

As Democrats Meet, The Teachers' Unions Will Show Their Clout

They Spent Huge Amounts
On Campaign Donations
And Do a Lot of Legwork

Fielding Some 550 Delegates

By GLENN BURKINS and GLENN R. SIMPSON
Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In a conference room at the stately National Education Association building five blocks from the White House, these words from Florida Sen. Bob Graham hang framed on a wall: "No presidential candidate who wants to win in November ignores the National Education Association any more."

Bob Dole certainly hasn't ignored the union.

In his speech accepting the Republican nomination, he blasted teachers' unions, saying they are President Clinton's bedrock supporters and accusing them of blocking badly needed education reform.

"The teachers' unions nominated Bill Clinton in 1992, they are funding his reelection now, and they, his most reliable supporters, know he will maintain the status quo," Mr. Dole declared.

Raw Power on Display

When the Democratic convention opens in Chicago Monday afternoon, the raw political power of the teachers' unions will be on display. More than 400 delegates—roughly one in 10—will be members of the National Education Association, the nation's largest union. They will be armed with, among other things, a colorful NEA voting guide that rates Mr. Clinton as preferable to Mr. Dole on all 10 issues the union tracks. Another 150 Democratic delegates will belong to the considerably smaller American Federation of Teachers.

Although the teachers' unions don't get as much attention, they play a role in the Democratic Party strikingly similar to that played by the Christian Coalition and other religious-right groups in the Republican Party. The NEA not only consistently urges its 2.2 million members to vote for Democratic candidates but also gives the

Democrats millions of dollars in campaign support. And perhaps most important, it provides them with an army of campaign volunteers.

The teachers' unions are "the core of the Democratic Party," says Myron Lieberman, president of the Education Policy Institute, a Washington-based nonprofit think tank, funded by conservative groups, that opposes the unions. "The question is not why Dole and the Republicans are attacking the teachers' unions; it's what took them so long."

Tactical Advantages

Because the NEA is a labor union, moreover, it enjoys advantages in pursuing political activity that are denied to groups such as the Christian Coalition. For instance, it can offer vast assistance to political campaigns without reporting most of this aid to the Federal Election Commission. And it can spend unlimited amounts of money informing its members about political affairs.

Nonunion groups such as the Christian Coalition, which is organized as a nonprofit corporation with no political-action committee, must walk a much finer line. Indeed, the Election Commission recently sued the Coalition, alleging that it violated election laws by providing unlawful corporate contributions to Republicans. GOP officials complain the NEA has long done for the Democrats exactly what the Coalition is being sued for. "The crime isn't that labor unions are able to do it," says Jan Baran, a Republican lawyer. "The crime is that the laws don't allow other organizations to do the same thing."

In return for its political activism, an NEA pamphlet explains, the union hopes to "encourage officeholders who may not initially support our legislative goals to do so." In general, the group's goals are to maintain funding for education, to support public schools and to protect the interests of public-school teachers. But critics say that in its efforts to protect teachers, it often blocks educational experiments—especially involving school choice—that could be beneficial to children.

No Apologies for Power

NEA Government Relations Director Mary Elizabeth Teasley denies the NEA impedes education reform. "I think we have a long history of making the schools better," she says. But she makes no apologies for NEA power. "Of all the organizations in the country, ours is unique," she says. "An endorsement by the NEA carries right down to the local school board."

Nancy Worley, a high-school Latin and English teacher who will be in Chicago as a Clinton delegate, exemplifies NEA volunteerism. Ms. Worley, president of the

Alabama Education Association, has spent countless hours manning phone banks and canvassing for Democrats door-to-door. She has even carried signs for Democratic candidates along the streets in Decatur, Ala. (pop. 50,000). The Democrats have "done a great deal for working people, for elderly people, for education," she says, and contends that the Republicans aren't equally committed to education.

Determining the value of such volunteers' efforts is nearly impossible because the NEA isn't required to report it to the Election Commission. However, Leo Troy, an economics professor and labor specialist at Rutgers University in Newark, N.J.,

estimates the total of all unions' unreported contributions to all parties at \$300 million to \$500 million this year. He couldn't give an estimate for the NEA alone.

With a 1996 budget of \$193 million, the NEA doesn't worry about finding money to support its candidates. Each state affiliate also takes in substantial revenue—and generously aids Democratic causes. Almost all the money raised at the state and national levels is from members' dues.

At the national level in 1994, the union's political-action committee donated about \$2,250,000. Of that, \$2,230,000 went to Democrats. But the numbers vastly understate the NEA's political spending.

According to its 1996-97 operating budget, the NEA has earmarked \$20.7 million to "build broad-based support for a quality public education system." Many specific uses of that money appear political, such as \$607,000 to help "policy makers" and "opinion leaders" appreciate the value of public schools and \$2.8 million to forge ties with policy makers, civic groups and governmental agencies, among others. Another \$4,340,000 is devoted to media, with the stated objective of building "broad-based public support for quality public education." Since the 1994 election, the NEA has bought advertisements calling on certain members of Congress to oppose cuts in education funding.

The largest chunk of the \$20.7 million is \$9.6 million to "build bipartisan constituencies among those running for and elected to public office to support public education." This allotment can't be found in official filings; partly because it is a union, the NEA can spend unlimited amounts for election-related activities that don't directly give money to candidates.

The budget's fine print makes clear that the money goes to electing the NEA's preferred candidates, mostly Democrats. For example, \$3.6 million will go to "support the election of pro-education candidates and ballot measures." It also will buy "technical assistance, surveys, and training in political campaign work to

More...

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continued...

affiliates and members at all levels.

A Force of Professionals

In addition, the NEA has 1,500 field professionals who act as liaisons and advisers to its roughly 13,000 affiliates and will get some \$40 million in grants in 1996-97. Though primarily seeking to assist in collective bargaining, they also help in PAC fund-raising and campaigning.

The NEA's biggest political asset, though, is its 2.2 million members, nearly all of them college-educated and politically aware. "Citizens who do not vote have no political influence," one NEA manual encouraging active participation in politics declares. "Citizens who only vote have little political influence."

Like many NEA electoral contributions, volunteering has the added value of being a completely unlimited, untraceable means of supporting campaigns. However, the NEA wants its volunteers to make known to the politicians where their foot soldiers come from. "They see firsthand that our association delivers," an NEA political primer says, "and they're more likely to pay attention to what we have to say during legislative deliberations."

Where do teachers find time to plunge so deeply into politics? Part of the answer lies in the summer break, although, by Election Day, school will be well under way. According to NEA critic Mr. Lieberman, who spent much of his career as a negotiator for teachers' unions, they solve that problem at the bargaining table.

"In a very large number of districts, they negotiate a 'personal necessity' leave where you don't have to give a reason," he says. "And then what they do is they will get their people to take personal necessity leave on the day of the election to work at these in-kind [efforts], ferrying people to the polls and so on." NEA spokeswoman Kathleen Lyons says she knows of no such practice. "I think that statement is false," she says.

Sophisticated Training

Getting an NEA volunteer can be like getting a free political consultant. NEA manuals depict a remarkably sophisticated training program for campaign operatives. Dubbed "The NEA Series in Practical Politics," the manuals explain the art of political persuasion in every medium, from brochures to bumper stickers to postcards. They also describe arcane polling concepts such as "sampling" and voter "targeting." And they detail the elaborate NEA endorsement process, which enables the candidate to receive money from the NEA's political-

action committee. The group evaluates not only the candidates' positions but also their chances of winning.

NEA members say their political activity is designed to improve the quality of education. "We care about the future of this country," says Ms. Worley, the Alabama official. "We work with students, and we really see a relationship between politics and education."

But NEA critics say the union is more concerned about protecting jobs and increasing teachers' salaries. "They are geared up toward getting more money through political action," Mr. Lieberman says. "If they are about anything else, it has escaped me."

Critics say NEA members, worried about their jobs, are blocking education reform by opposing the Republican push to give parents vouchers to help pay for private schools. The voucher issue, both sides agree, is at the heart of the intense debate over how to revive America's education system. Republicans say public schools need some competition; teachers' unions say public subsidies for private schools would destroy public education. "We are the ones defending public education in America," says Susie Jablonske, an NEA member and Clinton delegate who teaches first grade in Annapolis, Md.

Some signs suggest the unions are beginning to rethink the wisdom of their resistance to school-choice experiments. Nevertheless, the NEA successfully lobbied congressional Democrats this spring to block a \$5 million federal scholarship

program that would have allowed choice for some low-income children in the District of Columbia. NEA officials opposed the program because it would have permitted parents to spend the money at any of the city's private schools; they viewed it as a Trojan horse for vouchers. But Ted Rebarber, a former aide to Wisconsin Republican Rep. Steve Gunderson, argues, "This was not something to benefit the upper class or middle class. It would have benefited poor children in some of the most hopeless neighborhoods."

Teachers first began to get heavily involved in presidential politics in the 1964 race between Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson. Because teachers had long tended to think of themselves as salaried professionals standing aloof from collective action and politics, NEA leaders had to work hard to push the idea that educators were a labor force. In 1976, the NEA made its first presidential endorsement, backing Jimmy Carter, who had promised to deliver on its longtime goal of a cabinet-level Department of Education. When Mr. Carter ran for re-election in 1980, some 500,000 NEA members volunteered in his campaign, according to one account.

The NEA's close ties to the Democrats proved a liability after Republicans unexpectedly won control of Congress in 1994. "I think the 1994 elections were certainly a wake-up call for the NEA," the NEA's Ms. Teasley says. The group made a concerted effort this year to woo Republicans; some 30 NEA members were delegates to the GOP convention in San Diego, and the NEA hosted a breakfast buffet there "honoring Republican leadership on behalf of education."

The NEA also hired a GOP pollster, Linda DiVall, to conduct a survey showing that conservative Republicans support many NEA goals. Ms. Teasley acknowledges the NEA's reputation as a Democratic Party adjunct. "In retrospect, I think we made some mistakes," she says. "And we're trying to retool our political operations." This summer, she says, the board unanimously voted "to restate the bipartisan nature of the organization."

That will be hard, given that one of the NEA's primary goals is to lobby for more federal spending. About 92% of the delegates at the NEA's July convention voted to endorse President Clinton, and the association is backing more than 250 Democratic congressional candidates this fall but, so far, no Republicans.

young men, white for women, Red River High's 271 seniors scurried about the University of North Dakota gymnasium Sunday as their parents and friends filled the wooden bleachers. Central High's 262 seniors graduated later in the same building that is still being used as a shelter for flood victims.

"We have coped with nature's fury and survived," senior Vinita Parikh said during the commencement. "We have learned to adapt to circumstances which are difficult to comprehend."

Later, Central High senior Sara

McIntyre said the students had proved they could "make it through hell and high water."

Grand Forks seniors missed two weeks of April and all of May, time often preoccupied with final tests, college paperwork, yearbook signings and the senior prom. That isn't until June 28, at a hangar at the Air Force base about 10 miles west of town.

"It's really weird. It doesn't even feel like we're graduating," said 19-year-old Laurie Parsons. "We've worked so hard

to become seniors, and then this has to happen."

City officials say that five weeks after most of this town of 50,000 people was evacuated, thousands have still not returned to their homes. Graduation preparations last week were the first time many had been able to see their friends, said Red River Principal Daryl Bragg.

The Red River is now back in its banks, but the toll is staggering; it will cost an estimated \$40 million to repair the city's schools alone. ■

36. The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, Tenn.)

May 27, 1997

When students strike teachers, what's a school system to do?

By Angie Craig
The Commercial Appeal

Coral Niknahad recently tried to break up a fight between two students, her third such effort since joining Memphis City Schools four years ago.

The last thing the Westside High seventh- and eighth-grade history teacher remembers before her head hit the concrete floor is the two girls grabbing and clawing at one another.

Niknahad's effort at intervention resulted in a visit to her doctor and two days' home recovery. The experience has left Niknahad, 49, apprehensive about approaching such situations, a first for her in 15 years as an educator.

Memphis Education Association officials say a comment survey compiled in April shows student discipline and safety in schools now are the top concerns of city school educators. In past surveys, the desire for more money topped the list.

During the 1995-96 school year, 619 board suspensions were issued to Memphis City Schools students for at least threatening school personnel, according to Dr. Jim Paavola, director of pupil services.

Student assaults on school personnel have ranged from 10 to 36 a year since the 1989-90 school year. Paavola believes the frequency of such incidents is rising. His conversations with security personnel suggest the number could reach 40 for the current school year.

While Shelby County Schools officials say incidents of student threats or assaults against school personnel are rare in the estimated 47,000-student district, they don't keep separate records. But Katie Stanton, director of pupil services for the county, said there are indications the system is encountering bolder insubordinate behavior. "The whole issue, to me, is scary," said Stanton. "We are having more and more insubordinate behavior from children who have no reluctance to get in a teacher's face. And many of their parents take up for them."

Memphis and Shelby County educators' concerns about student discipline and school safety is mirrored in other parts of the state. "In the grand scheme of things, this issue has boomed in the last couple of years," said Mike Herrmann, state director of a program for promoting safe and drug-free schools and communities.

Tennessee Education Association leaders certainly think so. They successfully lobbied legislators for the Student and Employee Safe Environment Act of 1996, a measure that expanded the 1995 "zero tolerance" law regarding guns in schools. Zero tolerance now covers battery of school employees.

Niknahad, who taught at a private school in Mississippi before joining Memphis City Schools in 1993, says

she's afraid the fighting, attacks on teachers and discipline problems now are considered just another part of the job.

Memphis Education Association President Tom Marchand said teachers and other educators in the association complain of a reluctance among individual city school administrators to expel students for some offenses.

In high schools, that reluctance is linked to a lack of space in alternative school programs, he said. In elementary schools, a contributing factor is there are no alternative schools, said Marchand.

In Memphis City Schools, students in grades 6-12 expelled under zero tolerance for a full calendar year may enroll in an alternative school, if space is available. But with the longer expulsions, the space hasn't been there, despite expanding the number of alternative school slots from about 40 to an estimated 350 in the last few years.

Alternative schools are set up to improve safety and protect learning in the regular classrooms as well as provide help for the students with discipline problems.

The district doesn't have alternative programs for students in grades K-5, and Marchand said many teachers believe principals and administrators are at times reluctant to suspend younger students for extended periods.

Paavola said no K-5 student had been

expelled from the district as of a Jan. 10 report. He defined expelled as out of school for more than 10 days. No more recent numbers were available.

Many of these younger students return after a few days to wreak havoc on the same teachers, said Marchand.

"Until the educator feels they have the authority to remove a child from the classroom, I'm not sure the educator is going to be comfortable," says MEA executive director Wayne Pike.

At Wooddale High School, veteran 12th grade English teacher Lucy Stansbury, 55, said Wooddale's administration generally is supportive of teachers. Still, she says, "It's very hard to teach when you are concerned about your own safety."

Fairley High School chemistry teacher Lynette Tabor, 52, says a lack of consistency mars the discipline effort.

"You may send a child to the office one time for cursing you out, and he might get suspended," said Tabor. "Then another time he may do the same thing and not get punished."

School board member Sara Lewis, who has been monitoring school safety concerns, said, "The problem is not with the zero tolerance policy. It is the way it is being implemented and administered."

"There is no one solution," said Lewis. "But I think it's time that teachers and other personnel in the schools stand up and say 'We're not going to take it anymore.'"

The No. 1 concern

When it comes to school safety and student discipline, Supt. Gerry House

says she's listening. "We know safety is the No. 1 concern of teachers. And it's our No. 1 concern."

But House says alternative school space and a focus on student discipline are only parts of the solution. "Studies show that students who are actively engaged in learning are not prone to be involved in disruptive behavior," she said.

That's why House continues to push for increased teacher training and more systemwide use of school reform models that already are in 48 of the district's schools.

Two other moves also are under way. The district is developing a comprehensive school safety plan and last year hired Ronald V. Pope as safe schools and educational alternatives coordinator.

Pope, former director of managed care for children for the Memphis and Shelby County Community Health Agency, must set up and expand a safe schools program. He also administers alternative education services for at-risk students, those who may not meet their potential because of risk factors such as poverty, birth defects or health care.

Pope has a background dealing with juvenile delinquency and has worked as a gang intervention specialist in Chicago. He is designing programs for each district school to teach students alternative behavior. "If we can keep their minds stimulated, they are going to have less time to put into disruptive behavior," he said.

That theory is one that board member

Sara Lewis understands. But, she says, "The matter is that our teachers aren't equipped and our schools aren't equipped. If they were, we wouldn't have all of these alternative schools."

"Many of these things deal with character education. Those things used to be taught at home: the value of human life, respect for elders and for others' property, honesty and integrity."

Tracking violence

Tennessee plans to begin separately tracking violence against school personnel at the earliest during the 1997-98 school year, according to Tennessee Department of Education spokesman Sidney Owen.

Up to now, the state has required school districts to report by the end of June "violence or threatened violence against . . . any person attending or assigned to any public school." The 1995-96 statewide report of student suspensions and expulsions shows that 7,494 suspensions and 403 expulsions fell into that broad category.

Tennessee Education Commissioner Jane Walters this spring issued state advisory guidelines aimed at developing safe and secure learning environments in each of Tennessee's 139 public school systems. The guidelines urge districts to take a proactive approach toward safety and set clear expectations for students.

"Memphis has been dealing with this kind of issue (threats of violence) longer than anyone in the state," said Herrmann. "They are already doing much of what we're suggesting districts do." ■

37. Chicago Tribune

05/26/97; Edition: LAKE; L; Section: METRO LAKE; Page 3

AUDIT SAYS SCHOOLS ARE ALL TOO CROWDED

By Margaret Van Duch.

Classrooms, lunchrooms, libraries and gymnasiums at most Kildeer Elementary School District 96 schools have serious space shortages, an audit has disclosed.

The audit presented to the board last week illustrated what parents responding to a newly released survey called the most common districtwide problem: lack of space.

The board had retained Thomas Glass, a facility planner, to study existing space configurations to help the district plan for future enrollment growth.

