
Subject: Re: Brief Update: Cleveland High School Closed 

FYI -- According to the Treasury Dept., the ATF still hasn't been called for assistance on this case. The only two guns recovered so far (from the searches of the students' residences) belonged to a grandfather who had passed away awhile back. The guns were very old and no ammunition was present.

The plot is still being billed as racially motivated and 4 students have been charged with 2 counts of inciting violence, 1 count of false alarm, 1 count of aggravated menacing and ethnic intimidation and 1 count of inducing panic.

Bruce N. Reed



Bruce N. Reed
10/29/99 09:32:09 AM

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Teaching of teachers evolves to raise standards

Calif. programs target burnout, subject matter

By Mary Beth Marklein
USA TODAY

LONG BEACH, Calif. — To the untrained eye, the 37 students enrolled in a California State University course called ITEP 100 look like your average college kids in an introductory-level survey course.

They are, but a closer inspection also reveals that they are guinea pigs, part of an experiment launched this fall as the Long Beach campus works to produce not only more teachers, but better ones.

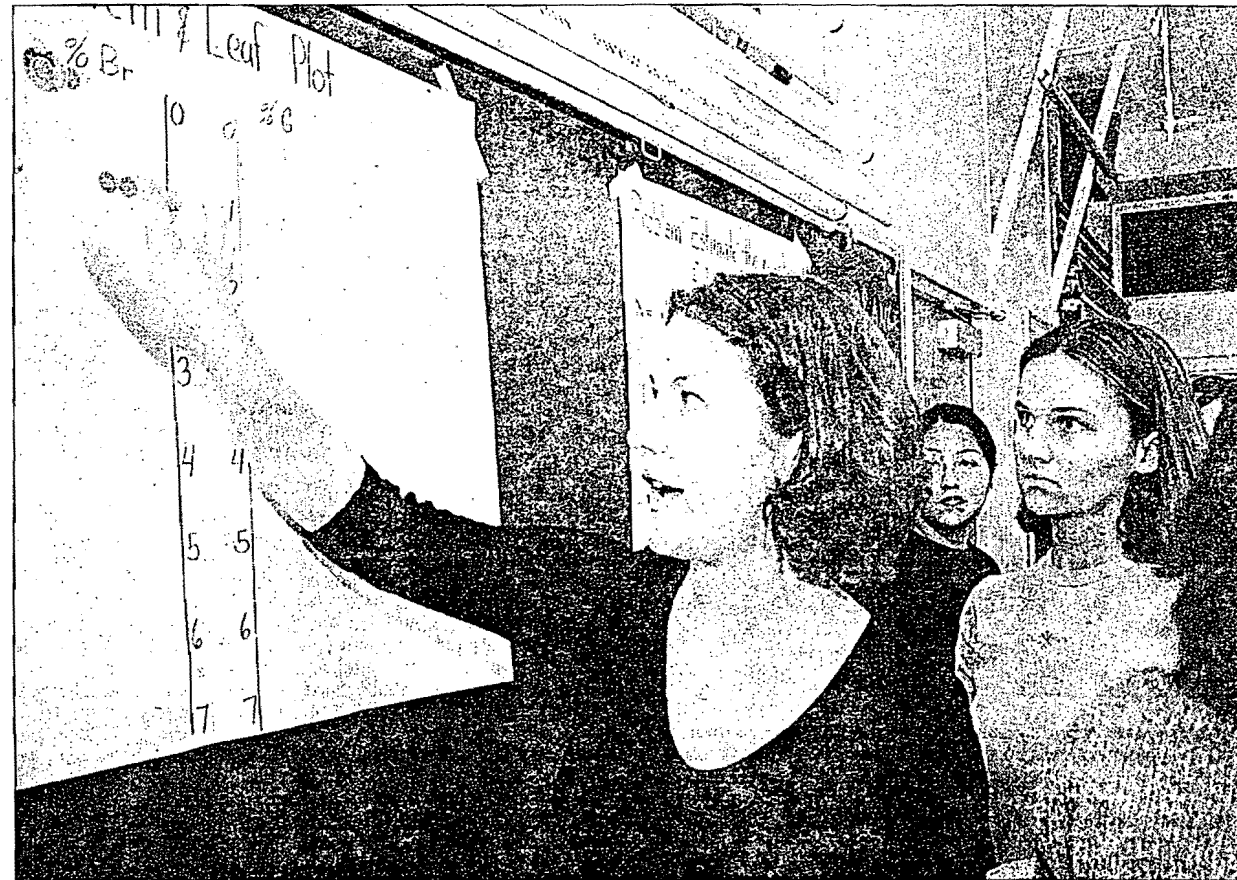
It's the latest development in a growing arsenal of strategies developed by the 23-campus California State University (CSU) in an attempt to meet the demands of a burgeoning and increasingly diverse population of public school students. Between those and other trends, such as massive teacher retirements and a move to smaller class sizes, California expects to need up to 300,000 new teachers in the next decade.

Nationally, experts put that figure at more than 2 million. And as the debate on how to address the enormous challenges facing public education focuses increasingly on teacher quality, teacher-preparation programs at colleges and universities nationwide are finding themselves under scrutiny.

Last month, governors and CEOs called for greater accountability of teacher-preparation programs. A 1998 federal law requires that colleges report the performance of their graduates on state licensing exams for teachers. The U.S. Department of Education recently signaled its support by granting \$33 million to 25 institutions that train future teachers. And in a report due this month, the American Council on Education, which represents college presidents, is expected to talk tough to institutions that offer teacher preparation.

Some experts, noting a 35% dropout rate among teachers by their fifth year, have pushed for better teacher training for years.

"Why do they drop out? It's mainly because nobody's taking care of them," says Judith Renyi of the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, a branch of the National Education Association.



Hands on: Laura Miller works on a statistics experiment as part of the teacher-preparation program at California State University, Long Beach. The course is geared toward developing the skills and filling the actual classroom needs of future teachers.

But much of the newfound attention spins off from horror stories about credentialed teachers who couldn't pass state licensing exams. And while teachers have long battled stereotypes suggesting they are low achievers in low-status jobs — unfounded and unfair, many of them argue — some experts suggest that the poor teacher performance in recent years was inevitable.

"When we got into standards-based reform 10 years ago, it should have occurred to more people than it did that as we raised our standards for kids, some sort of standard for teachers was going to be necessary," says Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust, a Washington non-profit group that urged Con-

gress to include the accountability provision in the Higher Education Act.

Colleges and universities, wary of more paperwork, were among those that fought the proposal. But some leaders in higher education argue that universities have not only a responsibility to improve teacher preparation, but an incentive to make it a priority.

"We want to get out of the remedial education business," says CSU Long Beach president Robert Maxson, a former classroom teacher. The way he sees it, the better the teachers, the stronger the high school students he can admit to his university.

In hindsight, some of the weaknesses in teacher-preparation programs can be traced

to a simple lack of communication between colleges and the school districts they serve.

Long before all the talk about teacher quality, for example, CSU Long Beach worked with the local school district and community college to revamp the teacher-preparation curriculum.

Chief among their discoveries was a glaring gap between what teacher candidates were learning and what they would be expected to teach. One example: Though calculators are allowed in elementary and secondary school and on the SAT college admissions exam, they aren't allowed on CSU's entrance exam.

Since then, members of the Long Beach

campus and the school district have developed a concept they call "seamless education." The university program was meticulously refashioned to correspond with what students are expected to master at all grade levels. The university also strengthened requirements to ensure that teacher-preparation students have a grounding in the four core subjects: science, math, social studies and languages.

That's just one in an ambitious array of CSU initiatives, each addressing some aspect of the challenge, be it a state initiative to ensure all students can read by the third grade or an emerging need to offer courses tailored to teachers in urban schools. As CSU chancellor Charles Reed puts it, "You've got to attack this on all fronts."

This fall, the system launched a distance learning initiative that aims to expand access to courses for working teachers pursuing a teaching credential. And in a bid to reach younger students, the Long Beach campus is one of several to offer an evolving program for aspiring elementary school teachers that aims in part to shorten the length of preparation by embedding the teaching of pedagogy, or teaching methods, into courses that focus on content, or subject matter, such as science and history.

(In typical education jargon, the program is called ITEP at Long Beach, which stands for Integrated Teacher Education Program. The traditional approach, still offered at CSU and common in many states, requires teaching candidates to earn a bachelor's degree before pursuing a credential.)

While it's too soon to draw conclusions, students aren't complaining. "All our teachers are talking to us like future teachers," says freshman Laura Miller, who within weeks of starting school had picked up a handy lesson on how to use M&M's to teach probability to elementary school children.

One advantage of programs such as ITEP is that freshmen get classroom experience as soon they set foot on campus, so they can cut their losses early if they find they're not cut out for teaching.

But the practice of integrating education concepts with subject matter is not universally embraced.

"In theory, it makes a great deal of sense, (but) there's been some resistance to move in that direction for fear it will water down the curriculum," Haycock says.

CSU Long Beach professor Deborah Hamm has heard that argument but is committed to making ITEP work. Still, she acknowledges that it's a work in progress. "We hope," she says, but "we're still learning."

Leading classrooms after leading troops

Military personnel, others go back to school
in career shift aided by alternative certification

By Stephaan Harris
USA TODAY

There is a small chance that the new teacher in your child's school is not a 22-year-old fresh from a college teacher program with certification in hand. The instructor could be a 40-year-old former engineer who was licensed through a non-traditional route.