Glass recommended holding enrollment in each elementary school to 500 pupils or less. All of the districts' kindergarten through 4th-grade elementary schools exceed that capacity.

A more detailed discussion of the space audit is planned for June 17.

At Kildeer School, with 726 pupils, the cafeteria and library are too small for the present enrollment, officials said.

Prairie School, with 663 pupils, has severe problems with pupils loading and unloading from buses and cars because of the small site. The cramped library can

hold no more than 30 pupils at a time, the music room is inadequate, and the cafeteria is overused.

Willow Grove School is overcrowded in many areas. It cannot adequately accommodate its current 572 pupils, Glass said. The building is designed to hold 400 pupils, he said. Expansion on the six-acre site is questionable. Both the gym and the library are too small.

Ivy Hall Middle School, serving 817 pupils in 5th and 6th grade, was designed to hold 700 pupils. The school's major deficiency is the need for more room in

51. The Plain Dealer Cleveland, OH

05/26/97; Edition: FINAL / ALL; Section: NATIONAL; Page 1A

SCHOOLS PUSH FOR NEW CLASS OF TEACHERS

RETIREMENTS SPARK KEEN COMPETITION FOR REPLACEMENTS

By SCOTT STEPHENS PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

C. Paul Jeffries still chuckles when he thinks about the big trailer that recruiters from the Prince Georges County School District in Maryland parked in front of a job fair in New Orleans last year.

"You couldn't get in without going past it," said Jeffries, assistant director of career services at Xavier University of Louisiana. "The other recruiters got very mad. They're extremely competitive - almost fanatical. They come with contracts in hand."

A landslide of teacher retirements and a surge in student enrollment have suddenly made teaching a hot profession. Education Secretary Richard Riley has estimated that enrollments will increase by 800,000 each year through the foreseeable future, and 2 million new teachers will be needed by 2006.

The biggest demand for teachers is in California and the Southwest, but states such as Ohio will not be immune. The State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio projects that 5,062 teachers in Ohio will retire next year, up 600 from 1996. That number is expected to jump to 6,072 by 2001 and to 7,743 in 2007.

At least 600 Cleveland teachers - most of them hired in the baby boom years of the late 1960s and now closing in on 30 years of service - are expected to retire in the next three years, according to the Cleveland Teachers Union.

"And that's conservative," said Janice C. Brundage, the union's membership chairwoman. "There were a lot of people hired in the late '60s and early '70s, and now those people are ready to retire. We're looking at 200 to 250 retirements per year, at least, for the next three years."

Cleveland school officials have been working to fill more than 300 vacancies for the 1997-98 school year, which begins in August. As of last week, 172 teachers had been hired.

Retirements account for more than 100 vacancies, with resignations, open positions and a new, full-day kindergarten program accounting for the rest.

Several factors are driving veteran

teachers from the classroom before they are eligible for full retirement benefits.

School districts such as Cleveland and Berea are offering financial incentives for older teachers to leave early so they can hire younger replacements who are paid less and, in many cases, are more proficient with computers and other technologies.

In fact, having experience and a master's degree - which requires a district to pay a teacher a higher salary - is actually a handicap to getting hired, said Cleveland schools Superintendent Richard A. Boyd.

Also, the increasing number of two-income households means fewer teachers are tethered to their job for economic survival. And more teachers are withering under the weight of growing social problems such as poverty and violence.

Like most big-city districts, Cleveland is looking for teachers who are in the shortest supply: special-education teachers, teachers certified in science and math specialties, and members of minority groups.

The district is searching far and wide to find them. At the end of April, district recruiters completed a six-week tour that took them to 34 colleges and job fairs in 10 states, including Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida.

"We are hoping to get a jump on districts that are looking for the same thing we're looking for," Boyd said.

The district is also trying to sell the city to recruits. Next year, it hopes to produce a chamber of commerce-style videotape that will tout Lake Erie, Jacobs Field, the Cleveland Orchestra and other civic assets.

"Marketing the district is something we've talked a lot about this spring," said Rick Ellis, director of communications for the Cleveland schools. "We have to promote ourselves in the same way other districts do."

Conversely, sun belt districts are going to rust belt cities to look for teachers. An April teacher career fair at the University of Toledo attracted recruiters from 64 districts in 10 states, including several districts in Texas and California, which can no longer fill their

needs for minority and bilingual teachers by recruiting in their own back yards.

"The market has improved significantly since last year," said James Casper, an education employment specialist for the University of Toledo. "There is a great drive to put minorities in the classroom, and we're not getting as many as the market is asking for. And if you can teach Spanish, you can get a job."

Casper said teachers with certification in secondary school science and mathematics could write their own ticket. Those wanting to teach grade school remain plentiful, but minority and male grade school teachers can find jobs. Teachers who themselves are disabled - blind or hearing impaired, for example - are also in demand, Casper said.

Casper said he knows of one Toledo education graduate who is certified in physics and chemistry, and wants to volunteer to instruct the marching band.

"He'll be eaten up," Casper said of the recruit. "They'll go into the aisles to get him."

Cy Johnson will go farther than that for a promising candidate. Johnson, an assistant principal in the 7,000-student Pike Township district in suburban Indianapolis, made the six-hour drive to the Cleveland State University Career Exposition last month for the second year in a row.

"Last year, I recruited and hired two teachers," Johnson said during this year's exposition, which took place April 18 at Woodling Gym. "I've got the possibility of one or two more this year. I consider that a successful trip."

In the 1980s, college graduates wanted to plunge into fields where they could make money quickly, such as sales and investment banking, Johnson said. Teachers made comparatively low salaries that increased slowly.

That hasn't changed. A just-released poll by the National Education Association, the country's largest teachers union, placed the national average salary for teachers at \$37,685 for 1995-96, up 3 percent from the previous year. Inflation increased 2.7 percent during the same period.

In 16 states and Washington, D.C.,

teachers actually have lost purchasing power over the last 10 years, the survey concluded.

Still, Johnson said he believes teaching is an attractive field for the 1990s.

"I just see the teaching field as one with lots of opportunity and stability," he said. "And, you can help people."

Gala Gates, 32, has heard the pitch. Gates has taught school, but returned to

CSU to get her certification in special education and foreign language. She said opportunities appear to be plentiful.

"So far, I've been fortunate to have gotten a couple of offers," Gates said.

Steve Hunter, 25, who grew up in North Olmsted, will graduate from CSU next month with an education degree. Hunter, who hopes to find a job teaching in an elementary school, is confident about getting the right job. But he

concedes he may have to leave Northeast Ohio to do so.

"I'm hearing a lot of people say that there will be all these retirements, but it still seems pretty competitive right now," said Hunter, who has been doing his student teaching this year at Butternut Elementary School in North Olmsted.

"I guess time will tell," Hunter said. "I'm just trying to be flexible." ■

COMMENTARY

52. Minneapolis Star-Tribune

May 27, 1997

Supporting diversity in schools

Leonard Inskip / Star Tribune

The governor, legislators, school officials, community leaders, parents and other people are debating why many minority kids fail in Minneapolis and St. Paul schools and what to do about it.

One possibility can be found in a seven-year experiment in St. Paul to improve school environments for such kids. The experiment ended quietly this month. Its director for most of those years is pessimistic about whether today's debate will lead to real, district-wide change in schools.

Ruth Anne Olson has written a summary report for the St. Paul Foundation that offers important insights into why schools don't work for many kids. It's worth attention as the debate goes on.

The report suggests that public schools must find better ways to involve parents more, must create environments more respectful of diversity and must seek to overcome bureaucratic barriers to change. Perhaps the most significant conclusion is that school systems have only limited internal potential to change and that outside pressure is required.

The report doesn't mention competition, but that would be one form of outside pressure — something implicit in Gov. Arne Carlson's proposed tax breaks for parents using private schools.

A key part of the seven-year project was establishment of partnerships between eight St. Paul elementary schools (seven public and one parochial) and community organizations, with a

heavy emphasis on involvement of African-American, Southeast Asian, Hispanic and American Indian parents. Four partnerships worked; four failed. Other activities included workshops and training for school people.

The project cost \$2.6 million. The St. Paul Foundation was the organizer but funding also came from others, including the Bush, General Mills, St. Paul Companies and Cowles Media foundations. There was a mixed-race staff, usually six, headed by Olson.

A final event on St. Paul's West Side this month celebrated the De Colores partnership between the Neighborhood House (the city's oldest community center), St. Matthew's Elementary School and the church's preschool child-care center. Although the overall project has ended formally, many of its achievements will continue at St. Matthew's and other successful partnership schools.

In the late 1980s, the St. Paul Foundation completed an earlier minority-support program. Concerned about mounting numbers of children of color and the schools' ineffectiveness with many of them, the foundation hired Olson to design a more focused program. Its name would be Supporting Diversity in Schools Through Family and Community Involvement (SDS).

Olson began by holding 10 focus groups with students from different races. Also she interviewed more than 100 school officials and community people. That "taught us," her report said, "that young people can spend an entire 13-year

school career without having even one teacher who shares their history or culture and that policy decisions affecting their daily classroom experience are made by people who have little or no knowledge of the compelling life forces of the majority of the students.

"Their schools contain only peripheral acknowledgment of students — who they are and where they come from . . . and daily curriculum contains little of the history and culture of the majority of the children. Such places are, at best, unfriendly places for children to learn. At worst, they are destructive . . ."

In one focus group, high-achieving white students told of getting strong support from parents, community and from schools. High-achieving Hispanic students said the same about their parents and community. What about schools? No one answered. Then one said: School is not our place. Teachers and other people don't know anything about our community.

"One group had teachers who reached out and pulled them," Olson recalls, while the second did not. That pointed to a principal goal for SDS: "to create an environment where kids from all backgrounds feel pulled."

Diversity, Olson says, is more than different races in a school. More important is what happens in school, what students are taught and how they are treated. Such a school, she argues, requires a shared vision of classrooms and buildings "in which students of all racial and cultural backgrounds are valued equally."

NATIONAL

1. TIME

May 26, 1997

A LESSON PLAN

NEGLECTED ON MOST CAMPUSES, TEACHER EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO BETTER SCHOOLS. A BOLD NEW PROGRAM IN CINCINNATI LETS STUDENTS LEARN BY DOING

BY STEVE WULF

Tracy Robinson was losing them. The lesson for her fourth-grade class at Cincinnati's Vine Elementary School on this Friday afternoon was fractions, and as she stood at the front of the room with her textbook, explaining why 1/3 is larger than 1/4, she saw blank stares. No hands were raised. She drew shapes on the blackboard, shading in parts of them, but that didn't work either. The kids were wiggling in their seats. "I was getting so nervous," Robinson recalls. "I was feeling like, 'O.K., now what do I do?'"

Despite their best efforts, American educators well know the sensation. New demands are being placed on teachers that make their jobs harder than ever. Students arrive at school with greater difficulties than in decades past, yet the public's expectations of what children should achieve increase each year. Tougher new academic standards are being instituted in schools around the country, and teachers are being held accountable for seeing that all children reach them. One survey found that 40% of public school teachers would not go into teaching if they had to choose a career again. According to the federal **Department of Education**, 30% of new teachers leave the classroom within the first three years. Those who stay feel overworked, underpaid, underappreciated—and poorly prepared.

Six hundred experienced teachers surveyed in 1995 were brutal about the education they had received, describing it as "mind numbing," the "shabbiest psychobabble" and "an abject waste of time." They complained that fragmented, superficial course work had little relevance to classroom realities. And judging by the weak skills of student teachers entering their schools, they observed, the preparation was still woefully inadequate.

It is little wonder, then, that educators

worry about meeting the growing demand for teachers without drastically lowering the quality of teaching by hiring untrained recruits. In California more than 16,000 teachers were hired this year to accommodate state-initiated class-size reductions. Barbara Burch, former president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, has warned that unless the lesson plan for teachers is revised, "it is increasingly clear that we are indeed a profession at risk."

Tracy Robinson is part of one of the most promising efforts to remake teacher education—a unique collaboration among the University of Cincinnati, the Cincinnati public schools, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers and the city's business community. Called the Cincinnati Initiative for Teacher Education, or CITE, this five-year program requires participants to obtain a bachelor's degree in humanities or the sciences; then spend a fifth year in the classroom, with pay, under the close guidance of a mentor teacher to earn a teaching diploma. What sets these CITE "interns" apart from traditional student teachers is that for the entire year they are the teachers of record, fully responsible for student behavior and achievement, but they receive lots of help from mentors who have been certified as exemplary teachers.

"The CITE approach makes great sense," says U.S. **Secretary of Education Richard Riley**. "Though you prepare for teaching by taking courses, the best preparation is teaching itself. To learn with the support of master teachers is absolutely critical; and I think teaching colleges are beginning to realize this."

Perhaps. But teaching colleges, which Riley calls the "forgotten stepchildren" of higher education, are known mostly for inertia and mediocrity. "The low status

and general neglect of teacher education over the years have contributed to a kind of hardening of the arteries," says John Goodlad, director of the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington, Seattle. It doesn't help that many education schools function as cash cows, a place in the university system to collect tuition, not spend money. Equally disadvantageous is the historic low esteem in which the profession is held, owing in large measure to its century-old roots as a female occupation.

Reforming this sorry situation has been the topic of many commissions and consortiums over the past two decades. A 1986 report, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, by the Holmes Group, a coalition of 100 leading universities, scolded, "If someone had argued that doctors should practice modern medicine with the terms of an 1850s job description...he would be ridiculed by any audience. Yet most Americans think nothing of requiring teachers to carry out a late-20th century assignment when locked into a mid-19th century job description. Nor does it strike them as odd to then blame teachers for a job badly done."

The University of Cincinnati was a charter member of the Holmes Group. When it joined, in 1986, its College of Education was poorly funded and generally overlooked. The university asked Bob Yinger, an educational psychologist by training, to rethink the program and build a better bridge between academia's ivory tower and reality's classroom. Yinger recalls, "We looked at what we were doing in our old program, and we said, 'Let's redesign our entire program from the ground up. All new courses, all new experiences, taught in a completely new structure.'" The debate within the faculty was intense and at times divisive. But, according to Piyush Swami, a professor of science

education, "people knew that what we were doing wasn't working. One day a well-respected faculty member said, 'I've got about 15 years left in my career, and I would like to make those years worthwhile. Let's give these new ideas a chance. The worst we can do is fail.'"

Fortunately, Yinger found willing allies in Cincinnati school superintendent Michael Brandt and teachers' union head Tom Mooney. As part of Brandt's reform-minded agenda, several schools decided to transform themselves into Professional Practice Schools. CITE interns learn to teach in these schools, which give teachers a greater voice in determining policy and implementing change. Mooney persuaded his membership to give up certain job slots to CITE's fifth-year students. "As a union, we think of programs like this as the professionalization of teaching," he says. "We are not here to defend the weakest link, because if we do that, the chain will break."

The university faculty was worried about adding a fifth year, as competing education schools at nearby Xavier University and Northern Kentucky University could send their graduates out into the world after four years. But when Yinger took his five-year plan to high school students who had indicated an interest in teaching, he was encouraged by their response. "They could see the value added," he says. "They liked the idea of spending a full year in the classroom before going out to teach on their own, and the notion of getting two degrees." Teachers sometimes feel trapped in the profession because they don't have a degree in anything else. "In the old traditional programs," says Yinger, "we put a lot of teachers out there who already knew they didn't like teaching. I think that accounts for some of the burnout and failure."

Equally important, CITE interns study specific theories of learning, behavior and classroom management while testing them in real-world situations. In the typical teachers' college, such subjects are taught as large lecture classes in the first or second year.

When the bell rang after her unsuccessful lesson in fractions,

Robinson immediately sought out her lead teacher, Sandy Luebke. Lead teachers are considered the very best in the Professional Practice Schools, and they not only counsel the interns but also evaluate their performances. "Sandy is like a video camera," says Robinson, "observing me, saying 'O.K., this is working really well' or 'If you move your arms down to the side, you'll look more open and the kids will want to approach you.'" Luebke listened to Robinson's account of her ordeal and, referring to little colored bars used to convey the concept of fractions, said, "Manipulatives. You have to use manipulatives so they can do hands-on work to understand what you're teaching."

Robinson is the first in her family with a college degree, as are many teachers. She says she knew she wanted to be a teacher when she was in kindergarten. Like every other CITE intern, she is strongly encouraged to keep a journal of her year at Vine Elementary — whose students have the highest rate of poverty among the city's schools — to reflect upon her worries, her triumphs and her progress.

Often the lead teachers use the journals in their mentoring. Early in the school year, Karon Jacob, another intern at Vine, wrote, "We try to get parent participation by sending home the weekly behavior charts of the students to be signed. However, no parents have sent their child's back. Also, homework given to the children is never brought back." In her response, mentor Cheryl Hilen wrote, "Offer bonus points, an incentive, or special privilege for kids who bring them back. Make a big deal about it."

Among the most hotly debated issues in the profession these days is how to certify those who come to teaching from another career. Not surprisingly, CITE takes a more rigorous approach than most to "alternative certification," which is sometimes just "a fancy name for emergency licensing," says Karen Zumwalt, dean of Columbia University's Teachers College. CITE offers a two-year program for those who choose teaching as a second career. Carolyn

Toney, a fifth-grade intern at Vine, is a former research scientist for Procter & Gamble. She decided to enroll in CITE after her two children graduated from college. Toney spent one year taking education classes and substitute teaching. Now, in her second year, she is teaching fifth-graders, with the help of Luebke. "I'm working harder than I ever did in the corporate world because I'm working around the clock," says Toney. "My friends at P&G do not understand why I'm doing this. There's no money, at least from their perspective. I tell them I get a greater sense of personal satisfaction right here than in the corporate world. It's a challenge every day."

CITE is a work in progress. Almost 10% of students have quit before completing their internship — some complaining that even with this innovative work-study model, they feel ill prepared to run a class. The interns' journals brim with fears and frustrations, and their mentors are still learning when to intervene and when to let interns learn from their mistakes.

Before her fourth-grade class on the Monday after her Friday disappointment, Tracy Robinson loads the manipulatives — the little bars of different colors, each representing a different fraction — into plastic bags. When her students walk in, she distributes the bags. The book she was reading from on Friday is nowhere in evidence. She asks her pupils to use the bars to construct flat, box-shaped designs on their desks. Three of one color, they soon discover, will fill the same space as four of another. When each child has a mosaic on his or her desk, Robinson begins the verbal part of her lesson. She challenges them to come up with ways of figuring out which color is bigger and how many it would take of each to make a whole. Hands fly up. Voices have to be restrained. Soon the students are calling out the answers in unison.

The hands-on approach worked that day in a fourth-grade class at Vine Elementary. The same method seems to be working in Cincinnati.

—Reported by Melissa Ludtke/Cincinnati

Both proposals are subject to approval by the county councils during budget deliberations.■

41. The New Orleans Times-Picayune

05/10/97; Edition: THIRD; Section: NATIONAL; Page A6

CHANGE IN TEACHER HIRING FAILS

By LITTICE BACON-BLOOD
Capital bureau

A bill that would have given school superintendents sole authority to nominate teachers for employment was withdrawn Friday after several legislators criticized the measure as usurping local school board power.

Rep. Charles McDonald, D-Monroe, who proposed House Bill 750, touted it as "an attempt to bring professionalism to the board" by restricting board members to voting only on names endorsed by the superintendent.

Current law allows board members to override the superintendent and hire an unendorsed teacher with a majority vote.

"We're not talking about the desires of one, two or three people," Rep. B.L. "Buddy" Shaw, R-Shreveport, said, "but a fundamental right of an elected body."

Shaw was able to get an amendment passed that allowed the board to retain that right.

McDonald, who objected that the amendment would "gut the bill and put us back where we are," returned the bill to the calendar without a vote.

On other education bills, the House approved:

HB 796 by Rep. Renee Gill Pratt, D-New Orleans, which requires parents or guardians to attend an orientation session before a child is registered or enrolled in school for the first time. The measure, which would go into effect in the fall, requires school districts to offer the sessions at least three times between March and September and to schedule them around work hours. Children would not be prohibited from attending school if parents don't attend a session.

HB 311 by Rep. Troy Hebert, D-Jeanerette, which would allow high school freshmen attending nonpublic high schools to participate in athletics if they transfer to a school outside their attendance district.

Current law requires students who transfer to other school districts to sit out a year.

While some legislators voiced concerns over illegal recruitment of "star" players, Hebert said the bill was intended for students whose school doesn't have a high school. Some private schools in his parish only have kindergarten through eighth grades.

"This bill has to do with a handful of 14-year-olds in the eighth grade who are looking forward to ninth grade and playing sports," Hebert said.■

42. The Dallas Morning News

05/10/97; Edition: HOME FINAL; Section: PLANO; Page 11

Mother says school violated son's right to education

By Sandy Louey
Staff Writer
of The Dallas Morning News

The mother of a fourth-grader at Mendenhall Elementary School contends that actions taken by the Plano school district have violated his right to an education.

A complaint to the Texas Education Agency about Karla Sappington's frustrations with the district has resulted in a mediation session scheduled for Wednesday between the family and school officials.

A year ago, Mrs. Sappington said, she submitted the required paperwork to have the school nurse give her son, Chris, the medication he needed to control his attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The nurse refused, claiming his dosage was too high, an action that resulted in Chris' behavior worsening and his being placed in special education, Mrs. Sappington said.

She said she wants the nurse to

administer the medication and return Chris to the regular classroom.

"We have not asked for anything unreasonable," she said.

Officials from the district, including school attorney Nona Matthews and the director of special education, Kathy Seei, declined to comment about any of the Sappingtons' contentions, citing student confidentiality.

"I just feel it wouldn't be in the best interest of the student at the moment," Mendenhall principal Martha Hunt said.

During Wednesday's session, an independent mediator appointed by the TEA will work with both parties to see if an agreement can be reached.

If mediation fails, Mrs. Sappington can ask for a due-process hearing for her complaints against the district, which include educational and medical neglect. The agency would appoint an impartial hearing officer to hear the case.

"If they had given him the medicine, this wouldn't have happened. It all could

have been avoided," she said.

The Sappington family moved to Plano from Doniphan, Mo., in January 1996. Mrs. Sappington said there were no problems with Chris receiving his medication at Doniphan Elementary School. Doniphan school officials could not confirm that Chris had been administered medication by a school nurse.

She said Chris took the drug Cylert before school to control his hyperactivity but needed to take another two pills at lunchtime. Texas law requires a nurse to administer students' medication during school hours.

Mrs. Sappington said she does not understand why the nurse's decision overrode the doctor's note and medication request that she submitted as required by Plano school district policy.

The district's school nurses are all registered nurses, who follow nursing practices and conduct rules, said Kathy Thomas, executive director for the state

Howard \$60 \$55 \$76 after 5 days \$66 after 5 days
 \$93 after 15 days \$83 after 15 days
 Carroll \$55.70 \$50.13 \$65.50 after 10 days \$56.81 after 10 days
 Harford \$55 \$45 \$85 not-allowed

By Elaine Tassy SUN STAFF

Katie Cheng got about \$50 and no respect for the recent day she spent as a substitute math teacher at MacArthur Middle School at Fort Meade, typical of the problems that have led to substitute teacher shortages throughout the metropolitan area in the past 20 years.

Baltimore-area educators are trying to remedy the situation.

Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties seek nominal pay raises for substitutes, hoping to attract and keep more of them. Other school districts are swelling the ranks of fill-in teachers by tapping faculty members — teachers in their planning periods, administrators and guidance counselors.

Local administrators are driven to find solutions because they are increasingly being held accountable through standardized tests, said Ronald A. Peiffer, spokesman for the state school superintendent's office. And a day without a teacher, or a capable substitute, is considered lost to education.

Little Baltimore-area data is available on how often a substitute cannot be found. That's because most school districts do not collect that information. Only Harford County had specifics: 29,000 teacher absences occurred in the 1995-1996 school year, with 26,000 substitutes replacing them.

Substitutes for the Baltimore area's 20,000 teachers complain that too often they must deal with misbehaving students and invent lesson plans on the fly without notes from the regular teacher or even a seating chart to figure out who's who.

Some substitutes can't control their classrooms, which leads to a free-for-all atmosphere that cultivates cheating and pranks.

"It's a very tough job," said Cheng, 43, who has substituted at MacArthur Middle in Anne Arundel County for 1 1/2 years. "If [regular] teachers don't show their appreciation, you feel like a dog."

At the beginning of a math class on a day Cheng filled in,

her students ignored her order to sit down. Some made fun of her accent, and a 13-year-old threatened to stab one classmate in the eye and called another an obscene name.

"You have the choice to go to the

office or be quiet," Cheng told the boy. He shut up.

She put algebra problems on the board, but when she tried to get students to come up to solve them, she got no takers. She finished the class period red-faced, one arm covered in chalk, visibly upset.

A workday that began at 7:40 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m. earned her about \$7 an hour, \$1 an hour less than if she had spent the time ringing up groceries at the local supermarket.

In the Baltimore area, substitutes earn between \$35 and \$90 a day, depending on whether they have a college degree and the length of the assignment.

In Kenosha, Wis., substitutes are paid \$75 a day; \$70 in Hartford, Conn.; between \$55 and \$70 in Mesa, Ariz.; and \$123 in Los Angeles.

A college-educated substitute who worked every day of the school year for \$52 — the average daily rate in the Baltimore area — would earn \$9,360 before taxes, compared with \$41,229 a year before taxes for the average full-time teacher in Maryland.

Not only is pay for substitutes substandard, it's unpredictable, conceded Lawrence E. Leake, assistant state superintendent of schools.

"It's not a guaranteed source of income; the job doesn't carry any benefits at all — I'm sure that has an impact," he said.

Life isn't all that bleak, said Les Nakamura, who substitutes three to five days a week at Pasadena's George Fox Middle School in Anne Arundel. He helped students review for a statewide exam, had them work in small groups at lab stations and learned all their names, which helps circumvent the trickery, he said.

"They get really rowdy" with some substitutes, but "they can't do that with me because I know all of them," he said.

Knowing the class doesn't always guarantee good behavior. Jannie Williams substituted for an earth science teacher at Randallstown High School in western Baltimore County who had been out since a car accident in January.

Her class appeared to be paying attention, but students said some of their classmates were cheating and others were wandering the halls.

LaKia Eldridge, a 16-year-old sophomore, conceded she cheats regularly.

"I do it all the time," she said. "It's faster — then you can sit around and talk. Why not cheat when you can get it done and pass?"

Ramone Williams, a 19-year-old senior, said classmates were walking the halls instead of attending the class, which has dwindled from 30 students to 18 since the regular teacher's accident.

"I think we're being cheated out of having a real teacher," said sophomore Ericka Mayes. "But it's something we can't change, so we have to deal with it."

Substitutes also are being cheated, said Warren Fletcher, chairman of the National Education Associations' substitute teachers caucus, a group advocating professional treatment of substitutes. "It's the equivalent of being blindfolded and spun around three times."

Local administrators are looking for solutions.

Five Maryland counties — Anne Arundel, Calvert, Dorchester, Kent and Wicomico — have stables of permanent substitutes assigned to certain schools.

But in Anne Arundel, gaps exist, according to David D. Lombardo, director of human resources for the county's schools. Spanish, special education and speech pathology slots are the hardest to fill.

In Harford County, 57 of the district's highest ranking administrators substitute in their subject areas as part of a program that began in February called CARE (Central Administrators Renewing Education).

And teachers at Baltimore's Southern High School in Cherry Hill sometimes get \$15 to teach an 80-minute class during their planning periods, said Paul M. Lufrio, assistant principal in charge of substitutes.

The Baltimore County school board has proposed raising substitute pay from between \$33.55 to \$70.45 a day to between \$40 and \$75. "Certainly it's a long-term goal, but it's a matter of priorities," said Donald I. Mohler, spokesman for the school system.

Anne Arundel's school board has proposed a raise from \$50 a day to \$60 a day, Lombardo said.

89. San Francisco Chronicle

May 14, 1997

Day of the Teacher

FORGET BATMAN and Wonder Woman and Indiana Jones. The real superheroes are the men and women who stand in front of a classroom each day and, despite a million obstacles, educate children.

Today has been designated "Day of the Teacher" by the California Board of Education, an occurrence that provides a special opportunity to pay tribute to that

daunting group of dedicated individuals who fill our children's heads with the wonders of history, science, mathematics, literature and technology and somehow manage to throw in a few lessons in manners and sharing and good sportsmanship and respect.

If all were right with the priorities of this society, teaching would be as highly

regarded a career as medicine or law, and teachers would get commensurate pay and respect.

All through the year we should honor this underappreciated group, but a special day provides an opportunity to take a moment and applaud teachers' hard work — with a note, an apple, a pat on the back or just a "thank you" smile. ■

90. Sacramento Bee

May 14, 1997

City schools' timely shuffle

A solid majority of the trustees of the Sacramento City Unified School District stood firm in the face of nasty accusations of racism this week and approved a promising administrative reorganization. The plan is wisely designed to shift resources and focus from the downtown headquarters to struggling school sites that have long needed the attention.

Twenty-five downtown administrators and seven principals or vice principals will be relieved of their duties and either sent back to the classroom or given an opportunity to reapply for school site positions, including a newly created, school-based "student achievement team" that will focus on boosting outcomes at some of the district's lowest performing schools. Most of the principals come from lagging schools where, according to Interim Superintendent Jim Sweeney, the faculty have not been successfully marshalled to implement an improvement plan.

The nature and pitch of the criticisms of the reorganization shouldn't surprise anybody. In recent years, attempts to retool an ineffective bureaucracy and to hold administrators accountable have been met with similar storms of protest. Administrators targeted for reassignment or subjected to rigorous performance reviews have cried racism before. Sometimes, sadly, they were joined by school board members themselves, who seemed more interested in protecting cronies than in improving the schools.

Sweeney points out, however, that the allegations against his plan don't hold up to scrutiny. The district rightly values diversity of staff and administration, and more than half the downtown administrative posts are now held by ethnic minorities, as are 60 percent of its principals and vice principals. Of the 32 administrators to be reassigned, 18 are minorities. The ethnic makeup of the reassignments isn't out of line with the

proportion of minorities in the administration.

Following on a parade of speakers who claimed the reorganization was motivated by a desire to "purge" minorities from the district's upper ranks, the Rev. Carol Carter of Wesley United Methodist Church, speaking on behalf of Area Congregations Together, made the simple but important point that the school district is not just an employment agency for administrators who are comfortable with the status quo. For far too long, while the schools slid further into academic and physical decay, many people in the district — even those who once led it — seem to have considered it just that.

It is, rather, an institution whose sole mission is to improve achievement among a very challenging student population. It's time now to get beyond the poisonous allegations that detract so terribly from that mission. ■

when the governor's \$66.6 billion budget for the 1997-98 fiscal year was unveiled in January. The governor's staff has said the state has more than \$2 billion in additional revenues, but thus far has declined to be specific.

Wilson was expected to release details of the revised budget Wednesday at the Capitol in an annual announcement called the "May revision," in which the latest revenue figures are plugged into the proposed spending plan before the

start of the new fiscal year on July 1.

Since the weekend, the Wilson administration has issued a number of budget-linked announcements, including \$230 million for class-size reduction, some \$225 million in new funds for local governments and \$277 million for subsidized child care for welfare recipients.

The governor's class-size reduction plan would increase the amount that the state pays districts to reduce class sizes to

\$800 per year per pupil, which is estimated to be the full cost of the smaller classes.

In the class size reduction program that started last fall, the state pays \$650 per child, which means districts had to shift money from other programs and grades to qualify for the funds to reduce kindergarten through third grade classes from an average of 29 to 19 pupils per teacher. ■

87. Richmond Times-Dispatch

May 14, 1997

No Matter What?

Advocates for the disabled, including disabled schoolchildren, seemingly want it both ways. On the one hand they demand equal treatment — via mainstreaming, equal employment opportunity, and so forth — when that redounds to the benefit of the disabled. Yet they seem to balk at equal treatment when it does not.

Case in point: the overhaul of the Individuals With Disabilities in Education Act. The bill would mandate, for the first time, that school districts guarantee a free education to disabled

students even if they are expelled for disciplinary reasons unrelated to their disability. Such occurrences are rare but that rarity should not confer upon the individuals a benefit irrevocable no matter how much abused.

The legislation would effectively overturn a federal court ruling that permitted Virginia to expel disabled students. The federal government had threatened to withhold funds because Virginia does not have a backup education system.

The Allen administration and some school officials oppose the revamped legislation. As Fairfax School Board Chairman Kristen Amundson put it: "I just wonder if there aren't some cases in which we finally say, as a society, 'Your behavior was dangerous enough that you've lost the right to a free public education.'"

There ought to be. Disabled schoolchildren should be treated fairly, but fair treatment is not the same thing as a free pass. ■

88. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

May 14, 1997

Plain English

School officials in Oakland, Calif., who claimed all along they were only trying to teach their students better language skills have obviously learned a valuable word lesson of their own. A report recommending a \$2 million, five-year program to improve English skills never mentions the word "Ebonics." That word, of course, stirred

strong discussion when the district first devised its plan. By using the word "Ebonics" for a form of black English, the school board raised suspicions it was trying to get federal funding for teaching a foreign language — a notion that was quickly shot down from Washington. Faced with heated arguments on both

sides, the schools came up with a cautiously crafted statement urging that more money be spent helping students in the predominantly black district become proficient in language. If the new wording throws the focus back onto education and away from the Ebonics controversy, it will do its job. ■

ADVERTISEMENT

Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

The Push Against Tenure

There is currently a big attack on teacher tenure—particularly in the media. Look, for example, at the “20/20” segment that aired in February. If you took its presentation of tenure seriously, you’d conclude that tenure is an insult to common sense and its principal effect is to protect incompetent teachers by giving them lifetime jobs from which it is almost impossible to remove them. I’ll take up this gross distortion in a moment.

First, though, “20/20” did not even get the facts right. During a parade of horrors, it said that a Michigan school was “unable to dismiss a teacher who threatened a third-grade student with a knife” and implied that the teacher got away without punishment. What really happened? According to the Michigan Department of Education (*Education Week*, Letters, June 19, 1996), the threat was an unfortunate joke, and the tenure commission decided not to fire the teacher because it weighed his error in judgment against a 22-year record of “effective” teaching. Instead, it suspended him for two years without pay. But the caricature of a teacher (protected by tenure) pulling a knife on a young child—and then getting off scot-free—is what will stick in the minds of “20/20” viewers. Unless, of course, they read *Education Week*’s even more sensational version of the story (April 17, 1996), in which the teacher “threatened children with knives.”

But doesn’t tenure protect incompetent teachers? No, it protects competent ones by giving them the right to due process. Tenure means that a teacher can’t be let go just because he or she has said something that annoyed the principal or because a parent objects to a book on the reading list and is making it hot for the school board. And it means that a teacher can’t be fired because a board member has a young friend or relative who needs a job.

Remember the story of Adele Jones? She’s the Delaware math teacher who was fired for “incompetence” because the school board said she had flunked “too many” students. (The kids said she was a good teacher, and if they flunked it was because they hadn’t done the work.) Ultimately, Adele Jones got her job back—because of tenure. Occasionally, there is an injustice and somebody who deserves to be fired keeps his job. That, as people realize in connection with our system of justice, is the price for having fair procedures.

As for hiring and retaining mediocre or incompetent teachers, the principals and the school boards are the main culprits here. The union acts as a kind of defense attorney when a tenured teacher is in trouble—that is its legal responsibility. However, the problems start much earlier. When working conditions or pay are poor, administrators may have to

hire people they know are marginal. At the end of the probationary period, which is three years on average, a large majority of probationary teachers end up getting tenure, whether or not they deserve it. Sometimes administrators don’t think they can find replacements who’ll be any better; sometimes it’s just that they hate to fire anybody. Administrators are also the ones who let incompetent teachers with tenure hang on without either trying to help them, or, if it is clear that they will never improve, easing them out or making the case for firing them.