More school districts are introducing teachers with alternative certification received through special programs. They involve college courses tailored for those who are switching to education from another career or college background.

Nearly every state has some type of alternative certification, says the National Center for Education Information. Some programs work with colleges to prepare and license prospective instructors without a degree in teacher education. These teachers-to-be represent many facets of the working world, including retirees, classroom aides, students and professionals from their 20s to middle age who want a change of pace.

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that in 1994 at least 1% of the USA's teaching force had received certification through alternative routes. Some educators say that figure has grown considerably, as teacher shortages have left some districts scrambling to fill holes left by retirements or resignations.

Some programs allow participants to teach during the day while taking classes at night. Others offer college tuition assistance. Certification requirements vary state by state, but just about all require candidates to have a bachelor's degree and pass state teacher exams.

One of the larger programs is Troops to Teachers, created in 1993 to train ex-military personnel to become teachers. In place in every state except Wyoming, the program has helped more than 3,000 participants get certified.

Retired Army warrant officer Steven Decker started the program five years ago. After receiving his certification, the 52-year-old Colorado Springs resident began full-time instruction at a high school, teaching subjects such as math and technology. Decker, who now teaches woodshop to blind middle and high school students, says his background of discipline and experience with youth groups prepared him.

"It's easy to adjust, coming from the military," Decker says. "You've had leadership. You know how to organize."

New Jersey, in 1984, was the first state to design an alternative certification program for people with bachelor's degrees in fields other than education. But two states are pioneers in this area. Texas has 27 alternative programs (some train administrators) certifying 14% of the state's teachers. California

has 65 such programs, involving 430 of its 1,000 school districts and 7,923 teachers. The state set aside \$11 million for tuition assistance, recruitment, performance assessment, extra faculty support for new teachers and team-teaching courses, says Mike McKibbin of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Many educators who praise the trend say alternative certification brings in people with on-the-job knowledge in areas like science and a maturity that makes them as prepared as their younger peers. Others express caution, saying strong standards must always play a part.

"It's positive as long as people are deeply grounded in their subject area and they get help on the job," says Sandra Feldman, the president of the American Federation of Teachers. She warned that some districts abuse the divergence from traditional teacher programs by bringing in anyone to fill positions, most notably by issuing emergency credentials. Despite California's alternative-certification investment, 11% of its teachers have an emergency permit or waiver.

Weeding out poor candidates is essential for ensuring quality, says Della Stafford, founder of the National Association for Alternative Certification, which estimates that as many as 80,000 teachers have been licensed through non-traditional means.

"There are a lot of nice people who probably should not be teaching," Stafford says. "Screening is of the utmost importance (because) teaching is a craft."

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**— Steven Decker,
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warrant officer**

Volunteer teachers don't go by the book

But critics say enthusiasm can't replace experience

By Stephaan Harris
USA TODAY

It's safe to say Caitlin Wittig experienced a bit of a culture shock two years ago.

That is when the College of William and Mary graduate traded the comforts of her Arlington, Va., home for the border town of Pharr, Texas. It wasn't just the crop fields, the palm trees, the plains and the enveloping Rio Grande Valley that Wittig, 24, had to get used to. She also had to adjust to her sudden career as a teacher.

Wittig is one of nearly 1,000 people who enlisted that year in the Teach for America program, which gives recent college graduates, usually in their 20s and hailing from top schools, a chance to teach in 13 urban or rural school systems for two years. The school districts pay the salaries.

Almost all TFA participants have no formal teacher training. But all have a desire to dip their toes into the world of education.

TFA started in 1989 as the thesis of president and founder Wendy Kopp, who was a Princeton University student. Along the way, the program has grown in numbers and stature. In these days of teacher shortages and a growing demand for minority educators, some school officials desperate for new blood and diversity count on the program.

Though some educators praise the effort, others have questioned whether participants are prepared to provide quality instruction to students who sorely need the best teachers.

The genesis

In 1989, Kopp wrote 30 companies at random to solicit \$2.5 million to get the Peace Corps-type venture off the ground. She pieced together money from grants, foundations and individual donors.

More than 2,500 college seniors applied, and in the fall of 1990 about 500 were chosen and sent to New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, North Carolina and Georgia to begin two-year commitments. The number of participants nationwide is expected to grow to 1,400 this fall.

Kopp says TFA is looking to expand in five not-yet-named areas.

"Teach for America is potentially the most catalytic force out there in terms of urban and rural education," Kopp says. "We're tapping into a desire among college students to do something that makes a difference in a world."

While a heady mix of enthusiasm and anxiety permeates the program, plenty of participants experience initial difficulties in adjusting. Most move hundreds or thousands of miles from their hometowns.

Wittig teaches social studies and theater at an alternative high school in nearby McAllen, Texas, where the average household income is about \$12,000. Wittig had to write a curriculum for her mostly Mexican-American ninth-through 12th-graders. She also became part of the community and coordinated service projects, such as student murals that promote non-violence.

"Teach for America teaches you high expectations and to go beyond the call of duty," Wittig says.

At first, 24-year-old Samuel Villani III found his position as a physical education teacher at Washington, D.C.'s J.F. Cook Elementary overwhelming. Villani saw the particular challenges of the inner city. Some students came in without enough food or sleep, while others dealt with street violence.

"We're in here fighting for their education. They're fighting for their lives," he says. "It's a sink-or-swim mentality, but there's a network here that keeps you afloat."

About half the Teach for America participants stay in education. Lisa Gilmore, 30, also at Cook Elementary, is finishing her certification and a master's program. Gilmore learned about the highs of teaching — eager children who shower her with hugs — and lows — having to shell out money to make copies.

"I love teaching," Gilmore says. "It's what I should have been doing all along."

The preparation

Kopp says that although the five-week training is not the same as a traditional teacher-education program, it covers a variety of topics, including instruction strategies and the setting of goals for students.

"Some principals say they are the most effective teachers," Kopp says. "It's selecting people who have what it takes to excel in

these environments. There are many different effective routes into teaching, and this is one of them."

Some are not so sure.

Putting those with little formal training in the classroom will further handicap children who are poor academic performers, says Stanford University education professor Linda Darling-Hammond. She says she has talked with recent TFA graduates who felt poorly prepared.

Recent studies, including those done by professors in North Carolina and Texas, have found that students who are taught by certified instructors exhibit higher gains in math and reading than counterparts who have teachers with either temporary or no certification, Darling-Hammond says.

"You don't necessarily learn from experience if it's unguided experience," she says. "I frankly think it's criminal when you can hire teachers who are qualified. We wouldn't allow it in inner-city hospitals."

Six TFA participants have worked for Alfred Billingsley, principal of a high school in rural West Helena, Ark. He says the inexperience of some first-timers shows.

But he says veteran instructors often help iron out the kinks. Billingsley says the participants often prove to be the most energetic teachers, staying after hours or working on weekends to plan classroom lessons.

"They bring in good ideas from different areas of the United States, and the kids look up to them," Billingsley says. "Some I wish I could keep. They have made a great impact on our students."

TFA recruits smart people who wouldn't necessarily go into education, but "the problem stems from the implicit assumption that you don't need to be prepared," says Patricia Wasley, dean of the graduate school of Bank Street College of Education in New York. It is considered one of the foremost practical teaching schools in the nation.

Wasley says good changes to TFA would include more training and alignment with the professional development in each school district. Wasley worries about those who decide not to pursue teaching, thus not using the stint to hone professional skills.

"Learning how to respond to every child in your class is unbelievably complicated," Wasley says. "Without a lot of skills, teachers tend to teach the way they were taught."

But course content found in some teacher-education programs "isn't necessarily that much greater" than Teach for America's five-week crash course, says Dave DeSchryver, senior policy analyst for the Center for Education Reform.

He points out that many programs devote much of their time to pedagogy, or the science of teaching. It includes such conceptual courses as understanding how kids learn. He says inexperience is countered by knowledge of subject areas such as science and math.

TFA proponents say such programs increase minority representation in the education field and provide role models for some students of color. In 1998, 34% of the TFA members were minorities. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 13% of public school teachers are minorities, compared with a minority student population of 32%. Educators estimate that the 13% figure is in danger of shrinking as higher-paying, less stressful jobs lure minority college graduates.

The problem seems to be more in the area of retention than recruitment. Figures show that minority enrollment in teacher-education programs is on a bit of an upswing.

Nearly 19% of education students in fall 1995 were minorities, compared with 13.5% in 1989, according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Despite that gain, the minority teacher figure of 13% remains, suggesting that many new hires drop out of the profession.

The shortages

School districts nationwide say they have had or will have trouble filling teaching positions, especially as more teachers approach retirement. Programs such as TFA provide more staff, albeit temporarily.

For example, more than 270 TFA members taught last school year in California, which estimates it will need 260,000 to 300,000 new teachers in the next 10 years.

But some educators say the shortages sometimes reflect bad hiring practices. Darling-Hammond says some districts, particularly in urban areas, tend to fill open positions with less qualified teachers because those with advanced degrees command higher salaries.

Darling-Hammond interviewed a former Louisiana TFA participant who found out she was chosen over a teacher with 10 years of experience and a master's degree.

"The district that invests in (programs such as Teach for America) has a revolving door of unprepared teachers."

Smaller classes better than money

All-USA nominees proud of work
but would like more respect, support

By Anthony DeBarros
USA TODAY

The best way to increase teacher quality and satisfaction is to reduce class size, a survey by USA TODAY of some of the nation's top teachers suggests.