Probably the biggest reason administrators don’t get rid of poor teachers is that firing someone is an unpleasant thing to do. In the southern states where teachers are not protected by tenure, administrators could fire them much more freely, but there is no evidence that they do. And it doesn’t happen much in businesses, either, which is why you find marginal employees who draw their paychecks year after year.

What about the objection that tenure means it takes too long and costs too much to get rid of a bad teacher? There is no question that procedures in many jurisdictions are cumbersome and expensive, but that is no reason to get rid of tenure. Other lines of work with adversarial proceedings avoid roadblocks by using procedures like expedited arbitration and making rules that prevent delay. There is no reason why we couldn’t work out something similar for hearings involving teachers and school boards.

The policies and procedures governing tenure are not perfect or perfectly carried out, but the principle is sound. Perhaps most Americans understand that, despite the deluge of anti-tenure propaganda from the media. That’s what is suggested by the results of an informal poll conducted by a New York State senator in his district. The senator didn’t mention tenure. Instead, he asked constituents, “Should teachers who have successfully served a three-year probation be entitled to a due process hearing before being disciplined?” Seventy-six percent said yes. Instead of getting rid of tenure, which is what the one-sided accounts in the media are pushing, we need to reacquaint people with what the word *tenure* really means.

28. Cincinnati Enquirer

May 13, 1997

Teachers struggle to clear rising bar

Here and statewide, intense training stressed

BY GINA GENTRY-FLETCHER and MARK SKERTIC The Cincinnati Enquirer

Increasing demands on teachers to improve student performance while dealing with the many problems children bring to school are forcing teachers back into classrooms - as students.

Recent changes in Ohio teacher licensing rules and prodding from an influential national commission has put renewed emphasis on instructor training. The time when teachers could gather in the school auditorium for a day of in-service is over.

Linda Darling-Hammond, professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, derides in-service efforts as "hit-and-run workshops."

As executive director of the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, she oversaw the commission's landmark report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*. In September, the bipartisan commission warned that 23 percent of teachers lack even a minor in their main area of teaching; 30 percent of math teachers lack even a math minor.

More troubling, the typical school system has no staff development program in place, the commission found.

"Most school systems are still operating off the idea of the factory-line assembly model of the early 1900s, the model most business and industry got away from 20 years ago," said Ms. Darling-Hammond, whose new book, *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for Creating Schools That Work*, states the need for professional development. "We still have this notion that teaching is semi-skilled work."

The report called for tough standards for teachers, a greater emphasis on professional development, better recruitment and rewards for mastering skills.

"We know that the single most important determinant in student success was teacher education," Ms. Darling-Hammond said.

Cincinnati was spotlighted several times in the 150-page commission report as a district that has had some success improving its work force, particularly

with the Mayerson Academy for Human Resource Development. Mayerson, in the former Merry Middle School building, is one of the few places outside of a university campus dedicated to professional training for teachers.

Suburban initiatives

When Sandy Fernbacher and Johnnie Huston started teaching two decades ago, professional development was unheard of.

"There was no such thing," said Ms. Huston, business education teacher at Mount Healthy High School. "We just had in-service days."

Most suburban schools still have not faced the need to improve their teacher work force, said Judith Renyi, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. "That's the hardest nut to crack - complacency," she said.

"Teaching is a profession that takes constant work, constant struggle, learning. In the past it was easy," she said. "You had a set curriculum, and it was the textbook. It's not the textbook any more. Instruction is tailored to the kids, and you have to be able to adjust to meet their needs."

Locally, suburban teachers have seen a gradual increase in opportunities available to keep pace with educational changes, said Ms. Fernbacher, a sixth-grade teacher at Springmyer Memorial Elementary School in the Oak Hills Local School District.

Educators in cash-strapped districts say that lack of funding is a reason their programs may lag. A shortage of substitute teachers - filling in while teachers attend workshops - also reduces what programs schools can offer.

To ease the funding concern, many schools are turning to state-backed grants and resource agencies such as the Hamilton County Educational Service Center (HCESC). It assists schools in areas from technology to professional development. The center serves districts in Hamilton County, but schools outside the county may also pay for services.

Such programs will work together with a new state mandate calling for Ohio public school districts to form Local Professional Development Committees by 1998. The mandate is part of Ohio's new teacher licensing standards.

Last year, tough rules went into place at the state level to force training on all teachers. Instead of a permanent teaching certificate, instructors must renew their certification every five years, a process that requires professional-development work.

With a grant secured by HCESC, nine suburban districts - Princeton, Oak Hills, Sycamore, Mason, Forest Hills, Winton Woods, Finneytown, Northwest and North College Hill - are being trained in a pilot program to launch professional development committees early. "We see this as an opportunity to really focus on the professional development of teachers," said Michelle Walker, personnel coordinator in Princeton, and pilot committee member. "The committee will be responsible for approving activities for certification renewal."

Other initiatives

The Oak Hills school board provides some financial assistance for development, and sometimes pays for training at the Mayerson Academy - one of only a few suburban districts to do so. But the bulk of funding comes from Venture Capital Grants awarded to two district schools. The grants provide \$125,000 to the schools over five years for professional development.

"It's making a difference in terms of teachers' understanding of education reforms," said Ms. Fernbacher, president of the Oak Hills Education Association.

"We feel very strongly that we need to get our teachers ready," she said. "With this Venture Capital money, we're like kids at Christmas. We've never had the chance to do so much before."

Other suburban districts are trying to improve their work forces. In the Princeton City School District, training has been stepped up in recent years for its 475 teachers.

The district this year paid for

a computer terminal next to Kevin Aujla, also Punjabi.

Hawinder's long, silky black hair was pulled into a bun on top of his head and tightly covered with a white swatch of fabric. Kevin's shiny black hair was closely cropped. Intent on becoming Americanized, he was decked out in jeans, T-shirt and Nikes.

They sat side by side, but didn't speak to one another.

At recess, Hawinder stood by himself, hands clasped loosely behind his back, watching Kevin and the other kids jump rope, chase each other and play four-square, hopscotch and tether ball.

"I tell Hawinder he needs to go and talk to the other kids, but it's not easy," said Sita Balavenkatesan, a bilingual aide who speaks Punjabi, Tamil and Hindi.

"Punjabi kids often don't want to sit together or play together because they don't want to stand out," Balavenkatesan said. "And, no matter what culture, boys and girls do not want to sit together."

Igor Feldman is determined that his daughter, Oksana Prodan, will master English.

She goes to Alamo Elementary School, part of the San Francisco Unified School District, which has the largest number of Russian students (765) in the Bay Area.

"She gets a lot of attention here," Feldman said in Russian, as Oksana's teacher, Mina Teper, translated. Teper, who is Russian, taught for 17 years in her homeland before coming to the United States. Eleven students in her class of 20 speak Russian as their first language.

As Oksana works to pick up English, Feldman and his wife spend at least seven hours a day in adult language classes.

"I was fine in the Ukraine," said Feldman, who worked as an airplane mechanic. "But I wanted my children to have a better situation, more opportunities and safety and to have a future."

Back home, there was little correlation between educational attainment and earnings, he said.

"In Ukraine, a shoemaker is often paid more than a person with a Ph.D.," Feldman said, rubbing his large, calloused hands.

Oksana, who had been sitting quietly and listening to her father, said softly, "I like school better here."

Each time Oksana smiled, her

cherubic face, dotted with pale freckles and clear, happy blue eyes, took on a faint blush.

"In Ukraine, we couldn't go outside for recess because it was too cold," she said in Russian, twisting the end of her thick, waist-length braid. "We didn't have anything to play with. Here we play with balls and ropes and my favorite game is hide-and-seek."

She said she doesn't miss her old friends: "I made new friends. I was afraid of school at first, but there are other girls who speak Russian who came to me and now we're friends."

No more dread

Across town at the Chinese Education Center near Chinatown, Weng Ian Wong said his son Kenny, a fifth-grader, used to dread school.

In Macao, a province of Portugal on the China mainland, school was tough, teachers were strict and homework was demanding, Wong said.

"Kenny would work until 11 or 12 at night," Wong said in Cantonese, translated to English by the school's principal, Carolyn Hee. "He couldn't have a life outside of his schoolwork. Here it's much more relaxed and my son is feeling happy and relieved."

For Wong, 56, the move from Macao has been more difficult than for Kenny.

"I was a doctor of Western medicine," he said. "To practice here, they say I have to study for four more years. And I must learn English."

Kenny adapted quickly to American culture. He says "hello" in English and extends his right hand in formal greeting. Asked how he likes school, he flashed a grin and said, "Um . . . cool."

He already has between "six and 10 friends" he said in English; and his new friends are nicer than his old friends in Macao.

"I like San Francisco because of my friends, my school, my family, the food, the television, the English books and I have more time to play," he said.

At a table nearby, Yuk Kwan Fung said in Cantonese that her 7-year-old daughter, Ada, a first-grader at the center, didn't enjoy school in Hong Kong because of the pressure.

"In Hong Kong, the pressure is too much. All parents in Hong Kong want their children to go to universities," said Fung, who works as a seamstress in Chinatown. "But there are only four universities, so it's very hard to get in."

The children are pushed and pushed to be at the top of the class."

She said the opportunities are better here because if her children don't get into one college, "there are always more colleges."

Her 14-year-old son, Steven, who attends Herbert Hoover Middle School, is expected to achieve more than his sister because it is "Chinese custom."

"Even though girls here work and there's equality, Chinese custom is that the son supports his family and his parents in old age," she said, laughing.

In Southern California, an influx of thousands of Armenian immigrants has changed the makeup of the Glendale Unified School District and the city of Glendale.

"With each group of immigrants, no matter who they are, you come across a different set of challenges," said Alice Petrossian, director of intercultural education at Glendale Unified. "For Armenian children, you have to realize they're coming from conditions that could be described as worse than Third World."

The district, with an enrollment of 30,000, has 10,000 Armenian students.

Petrossian, who is Armenian, sometimes finds herself in the middle of delicate family situations.

"Because Armenia is a very male-dominated society, Armenians believe that boys pull rank over girls," she said. "The boys get the education, they drive the cars and they get to work."

The discovery that their daughters are dating can be shocking to Armenian parents.

"Girls were not allowed to date in Armenia," Petrossian said. "If they spent time with a boy, it was because they were getting married. If they dated, it meant the girls were lacking all morals."

She said that parents have to be told it's OK for older girls to have "one boyfriend one month and another another month."

Often, teachers become lifelines to immigrant families.

"Our teachers must remember that the most dangerous thing we can do to children is tell them their language and culture is of little status," Petrossian said. "When a child brings another language and culture to school, that is not something that should be eliminated. It should be looked at as a bonus, a special gift." ■

development training at the Mayerson Academy and also uses HCESC to supplement professional education programs.

"We're always going back to school because education changes all the time," said Ellie Rudolph, a second-grade teacher at Lincoln Heights Elementary School. "Your clientele changes and your problems change."

Fairfield High spends one-half to three-fourths of a \$25,000 Venture Capital Grant annually on professional-development programs. "The business community spends a lot of money on training," said Principal Monica Mitter. "If we are going to model some of the best practices of business, then we need to follow their example of training their employees."

Facing challenges

Schools have traditionally ignored the need to spend money on staff

development and provide the time for it, said Theodore Sizer, author of *Horace's Hope, What Works for the American High School* and chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Based at Brown University, the coalition is a network of schools embracing the concept that students should master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge.

Professional development of teachers should not just focus on boosting student test scores, Mr. Sizer said. The goal should be to make them better teachers.

"The best model is a first-class smorgasbord, where the faculty and staff have the opportunity to draw from quality classes," he said. "The best professional development one receives comes from one's own colleagues, working together and planning a school." Scheduling such training is often

difficult. Ideally, officials would prefer to have seminars and workshops during the summer but must honor contract obligations that do not require teachers to be available.

Whether to pull teachers away from valuable class time, ask them to stay after school or attend sessions on Saturdays, also are challenges, said Kathy Thornton, an assistant superintendent at HCESC.

"Time is a huge challenge in schools because a teacher's time is so scheduled," she said. "The issue of having them released from those obligations is a challenge because No. 1, it requires putting a substitute in a classroom, and there is a huge shortage of substitutes."

"The other challenge is cost. If you look at business, those costs are always assumed by the business. If you look at schools, teachers assume a large amount of the cost." ■

29. Detroit News

May 13, 1997

Link helps parents keep tabs at school

By Mark Puls / The Detroit News

Technology is making it easier for parents to stay in touch with their child's education, and harder for students to keep secret about what's going on at school. Continental Cablevision is launching a high-speed link today between schools and homes in Plymouth, Canton and Northville Township. The company soon expects to expand links between schools and homes throughout its service area. Parents can access within seconds the website at their child's

school from a browser file with the new link. Teachers also can make parents aware of homework assignments, class curriculum and how their child is doing in school. Parent-teacher conferences can be held daily through e-mail. New uses for the school-to-home link are expected to be invented in the classrooms. "This will help schools find out what they can do with the Internet," Continental spokesman David Childs said. The high-speed interface provided

by the cable company allows schools to use other websites more effectively, and information such as video can be downloaded to personal computers at home. "The biggest advantage to this is speed," Childs said. "It provides a whole network between a school and the community. With the old dial-up, it wouldn't be feasible for a teacher to keep in touch with the homes of several students." ■

30. Baltimore Sun

May 13, 1997

Prone to Learn

By Tamara Ikenberg
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Take class in bed.

An appealing prospect to that slothlike subset of Gen-Xers: The Laziest College Students in the Nation. A subset of which I consider myself an honored member.

And taking classes in bed is exactly what the ad for Howard Community College's distance learning courses

promised.

As a senior at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., I don't need the course to graduate or for any practical reason. But with all the hype about Internet and distance learning and the tantalizing premise, I decide to give it a whirl. Also, I want to see how much I

could get away with.

Howard Community College offers some 36 distance learning options a semester, says Martha Mat-lick, chairwoman of the college's learning center divisions.

About 20 of these classes are telecourses: videotapes complemented by

a text and workbook. Another eight are Internet-conducted classes, where students and teachers communicate by e-mail and listserv. There are also eight fiber-optic television courses, which allow students to participate in a class taught at another school using interactive Bell Atlantic technology. The subjects range from foreign languages and history to biomedical engineering and sign language.

Put off by the prospect of doing real work — economics, math or anything involving numbers or chemicals — I choose Humanities Through the Arts.

I am curious to see if the world of technology has indeed come up with a substitute for lecture halls and four walls. To see if faxes and Web sites can replace classes and late nights. If e-mail and listservers can supplant pass-fail and bell curves.

Hundreds of universities across the nation are offering such courses to a wide range of students. It's certainly profitable for them. They can charge the same tuition for an online class as they do for one taught on campus.

And they don't have to build new classrooms or dormitories to reach a whole new market.

The online trend is growing, despite the absence of intimate human contact and a general distaste for the interference of computers among some educators and students alike.

How will it compare with my nearly completed college experience?

Granted, my stab at distance learning is somewhat primitive; consisting of a textbook, a workbook and about 12 instructional videos presented by Maya Angelou in full '70s regalia. The only Internet-related aspects of the course are receiving assignments via e-mail and sending completed assignments back in the same manner. There is an option for online discussion, but it never materializes.

Cigarette in hand, notebook and box of chocolates in lap, I enter the virtual university.

"We have students attending graduation who have never set foot on campus," says Lissa Brown, director of university relations at the University of Maryland University College. "That's one thing you can't do at UMUC, participate in graduation from a distance."

UMUC offers online courses in business and management and computer studies as well as in traditional liberal

arts disciplines. Brown says UMUC has been offering an online master's degree since January.

Graduating without stepping into a classroom is a major achievement, but one must not forget the simple pleasures.

When you need to go to the bathroom, press pause.

Don't bother setting your vicious alarm.

And don't worry about looking like a nincompoop when the teacher calls on unprepared you.

"There's not that immediate reaction where the Big Man on Campus smirks at you," says Jan Walbridge, public relations manager for IBM Global Campus, which is helping 36 colleges and universities develop online capabilities. "The anonymity gives some students more confidence."

But isn't college about socializing? Sharing notes? Throwing Gummi Bears at your friends during class?

Not for everyone.

"For the typical 18- to 24-year-old, the important part is growing up and being social," says Naomi Wilsey, communications manager for IBM Global Campus. "But the average college student is a 26-year-old female with a part- or full-time job."

Most participants in distance learning don't have the Gumby-like lifestyle of Joe Undergrad, and being able to dictate when they log in and log out is a virtual necessity.

"Young people have the ability to replant themselves," says Neil Kleinman, who is helping to sponsor faculty work at the University of Baltimore to expand distance learning. "We're looking at a group that are going to be interested in education and cannot replant themselves."

Yes, flexibility is a blessing for those whose lifestyles demand it. But a little leeway is a dangerous thing for Joe Undergrad.

Academic anarchy

Let's see: minimal monitoring, considerable latitude, relative anonymity.

Could this prompt procrastination?

May a student be inspired to gasp cheat?

For my distance learning class, I need to describe the tonal mood, or something, of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, so I call my French horn-playing dad and send him on a mission to Barnes & Noble to research it for me.

The summary he gives me is fabulous. No wonder he got straight A's at UCLA.

Thanks, Dad.

There are ways for distance educators to counter cheating and procrastination, such as scheduled, proctored exams taken at specific locations and consistent work assignments. The students themselves tend to be more serious and dedicated about their work, Wilsey says.

"Students who choose to learn this way are going to be more self-motivated," she explains. "It's on-demand learning. They sit down and are ready for it."

But, she acknowledges, "people who want to cheat are going to do it anyway."

Procrastinating in college, even at a shrine of striving such as Northwestern, is as common as the Duchess of York.

In my class, the work can be turned in any time during the semester, in any order. It is what you would call free-form. So free-form that I do the mid-term and the final on the same day. So free-form that I fulfill the art review assignment by critiquing a Kevin Bacon movie.

Our VCR explodes a week before my work is due, and I still have about 10 videos to watch.

I lock myself in my friend's apartment (she had a living VCR) during Thanksgiving break and overdose on the arts. I skim and fast-forward all the way, while admiring the way Ms. Angelou coordinates her orange scarf with her violet blouse.

Hey, I could get used to this. With a few major life-changing decisions, I could get my bachelor's without getting out of this chair.

Making it different

Ever see "The Simpsons" in Spanish?

Something gets lost in the translation.

The same goes for distance learning.

"Sometimes you have to think hard about how you're going to bring these things to life," says Dick Vigilante, director of Information Technologies Institute at New York University.

Transforming any subject into a distance-learning format isn't always viable. I don't get anything out of my class that makes it unique to its format, that makes it any different from doing assigned readings and struggling to keep my eyes open during lectures.

A distance-learning class has to be tailored to the technology. It needs to offer something original; something the medium in which it is delivered can enhance.

"What I did to bring the class to life was to make it into a project

Teachers

State and Federal Officials Push to Improve Teacher Education

By Peter Schmidt

Like unruly schoolchildren, the teacher-education programs at many colleges have been labeled as underachievers and allowed to slide by with poor grades. Recently, however, a rapidly growing number of state and federal officials have been demanding that they shape up.

Convinced that inadequate teacher training is a major impediment to elementary- and secondary-school reform, the officials have begun a wave of efforts to overhaul teacher-education programs at colleges and universities.

Their goal, they say, is to hold the programs accountable for producing teachers who can pass tough certification standards, are familiar with the subject matter they will teach, and have enough field experience to perform well in the classroom. Some are threatening to close any teacher-education programs that fall short.

More than a dozen states, including Illinois, Minnesota, New York, and Texas, are seeking to exert much tighter control over teacher-training programs.

"For too long, the colleges of education have been cash cows — with big classes and little quality control, so they can bring in lots of students to support more prestigious programs," says Sarah B. Burkhalter, who reviews new teacher-education programs at colleges for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

South Carolina, as part of a continuing effort to devise a formula for spending on public colleges based largely on their performance, plans to reward or punish institutions financially, based partly on the quality of their teacher-training programs and how well they meet the needs of the state's public schools.

On the federal level, meanwhile, several members of Congress reportedly are considering whether Washington should become more involved in insuring the quality of teacher-training programs.

"There is extreme interest in the House and Senate in teacher education," says Penelope M. Earley, senior director of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher

Education. "I have had more calls from Congressional staff at the beginning of the 105th Congress than I have had at any time in the 21 years I have been here."

In a speech last week, Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said that all teachers should be required to pass performance-based licensing assessments and that schools of education should be held accountable for how their graduates fare. He encouraged college presidents to strengthen the links between their liberal-arts schools and their schools of education, which, he said, "too often are treated like forgotten stepchildren in our system of higher education."

The drive to overhaul schools of education appears to have gained momentum from a report issued in September by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, a 26-member panel that includes state and federal officials, college presidents, and leaders of teachers' unions. Describing the inadequate preparation of teachers as a major obstacle to school reform, it said that schools of education should be required to gain accreditation and that inadequate ones should be closed.

Some education deans questioned the report's objectivity, since the commission included leaders of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education as well as another group that backs national standards for teacher certification. But the document nonetheless has been credited with inspiring a surge of activity in the states. So far, 11 states — Kansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, and Oklahoma — have entered into agreements with the national commission and are moving to carry out nearly all of its recommendations.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board responded to the commission's report by analyzing the state's teacher-education programs. In a report last month, it criticized several state colleges for producing graduates who have difficulty passing certification tests. "This is an early warning to a lot of universities that they'd better get their programs in

better shape or they will lose their ability to certify teachers," the Texas commissioner of higher education, Kenneth H. Ashworth, told members of the board. He recommended that the board refuse to let universities establish new academic programs of any sort as long as the graduates of their education schools have trouble passing state certification tests.

"There's probably no single subject more important to the State of Texas than teacher certification, and we're only now starting to realize how much work we have to do," Dr. Ashworth said.

Experts on elementary- and secondary-education policy note that the nation's schools of education have encountered such scrutiny before. In the mid-1980s, for example, many states enacted legislation that provided for stricter regulation of such programs and opened up alternative paths to teacher certification.

"The reform of teacher education is politically easy and economically cheap," observes Willis D. Hawley, dean of the University of Maryland's College of Education.

The proposals for reforming teacher education that are now under consideration are generally viewed as not nearly as punitive or regulatory as those in the past. "You don't hear a lot of talk about the state bludgeoning us into submission," Dr. Hawley says.

State officials say they hope that a more cooperative approach will help them avoid the finger-pointing that has complicated past efforts to reform teacher education, for which responsibility often is shared by colleges, public schools, and several state agencies.

Schisms are occurring as the various players focus on the details, however. For example, although nearly everyone involved in reforming teacher education agrees that such programs should be accredited, they disagree on who should do the accrediting.

-more-

Teacher Education cont.

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, a coalition of 30 education organizations, is seeking to be the sole accreditor of the nation's teacher-training programs. But many institutions disagree with its methods and standards, and, so far, it has accredited less than half of the 1,263 higher-education institutions that offer teacher education. The Council of Independent Colleges is leading an effort to establish an alternative certification body.

Calvin M. Frazier, a senior consultant with the Education Commission of the States, predicts that the latest efforts to reform teacher education will run into trouble as the programs are prodded to adopt more-subjective measurements of student progress aimed at determining how their graduates will perform as teachers.

John T. MacDonald, director of the state leadership center at the Council of Chief State School Officers, predicts that the demands on colleges to produce high-quality teachers will put them "under a great deal of pressure to look at who they are admitting into these programs."

More Than 10% of Colleges Broke Law Requiring Crime Reports, U.S. Says

More than 10 per cent of colleges failed to publish annual security reports required by federal law in 1995, according to a report released Tuesday by the U.S. Education Department.

An equal number did not use the definitions of crimes prescribed by the law, the department said.

The report was based on a survey of more than 1,400 colleges. The survey asked about security issues, including crime statistics, awareness programs, and such security measures as escort services and improved lighting.

Since 1992, colleges receiving federal student aid have been required to publish annual reports on campus crime and descriptions of their safety policies and programs. The law, passed in 1990, also requires colleges to keep their students and employees informed about crimes during the year.

The Education Department found that 13 per cent of the colleges in the survey had not compiled the annual reports. The biggest offenders were trade schools and colleges enrolling fewer than 200 students each. The department did not release the names of colleges that had not followed the law, nor did it release information on crime on specific campuses.

Almost all colleges with enrollments of more than 3,000 produced the reports, leading the researchers to conclude that 98 per cent of all college students attended institutions that reported.

The law also requires colleges to use crime categories defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The report found, however, that only 40 per cent of colleges had done so. An additional 45 per cent used definitions from state statutes that researchers considered comparable to the F.B.I. terminology. The remaining institutions used definitions that ranged from local ordinances to "common knowledge." Again, compliance was best among large institutions and four-year colleges.

David A. Longanecker, Assistant Secretary of Education for postsecondary education, acknowledged the compliance problems Tuesday and said the department would have to decide such issues as whether the failure to use the F.B.I. definitions had compromised the accuracy of the statistics. He said his

staff might decide to work with national organizations representing proprietary schools to insure that they know what the law requires.

"If you have a barbering school with a daytime program, what they are going to need to put together is substantially different than Ohio State University," he said.

The department's report also includes aggregate statistics on campus crime for 1992, 1993, and 1994 that were reported by the colleges. In 1994, the data show that 26 per cent of all institutions reported violent crimes, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. About 44 per cent reported property crimes, including burglary and motor-vehicle theft.

The report does not deal with the biggest complaint of critics — that the statistics don't capture all crimes because the data often don't include incidents reported to officials other than the police, such as counselors and deans.

Benjamin F. Clery, president of Security on Campus, a watchdog organization, said Tuesday that he had not had a chance to read the report but that he was frustrated that it was 18 months late. The 1990 law required that the department produce it by September 1995.

Mr. Longanecker said the report had fallen between budgetary and planning cracks. "I got here in 1993," he said. "We should have been starting at that point. I didn't know it was a requirement. By the time I discovered it was coming up, we simply couldn't get started and completed by the deadline."

The report, "Campus Crime and Security at Postsecondary Education Institutions," was compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics. Surveys were sent last spring to 1,500 postsecondary institutions, ranging from public research universities to proprietary trade schools. About 93 per cent responded.

The report is available on the agency's World-Wide Web site. Printed copies cost \$11 each and can be ordered by mail from New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh 15250-7954. — Kit Lively

Vanishing Breed of Teacher: Ex-Police Officers

By PAM BELLUCK

One wind-whipped Brooklyn morning, Francis Musto bundled up his third and fourth graders and ferried them out the door of Public School 345 for a carefully planned field trip. Not Ellis Island or the Museum of Natural History. Not Radio City Music Hall. Nothing like that.

Instead, Mr. Musto walked them half a block to a broken fire call box, where he made sure they knew the best way to report a fire. He had them count the cracks in the sidewalk so they could write to city officials and demand repairs. And he pointed out a man delivering chickens and salamis to a grocery store, showing them how many jobs a single small business could create.

Some years ago, Mr. Musto patrolled the streets not far from this East New York school as a veteran detective for the New York City Police Department. Now, as a teacher of learning-disabled children, Mr. Musto has turned their everyday streets into their curriculum. His field trip — he calls it the Good Citizens Patrol — is an excursion in how to succeed within the confines of the poverty-pocked neighborhood.

In the New York City public schools, Mr. Musto is a member of a vanishing breed.

Once, scores of retired police officers became teachers, aided by a state rule allowing some retired government employees to collect their pensions even after taking another government job. But about five

years ago, the City Comptroller's office said the former officers and other city employees were "double dipping," and ordered the Board of Education to deny waivers to anyone whose job could be filled by a less-expensive qualified teacher.

This year, only 19 retired police officers are teaching under this rule. There may be a

few others who gave up their police pensions to teach, and every year the Comptroller's office finds a handful who are breaking the rules.

In the vastness of the New York City public school system, where 65,000 teachers

manage bulging classes in 1,100 schools, former police officers have slipped into an unusual niche.

They frequently teach in schools in battered neighborhoods that others shun, ranging from the public school on Rikers Island for young offenders to schools in ravaged parts of Brooklyn and the Bronx. And instead of becoming stereotypes of the rule-driven disciplinarian, police officers are often among the most sensitive teachers, principals and others say.

Terry Geil, who retired as a lieutenant in the Metropolitan North division and became a math teacher at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, said police officers are

trained to see details, motivations, extenuating circumstances.

"Cops see gray," Mr. Geil, 58, said. "People's lives aren't made up of black-and-white rules. Two people do the same bad thing, but one of them is kind of a victim doing it and one them isn't."

A couple of months ago, Mr. Geil said, an 18-year-old student who had recently missed a lot of school began screaming at another teen-ager and then started fighting with a dean.

Mr. Geil started talking to him, steadily, but softly. His years of scrutinizing witnesses and suspects told him there was a way to get behind the boy's anger.

"I said, 'Where have you been?'" Mr. Geil said. "I kept asking questions and suddenly I heard the crack in his voice. He broke down and started to cry. He had been thrown out of his house."

School officials were first impressed several years ago at Mr. Geil's abilities to be both a tough and a sensitive problem solver when he calmed a boy who had attacked an elderly rabbi in a hallway. Mr. Geil ran out of his classroom, cornered the boy and backed him into another room.

"I reacted, I guess, as a cop would react," he said. "It was like a flashback." Mr. Geil had his arm twisted into taking on counseling and disciplinary responsibilities at the school after that.

Thomas Benevento, an assistant principal at DeWitt Clinton, said Mr. Geil had "helped us with an awful lot with legalisms, if you will, telling us how far can we go? What can we do?"

"Let's say a kid gets beaten up,"

Mr. Benevento said. "The kid has to press charges. Terry can help explain. He isn't somebody who's come in hating humanity. A lot of this is 'seat of the pants' kind of stuff and the cop background helps. You have to be able to tell if the kid is telling the truth."

But Mr. Geil, a silver-haired, ruddy-faced man, seems to have slipped easily out of spit-shined shoes and into chalk-dusted pants.

"You have seen these kids after they leave school in the neighborhoods they live in and you sometimes wondered how they made it through anyway," he said. "Now you're amazed, every day, how good they are in spite of it all."

One morning, Nikeisha Lewis, 15, asked Mr. Geil to read a speech she had to submit to another class, just to give her some pointers.

"Yeah, we know he was a cop," Nikeisha said. "It's not a bad thing. He's very nice and he explains things well."

George Rohrberg, a 54-year-old social studies teacher at Evander Childs High School in the Bronx, said he went into teaching after retiring as a detective sergeant in the Bronx robbery squad because, as a police officer, "you get a kind of negative

More...

Police Officers Turned Teachers

Continued • • •

view on the kids, because you always see bad kids, and the kids get a negative view of you."

When he was a police officer, his idea of being a teacher was "this image of Mr. Chips," he said. "I would get on my little bicycle with the patches on my elbows and bicycle to my local school."

It hasn't quite worked out that way, Mr. Rohrberg said.

"You get frustrated because you have the secret of eternal life, so to speak, and nobody wants to listen," he said. "But somebody will get it. Like I used to tell my cops when I turned them out in the precinct: 'This is your territory. When you turn down a street, that's your street. If anything goes on there, that's because you let it go on.'"

Most of the police officers say they have had trouble, off and on, getting the Board of Education to approve the waivers that allow them to collect both the pension they received for 20 years on the force, usually about \$1,400 a month, and a teacher's salary, about \$40,000 a year.

Following the Comptroller's directive, the board is dutifully, if sometimes reluctantly, parsimonious.

Gary Barton, the board's deputy executive director for human resources, said teachers received waivers only for subjects like math, where there is a shortage of teachers, or for working in schools that are considered undesirable. "If a police officer who is retired wants to work on Staten Island, the answer would be no," he said.

Last year, Mr. Musto's waiver was denied, but he managed to get it reinstated after his principal and su-

perintendent appealed to the Board of Education.

So Mr. Musto has continued to immerse himself in his students' lives in ways he never could as a police officer moving from crime to crime.

"Why do we have a regular bus stop?" he asked on the Good Citizens Patrol.

"So people can go to their jobs," said Umajestice McKenzie, 9.

"And what other job does that bus create?" Mr. Musto asked.

Within three blocks, the class stopped dozens of times: to survey rubber tires and rusty bed frames in a vacant lot, to muse about the Liberty Food Center's stock of tamales and Caribbean oxtail stew, to recite the health and safety regulations for a vest-pocket barbershop.

Mr. Musto, girded in a trench coat, even stopped to expound on a sidewalk grate. "I make it a practice not to step on those things," he said, "because they're old and they might break and we could fall into the basement."

Mr. Musto has offered to fingerprint every child in the school and give the prints to their parents, to help track children who are missing or in trouble. Once or twice a week, he visits the homes of children who have discipline problems, to consult with the parents and see the child's home life.

And he reads to his classes a little book he has written called "Our Friend the Policeman."

"Policemen are people just like you and me," the book says. "Their kids might play or go to school with you. If you stray and get lost, look for the man in blue to help you."

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state has more, better-educated teachers, but fewer minorities

By PHIL WEST

Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - The state has more and better-educated teachers, but fewer of them are minorities, a new report says.

The percentage of beginning teachers and teacher candidates passing their national exams rose from 93 percent in 1991-92 to 95 percent in 1995-96, according to the Annual Joint Report of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the state Board of Education.

During that time, the percentage of minority teacher education candidates jumped from 4.3 percent to 7.8 percent, but they're finding other jobs than teaching.

The percentage of minority teachers dropped from 11.2 percent overall in 1991-92 to 10.7 percent in 1995-96, the report showed.

"The reason you don't find more minorities in the classroom is you are finding many more opportunities out there that have not been there in years past," said Tennessee Education Association president Velma Lois Jones, on leave from her math teaching job at the all-black Cypress Junior High School in Memphis.

"We feel that students can better identify with their own. If you've got a minority student with a minority teacher, you've got a feeling that the student will be more successful."

THEC and the Board of Education planned to vote on the report Wednesday.

The annual report, required by a 1984 state law, also showed:

- The funding level for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade jumped from \$1.55 billion in 1993 to \$2.14 billion in 1997.
- Higher education spending rose \$850 million in 1993-94 to \$1.1 billion in 1996-97.
- The percentage of black Tennessee college students increased from 13.4 percent in 1990 to 15.6 percent in fall 1996.
- The number of teachers rose from 2,862 in 1991-92 to 2,984 in 1995-96.

A separate report showed that more Tennesseans are earning college degrees, and the quality of higher education instruction is better than it was six years ago.

The percentage of undergraduate female and black students in Tennessee higher education institutions has grown by more than 15 percent between 1990 and 1996, according to THEC's annual Status of Higher Education in Tennessee report.

Among the report's highlights, between 1990 and 1997:

- Undergraduate enrollment in state schools rose 10.5 percent and 6.7 percent in independent institutions.
- Tennessee residents account for more than 90 percent of public school enrollment.
- The percentage of students requiring remedial courses dropped from 54.2 percent in 1994 to 51.9 percent in 1996.

EDITORIAL

Investor's Daily

April 17, 1997

Will The White House Pass The Standards Test?

Of President Clinton's 10 ideas to improve the schools, one holds real promise: his call for national standards and testing. But the wrong standards would be worse than none at all.

The president's plan would let each U.S. fourth-grader take a national reading test and every eighth-grader a math exam. Parents could then compare their children's scores to those of the district, state and nation. Any data would be an improvement. As things now stand, parents, * teachers and principals have no good way to compare student performance.

We have only a handful of measures: the Scholastic Assessment Test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the odd international exam. None is even close to universal, and few schools use them to evaluate their own performance, let alone students. And the NAEP has only broken down its results by state in the last few years. *

Why does testing matter? It lets education "consumers" and "providers" know how their service stacks up. That's the best way to spur improvement. Take California. In '92, the NAEP let the Golden State know it had tied Louisiana for last place in fourth-grade reading.