In the survey, of people nominated for the 1999 All-USA Teacher Team, respondents placed smaller class size ahead of higher salaries, increased training and better school equipment when asked to rank ways to improve the quality of teaching and the satisfaction of teachers.

"The more students that a teacher has, the more robotlike and mechanized the personality becomes," says Evelyn Galatis, a sixth-grade teacher at McCall Middle School in Winchester, Mass., who was nominated for the team.

"Smaller class size gives the teacher more opportunity to learn about the students, the opportunity to have more interaction with the students," says Lawrence Svrcek, a nominee who teaches economics and business at Francis Lewis High School in Fresh Meadows, N.Y. "When you get up to class sizes of 34 and beyond, it becomes virtually impossible."

About 88% of the 975 individuals and team members nominated for the All-USA Teacher Team responded to the survey.

The results, though not representative of teachers as a whole, do offer insight into the thinking of some of the nation's most effective teachers.

Among the findings:

► Nearly 100% of respondents said they were proud to be a teacher, but only 30% said that most people would consider teaching to be an attractive career choice. And 68% agreed that teachers get respect from the community.

"That 30% think people see teaching as attractive troubles

me," says Dennis Van Roekel, secretary and treasurer of the National Education Association, the biggest U.S. teachers union. "As we look over next eight to 10 years, we know we need 2 million new teachers. If they're at all accurate in terms of the public's perception, that would bode negatively in terms of finding the number of qualified people we need."

► On school safety, 96% of the respondents said they felt safe in their schools. Still, swift action regarding problem students and help in identifying troubled students ranked first and second among items respondents said would make schools more secure. Security devices and police ranked last.

"Once you identify the students and you are able to provide them with individual counseling... it becomes more of a situation of a psychological problem and not a safety problem," Svrcek says.

► On parental involvement, just 34% said that most parents are actively involved in their children's education. And 72% said parents expect teachers to take more responsibility for discipline than they should.

Adequate space and adequate basic supplies were the top two suggestions for physical characteristics of classrooms that would improve teachers' effectiveness. The respondents ranked those ahead of cleanliness, technology and other factors.

"I'm really blessed where I just about have everything I need to teach with," says Scott Rippetoe, a physics and electronics teacher at Conroe (Texas) Academy of Science and Technology.

"But I do a lot of workshops for teachers, and I often find that they're in a different situation," he says. "A lot of times, they're trying to teach physics with sticky string and tape in-

stead of high-tech equipment. It's easier to teach when you don't have to worry about those things."

► Interaction with students and influence on students' lives ranked highest among items the teachers found to be rewarding about their jobs, ahead of interaction with colleagues

and professional development. Salary ranked last.

"To consider and finally decide to be a teacher, it has to be a vocation — it has to be considered in that regard," Galatis says.

Complete results of the survey are available at www.usatoday.com/life/lts045.htm.

Two paths point way to class career

Fresh from a job or college, teacher recruits answer the call

By Anthony DeBarros
USA TODAY

Colleen Murphy and William Harris are, in many ways, a snapshot of teaching's two-pronged future.

At their core, the two came to the profession — Harris in 1996 and Murphy this year — out of motives teachers have shared for centuries: the sense that working with children is their calling, not a job.

But Murphy, a voluble 22-year-old, and Harris, a 47-year-old retired Marine, arrived via far different paths — she by traditional teacher education, he by a non-traditional program that led him through a midlife career switch. In those two paths, experts say, is a picture that increasingly defines who is teaching America's children and why.

On one path are the young traditionalists, a group in a renaissance. After bottoming out in the early 1980s, interest in teaching among college freshmen has risen steadily in the 1990s, feeding classrooms with enthusiastic graduates who see teaching as part vocation, part community service.

On the other path are the converts, thirtysomethings and fortysomethings moving to teaching as a second career. Though a fraction of the 200,000 people certified to teach each year, they're having an impact in states such as Tex-

Interest in teaching grows

The 1990s have seen increases in the number of people studying to become teachers. Between 1983 and 1998, the number of new teacher graduates jumped 49%.

New teacher graduates

1983	134,870
1998	200,545

Institutions of higher education preparing teachers

1984	1,287
1999	1,354

Source: "The Making of a Teacher," Center for Education Information

By Julie Stacey, USA TODAY

as, where career-changers account for about 19% of new teacher certifications.

Together, the streams are supplying a new combination of teachers — one that benefits from the idealism of youth and the maturity of experience.

"We're seeing a real mix of people entering teaching much later in life, as well as people who are studying to be teachers straight out of high school," says C. Emily Feistritz, president of the Center for Education Information in Washington, D.C. "And, I think,

increasingly that mix is going to get more and more even."

Both of Colleen Murphy's parents are educators, but it wasn't until she began giving swimming lessons during high school that she discovered she loved teaching. Fresh out of

Valparaiso (Ind.) University this summer, she landed a job with the Wake County School District in Raleigh, N.C., and started teaching fourth grade at Wildwood Forest Elementary School in September.

Her classroom is an exhibit

of the enthusiasm she and her peers are bringing to the job: Before school opened, she decorated it with a giant ladybug, a large owl, maps, puzzles and a reading corner with a beanbag chair. Already, she says, she has spent \$250 of her money on supplies, not small change given her \$26,500 annual salary.

She'd like to see the pay increase. Teachers' median weekly earnings are below professional salaries in general, even though between 1988 and

1998 they went up faster than other occupations, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. But money is not her biggest reward.

"I love having the ability to make somebody be motivated," Murphy says. "I see kids who I know didn't enjoy school last year, and I can see them coming alive."

That kind of fire is driving renewed interest in teaching from a group that, 20 years ago, abandoned it for more money elsewhere. In studies by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, 11% of college freshmen in 1998 indicated interest in a career in education. Though down sharply from 24% in 1968, it's more than double the rate of the early 1980s.

"What's driving them is idealism," says Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University in New York and author of a recent book on college students' attitudes. "The interview (for the book) I'm never going to forget is the student at the University of Colorado who said, 'For my generation, teaching's the equivalent of the Peace Corps.' ... They want to make a difference, and the best place to make a difference is in the classroom."

There's also a desire to right what they perceive as the system's failures. "History is boring to a lot of my friends, but I just think it's the way they were taught," says Katherine Jordan, 22, studying at the University of Connecticut to become a high school teacher. "I adore history, and I felt like, 'Why don't I teach history and make everybody love history like I do?'"

But the danger for this group, Levine warns, is that idealism can fade. "We're going to lose at least half of these kids," he predicts. "It's the equivalent of the Peace Corps — and do you know anybody who made the Peace Corps their career?"

The solution, he says, is threefold: improve pay, improve working conditions and enhance the status of the career.

"We keep saying that teaching is the most important profession, but we rarely treat it with respect," Levine says.

Murphy herself is more blunt. Society, she says, "needs to be aware that we need teachers and that we need to appreciate what they put into it."

Changing directions

But youthful idealism is just part of what's drawing teachers. The other driver is people such as William Harris, whose story is a template for midlife career changes into teaching.

Harris began pursuing teaching in 1995 after 20 years as a Marine. Drawn by his desire to work with kids, he became a substitute teacher after going through the military's Troops to Teachers program. Soon after, he enrolled at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Georgia in the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Pathways to Teaching Careers program, which helps education paraprofessionals become certified to teach.

By 1996, he was an intern social studies teacher at Shuman Middle School in Savannah, Ga., while taking college courses. The next year, Shuman hired him to teach computer literacy. His initial salary: \$25,000, just more than half the \$48,000 he made as a Marine major. But that wasn't the point.

"I spent 20 years in the service. I enjoyed it, but it was time to do something else," Harris says. "It wasn't about making money. I wanted to give back to the community."

Harris' computer lab reflects the whole of his life: Before class, in military fashion, his students wait in line outside the door until he gives the signal to enter. From typing exercises to the daily lessons, the students' day is built on a disciplined routine. "Every student, if you ask one of them what to do in a certain situation, they will know what to do," he says.

That ability to translate 10 or 20 years of career experience into the classroom is part of what makes career-changers particularly attractive to school districts.

"They've usually had a level of organizational experience that helps prepare them for some of the organizational aspects of being a teacher," says Augusta Souza Kappner, president of Bank Street College of Education in New York.

Kappner says career-changers have become about 30% of Bank Street's student population, a signal of their emergence. And more statistics point to the growth: A recent study by the Center for Education Information found that 55% of people entering post-baccalaureate teacher-preparation programs — and 11% of people entering undergraduate programs — were moving into teaching from occupations other than education.

The impact has been felt deeply in states such as California and Texas, both with substantial alternate-certification programs. In California, an \$11 million program will lead 7,923 people, mainly career-changers, through internships this year. That's about a fourth of the teachers the state will hire — and more than six times the number of internships granted when the program started in 1994, says Michael McKibbin of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Particularly attractive to school districts: About 85% of the people who've gone through the internships are still teaching, McKibbin says.

"When those people have made a decision, they've made it at a much more mature level," he says.

Often, it's because they've had time to learn about themselves. "I realized that while I liked what I did, I felt like there was a void in my life," says Lisa Sandhaus, 30, a former stockbroker studying to be a teacher at Bank Street College. "Whenever I walk into the classroom, I feel like that void no longer comes into my life. Children really make my life special."