Shocked, parents and concerned citizens forced the state to abandon "whole language" - an inferior way to teach reading that "experts" had inflicted on California a decade before.

Most parents respect teachers, often rightly so. But teachers have little control (or responsibility or accountability) in today's schools. Bureaucrats and unions set the real priorities, and those don't include letting any "consumer" be king.

At best, they promise to do better if offered more money - while fighting the search for ways to do more with less. * A touch of education glasnost can wake parents up to the bitter truth. The slight rise in testing over the past 15 years has put the schools' poor showing in the spotlight - and helped fuel today's drive for reform.

But not all tests are equal. The education "blob" is happy to offer mush under the label of real tests. The Golden State establishment, for one, sunk millions into setting up the California Learning Assessment System. But the "state-of-the-art" result was * useless psychobabble. It set out to probe student feelings and beliefs, not their skills or knowledge. The establishment can mess

up efforts to raise standards, too. The first set of national history standards, released in '94, made so much room for "alternative" views that the result was blatantly anti-Western, even anti-American. One more danger: If the "blob" produces standards that are too low, they could become a ceiling beyond which few schools aim. Clinton's plan would avoid that by basing his tests on the NAEP's. *

The president seems to truly care about education. He said the right things to the Democratic Leadership Council in December: "We must dramatically reform our public schools, demanding high standards * and accountability from every teacher and every student, promoting * reforms like public choice, school choice and charter schools in every state."

But will he fight for what he knows is right? His testing plan already falls short of President Bush's call for 15 national tests. Yes, a more modest plan has a better chance of becoming law. But if Clinton waters it down much more, we'll have the politically correct history standards, or California's psychobabble testing, all over again. ■

The Washington Post

04/18/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: Editorial; Page A24

Maryland Schools: Who's Paying?

THIS YEAR'S battling over state aid for Maryland schools bared an arbitrary and unfair system of distributing money and highlighted some outdated assumptions in Annapolis about the needs of the Washington suburban counties. Defenders of one deal that will steer \$254 million to Baltimore City schools over the next five years — compared with \$167 million to all other public school systems combined — portrayed Montgomery and Prince George's counties as rich and undeserving. With all that wealth, the

charges went, the two shouldn't have serious problems maintaining their schools.

Now, as Gov. Glendening, House Speaker Casper Taylor and other legislative leaders are conceding that maybe the school-aid distribution isn't all that systematic or fair, they ought to take a fresh look at the profiles of the two counties' schools:

Enrollments: Maryland Department of Education numbers show that as of September 1995, total state public school enrollment was 805,544, of which 42

percent was minorities. Largest system in the state? Prince George's, with 122,415 at that time. While Baltimore's school population is declining, the suburban populations are growing fast. In Montgomery, the enrollment is increasing by more than 1,700 students annually — more than enough to fill three new elementary schools a year. The county already uses 200 portable classrooms while continuing to build more schools, according to county school officials.

Students from lower-income families:

Teacher Training Seen Key to Improving Reading in Early Grades

By Kathleen Kennedy Manzo and Joetta L. Sack

Most of the research on reading proficiency agrees that a student's success throughout his or her school career hinges on learning to read well in the early grades. Yet, most elementary education teachers have little formal training in the structure of the language and in how children learn to read.

Experts say that expanding tutoring efforts in grades K-3, as President Clinton proposes, may be of little benefit unless efforts are also focused on improving teacher preparation and classroom instruction.

"It makes no sense to have kids sit six hours in school and not be taught effectively, then to think that reading after school with a tutor is going to make everything right," said Robert E. Slavin, a researcher at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the creator of Success for All, a national early-intervention program to assist elementary students in reading. "You just can't solve the problem of reading while leaving alone the instruction taking place inside the classroom."

Republicans have taken aim at President Clinton's plan—the America Reads Challenge—arguing that the focus should be on improving the skills of teachers instead of volunteers.

"With the federal government already spending \$7 billion on remedial education and \$4 billion on Head Start, why doesn't the literacy proposal re-evaluate ineffective classroom-based reading initiatives in these existing programs?" Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., the chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, wrote in a letter to Mr. Clinton this month.

Although many educators are enthusiastic about the president's idea of creating a corps of 1 million tutors and 30,000 reading specialists to help all students learn to read by the end of 3rd grade, they say that the initiative fails to address the inadequate training of classroom teachers in performing this most critical of tasks.

"Teaching reading is complicated. Teachers need to understand multiple layers of language ... where the gaps are with a student and how to plan lessons to reflect those gaps," said Judith R. Birsh, a master-teacher trainer at Teachers College, Columbia University, who last week hosted a forum on the inadequacy of teacher training in reading areas. "I really think that we have to retread the training of teachers with a greater emphasis on reading," she said.

Part of the deficiency is blamed on the ongoing tug-of-war over how best to teach reading. The drastic shift in many states several years ago toward what is known as the whole-language approach to reading was reflected in teacher education programs. That approach downplays the teaching of "decoding" skills—the essence of the phonics method—and aims to engage students in reading through the use of high-quality children's literature. The recent momentum toward balancing the use of literature with skills-based teaching methods, however, has left many young teachers without the appropriate experience.

Many teachers have no background in the balanced approach, Mr. Slavin said. "In a sense, there is an enormous retooling job to be done to bring teachers of beginning reading up to the current conception" of how to teach reading.

Minimal State Requirements

Requirements for earning teaching credentials vary from state to state, but most mandate that early-education majors take only one or two courses in reading foundations or instruction, according to Penelope M. Earley, the senior director of the Washington-based American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

In many districts, reading specialists have helped fill in the gaps in the expertise of teachers. Specialists are generally required to have taken advanced courses in reading instruction, evaluation, and research. But, partly due to budget cuts, those positions have steadily declined nationwide over the past decade, according to Richard M. Long, the International Reading Association's Washington representative.

The IRA, a professional organization of language arts educators based in Newark, Del., is supporting the Clinton plan because of the thousands of new positions it would create for reading specialists. But extra money is still needed to improve professional development for elementary school teachers, the group's leaders say.

"Teachers need extensive training in the reading process," said Alan E. Farstrup, the group's executive director. "We are very concerned that the basic state-licensing programs may not be requiring enough experience and coursework in the area of reading."

But teachers' union officials say that finding qualified specialists to fill the part-time positions envisioned by the Clinton plan may be a challenge in many communities. "By even a loose definition of a reading specialist, the supply is lacking," said Bella Rosenberg, the assistant to the president of the American Federation of Teachers.

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State officials target students for teaching careers

By EILEEN LOH

Associated Press Writer

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) - State education officials are optimistic that an early award scholarship program could help fill the gaps in Mississippi's teacher shortage.

The William Winter Teacher Scholar Loan Program would award up to \$8,000 that could be repaid through service as a Mississippi teacher.

Higher Education Commissioner Tom Layzell said Wednesday that award recipients have two choices. "They can pay it back as you can pay any loan back, or they can pay it back in service as a teacher."

"We think that this is one among a different number of programs to help deal with the projected teacher shortage in the state of Mississippi," Layzell said Wednesday.

The awards would go to high school seniors and college students enrolling in an undergraduate teacher education program. The deadline is April 1, but students will receive word by May 1, Layzell said.

One year of teaching in a Mississippi classroom would excuse one year's loan obligation, Layzell said. If the service is performed in one of the state's teacher shortage geographic areas, one year of teaching would repay two years' debt.

"It sounds like a great idea," said 17-year-old Nicole Goff of Picayune, "because teachers don't have enough incentive to do what they do."

Gloria McQuagge, president of the Mississippi Association of Educators, said the program "shows the state is interested in helping people who want to teach."

"Hopefully this will inspire students to look at teaching as a career, and they'll stay with it in and stay in Mississippi," she said.

The private citizens' group Public Education Forum reported in January that Mississippi's teacher crisis will likely worsen, due primarily to low salaries and early retirements.

Separate bills are pending in the House and Senate proposing teacher pay raises ranging from \$900-\$1,000 more per year.

Under the program, first- and second-year college students could receive up to \$1,000 per year. The maximum yearly amount for third- and fourth-year students is \$3,000, Layzell said.

The program is designed so that the bulk of a graduate's debt obligation would be paid off in the third and fourth years of teaching.

The money for the program comes from the state treasury, student loan paybacks, and Omnibus Scholarship Loan Programs, and plans are in the works for the program to be expanded if it proves successful, Layzell said.

Seventeen-year-old Adam Todd of Senatobia said he has already decided to pursue a career in international business, but said the pilot program would probably inspire uncertain or undecided students to seriously think about teaching.

"It would certainly be an incentive," he said.

Riley Says Nation Should Get Tough on Bad Schools

Associated Press

Americans should close or reorganize bad schools, even if it means replacing teachers and principals, Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said yesterday in his yearly speech on the state of education.

Riley also said algebra should be taught routinely in the eighth grade. And he announced that he would hold a forum this spring on how to address the looming shortage of teachers.

Riley devoted much of the speech to selling or further explaining proposals already made by President Clinton, such as national standards and tax breaks to finance a college education.

But Riley also stressed what states and communities should do to improve the quality of schools and teachers. Laws should be changed, if necessary, to make it easier to clean house at schools where students don't learn and dropout rates are high.

After the speech, a top aide, acting Deputy Secretary Marshall S. Smith, said those necessary changes might include overhauling union contracts with teachers.

"In America today, there are schools that should not be called schools at all," Riley said in the speech, delivered in Atlanta but televised in Washington.

"We need to stop making excuses and get on with the business of fixing our schools," he said to an audience that included former president Jimmy Carter, during whose administration the Education Department was created. "If a school is bad and can't be changed, reconstitute it or close it down."

"If a principal is slow to get the

message, find strength in a new leader. If teachers are burned out, counsel them to improve or leave the profession. If laws need to be changed, get on with it," Riley said.

In reiterating Clinton's push for national tests of fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math, Riley said schools should begin teaching algebra in the eighth grade, just as it is taught elsewhere in the world.

Smith said afterward that the proposal is politically touchy because people aren't trained to teach algebra at that level and high schools don't always want to yield control of the subject to middle schools.

But Riley stressed in his speech that the tests would be voluntary and that the administration opposes a national curriculum.

In announcing a national forum on teacher recruitment, Riley said 2 million new teachers will be needed in the next 10 years.

"New teachers—like new lawyers and new doctors—should have to prove that they are qualified to meet high standards before getting a license," he said. "This would mean that prospective teachers are able to pass a rigorous, performance-based assessment of what they know and what they are able to do."

Riley, however, did not mention raising teacher pay as a means of finding more teachers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read a White House abstract of Clinton's second-term education initiatives, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1997 • USA TODAY D 6

Riley: Recruiting teachers a priority

2 million replacements needed by 2000

By Tamara Henry
USA TODAY

Education Secretary Richard Riley announced plans Tuesday to launch a national effort to recruit highly educated teachers who can replace more than a million expected to retire by the next century.

In his State of American Education speech in Atlanta, Riley said a national forum this spring will attract the USA's "best teachers, public education leaders and members of the higher education community" to explore "how we can recruit the next generation of teachers."

In the next 10 years, he added, "we need to recruit 2 million teachers to replace a generation of teachers who are about to retire and to keep up with rising enrollments."

The National Education Association says 2.6 million teachers work in public elementary and secondary schools. Student enrollment is 44 million.

Related issues to be discussed will include teacher salaries and the need for more minorities and men as teachers, explained acting Education Undersecretary Marshall "Mike" Smith.

Other details, such as the location of the forum, are still under discussion, he said.

Riley described the current approach to teacher training as "sink or swim" and added that "our colleges of education and departments of education are too often treated like forgotten

stepchildren in our system of higher education." He said the result has been the loss of 30% of new teachers in the first three years and 25% of current teachers teaching out of their field.



USA TODAY

"We will never have 'A' students if we can only give ourselves a 'C' as a nation when it comes to preparing tomorrow's teachers."

— Richard Riley

"We will never have 'A' students if we can only give ourselves a 'C' as a nation when it comes to preparing tomorrow's teachers. We cannot lower our standards, as we have in the past, to meet the growing demand for new teachers," he said.

To boost the teaching force for the 21st century, Riley pledged to issue a biennial report on teacher quality beginning next year. He also called for:

► Prospective teachers to pass a "rigorous performance-based assessment of what they know and what they are able to do."

New teachers also would be linked to master teachers during their first few years.

► College and university leaders to strengthen ties between their schools of liberal arts and schools of education. Course content for future teachers would be similar to rigorous pre-med and pre-engineering courses.

► Every school in the nation to have at least one teacher on its faculty who has been certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Riley applauded the board's goal of certifying more than 100,000 master teachers in the next decade.

Teacher pay just outpaces inflation

Average 3% hike disappoints NEA

By Tamara Henry
USA TODAY

Public school teachers earned an average annual salary of \$37,685 last year, 3% more than the previous year, says a National Education Association (NEA) report out today.

Connecticut's teachers earned the most at \$50,254 in 1995-96, while South Dakota teachers earned the least at \$26,346, says the NEA's *Rankings of the States 1996*. Other states with the highest-paid teachers are Alaska at \$49,620 and New York at \$48,115.

NEA President Bob Chase says teachers are still not paid on par with people in similarly demanding jobs, although the 3% salary growth rate did outpace inflation's 2.7%. After adjusting for inflation, the report said, salaries dropped in 16 states and the District of Columbia over the past 10 years.

"The nation needs 2 million new teachers over the next 10 years, and how are we going to attract qualified people to the teaching profession without attractive salaries?" Chase said. "Teaching is an emotionally, physically and intellectually challenging career that today garners too little respect and low pay relative to comparable professionals."

The report found that while Alaska's teachers have the second highest average salary, those dollars buy about 11% less in 1995-96 than they did in 1985-86. Wyoming teachers lost the most purchasing power over the 10-year period ending in 1995-96: -18.5%.

In other trends:

► The number of classroom teachers increased by 1.7%, leaving the ratio of 17.1 pupils enrolled per teacher in 1994 the same for 1995.

► The percentage of public school teachers who are men remains 26.6%, the same as the previous year but less than the 30.5% reported 10 years ago.

► School funding became more state-oriented between 1994-95 and 1995-96. The local share of K-12 public education revenue fell from 45.5% to 45%; the state share increased from 47.6% to 47.9%; and the federal share increased from 6.9% to 7.1%.

By the numbers

Here's how average teacher salaries in each state, the District of Columbia and the U.S. rank:

State	Salary
1 Connecticut	\$50,254
2 Alaska	\$49,620
3 New York	\$48,115
4 New Jersey	\$47,910
5 Pennsylvania	\$46,087
6 Michigan	\$44,796
7 District of Columbia	\$43,700
8 California	\$43,114
9 Massachusetts	\$42,882
10 Rhode Island	\$42,160
11 Maryland	\$41,215
12 Illinois	\$40,919
13 Delaware	\$40,533
14 Oregon	\$39,575
15 Wisconsin	\$38,182
16 Washington	\$38,025
17 Ohio	\$37,835
United States	\$37,685
18 Indiana	\$37,677
19 Minnesota	\$36,937
20 Vermont	\$36,295
21 Nevada	\$36,167
22 Hawaii	\$35,807
23 New Hampshire	\$35,792
24 Colorado	\$35,364
25 Kansas	\$35,134
26 Virginia	\$35,037
27 Georgia	\$34,087
28 Missouri	\$33,341
29 Florida	\$33,330
30 Tennessee	\$33,126
31 Kentucky	\$33,080
32 Maine	\$32,869
33 Arizona	\$32,484
34 Iowa	\$32,372
35 West Virginia	\$32,155
36 Texas	\$32,000
37 South Carolina	\$31,622
38 Wyoming	\$31,571
39 Nebraska	\$31,496
40 Alabama	\$31,313
41 Idaho	\$30,891
42 Utah	\$30,588
43 North Carolina	\$30,411
44 New Mexico	\$29,632
45 Montana	\$29,364
46 Arkansas	\$29,322
47 Oklahoma	\$28,404
48 Mississippi	\$27,692
49 North Dakota	\$26,969
50 Louisiana	\$26,800
51 South Dakota	\$26,346

Sources: The National Education Association

teacher

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'TEACHING IS HOT'

Once shunned, the profession has new fans

COVER STORY

Common theme is behind new popularity: Service

By Tanya Albert
USA TODAY

A generation of college students shunned teaching because of poor pay and even less respect.

Politicians and the public openly questioned teachers' competency. Headlines screamed about the "rising tide of mediocrity." Teachers tried to educate angry, even violent, kids in schools with metal detectors at the doors and peeling paint on the walls.

Many of those problems remain, and one in six public school teachers quits the profession within the first year.

But a confluence of events has led to a palpable change nationwide: Teaching is back.

Salaries now are decent or better in most places. Teachers say they feel more respected. Midcareer professionals are ditching stale jobs for fresh challenges in the classroom. And a new survey finds more college freshmen interested

in teaching than at any time since the mid-1970s.

This attitudinal shift couldn't come at a better time.

Last week, in his annual State of American Education speech, Education Secretary Richard Riley said at least 2 million teachers will need to be hired in the next decade to replace the generation of teachers about to retire.

He plans to hold a national forum this spring to explore how to avert a nationwide teacher shortage and lure America's best and brightest into the classroom.

Some experts and educators say they may not need much convincing.

"In the 1980s, people wanted to go into professions to make money," says Evelyn Freeman, an associate professor of education at Ohio State University. "In the '90s, we are seeing a return to other values. People want to feel like they are

doing something to make a difference in society."

At the University of Florida, one of the nation's larger teaching colleges, enrollment in the College of Education increased 7% between 1993 and 1995, almost twice as fast as the university's overall enrollment. At Teachers College, Columbia University — considered one of the nation's top graduate schools — applications were up 54% over last year.

Why the increase?

"The emphasis today is on education being a top priority," explains Roderick McDavis, Florida's education dean. "It's a top concern of voters and the president, and the leadership in Congress are saying they are making it a top priority."

"Teaching is hot," says Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College, in New York City. "What we're experiencing now is a huge surge of people interested in teaching. The overriding theme ... is idealism."

'The rewards are intrinsic'

It should be no surprise that volunteering among young people is at an all-time high at the same time interest in teaching is up.

"Teaching is a venue where they can turn service into a career," Levine notes.

According to the nation's largest annual survey of college freshmen, a record 38% said they had spent one hour or more each week volunteering during the past year.

The survey, conducted by UCLA, was the same study that found more than 10% of freshmen expressed interest in going into teaching — the highest rate in 23 years.

"They're making a difference in their community as opposed to influencing the political scene," says Linda Sax, director of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at UCLA, which ran the survey of more than 250,000 freshmen nationwide. "Teaching is a career where they feel they can make a difference in their community."

Those attitudes come through in talks with would-be teachers.

Qiana Maple, 17, is a high school junior in the Teaching Profession Magnet program in Shreveport, La. She volunteers at church tutorial programs and says she tries to help out whenever she can.

"If I can change a person's life for

the better," she says, "my life will be complete."

Christina Lucas, studying at the University of Florida to be an elementary school teacher, agrees.

"The rewards are intrinsic," says Lucas, 21. "Seeing the one problem child succeed makes you go on."

'Helping on the front end'

These days, though, it isn't just young people drawn to teaching.

There are grandfathers who were downsized after selling insurance all their lives. Chemists who were let go from jobs midcareer. Career military personnel looking for a new life after retiring.

The common theme: service.

"After spending two weeks in a classroom, I felt I had done more

public service ... than I had done in the past seven years," says Art Howard, 42, who spent 17 years as a St. Louis police officer before becoming a teacher last year. "I wasn't solving any problems putting people in jail."

Now, says the fifth grade teacher, he feels like he's giving something back to his community. "I'm helping on the front end as opposed to being

More...

'TEACHING IS HOT'

continued...

on the back end," Howard says.

Nationwide, about 25-30% of students enrolled in education programs are people who previously worked in another field.

That's a lot of career-switchers. But in addition to regular degree programs, experts agree that to avoid the looming teacher shortage, there need to be more non-traditional ways to get professionals into the nation's classrooms.

"There's always been an interest in teaching," says Michael Acosta, administrator of employment operation for the Los Angeles Unified School District, which already is short of teachers. "Universities and schools are going to have to look at different ways to prepare teachers."

"It's not a lack of individuals not willing to go into teaching," adds David Haselkorn president of Recruiting New Teachers. "It's a lack of societal will to put people into teaching."

Recruiting New Teachers, a non-profit group trying to draw more people to the profession, is in the process of collecting information on midcareer programs across the country. So far they have identified 324 of them.

Among them is Old Dominion University's Military Career Transition Program. Since 1988, it's moved 525 retired or downsized military personnel into teaching.

In addition, about 150 programs nationwide help teacher assistants become certified teachers. More than half began after 1991.

'Have to reach their hearts'

Often, though, the idealism that draws someone to teaching is shaken — even snuffed out — by the reality of many classrooms.

"We're not teaching just subject matter," says Sharon McCrie, an 8th-grade teacher at Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Arlington, Va.

"We have to reach their hearts," says the 35-year classroom veteran. "Sometimes that can be more difficult than new teachers realize."

Slightly more than 17% of public school teachers with less than a year of experience left teaching between the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years.

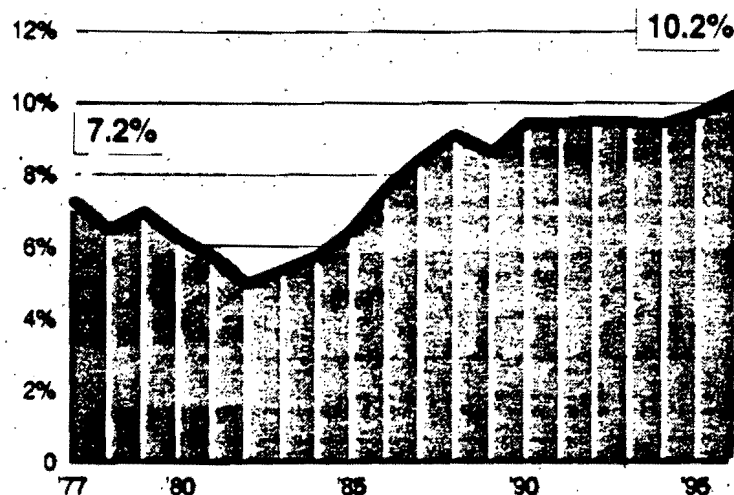
One of the biggest reasons behind that statistic, educators say, is the shock of classroom management.

New teachers go into the classroom only to discover that they can spend as much time on discipline problems as imparting information.

Teaching bounces back

Highest interest in decades

10.2% of college freshmen last fall said they were interested in going into elementary or secondary education. That's the highest percentage in two decades.



Sources: The American Freshman; American Council on Education; University of California, Los Angeles

Job growth in teaching

Demand for teachers is high and job growth in that field is projected to exceed overall job growth between 1994 and 2005:

	1994 employment	2005 projection	Increase
Elementary teacher	1,419,000	1,639,000	16%
Secondary teacher	1,340,000	1,726,000	29%
Special education teacher	388,000	593,000	53%
All occupations	127,014,000	144,708,000	14%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Career-switcher Victor Guerrero, in his second year as a teacher at a San Diego grade school, survived the first year. But he was shocked the first time he entered a classroom as a teaching assistant.

"The first week was horrible," says Guerrero, 33, who holds a computer systems degree. "The kids were fighting. ... But after a while you realize the kids need someone to guide them."

Now Guerrero loves his job and says his only regret is not going into teaching earlier.

606,000 needed by 2005

Paths into teaching are becoming more available and more people are taking advantage of them. But there still aren't enough teachers.

The need will grow with the "baby boomlet" and large number of children of immigrants — a shortage that could push up the average teacher salary of nearly \$38,000.

And, though interest in teaching is up, there's only been a slight increase in the number of undergraduates receiving education degrees.

More...

'TEACHING IS HOT'

continued...

About 107,600 education degrees

were awarded in 1984 — just over 9% of all degrees that year. That's a far cry from the 1960s, when 20% of students got a degree in education.

Interest needs to reach that 20% mark again to meet the needs of a profession that's projected to add 606,000 new jobs by 2005.

Haselkorn, of Recruiting New Teachers, is optimistic.

His organization's 1-800-45-TEACH hot line has received more than 1 million phone calls since 1988.

"After the 1980s focus on making it big on Wall Street," Haselkorn says, "we've seen the pendulum swing to volunteerism and service."

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Report details crime rate on campus

WASHINGTON (AP) - Sixty-five students out of 100,000 were victims of murder, rape, robbery or aggravated assaults in 1994, a government survey of campuses said today.

The Education Department report also found that 257 students out of 100,000 were victims of burglary and vehicle theft.

The report is the first of its kind by the department, which was unable to say whether campus crime is on the rise. The report was required by the 1990 Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, prompted by public concern over campus safety.

While it is difficult to draw conclusions from the report, the Justice Department previously has reported that in the nation as a whole there were 716 violent crimes and 4,656 property crimes for every 100,000 residents in 1994.

Crime rates were higher at institutions with on-campus housing, the Education Department said. There were 113 violent crimes per 100,000 students at institutions with campus housing, compared with 29 for those without.

The definition of campus also included private institutions such as cosmetology, x-ray technology and practical nursing schools with fewer than 200 students. Violent crime at those institutions struck 237 out of 100,000 students.

The study found a rate of one murder per 100,000 students; nine sexual assaults per 100,000 and 21 robberies and 35 aggravated assaults.

FBI crime figures for 1995, when the murder rate reached its lowest in a decade, showed 8 per 100,000 murders in the U.S. population at large.

Teacher

Court rules on firing of incompetent teachers

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) - A Ridgefield teacher fired after being found incompetent to teach English and social studies should not have been rehired to teach business, the state Supreme Court has ruled.

The 4-1 ruling Monday could make it easier for school boards to fire teachers on grounds of general incompetence.

Nancy Sekor was reinstated as a business teacher in October 1995 after a lengthy and costly court case. A Superior Court judge had ruled that although Sekor was incompetent to teach English and social studies, she was qualified to teach business.

The case cost the Ridgefield school system, in an affluent suburb near Danbury, about \$250,000. It also focused attention of the long dismissal process required under the state's teacher tenure law.

Monday's ruling could end Sekor's 35-year teaching career.

"It basically says a teacher ... can be fired for general incompetence, and competence is not measured by a specific class or subject area," said Robert J. Murphy, a lawyer for the Ridgefield Board of Education.

Sekor's lawyer, William Laviano, plans to ask the Supreme Court for a rehearing.

"We're clearly considering all alternatives, but right now it looks like she has lost," Laviano said.

Sekor, who had taught business, was assigned to teach English and social studies after years of dwindling enrollments in business classes.

The school board said she could not control her class or finish paperwork and would not accept help. Her attorney said administrators were trying to replace her with someone younger.

In Connecticut, a tenured teacher who is given a termination notice has the right to ask for an independent hearing panel, which is what Sekor did. The hearings began in the spring of 1992.

Teacher unions defend the sometimes lengthy dismissal process, saying it is an essential guarantee of teacher's rights. Many school officials say the law goes too far, making the firing of a teacher costly and difficult.

SCHOOLS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN—TEACHERS

By Bonnie Miller Rubin, Tribune Staff Writer.

There is something different in Room 10 at Arcadia Elementary School in Olympia Fields.

Along with the alphabet, a map of the United States and a big calendar, there is also a collection of 200 action figures, a stack of comic books and shaky displays of penmanship on the subject of sports teams.

The masculine influence is striking—and no accident. Jeff Merkin is the 1st-grade teacher, the only male to teach at the primary level in the entire Matteson Elementary School District.

"The boys think it's cool that I can debate why Superman and Batman, who use their brains, are stronger than the Power Rangers," said Merkin, in his third year at Arcadia. "I don't think much about it; it's just a natural thing for me."

At first glance, many parents might assume that Merkin is the gym teacher, traditionally the only male to infiltrate the mostly all-female world of early childhood education.

But school officials are trying to change that. They say it is important to have male teachers in the primary grades to be role models for young children, especially those who come from single-parent and divorced families, where there is little or no male presence.

Nationwide, administrators have stepped up their recruiting efforts to attract more men to elementary schools. And if qualified male teachers can't be found, some officials try to confront the problem by reaching out to more male aides and volunteers.

"The schools are crying for men in the early grades," said Dominic Gullo, a professor of early childhood education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"I work with a lot of principals. And each spring I hear, 'Please . . . if you have any men, send them to me.'"

That's because even in the 1990s—when women make up half of all law and medical-school classes, which formerly were dominated by men—men in primary education are still scarce.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 15 percent of the nation's 1.5 million public elementary school teachers were men in the 1995-96

school year.

That percentage has not budged from a decade ago, even though the overall numbers of men going into the elementary field increased by more than 34,000 in that period.

In Illinois—excluding Chicago figures, which were not available from the State Board of Education—only 59 men (or 1.2 percent) are, like Merkin, teaching 1st grade. By contrast, 43 percent of the state's high school teachers are men.

But officials at the American Association of School Administrators said they are seeing a "slight up-tick" in their numbers, fueled by everything from better salaries to midlife career changes.

Until recently, no one questioned the inequity. At best, men were seen as less nurturing than women and, therefore, ill-equipped to teach primary grades.

At worst, a man who wanted to work with young children—where hugs, kisses and bathroom breaks are common occurrences—was eyed with suspicion and mistrust.

"There are definitely certain things that you can and cannot do," said Merkin, conceding that one innocent act of affection could derail his career. "Given the climate we live in, I think that female teachers probably have to be just as careful. I just try to be smart about things. . . . I keep it in the back of my mind without letting it change too much who I am."

And that is someone who can't wait to get to work, despite the fact that his day starts at 5:30 a.m. and might not end until 17 hours later, when he's finished grading papers.

He didn't start out with a burning desire to teach. In 1990, when he graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a history degree, Merkin thought he would go into sports journalism. When he realized that "NBC wasn't going to call," he pursued a master's degree in education at Roosevelt University.

From the moment he stepped in a classroom, he said, everything just clicked. "With young kids, they're just so honest. You know right away whether something is working or it's not."

That's not to say that there aren't times

when he would like to see a little more testosterone in the teachers lounge. The recent NCAA basketball tournament, for example, was a lonely stretch, which he endured by getting into friends' office pools.

"But my friends in the corporate world . . . all they do is complain. And here I am, excited about seeing the kids. They just give me an incredible energy rush, which I can't imagine getting anywhere else."

David Ablao understands. Ablao, a teacher at Nobel Elementary School on Chicago's Northwest Side, sold food-processing equipment for four years before deciding that he wanted to do something more meaningful. He teaches 5th grade, but at 2:30 p.m., Ablao puts in another three hours as a prekindergarten teacher, where men are even rarer. Of 116 prekindergarten teachers in Illinois public schools last year, a mere four were men.

"In business, the goal is to expand the company's pocketbook, but in education, it's to expand the mind," said Ablao, 31. "When that's your objective, it changes the whole way you see yourself and your life."

It's more than just what he teaches his students, but his very presence that makes a difference at Nobel, he said, estimating that as many as a third of his pupils live in households headed by females. "I get to show them a caring male every day, instead of just on the weekend, and that makes an impact."

Nobel's principal, Mirna Diaz Ortiz, has made hiring men a priority. In her eight years at the helm, she has increased the number of male primary teachers from one to six. Ortiz further levels the gender playing field by hiring more male aides and volunteers, a strategy that has been lauded by Chicago Public Schools chief Paul Vallas.

"It has been a conscious effort because there's such a desperate need for male role models. . . . The boys can see it's a guy thing to be good in school . . . to be involved in the arts," Ortiz said.

The Nobel parents have been very supportive, even at the preschool level. While Ablao acknowledges that he might come under different scrutiny, he takes it in stride.

"It's an age when kids want to be hugged, touched and patted, which is OK, but I make it a point never to be alone with the child. It's something that I think every man just has to work out with his own style."

John Godblod, chairman of the department of curriculum at Illinois State University in Normal, thinks moral queasiness is still the biggest obstacle to men entering the profession.

"No one will come out and articulate it, but there is an undeniable undercurrent of suspicion. All the exposes of priests, Scout leaders and teachers has heightened awareness. . . . If anything, the suspicion is greater today than it was 15 years ago."

According to Diane Ruklic, whose son, Evan, had Merkin during his first year of teaching, Arcadia parents were

unconcerned.

"I never heard anything. . . . He just brought a different dimension to the classroom. And during recess—instead of just standing there shivering, he actually played games with them," said Ruklic, whose son is disabled.

There are other hurdles that keep males out of the field, such as job status and pay. The money stigma has lessened somewhat—not only because most men are no longer the family's sole breadwinner, but because salaries have improved. In many districts, for example, beginning teachers can earn in the \$28,000-\$32,000 range for a 10-month year.

"There's an old message out there when it comes to money," said Gary Marx of the American Association of School Administrators. "We need to do a

better job of letting men know that."

At the Glenview public schools, men seem to be getting the message. Currently, there are five men in the primary grades who had former careers in everything from law to the military.

Marilyn Miller, head of human resources for the district, said that the system has benefited from its association with DePaul University, which has a graduate program geared toward mid-career professionals, who often are seeking personal happiness and spiritual growth over material wealth.

"Whether it's due to disenchantment or downsizing, we're seeing a real influx of people who want to bring some meaning to their life," said Charlie Doyle, assistant dean of DePaul's School of Education. ■

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'Eraserate' shatters Connecticut school's mystique and test scores

Revelations of cheating break spell of an institution and its principal

By Helen O'Neill and Denise Lavoie
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stratfield School was a magical place where happy children tested highest in the state and parents dreamed of the Ivy League.

The whole world wanted its secret.

It bewitched families from New York and Massachusetts, who bought \$300,000 homes to be part of the mystique. It captivated educators from India and Japan, who traveled to Stratfield seeking answers. It nagged away at rival schools, at a loss to understand why their students lagged behind.

In a town with nine public elementary schools, why did Stratfield score up to 40 percent higher on standardized tests? What was so special about the Stratfield school?

The answer shattered the magic and broke young hearts. But there was no escaping the evidence:

Stratfield's secret was cheating.

The school's parents can't believe the spell is broken, that after all these years of being so special, their kids are the same as the rest. Why would anyone

have tampered with their children's tests?

Neighbors smirk at their discomfort. See, they whisper to each other at soccer practice and in car pools. We always knew there was something fishy about the Stratfield School.

Fairfield is a pretty town of 53,000 on Long Island Sound, a place of stone walls and historic houses and well-paid professionals who commute to New York.

The elegant red brick elementary school on the hill has always exceeded expectations, delivering smart kids, dedicated teachers and prestigious U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon awards.

For years, it also delivered some of the highest scores in the state.

Parents knew the secret, or so they thought: It was the school's beloved 57-year-old principal, Roger Previs.

An unassuming man of gentleness and vision, Previs poured his heart into his students and his soul into winning awards.

He coached the kids in math and chess, taught roller skating and juggling after school, and snapped pictures of "my

kids" every chance he got.

The corridors were lined with his photographs. The light in his office shone late on Sunday nights. He was, said one parent, like the inspirational hero of the movie "Mr. Holland's Opus."

But even the school board sensed he was more. Why, board member Jeffrey Matthews kept asking, can't all schools be more like Stratfield?

Matthews was introduced to Stratfield's special world three years ago when he dropped into the school for the first time. Troubled by the education his children were getting at another Fairfield school, he was determined to get some answers.

Watching Previs coach an academic team, hearing how he tracked each student's performance, seeing him monitor the noisy lunchroom, Matthews was inspired. He ran for the school board and became Previs' greatest ally.

Other school officials were unsettled by Previs' popularity, unnerved most of all by his student's high scores.

Superintendent Carol Harrington was determined to find the secret. A year ago, she ordered her staff to check the tests

tech

A Classroom Gets Creative With the Computer

By Laurent Belsie

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ALLENTOWN, PA.