New law unit to battle product piracy

By Gary Fields
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The head of the U.S. Customs Service is expected to announce today the creation of a new law enforcement unit that will target people who manufacture and sell counterfeit merchandise.

Officials estimate that companies worldwide lose as much as \$200 billion a year because of product piracy.

Customs Commissioner Raymond Kelly says the new unit

will be made up of Customs and FBI agents working jointly. He plans to make the announcement today before a House subcommittee.

People know that products such as designer clothing and compact discs and computer chips are produced illegally, but "virtually everything made" is being counterfeited, Kelly says.

Last week, the Food and Drug Administration issued a warning for shoppers in southern California to look out for

counterfeit labels on baby formula. The mislabeled formula could cause severe allergic reactions in some infants.

Other cases have included counterfeit auto brake parts, bolts used in road bridge construction and even medication.

Last year, Customs officials found more than \$76 million in fake merchandise. The agency searches about 2% of all goods that are imported into the United States.

One of the problems for businesses is a lack of sympathy

from consumers who feel the companies are making enough money and that the consumer should be able to search for bargains. But what they often find is not a bargain, says Elhan Orlinsky, vice president and general counsel for Major League Baseball Properties.

Items such as caps, T-shirts and jerseys have been hit so hard that professional and collegiate sports formed a coalition in 1992 to protect their trademarks.

"I can't tell you how many

times we've gotten called, and they say, 'I can't believe you sold me this T-shirt. The color ran after one washing,'" Orlinsky says.

Tim Trainer, president of the International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition, says the real impact is in how counterfeiting is changing consumer behavior.

"Parents are being asked to check the letters embossed on the cans of baby formula," he says. "That's not something consumers would think they have to do to protect themselves."

Funding to target justice for Indians

By Richard Willing
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Janet Reno is expected to announce today a record \$89 million in grants to fight the exploding problem of crimes against American Indians.

The money will pay for more police on Indian reservations, more prison cells and prosecutors, and for crime prevention programs that target Indian youths.

Reno, who has made Indian justice issues a key part of her agenda, is scheduled to announce the grants after meeting with about a dozen Zuni, Northern Cheyenne and Oglala Sioux tribal leaders.

"Indians are violent crime victims at twice the rate of other Americans," Justice lawyer Leslie Batchelor said.

Indian leaders greeted the news of the grants with cautious praise.

"If it's just going to put more Indians under (federal) surveillance or in jail, I'm not interested," said Suzan Shown Harjo, a Muscogee and Cheyenne Indian who leads the Washington, D.C.-based Morning Star Institute, an Indian issues think tank.

"But if they're going to get at the real problem of racially motivated attacks (against Indians), then we may finally be getting somewhere."

Earlier this year, the Justice Department released a study that showed Indians are victims of violent crime more than twice as often as the national average. The study also found that unlike whites and blacks, Indians are more likely to be victimized by members of a race other than their own.

The report relied in part on the National Crime Victimization Survey and covered the years 1992 through 1996.

It found that Indians were the victims of rape, robbery and assault at a rate of 124 crimes per 1,000 people ages 12 and older. The rate for whites was 49 crimes per 1,000 people; for blacks it was 61.



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Sunday, October 10, 1999 |  Print this story

Education Appointees

* I was deeply troubled by Judy Pasternak's Oct. 3 article on the U.S. Department of Education, because it paints a distorted, unfair picture of our staff and management. Our career employees and presidential appointees work hard every day to ensure that the department administers high-quality programs that benefit all students.

First, your article gets the numbers wrong. The Clinton Education Department has never had more than 134 Schedule C presidential appointees--15% fewer than the peak in the Bush administration. Our peak employment of appointees requiring Senate confirmation and noncareer senior executives--the other two types of presidential appointees--is 10% below Bush administration levels.

The article asserts that the Education Department faces management challenges. Your rationale? Because education's number of appointees is similar to the number in the Bush administration and because the Bush administration had management challenges, then therefore so too must the Clinton administration. This is an obvious non sequitur.

Over the last seven years, the department has cut student loan default rates in half to an all-time low of 8.8%. We established the Direct Student Loan program, which introduced long-overdue competition to the student loan industry and has saved taxpayers \$4 billion over the past five years. We completed year 2000 computer renovations ahead of schedule and received an A on our most recent Y2K report card from Congress. And we spend less than 2% of our discretionary budget on administration.

Your article makes unsupportable statements about many hard-working department officials. For example, the article makes the astonishing argument that Wilson Goode--an eight-year mayor of Philadelphia--is somehow unqualified to be deputy assistant secretary for intergovernmental affairs, the office that coordinates our work with the nation's governors, mayors, community leaders and educators.

The article argues that the short-term service of Judith Winston, the department's general counsel, as executive director of the President's Initiative on Race was unrelated to education. Clearly, the work of expanding educational opportunities for minorities is central to the department's mission.

And the article belittles the importance of Carol Rasco's work directing the America Reads initiative. Rasco has helped hundreds of organizations--including the Los Angeles Times--engage in helping children learn to read. And she has orchestrated a national effort that has resulted in nearly 1,200 colleges mobilizing their federal work-study students to become America Reads tutors.

MARSHALL S. SMITH
Deputy Secretary
Department of Education
Washington

* Your article describes the Department of Education as a school for political flunkies--more political flunkies than you can shake a stick at.

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news

Wednesday, October 13

Teachers feel squeeze in origins debate

By Anjetta McQueen
Associated Press
Wednesday, October 13, 1999

WASHINGTON -- Like many high school science teachers, Ken Bingman makes evolution the keystone of his biology lessons in his Kansas classroom.

He has always taught that life on Earth developed from single-cell organisms over about 3.5 billion years. And no state law can require that he teach students about creationism, a Bible-based view of human origin. The Supreme Court made that clear in 1987.

"You can't teach the facts of biology and avoid evolution," said Bingman, a teacher at Shawnee Mission West High School in Overland Park, Kan.

Yet the matter is far from settled.

In three states -- Alabama, Kentucky and Bingman's Kansas -- this issue has been clouded by state boards or education departments dropping the word "evolution" from science standards or replacing it with phrases such as "change over time." Critics say the decisions have the effect of giving school districts the option of introducing creationism into their classrooms alongside evolution. A fourth state, Colorado, has dropped questions on evolution from a standardized test it gives students.

Such actions could leave science teachers caught in the middle, particularly those in small districts where creationism advocates are better organized to exert more influence over local board decisions.

"It boils down to individual teachers, how intimidated do they feel, how much pressure do they feel from the principal or the local school board, regardless of the decision made at the state board level," said Eric Wheaton, assistant to the director of the National Center for Science Education, a group in El Cerrito, Calif., which supports a continuing focus on evolution in science lessons.

Reminiscent of Scopes trial

Creationists counter that the recent state actions giving school districts the option of teaching an alternate view are small, fair and certainly no cause for alarm.

"Science is the search for truth. I say we must consider this alternative," said Duane Gish, associate director and vice president of the Institute for Creation Research, a creationism organization based in El Cajon, Calif.

Nonetheless, the debate is close to reaching the attention it received 74 years ago when Tennessee teacher John Scopes went on trial for telling

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students that they and apes had common ancestors. The debate inspired other state laws demanding "equal time" in science classes for divine creation, but, one by one, court decisions struck down forced competition with evolution.

National science standards require the teaching of evolution, but these guidelines almost always are voluntary for states. Thirty-three states have tests based on science standards, many of which stress evolution to varying degrees; some states, which may include those who give tests, let school districts handle the issue.

Evolution key for college

The Kansas school board voted to omit from state science standards "macroevolution," the theory that species can evolve into other species and that some species, most notably apes and man, have common ancestors. It also omitted the big-bang theory of the universe's origin. The standards are a guide for local school boards, but critics fear that because the standards will be used to develop statewide tests, schools will emphasize whatever the standards do. In the wake of controversy, the Kansas board has reopened its debate.

"I'm just kind of amazed that they would leave out such an important part of education," said Katie Griffin, a 17-year-old senior in Bingman's independent study class.

"A lot of smaller schools will decide to not teach evolution" even though most college entrance exams, such as the SAT, have questions about evolution, added Petra Stankard, a junior in Bingman's Biology 2 honors class who wants to attend medical school.

Other critics of any move away from evolution's dominance note that anxiety goes beyond college preparation. Their view: People who don't learn basic evolutionary concepts could endanger their health. Bacteria evolve through a process of natural selection to withstand antibiotics, and using antibiotics improperly can allow germs to adapt and grow stronger.

"We could no sooner make a compromise there than presenting a choice between a flat Earth or a round Earth," said Steven Benen, spokesman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, an education group. "We don't say, 'Some people think there is gravity, and some people think there isn't, and we'll just leave you to make up your own mind.'"

But Gish, a biochemist who published "Teaching Creation Science in Public Schools" in 1996, argues that teachers should be able to discuss with students the questions that he says evolution can't answer.

"There are a tremendous number of very complex invertebrates that appear abruptly in fossil record, and they supposedly had evolved," he said. "There were no human witnesses; our public schools are not the private property of evolutionists or creationists."

Schools of thought

The debate over how to teach students about the origins of humans has centered on evolution vs. creationism:

n Evolution describes development of life on Earth from single-cell organisms over about 3.5 billion years, during which creatures and plants gradually adapted to changing environments. Fossils and genetics provide the bulk of evidence.

n Most creationists, on the other hand, follow a literal interpretation of the Judeo-Christian biblical story of Genesis -- that God created the world in six days about 6,000 years ago -- and that humans, animals and other forms of life exist today much as they did then. However, some alternate views do not outright reject the notion that man and apes developed from a common ancestor and say instead that such developments were part of God's design.