IF Winnifred Bolinsky's fifth-grade class is the schoolroom of the future, there may be something to that chaos theory after all.

Round tables, haphazardly placed, have supplanted yesteryear's neat rows of desks here at Fogelsville Elementary School in suburban Allentown, Pa. A tube of foam rubber, freshly painted, droops over a table edge. Two boys off to the side are having fun rolling marbles down a scale-model roller coaster. And a group is gathered around a computer, that increasingly ubiquitous classroom tool.

The class is a window on the 21st century, where kids are doing exactly what educators say they should be doing: learning on their own, using technology not as an end, but as a tool.

In one sense, the computer's conquest of the classroom is almost complete. When the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association surveyed elementary and high-school students recently, it found 82 percent saying they used a computer at school, 60 percent had access to the Internet.

For many educators, it's a crucial part of learning. "Today's fifth-graders are going to take jobs of which 60 percent have not yet been defined," says Paul Hampel, technical coordinator for George Washington High School in Philadelphia.

But how most children use technology is another story.

Ms. Bolinsky's class is hard at work on its year-long project of building a scale-model amusement park. What stands out here is that, although Bolinsky won a competition sponsored by Microsoft Corp. two years ago for creative computer use, the machines faded into the background as the students use them to create presentations and conduct research.

For example, Aparna Swaminathan shows off the class's working carousel whose animals are almost all endangered species. To figure out which animals would work, the class had to look them up in computer-based encyclopedias. At the back of the class, Kara Zimmerman and Kristen Barbieri are busy typing in the information they've found about those animals into a concept map — a computerized representation of facts.

At another computer, three students are creating a multimedia presentation of the animals, combining music with text, pictures, and sounds that they've found in computerized reference works or scanned in themselves. Although the software was installed earlier in the week, Crystal McDonald, Randy Redman, and Megan Hurley are already using special effects — in this case, a "diamond dissolve" — to move from one animal to the next.

The roller coaster shows inertia, acceleration, and the difference between potential energy (which an object has at the top of the ride) and kinetic energy (which it has while moving down). To name it, the class turned to a computerized encyclopedia to find the fastest land animal: the cheetah.

In another corner, four students are writing the script for the play the class will pre-

sent in May. It involves a fictional character, Julie Burton, who doesn't like physics at first, but is taken through an amusement park where the principles are demonstrated first hand. For a visitor, the students clamor to act out various scenes, which include familiar songs with new lyrics such as "Help me, Rhonda, get physics into her head."

"It's very important that the students feel that it's theirs," Bolinsky says of her projects. In previous years, classes have built a computer from scratch and studied the history and future of railroads. It is a far cry from when she started teaching five years ago, when she brought her first computer into the classroom.

Education experts are quick to point out that great teachers don't need computers. "You don't need a computer to be a good teacher, but you do need a computer to give kids as many opportunities as possible," says Jacqueline Hase, professor of education at Alverno College in Milwaukee.

Perhaps the biggest factor in whether teachers grab onto the technology is not technical expertise, but attitude, she adds. "We're seeing it in teachers who feel comfortable, not necessarily with technology, but who feel comfortable with moving away from being the sage on the stage."

Bolinsky doesn't take the stage very often. She reads out loud every day to the students. They have textbooks for reading, social studies, and spelling. But

students "probably spend more time on the computer and other printed materials than they do in any textbook," she says. And they answer each other's questions.

The new style seems to engage children, but does it educate them better than the old style? "That's the piece we don't know yet," says Caryl Hess, professor of education at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. But at least some parents are sold.

"I like traditional things," says Valerie Land, a member of the local school board and mother of two children taught by Bolinsky. "But I see my kids got a good traditional side of education [and] expanded another part of their mind to think creatively and problem-solve."

Kuchw

House approves bill to require competency test for teachers

By DAVID GERMAIN
Associated Press Writer

JUNEAU (AP) - Prospective educators would have to pass a competency test before they could be certified to teach in Alaska under a bill the House approved Friday.

Supporters said the requirement would help schools recruit the best new teachers and weed out bad ones.

"You need to pass a test for a license to sell real estate or insurance in Alaska, but all you need currently to teach is a college degree," said Rep. Con Bunde, R-Anchorage, the bill's sponsor.

The exams would gauge a prospective teacher's knowledge for primary-school topics and such secondary-school subjects as math, science and English. About 40 other states require teachers to pass such a test, Bunde said.

NEA-Alaska, the union that represents most Alaska teachers, supports the testing requirement. People already teaching in Alaska schools would not have to take the test.

"The idea of giving a pre-certification test gives the state some options on determining the intelligence level of somebody who wants to be a teacher," said Vernon Marshall, the union's executive director.

The House passed the bill 32-2, with Reps. Fred Dyson, R-Eagle River, and Scott Ogan, R-Palmer, voting against it. The legislation now heads to the Senate for consideration.

Rep. Allen Kemplen, D-Anchorage, voted for the bill but said the testing requirement could set up barriers to prospective teachers similar to those created by medieval trade guilds. That could result in a closed shop that drives up the wages of Alaska teachers, he said.

Supporters of the bill, though, said teaching applicants should face tougher hurdles before they are allowed in classrooms.

"I could think of no better field in which there should be barriers," said Rep. Tom Brice, D-Fairbanks.

The proposal comes on top of new teacher-evaluation methods the Legislature adopted last year to give school districts more flexibility in reviewing job performance and getting rid of bad instructors.

The teacher-testing requirement is part of a package of bills that would add a competency exam before high-school seniors could graduate, allow more boarding schools to open in Alaska and rewrite the formula used to distribute state aid to schools.

MASTER TEACHER EXPANSION MAY YIELD MULTIPLE BENEFITS

When 84 more educators last week earned recognition as master teachers, they became part of a growing trickle President Clinton hopes will become a flood.

Since 1995, only 595 teachers have passed rigorous assessments from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to earn certification, but Clinton wants to boost their ranks to 100,000 by 2006.

He is asking Congress for \$21 million for the NBPTS in fiscal 1998, more than quadrupling its \$5 million allocation this year. That would help the board increase the number of topics for which they offer certificates from six to more than 30 and help pay for exams (ED, Feb. 7).

Only eight states and 23 local districts now help teachers pay for the assessment, but most don't cover the full \$2,000 application fee.

Teachers who decide to go for certification send in a portfolio of their work, including a video of their teaching a class, answer written questions and submit to interviews at testing centers around the country. Other practicing teachers score the tests, which are rigorous: only 81 applicants out of 289 passed the first test given two years ago (ED, Jan. 6, 1995).

Personal, Financial Reward

"This board certification really means something to a group of people who have never been recognized and who've always been blamed for problems in the classroom," said Sharon Draper, a high school English teacher from Cincinnati who was among the first group to be board certified.

"Teachers are used to getting a hug from a third-grader as thanks," she added. "This is not just thanks, it is real recognition."

The certificate also confers credibility on teachers, said Susan Carmon, the National Education Association's (NEA)

liaison to NBPTS. "Colleagues, school boards, and governors call upon them for committees and task forces," she said.

Many local districts and several states also offer bonuses and salary supplements to those who earn certificates, and Carmon said that can help keep talented teachers in the classroom, reducing the financial allure of administrative positions.

Five states and 14 districts offer bonuses and salary supplements. Delaware, for instance, gives master teachers a \$1,500 annual bonus. Mississippi not only will reimburse teachers for the fee but also boost their salaries by \$3,000.

North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt, is pushing state legislation to give board-certified teachers a 12 percent pay raise, up from the current 4 percent bonus they now get. Hunt chaired the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future which called for this certificate program and served on the national certification board.

Mobile Credentials

Thirteen states will grant licenses to teachers moving into their states with NBPTS credentials.

"There is a mobile national teaching force," said Pat O'Connell Ross, team leader for the Eisenhower Professional Development program, which provides funds for NBPTS, itself an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. "This is a way to help people move from state to state."

But many teachers who have been through the assessment process say the most important benefit—even for those who didn't win certification—is that it helps them become better teachers.

"Doing this makes teachers think differently about their abilities and boosts self-confidence in your abilities as a professional," said Draper, a finalist for

national teacher of the year this year. "In class, I'm a lot more confident and a lot more reflective."

Certification Categories

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers certificates in:

- * Early childhood generalist (ages three through eight)
- * Middle childhood generalist (ages seven through 12)
- * Early adolescence generalist (ages 11 through 15)
- * Early adolescence English language arts
- * Early adolescence through young adulthood art
- * Adolescence and young adulthood mathematics

The board aims to offer certificates in:

- * Early & middle childhood (ages three through 12) for:

- art, English as a new language, exceptional needs/generalist, foreign language, guidance counseling, library/media, music and physical education.

- * Middle childhood (ages seven through 12) for: English language arts, math, science and social studies/history.

- * Early adolescence (ages 11 through 15) for: mathematics, science and social studies/history.

- * Adolescence and young adulthood (ages 14 through 18+) for: English language arts, science and social studies/history.

- * Early adolescence through young adulthood (ages 11 through 18+) for: art, English as a new language, exceptional needs/generalist, foreign language, guidance counseling, health, library/media, music, physical education and vocational education.

For more information, contact National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 26555 Evergreen Rd., #400, Southfield, Mich. 48076, (810)351-4444; or visit the Internet site, <http://www.npbts.org>. —Laureen Lazarovici ■

Clinton Teacher Board Proposal Marks Milestone

By Ann Bradley

Washington

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

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

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

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

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

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

Need for Incentives

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

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

board's assessment.

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

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

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

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

Two Pots of Money

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Banking' Scores

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

-more-

*Albert Shanker's passing is a reminder of the need
to break molds in order to strengthen institutions*

Teacher Unions: a Key to School Reform

By Charles Taylor Kerchner,
Joseph G. Weeres,
and Julia E. Koppich

AL SHANKER didn't invent teacher unionism, but for more than a quarter-century he was its personification.

He played the game at the edge. In the 1960s he organized New York's teachers, transforming them from a teachers' guild so weak that its newsletter was delivered in anonymous plain envelopes into the United Federation of Teachers, the nation's largest union local. By the turn of the '70s he was the most militant of labor leaders, jailed twice for leading unlawful strikes, spreading fear and in some cases loathing throughout the land.

Ironically, it was the fear of Mr. Shanker that helped push the National Education Association toward collective bargaining, thus spreading teacher unionism around the country. By 1973 he was to earn a footnote in cinema history. In the Woody Allen film "Sleeper," the title character reawakens in 2173 to say that civilization ended because "a man named Albert Shanker got hold of a nuclear warhead."

Public education crisis

His public persona changed. Early on, Shanker realized that teachers couldn't be strong when education was weak. When New York City went broke in 1975, the UFT pledged \$150 million in pension funds to bail out the city. In 1983, when the commission report "A Nation at Risk" criticized public education for permitting a "rising tide of mediocrity," Shanker used the opportunity to remold the union. He turned toward engaging the American Federation of Teachers in educational reform instead of confrontation.

When asked why, Shanker responded with disarming pragmatism that any union leader who had just seen his membership decline by 20 percent would think about doing things differently.

But the point is that most union leaders wouldn't and don't. Typically, unions last only until here is a change in the underlying institution or its production technology.

Thus, Al Shanker's passing is made all the more poignant by its timing. Public education as an institution is arguably entering what Shanker himself called "its first real crisis." The political cleavage line is no longer between those who think public ed-

ucation is doing a good job and those who think it is not. The line separates those who think the institution is capable of educating America's children and those who think it is not. Unionized teachers are no stronger than the institution they inhabit.

At least some teacher unionists have come to realize this. Over the last decade a quiet but concerted effort has taken place to transform teacher unions from their industrial-era ideological base. The latest manifestation of this came when National Education Association president Bob Chase called for his union to move from organizing around what Samuel Gompers called "more" to organizing around "better."

Mr. Chase is right about that — and so was Shanker in his call for unionists to rally behind the cause of higher standards — but the real challenge is over when and how this gets done. Politically, vexing as it is, establishing high national standards is not the hard part of educational reform. The hard part is getting more than the top 15 percent of students to achieve those standards. No amount of political exhortation will make it happen. Organizing teaching will.

In our recent book "United Mind Workers" (Jossey-Bass) we call for a teacher unionism aligned with the emerging imperatives about learning. The cognitive revolution, which is reflected in the new standards and tests, is changing our definition of what it means to be smart. And what has been called "the third industrial revolution" has changed what graduates need to know to make a middle-class wage. Teachers are the key to this transformation.

A plan for change

Teacher unions, through collective bargaining, organized what we call the first half of teaching — their wages and working conditions. Now, they can finish the job by organizing the actual work of teaching. In the process, they can play a valuable part in reorganizing the institution of public education by:

• Organizing around quality.

This nation is now engaged in a furious debate about learning standards: how we should measure them, what kinds of rewards or consequences should be attached to meeting or failing to meet them. Union leaders have been involved in these debates, but they remain abstractions to

most of the country's 2.5 million public school teachers. Unions need to internalize both the debate and emerging standards. They need to back standards with adequate training, professional development, and a strong peer review system. Peer review requires teachers to define good teaching, to develop ways of communicating it to others, to measure and support it. Ultimately it

Unions need to back national standards with adequate training, professional development, and a strong peer review system.

requires that teachers make decisions about other colleagues, removing those who can't perform.

• **Organizing around individual schools.** By changing the nature and scope of labor agreements, most union critics seek to narrow the scope of bargaining to keep teachers' hands away from public policy. We argue the opposite. Teachers ought to be forced to deal with the question of resource allocation tied to student achievement. This can happen if we slim down district-level contracts and create workplace compacts at individual schools about resources, work rules, and decisionmaking procedures. Why shouldn't the labor agreements that divide most of a school's resources also be its guiding path for educational achievement?

• Organizing around a teacher labor market.

Industrial unions organized around jobs, but there is an older union tradition that organized around occupations, one that allowed members to switch jobs and change the nature of their work relatively easily. In a time when education itself is in great flux, it makes sense to organize teaching as a career rather than a single job, to anticipate the role technology is likely to play in teaching, and to organize a career ladder that allows people to enter as helpers or aides and advance to become full-fledged teachers.

We're not sure whether Al Shanker liked the sweep of our ideas or not, or even our point of departure. His last campaign centered on standards for learning and student conduct. But Shanker

was committed to strengthening public education as the cornerstone of democracy and making strong unions both the fruit and the bulwark of that great experiment. He also saw a desperate urgency to get on with the task.

A historic transformation

We believe public education faces a transformation as profound as that which took place during the Progressive Era of the early 1900s, when the country transformed from being organized around farms and villages and became a nation of cities and factories. An institutional change of such magnitude spells real danger — and real opportunity — for teacher unions.

The debate about how the unions should respond is just beginning. Al Shanker believed passionately in the power of the intellect and in the value of debate. His voice will be missed.

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Teacher cont.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Education Week, March 12, 1997

Skeptics Greet Clinton Plan's First Appearance in Congress

By Joetta L. Sack

Washington

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

open to other suggestions.

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

Democrats Skeptical Too

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Consequences Undecided

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Schools find teachers in short supply

With students entering school in record numbers, many districts find that they have to be creative to attract new faculty members

By Mindy Fetterman
USA TODAY

In Fresno, Calif., educators jumped a plane to Mexico to recruit Spanish-speaking teachers.

In Las Vegas, a web site was unveiled to promote the city as a great place to be a teacher.

And in Florida, the state Department of Education is considering new rules to make it easier to become a teacher.

A record number of students and a surge of retiring teachers are causing an unprecedented hiring push in the nation's public schools. More than 1 million teachers — almost half the number working today — will be hired in the next 10 years.

The questions is: Where will all these teachers come from?

The U.S. Department of Education predicted last week that 190,000 new teachers would be needed to handle an influx of elementary and secondary schoolchildren through 2006. Another 825,000 will be needed to replace the one-third of the nation's 2.5 million teachers who will be retiring.

A record 51.7 million children entered school this fall. The number of newcomers will approach 54 million by 2006. Nearly half are children of baby boomers, whose entry to school two decades ago set the previous record in 1971. Immigration and high birth rates among minorities are factors, too.

At the same time, states like California are adding pressure to the teacher job market by passing laws encouraging smaller class sizes for kindergarten through third grade.

"I've been in education for 35 years, and I've never seen anything like it,"

said Peter Mehas, superintendent of Fresno County Public Schools. The district, which added 4,000 students this fall, hired 350 teachers just for smaller classes. He doesn't foresee shortages right away, but, "unless we get more people into the pipeline, the crunch is really going to hit at about 1999."

Already, urban and rural school districts report shortages, while many fast-growing suburban districts get thousands of applications. Competing for teachers has become critical.

The Clark County School District, which includes Las Vegas, sends recruiters to university job fairs nationwide. It has partnerships with colleges and bought video conferencing equipment this year to do interviews. It puts on a two-day program for new teachers that includes tours of the city, motivational speakers, training and parties.

Seventy-five percent of the 1,200 teachers hired this year were from out of state, said George Ann Rice, assistant superintendent of human resources.

"There's more to recruiting than just finding people," she said.

About 300,000 people are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate education programs, said Mary Dilworth of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. The image of teaching has improved and salaries are

up, so enrollment in education programs is up, too. "We're better prepared to meet this demand than we were ten years ago," she said.

But school districts are going to have to be more creative in recruiting, said Keith Geiger, president of the National Education Association.

States will need to loosen requirements to let business people get into teaching without returning to college for a degree in education. And school districts should give scholarships to non-teaching employees, he said.

"We have a group of paraprofessionals working in the schools now, our teacher aides and bus drivers, and they already know they like kids," he said. "We should encourage them to become teachers."

Recruiting teachers for rural and urban districts is a special challenge. Being in the country "is not as exciting a place to live like an urban or suburban district," said Bill Sherman of the Iowa State Education Association.

Nonprofit Teach for America Corp. has placed about 4,000 new college graduates in urban and rural districts since 1989, said Christine Thelmo.

"It's not for everyone," she admitted. But she tells recruits "it's incredibly challenging. And with all that challenge comes great reward."