Harsh Critique of Teachers Urges Attention to Training

By JODI WILGOREN

As the nation struggles to train more than 2.5 million new teachers over the next decade, college and university presidents must pay more attention and devote increasing resources to their schools of education, a leading higher-education group argues in an unusual report scheduled for release today.

The clarion call by the American Council on Education, the country's largest association of colleges and universities, presents a harsh critique of the current stable of teachers. It says that nationwide more than half of students in 7th through 12th grade were recently taught physical science by unqualified teachers, and that only one in five teachers feels prepared to integrate technology into the classroom. It also expresses concern that elementary school teachers, when they were students, typically took less challenging courses and performed less well on standardized tests than their peers.

"That many students in America — often those most in need of excellent teachers — are taught by unqualified teachers is a reprehensible form of publicly sanctioned malpractice," the 38-page report says. "Just as no person should receive medical care from a person who is not qualified or reliably certified as a health care professional, no student should face an unqualified or uncertified teacher."

The report, titled "To Touch the Future" — a line taken from Christa McAuliffe, the teacher killed in the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle in 1986 — proposes that an outside agency audit all 1,300 teacher-education programs in the country, oversight that is required now for medical and law schools. Fewer than half these programs receive such independent accreditation.

More broadly, the 36-member task force urges college presidents to place the education of teachers at the top of their agendas. The report, which is scheduled to land on the desks of the leaders of America's 3,500 institutions of higher education today, calls teacher training the responsibility of the entire university.

"For most colleges and universities, and for most presidents, the education of teachers has not been on their personal radar screens," Stanley O. Ikenberry, the council's president, said in an interview. "It either ought to be in the center of the institutional mission or they should move it out."

The leaders of the nation's two largest teachers' unions and the head of an association of teachers colleges all agreed that teacher education has for too long been neglected by many universities, and they praised the report despite its criticism of their colleagues.

"I think what they're saying is that teacher education has not been good, and I think they're right," said Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers. "Teaching is hard. We haven't had that kind of rigor in most teacher-education programs at all."

David Imig, chief executive of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, said his members might be skittish about outside auditors but would appreciate the call for a campuswide approach to their work.

The task force points out that teachers are poorly paid and often work under difficult conditions, particularly compared with workers who have similar educational backgrounds. But the report focuses on training, rather than on the systemic problems that repel some high-quality candidates from the profession.

"Would you blame education schools for the quality of the teaching force? No, they don't bear all the blame," said Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University and a member of the task force. "Could they make it better? Absolutely. But education schools can't do it all."

The report raises more questions than it answers about how to train effective teachers. It calls for additional research on such questions, noting that the nation spends \$300 billion a year on public education but that the Federal Government devoted only \$300 million to educational research in 1999. The report suggests a \$3 billion research budget.

The New York Times

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1999

Trump Quits Grand Old Party for New

Beats Buchanan to Punch in Possible Bid for Reform Nomination

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

WASHINGTON, Oct. 24 — Denouncing Patrick J. Buchanan as a "Hitler lover," Donald J. Trump announced today that he was resigning his Republican registration in advance of a possible challenge to Mr. Buchanan in his expected quest for the Reform Party Presidential nomination.

"It's a very great possibility that I will run," said Mr. Trump, the real estate and casino millionaire. He timed his announcement for the eve of Mr. Buchanan's speech on Monday in which he is expected to quit the Republican Party and aim his Presidential campaign for the Reform nomination.

Mr. Buchanan brushed aside Mr. Trump's accusations of anti-Semitism as he courted Reform Party officials at a reception here today. "To get in a slanging match with someone is not why I'm doing this," he told reporters outside the Westin Fairfax Hotel. "We don't run negative campaigns. I'm not in this because I dislike other people."

Mr. Trump is considered by Buchanan supporters as a straw man fronting for the wing of the Reform Party aligned with Gov. Jesse Ventura of Minnesota, a faction that is opposed to a Buchanan candidacy.

But Mr. Trump insisted that his own decision to quit the Republican Party was rooted in philosophical differences with the party, not political gamesmanship or his appetite for personal publicity.

"I really believe the Republicans are just too crazy right," he said when he disclosed that he would register this week with the Independence Party, the New York version of the Reform Party. He said he would begin meeting with Reform Party officials in the next few months and make a final decision by March about whether to run.

Mr. Trump, who has never been a political candidate, clearly timed his announcement to target Mr. Buchanan, acidly denouncing him on the NBC News program "Meet the Press" as the candidate of the "really staunch right wacko vote."

"Look, he's a Hitler lover," Mr. Trump said, alluding to the recent debate over Mr. Buchanan's view that in World War II Hitler initially presented no serious threat to the United States.

"I guess he's an anti-Semite," Mr. Trump said, raising an accusation Mr. Buchanan has repeatedly denied in his career as White House strategist and talk show



"I really believe the Republicans are just too crazy right," Donald J. Trump says.

polemicist. "He doesn't like the blacks, he doesn't like the gays," Mr. Trump continued. "It's just incredible that anybody could embrace this guy."

Mr. Buchanan responded that he would not be pulled into "the old name-calling and nonsense."

"I'm in a pretty good mood," Mr. Buchanan said, preparing to retool his chronic Presidential quest.

Asked how he might fare against a millionaire opponent, Mr. Buchanan said, "I don't be-

Calling his rival a 'Hitler lover,' a potential spoiler makes his move.

lieve the Reform Party nomination can be bought, and I don't believe the Presidency can be bought."

Pat Choate, Mr. Buchanan's chief supporter in the Reform Party, added, "That sort of hate politics has no place in the Reform Party." Earlier, Mr. Choate rebuffed the Trump charges on the CBS News program "Face the Nation."

"What has happened here is a degree of pundit bigotry about Pat Buchanan," Mr. Choate declared, saying there was no evidence in

Mr. Buchanan's writings of the charges. "So they concoct, make up positions, and then attack him on that."

But former Senator Warren Rudman, the national co-chairman of the Republican Presidential campaign of Senator John McCain, countered on the TV program that Mr. Buchanan had become increasingly offensive. "Many people are starting to believe that if he is not an anti-Semite, he certainly is doing a wonderful imitation," Mr. Rudman said.

While denouncing Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Trump sent conflicting signals about his own possible candidacy. "It's something I'm very, very serious about," he insisted on "Meet the Press." But he soon added, "I would only do this if I felt I could win the election."

Historically, third-party Presidential candidates fail.

At the Reform reception, party officials offered a mixed assessment of a Trump candidacy, with several doubting that he was serious. "We don't need name-calling," said Beverly Kidder, a party member from New Jersey. She added: "His treatment of women — his wives, plural — is notorious. If I were Ivana I would have gotten a better deal."

Asked about his tabloid image as a womanizer, Mr. Trump said on "Meet the Press," "If I think that's going to be a great impediment, I'm not going to bother."

Mr. Buchanan's anticipated switch and how it might damage the Republican ticket was the talk of the Sunday political TV programs. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, estimated on "Face the Nation" that Mr. Buchanan had "discredited himself tremendously" but could do serious damage to both major parties if he picked a pro-labor running mate like James P. Hoffa, the teamsters chief.

Senator Rudman argued that the G.O.P. was well rid of Mr. Buchanan, whom he described as a "total hypocrite" who had little in common with Reform Party views but was after the \$13 million in Federal campaign money the nomination offered.

Mr. Choate said Mr. Buchanan could easily weather a Trump challenge on the merits. But he allowed that Mr. Trump would "make a good candidate" because of name recognition and personal wealth. "I think he'd be very effective," Mr. Choate said as the Reform officials awaited Mr. Buchanan's decision.

The New York Times

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1999

Morality Play **A1**

Today, It's Reading, Writing and 'Diligence' In Elementary Schools

Character First! Volunteers, With Links to Religion, Teach Traditional Values

If It Works, 'God Bless Them'

By LISA MILLER

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

OKLAHOMA CITY — Lindsey Harris is standing in front of a group of squirming second-graders, trying to explain the word "diligence."

Diligence, she tells this class at Arthur Elementary School, "is using all my energies to finish a task." When you go home tonight, she suggests, "go to your Mom and say, 'Hey, Mom, how can I be more diligent?'"

The 21-year-old Ms. Harris is part of a wave called "character education" that's sweeping the nation's schools. Character First!, a joint venture between the public schools here and a Christian organization, aims to teach values to children. To this end, Ms. Harris and about 30 other college-age volunteers fan out into 56 elementary schools every day. Enthusiastic and clean-cut, the volunteers use games, songs and stories to teach concepts such as "attentiveness" and "truthfulness" in half-hour, weekly sessions.

Partial Solution

Distraught over school violence and chronic discipline problems, parents and educators nationwide are looking for ways to improve children's moral education. By identifying those qualities Americans value and hope to instill in their children, character programs are trying to present themselves as a partial solution. That they are doing so in public schools moves them into somewhat murky terrain.

Wary of the minefield between church and state, most new character educators, including Character First!, are careful not to discuss religion when they teach values. "You don't need to believe in God to believe in trustworthiness," says Michael Josephson, founder of Character Counts!, a popular character-education program with no religious affiliation that is based in Marina del Rey, Calif.

Because religion and values have traditionally been inseparable, though, it is almost inevitable that some character-education programs have religious roots. Character First!, for example, has deep ties to Christianity. Ms. Harris and her fellow volunteers follow the teachings of a conservative Christian minister named Bill Gothard. The "character coaches" come to Oklahoma from around the country, and live and pray together, monastery style, in a dormitory. Most were homeschooled using a Gothard ministry scripture-based curriculum.

In his religious writings, Mr. Gothard has identified 49 biblical "character qualities" — and these form the basis of the Character First! curriculum. Organizationally, Character First! is a division of Mr. Gothard's ministry, the Institute in Basic Life Principles in Oak Brook, Ill.

The program has exploded to about 600 schools nationwide from the original

eight in Oklahoma City — and has found both friends and opponents. In Oklahoma City, Character First! is almost universally loved. Volunteers come to Spencer Elementary School weekly, but "if we could have them every day, we would," says Kimberly Price, president of Spencer's Parent Teacher Association.



Bill Gothard

For others, the religious affiliation of Character First! presents a dilemma. Although most agree that it is appropriate—even essential—to address character in school, they wonder whether a religious organization should be in charge of teaching it. Cathy Kass, an education professor who helps train Oklahoma City teachers, says that among her colleagues, the program is a topic of concern. Despite its secular content, "a lot of people look at it as a way for certain viewpoints to get into the school."

"I'm Jewish, I grew up in the South, in small towns, and I know what it's like to have religion that's not mine pushed on me," Ms. Kass adds.

But Guy Sconzo, the assistant school superintendent who has shepherded the program since its inception in 1996, is unperturbed by the program's origins. "Who cares?" he asks. "As long as it's working, God bless them."

Once upon a time, everybody seemed to know what character was. Parents, teachers, pastors, scout leaders and swim coaches more or less agreed on the qualities that made a good citizen, and children heard the same lessons wherever they went: Respect your elders, don't lie, don't talk back. As the ties of traditional families and social institutions began to loosen, responsibility for imbuing morality increasingly fell to educators.

In the 1970s, that meant "values clarification." Children would identify personal values through class discussions, but teachers wouldn't declare some good and others bad. The common wisdom went as follows: "We won't teach one morality. We'll teach kids how to make moral decisions on their own," says Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the Freedom Forum in Arlington, Va., and a student of character-education programs.

But many people derided values clarification as too wishy-washy, and educators went back to the drawing board. The new character education, is, in a sense, a throwback to the 1950s: It asks people to agree on what matters—and to practice what they preach. Good character, this thinking goes, is about good habits.

Politicians have jumped on character education as an antidote to national angst over public education. President Clinton has endorsed it, and Texas Gov. George W. Bush plans to make a campaign speech on the subject early next month. Since 1995, the U.S. Department of Education has given more than \$22.5 million to 28 states to implement values programs, and about a dozen states—including Oklahoma—have passed laws recommending or requiring schools to develop them.

Nearly every day, Lee Roland receives promotional materials for one or another values program. "We are just inundated with literature, faxes," says Mr. Roland, principal of Kaiser Elementary School in Oklahoma City.

'Character Coaches'

Although they mostly agree on the components of character, different programs promote good character in different ways. Character Counts!, the California program, uses posters, teacher training and some celebrity help from actor Tom Selleck. The Child Development Project in Oakland, Calif., offers a three-year training course, in which teachers learn, among other things, how to help children uncover the moral lessons in such books as "Frog and Toad Are Friends." Character First!, which also offers a similar program to businesses, sells instruction manuals for teachers, posters, tapes and compact disks. Many school districts forgo the volunteer "character coaches" and train their own teachers to use the curriculum.

Districts pay for the programs with everything from public funds to private donations. Kent Fahrenbruck, chief administrator of the Character First! schools program, says one year of the program costs between \$4 and \$7 per child. In Oklahoma City, it is entirely financed by private sources. In New Orleans, Shell Oil Co. is sponsoring the program in one school. In Denver, some of the 20-odd schools using the program pay for it out of their own budget.

Many character programs are linked to faith-based groups. Edgar Bronfman, chairman of Seagram Co., recently helped launch "The Curriculum Initiative," which uses Jewish texts to teach ethics to high schoolers. Rather than talking about broad virtues, it focuses on "earthly things," says Sara Heitler, the program's national director: "How you treat a stranger; gossip and slander; relationships to parents, friends and teachers."

Setting an Example

The Concerned Businessmen's Association of America says it has reached 12 million school children since 1983 with its Set a Good Example Contest, which teaches "honesty, trust, competence," according to its promotional materials. Though it doesn't advertise itself as such, CBAA is a secular organization funded largely by members of the Church of Scientology. To participate in the contest, children read and discuss "The Way to Happiness," a secular booklet by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. "To say that the Scientologists are deeply concerned with what's happening in their communities is an understatement," says Tom Wright, a CBAA spokesman.

Similarly, Character First! doesn't advertise its alliance with Mr. Gothard's organization in its published materials. The group tries to keep an "arm's length" relationship from the Gothard ministry, says Mr. Fahrenbruck, the program administrator. Sending religious volunteers into schools is "uncharted territory," he says, and merits a "tentative" approach.

Mr. Gothard, 64 years old, has been addressing the problems of youth and ethics for decades. A fundamentalist Christian who tells church groups that "Christianity is the only way of life," Mr. Gothard started holding immensely popular conflict-resolution seminars in 1969. According to his estimates, 2.5 million people have attended these seminars and have heard his creed: that the Bible delineates right from wrong, that children should submit to the will of their parents, and that parents should strictly regulate their children's lives, especially in the areas of friends, music, dress and dating. These days, Mr. Gothard marvels at how obedient parents are to their children," he says in an interview.

'A Man of Vision'

Character First! began with a beleaguered policeman. Clarence Powers, a sad-eyed sergeant on the Oklahoma City force, was traveling from school to school in 1996 "hammering home the five 'R's': reading, writing, arithmetic, respect and responsibility," he says. But in the spring of that year, Sgt. Powers became overwhelmed by the drugs, violence and bad language he witnessed among even the youngest children and decided Oklahoma City needed a more formal, rigorous approach to character education.

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He approached Thomas Hill, who is executive vice president of Kimray Inc. in Oklahoma City, a family business with \$25 million in annual sales from oil-processing equipment. Mr. Hill has been a follower of Mr. Gothard since the 1970s, having attended the weeklong conflict-resolution seminar six or seven times. Mr. Gothard is a friend, says Mr. Hill, who is on the board of the Institute in Basic Life Principles. Mr. Hill's wife, Kay, calls the minister "a man of vision."

For years, Mr. Hill had been using modified versions of Mr. Gothard's materials in his company to increase employee productivity and combat lateness. A successful company depends on morally upright employees, Mr. Hill says. "They've got to resolve some of the issues in their families . . . like drugs and premarital sex and rebellion."

His suggestion to Sgt. Powers: Let Kimray help modify the Gothard materials for use in schools.

When Mr. Sconzo, the assistant school superintendent, heard the offer, he said, "yes, with one string attached." Mr. Sconzo wanted the school district to oversee the project.

Assured of final approval, Mr. Sconzo signed on. The Oklahoma City school district spends \$3,915 per student per year, among the lowest in the country. When a private company offers to fund a character program, "You don't look a gift horse in the mouth," Mr. Sconzo says.

The curriculum is composed of nine lessons, one for each month of the school year, each to teach a different "character quality." The first year, students learn about attentiveness, obedience, truthfulness, gratefulness, generosity, orderliness, forgiveness, sincerity and virtue.

When the children are introduced to a quality, they get a collectible card, like a baseball card. On the front it shows an animal that represents that quality—a lamb for forgiveness, for example—and on the back, a list of things to remember: "I will not seek revenge," and "I will respond kindly to those who hurt me."

Like a Variety Show

Sometimes, Character First! puts on school-wide assemblies. At Spencer Elementary School last month, 200 children piled into the lunchroom to watch two Character First! coaches do a sort of variety show on the subject of "attentiveness." During the assembly, children memorized a poem. It begins: "I will look at someone speaking/ And I'll listen all I can/ I will sit or stand up

straight/ Like a soldier on command."

The program's old-fashioned emphasis on memorizing definitions raises the hackles of progressive educators who maintain that children learn values by talking about them and practicing them regularly throughout the week, not in an isolated 30-minute infusion. When Cleveland Elementary School decided not to invite Character First! back this year, it was because of the organization's approach. The students "dreaded it," says Lori Hairston, a third-grade teacher at Cleveland. The stories were boring and hard to understand. The volunteers weren't dynamic. And the teaching technique was "all one-sided," with volunteers chanting definitions and children parroting them back. The children "thought it was stupid," Ms. Hairston says.

Linda Matthews initially had a different qualm. When the volunteers first arrived at her school in February 1997, she immediately noticed their uniform appearance: the women, clad in long skirts, flat shoes and modest blouses, the men in white shirts and ties. "And I thought, 'Where are the people of color?'" says Ms. Matthews, principal of Spencer Elementary school, where the student population at the time was 80% African-American.

Even now, she still yearns for more diversity among the corps, but she has been more than satisfied with their results. Suspensions at Spencer declined to two last year from about 15 in 1996-1997. "There's a definite change," says Ms. Matthews. The atmosphere around school these days is "calm and relaxing."

Indeed, the consensus around Oklahoma City is that Character First! is working. Mr. Sconzo hasn't heard a single complaint from a parent, he says, and principals have told him they are seeing fewer discipline problems. Although that information is anecdotal, he says, "I believe them."

Character First! moved into 21 of Oklahoma City's 64 elementary schools in 1997-98, 33 the next year and 56 this year. And it has become increasingly entrenched in the social fabric of the city, receiving grants from the local Kirkpatrick Foundation and the Kiwanis Club. In 1998, thanks mostly to sales from curriculum materials, Character First! had revenue of \$250,000, Mr. Fahrenbruck says. This year, he expects revenue to double.

Outside of Oklahoma, though, the road is rougher. In Florida, the American Jewish Congress strenuously objected to legislation recommending Character First!, though the bill passed last spring. In Oregon, Sen. Thomas Wilde led an acrimonious battle on the floor of the state Senate, infuriated that his state would legislate moral instruction. Again, the bill passed.

In Arizona, the debate over Character First! is still simmering. In September, the town of Gilbert proposed dubbing itself a "City of Character" and adopting Character First! not only for its public-school students, but also for its businesses and civil servants. The American Civil Liberties Union's local affiliate objected, and the town council formed a committee to look at Character First! and make a recommendation about the program's appropriateness. The decision is pending.

In Oklahoma City, Carol Berry is on the fence. The principal of Nichols Hills, a new elementary school in the city's most exclusive neighborhood, Ms. Berry is using Character First! on a trial basis. Her biggest complaint so far: the abbreviated, 30-minute weekly lessons.

But she sees why so many people like it. "I think the country is reeling from the horrors of the violence we see," she says. "Everybody is looking for something that will help children develop into citizens who can be productive."

TEACHER LOSES THE BIG APPLE

EDUCATION

BY SIOBHAN GORMAN

A typical election scenario in New York City: A former university professor and teacher trainer, a woman whose entire career has been in education—a Democrat—runs for City Council. Naturally, she seeks the endorsement of the city's powerful 140,000-member United Federation of Teachers. Should be a lock.

Wrong.

The Democrat, teacher Eva Moskowitz, likes charter schools—those publicly funded schools that commit to raising achievement in exchange for being freed from school board and union rules. In fact, Moskowitz likes them a lot. But the union local doesn't. So the union endorses the Republican, a well-to-do Wall Streeter.

But it gets better. The union's endorsee—Reba White Williams—is a former fund-raiser for GOP Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani. And she recently, and quietly, resigned as a member of the board of trustees of the conservative Manhattan Institute—a think tank that solidly endorses not only charter schools but private-school vouchers—stands that normally make teachers' unions recoil in abject horror.

The endorsement of the Republican is even more ironic because the UFT is affiliated with the national American Federation of Teachers, whose former president, the late Al Shanker, endorsed charter schools in 1988, a move widely considered to be a turning point in the national school reform movement. And where did Shanker get his start? At the UFT.

The endorsement of Williams by the New York City local has even raised eyebrows at the AFT's national headquarters in Washington. Sandra Feldman, president of the AFT, said she was not questioning the endorsement. But, she said, the union does support charter schools "when they are publicly accountable for how the money is spent."

In an interview, Williams said she resigned from the Manhattan Institute because she no longer had the time for it, adding that she had not agreed with "most" of the think tank's views on education. Williams said charter schools are "mildly interesting," but "I don't think they're the answer to all of our problems."

Moskowitz said the word in Democratic

circles is that Williams' resignation was part of a quid pro quo to get the UFT endorsement. She resigned less than two weeks before she received the union endorsement. "It seems awfully coincidental that in close proximity to their endorsement interview, she resigns," Moskowitz said.

But UFT President Randi Weingarten said there was no tit for tat. "It is not in my nature to extract quid pro quos," she said. "We make endorsements based on what people stand for."

Weingarten acknowledged, however, that the charter school issue was the issue that "more sharply defined" the candi-

impresed with Williams' commitment to establishing partnerships between the private sector and public schools. Williams wants to pair a corporate sponsor with every New York City public school to help them purchase everything from computers to playground equipment.

The New York endorsement flap highlights the continuing disagreement between national and local teachers' unions over school reforms. While Shanker trumpeted charter schools as "laboratories of reform," and the AFT maintains that position, many union locals still go to great lengths to muffle that call. And no local is better positioned than the UFT, considered to be the most powerful local teachers' group in the country.

The UFT's endorsement of Williams will make it harder for Moskowitz to win the special election for the council seat representing Manhattan's Upper East Side. But Moskowitz isn't going to change her mind about charter schools. "I think this is a reform that could make a measurable and material difference in the lives of the kids in this city, so I'm not willing to change my position to get an endorsement," she said.

And she says that's what got her in trouble with the union. "In the [endorsement] interview, it wasn't even veiled. It was, in what ways will I be flexible about charter schools? They made it clear that it was a problem. I said that it was a position of principle and that I had spent so many years working on this issue that it wasn't an issue that I could compromise on."

New York's first experiment with charter schools began just this year, with a new law that allows 100 such charter schools statewide. Moskowitz would like to increase the per-pupil spending at the new charter schools to the same level as that for regular public schools.

Moskowitz said her other get-tough, unpopular-with-the-union position is ending tenure for school principals while raising salaries for the best ones. Unions don't like the idea for fear it could eventually be applied to teachers. "I have worked in schools where it takes a very, very long time to get rid of a bad principal," Moskowitz said. "I'm a Democrat who has read Adam Smith."



RANDI WEINGARTEN: New York City teachers' union president refuses to endorse a Democratic teacher running for City Council because the candidate supports charter schools.

dates. "One of Moskowitz's suggestions was more charter schools, which we don't oppose, but it's not the way you're going to help every child in a public school system," she said.

Weingarten is aware that "there's been some eyebrows raised because she is a Republican, but we don't look at education as a Democratic or Republican issue." The issue for the union, Weingarten said, is "how do you help give every student a chance? [Williams'] agenda was a lot more progressive to that end than Eva Moskowitz's."

Weingarten said the UFT was most

UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

A Political State of the Union

President Clinton, a politician who is clearly unhappy about not being able to run for office again this year, delivered a State of the Union Message last night that managed to bring the campaign trail into the halls of the Capitol. Mr. Clinton has less than 12 months left in office, but he put forward an array of programs to expand health care, education programs, scientific research and anti-poverty efforts while shoring up the big retirement systems. These programs, however laudable, are unlikely to be enacted by a Republican-controlled Congress.

But this was not really a speech about getting laws enacted by a hostile Congress. This is a State of the Union that will be remembered as a bold attempt to anoint the vice president and the first lady as Mr. Clinton's political heirs and to shape the political terrain to their advantage. Less altruistically, the president was also seeking to frame the 2000 campaign debate so as to prolong his time in the spotlight.

By tradition, State of the Union speeches open a dialogue between the White House and Congress for the legislative agenda of the coming months. But with fierce battles raging in both the Republican and Democratic presidential races, Mr. Clinton zeroed in on the emerging divisions in the primary election states. The main cleavage in this year's election is already clear, with the Democrats calling for ambitious spending programs and Republicans resisting. Congress may well end up taking its cue on taxes from the presidential race, in which Gov. George W. Bush of Texas wants a sweeping tax cut that would use up much of the budget surplus, and Senator John McCain wants a smaller tax cut and more money set aside for Social Security and Medicare, echoing the White House proposal for tax cuts of only \$250 billion over 10 years.

The Republicans' refusal to applaud reflected a frustrated awareness that the speech was another

demonstration of Mr. Clinton's extraordinary ability to champion Democratic goals by borrowing G.O.P. themes. His approach on eradicating poverty relies heavily on tax cuts and credits, as well as emphasizing work and family. He spoke of expanding education aid, but sounded almost like Governor Bush in demanding that the money be used to reward students' performance. Mr. Clinton even said he wanted to shut down schools that fail to teach students, an echo of the Texas governor's demand that if federal aid does not raise standards, the money should be given instead to parents for private schools.

As for the Democratic race, Mr. Clinton almost seemed to be trying to rebut Bill Bradley's charge that Vice President Al Gore has not been bold in his proposals. He spoke at length about the unfinished agenda he shares with Mr. Gore of health, schools and reducing poverty, which also happen to be the former New Jersey senator's major themes, and he expropriated another of Mr. Bradley's campaign themes, a call to register all handguns. The president praised his vice president so relentlessly that he drew laughter when he stumbled and spoke of Mr. Gore's desire for "liberal" communities, when he wanted to say "livable." The staging of the speech was unapologetically promotional, especially when the first lady appeared with Hank Aaron, the baseball legend who has been counseling the Atlanta Braves pitcher John Rocker for his comments denigrating New York.

A year ago, Mr. Clinton pulled off the feat of addressing a Congress that had just impeached him and was about to decide whether to remove him from office. Last night he undertook a political operation of almost equal intricacy. He presented a State of the Union speech that was, simultaneously, an exercise in legacy enhancement and a political brief for his protégés.

THIS
IS
BULLSHIT
WE WERE
THERE FIRST

Mayor Giuliani's Election-Year Budget

An ebullient Mayor Rudolph Giuliani took the press and other onlookers through an elaborate slide show of his new four-year financial plan yesterday, missing no opportunity to congratulate himself for saving New York City from the financial mess left by his predecessors. He pointed with pride to this year's \$2.2 billion surplus and said his plan would keep spending growing in line with inflation, cut taxes, avoid accounting gimmicks and reform the way the city negotiates with unions.

Some of these contentions are fair. Others exaggerate. Over all, the budget he offered is responsible but flawed, with elements designed for election-year politics. The budget will surely irritate the unions. The City Council, though objecting to some of the details, will embrace many of the tax cuts and other major provisions.

The mayor's big news was a proposal to eliminate the 14 percent personal income tax surcharge starting as early as this year. He also called for cutting a number of business taxes, for a total tax cut that would reach \$2 billion a year by 2004. The plan calls for spending more on Medicaid by enrolling more eligible families.

The most controversial provision proposed to replace across-the-board pay increases with a system of merit pay. The idea would be to offer substantial wage increases to good workers and no increases to poor workers. Details of the merit pay plan, including who would control the grading system, would be left to collective bargaining.

The proposal is both unrealistic and nakedly political, designed to appeal to conservatives and union-bashers in the upcoming senatorial campaign. The unions will not accept the proposal, and it

is disruptive to introduce it into labor negotiations when the mayor is approaching the end of his time in office one way or another. It would be far better for him, in dealing with public-employee unions, to use wage increases to push for general productivity gains, as he has in the past, instead of singling out a minority of workers for merit raises.

Mr. Giuliani also wants workers to pick up some of their medical costs, as is common in private industry. Additionally, he wants the Board of Education, in return for more money, to turn over some of the city's worst-performing schools and some summer programs to private contractors, and has set aside \$6 million for a school voucher program.

The budget's most serious flaw is that it leaves a long-term financial imbalance largely in place. The mayor's own projections show the city running deficits in excess of \$2 billion by 2002. By cutting taxes, the plan would make those deficits worse. It proposes to use the current surplus to cover ordinary operating expenses over the next two years — another fiscally imprudent idea. The surplus is temporary. Sound budget policy would use it to pay off debt or create a "rainy day" fund to offset the revenue loss from a future slide on Wall Street or an economic downturn. The plan does little to bring the city's long-term spending in line with expected revenues. The longer the imbalance is allowed to fester, the steeper and harsher the eventual cuts will be.

The tax cuts and tough stance toward unions will play well in Mr. Giuliani's senatorial campaign. But however well the plan serves the mayor's political ambitions, it will leave his successor with a needlessly deep financial hole.

CLYDE HABERMAN
NYC

Filtering Out Taint of Bias In the Law

WHEN Hillary Rodham Clinton called on the Rev. Al Sharpton last week, eyes were naturally on their political pas de deux. But some at the Harlem forum where they spoke had other matters on the brain as well.

One dealt with the large numbers of blacks in prison, particularly those doing time for nonviolent drug offenses. While few hearts are about to bleed for drug dealers, it is hard to ignore the stark reality that the same type of crime is far more likely to land blacks behind bars than whites.

A big reason is the different ways that the law treats crack cocaine, a favorite on city streets, and powder cocaine, the drug of choice in wealthier precincts. Under federal law, a small-time druggie caught with less than one-fifth of an ounce of crack has committed a felony carrying an automatic five-year prison sentence. Someone with the identical amount of cocaine in powder form is guilty of a misdemeanor, unlikely to put him in jail.

The results are, if you will, black and white, and at the state level, too. Federal statistics last year showed that blacks accounted for 60 percent of the inmates who were in state prisons on drug offenses, even though they made up only 15 percent of regular drug users.

Given such numbers, Mrs. Clinton was asked at the Harlem gathering what might be done about the crack-vs.-powder disparity. Her answer was elliptical. That is a polite way of saying that she all but ducked the question, except to say the matter needed study.

"Where there are disparities that unfairly affect any group of Americans," she said, "we need to take a hard look at that because it undermines the confidence and trust we should have in our justice system."

The first lady might have figured that, since the subject was substance abuse, it was not the right moment for substance. Perhaps it was just as well that a similarly touchy matter arose before she arrived. It concerned the thick slice of black America that is not allowed to vote because so many people are in prison or have been convicted of a felony — again, often of a nonviolent, drug-related nature.

This is not an issue that pops up on many radar screens. "But it is now being talked about in large civil rights organizations," said Ron Daniels, executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights. "This is something that comes down disproportionately hard on communities of color."

No group is affected more than black men.

A study by two advocacy groups, Human Rights Watch and the Sentencing Project, shows that 13 percent of American black men, or 1.4 million people, have been stripped of their voting rights because they are in prison, or are on probation or parole, or are former offenders. In some states, like Alabama and Florida, the figure exceeds 30 percent. They are among 14 states that disfranchise felons for life, even long after they have completed their sentences and, to use a weary cliché, paid their debt to society.

IN New York State, where only people in prison or on parole are barred from voting, the numbers are not nearly that stark. The disfranchisement rate for black men is 6.2 percent here, the study said. It is much higher in New Jersey, 17.7 percent, and in Connecticut, 14.8 percent. Unlike New York, both those states extend the ban to people on probation.

No other democracy denies voting rights to so many because of their criminal records, said Marc Mauer, the Sentencing Project's assistant director.

"You are sent to prison as punishment for your crime, but we don't normally take away your fundamental rights," he said. "You may own property. You have free speech as long as it doesn't interfere with prison security. The right to vote is also a citizen's right. It shouldn't have anything to do with punishment."

There is also a question of proportionality, Mr. Mauer said. A young man in prison for stealing a car is made a political outcast the same as a murderer.

True, he acknowledged, most felons are probably not inclined to vote to begin with. And in today's political climate, anything that smacks of getting teary over criminals is "not easy to sell." But even if this issue is now off the political scope, he said, it needs to be raised, and not just in Harlem.

Intentionally or not, the law has fallen hard on blacks, Mr. Mauer told a House subcommittee in October. While lawbreakers should be punished, he said, "unnecessary policies such as the felony voting restrictions serve only to communicate a message of exclusion from the political process."

Geneva Overholser

OUR OTHER C. P. WRIGHT

Coming Around on Vouchers

It's getting harder every day to be an informed and compassionate opponent of vouchers. A new book called "Choosing Equality" just may spell the end of my opposition.

There are two good reasons *not* to give poor families public money to give them choices beyond their neighborhood school. It might hurt public schools, which desperately need careful attention and wisely used resources. And it might be unconstitutional because it could involve government support for religious schools.

The courts will decide the second question. And despite the recent injunction in Cleveland, vouchers seem likely to prevail—on the grounds that aid to families, rather than aid directly to religious schools, is permissible.

As the Heritage Foundation quotes Harvard Law's Laurence Tribe on this subject: "Any objection that anyone would have to a voucher program would have to be policy-based and could not rest on legal doctrine. One would have to be awfully clumsy to write voucher legislation that could not pass constitutional scrutiny. Aid to parents... would be constitutional."

That leaves the question of whether vouchers are good public policy. Here is where Joe Viteritti's new book may have pushed me over the line. Viteritti, director of the Program on Education and Civil Society at New York University, discussed his book—subtitled "School Choice, the Constitution and Civil Society"—recently at the Brookings Institution.

Viteritti acknowledges that, in their first incarnation—in the 1950s, championed by Milton Friedman—vouchers were a market-driven idea frankly anticipating the end of public education. Forty years later, "the second generation," he says, is "*not* a market model but an opportunity model." What you see now is money directed at poor kids, defined by need.

The powerful argument for this is simple fairness. Families of means can make choices about education. They move to neighborhoods with good schools. They can send their kids to private or parochial schools. Poor parents have no such choices. If their local schools are failing, their kids are trapped. And far too many of our schools *are* failing. This is the challenge that demands our attention. The question is, can a voucher program coexist with the struggle to improve our schools?

Viteritti argues that, properly designed, it can and, to be fair to all, it should. His research, based on the limited evidence so far—from public programs in Cleveland and Milwaukee and a few privately funded voucher pro-

grams—indicates that fears of the best students being "skimmed" from public schools are exaggerated. Preliminary indications are that student performance is strengthened. And the clearest conclusion of all is that parents love them. They like the quality of the education, the safety of the school, the value structure of the school and the opportunity for parent involvement.

As for what the public thinks, polls show ambivalence—except among particular groups, whose support is striking. A 1997 Gallup Poll put approval from blacks at

The powerful argument is simple fairness.

72 percent and from urban residents at 59 percent. The strongest backers of all are poor minorities. You can't miss the fact that these are the people vouchers would help.

Overall, public opinion is shifting gradually toward vouchers, according to education expert Diane Ravitch, who suspects this may be attributable to despair over urban schools. I like to think that many city schools seem finally to be beginning to pull themselves from the swamp.

States are instituting more rigorous standards, hiring better teachers and giving them more training, holding schools and teachers accountable and making results public. It's just a start. But it has strong support from the public. National Public Radio's recent poll indicated that three out of four respondents were willing to have their taxes raised by at least \$200 a year to improve public schools.

Could vouchers be a suitable companion to these improvements? Viteritti belongs to the camp that says competition can help, but only if we use vouchers in conjunction with broad reforms, including a commitment to close failing schools. Even so, he acknowledges, "We don't know what the effect of competition is going to be, because we haven't really tried it."

As a parent of an urban public high-school student, I flinch at anything that drains resources from public schools. But I have choices. Keeping them from others because of a vague threat seems increasingly hard to justify.

I've still got plenty of questions. But giving vouchers enough of a test to provide more answers begins to look like the right thing to do.

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