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FRANK J. FAHRENKOPF, JR.
CHAIRMAN

June 20, 1983

Mr. Michael K. Deaver
Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mike:

I am forwarding the attached copy of education briefing materials generated at the RNC. I have been receiving weekly updates on this issue. Copies to date are included in this book, and I will see that you receive copies of future updates.

Yours very truly,

FRANK J. FAHRENKOPF, JR.

FJF/lt
Attachment

Republican
National
Committee

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Chairman

EDUCATION BRIEFING BOOK

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Republican
National
Committee

Philip Kawior
Director of
Research

June 17, 1983

TO: CHAIRMAN FAHRENKOPF

ATTENTION: BILL PHILLIPS
Executive Assistant to the Chairman

THROUGH: WILLIAM I. GREENER, III WIGIII
Director of Communications

THROUGH: PHILIP KAWIOR PK
Director of Research

FROM: RICHARD HANSEN R.H.
Issue Analyst

SUBJECT: EDUCATION BRIEFING #6

Contents of this briefing:

I. The Week in Review

II. Appendix

-- Selected press articles from the past week

I. The Week in Review

The week ending Friday, June 17 saw an escalation of the public debate on education. President Reagan traveled to Knoxville, Tennessee and to Albuquerque, New Mexico and reaffirmed his support of a return to stricter, "back to basics" curricula, merit pay for teachers, and his opposition to a greater federal role in the funding and management of our nation's schools. Democrats in Congress stepped up their attacks on the President's education budget submissions, while Walter Mondale held a news conference to further criticize the President's policies and Senator Hollings did the same to announce his plan to give all the nation's teachers a $5,000 raise at a cost of $14 billion to the federal government. Alan Cranston put forward a program, as well.

Highlights:

- On June 14, President Reagan appeared at Farragut High School in suburban Knoxville, Tennessee, where he attended an education forum, lunched with teachers, and dropped in on a senior summer-school English class. With Governor Lamar Alexander at his side during the visit, the President said that American schools have become "too easy" because of "the abandonment of compulsory courses." He reaffirmed his support of merit pay for teachers, saying, "If we want to achieve excellence, we must reward it." The visit received coverage on the evening network news telecasts of NBC and CBS, according to the White House News Summary of June 15.

- On June 15, the President addressed the 87th annual PTA convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In his address, the President said:

  -- "I urge you, send a message to Washington, D.C. and make it loud and clear. Tell them you want the basics in your schools and the parents back in charge. Tell them that education must never become a political football, because your children come first and they must come first."

  -- "We don't have an education problem because we're not spending enough. We have an education problem because we're not getting our money's worth for what we spend."

  -- "I sincerely believe the leadership of the NEA is mistaken... In all due respect, I must ask them: If we test other professionals, why shouldn't we test the people who will be responsible for teaching our children? And if we can evaluate people in other professions, and reward them for superior results why should our schools be different?.... Until (the NEA) relaxes its opposition

to the badly needed reforms the country wants - in hiring, salary, promotion and tenure - the improvements we so desperately need could be delayed."

National PTA president Mary Ann Leveridge called the President's address "very positive... he supports parents, teachers, higher teachers salaries." The President was interrupted some 20 times for applause during his address. The event received coverage on the evening network news telecasts of ABC and NBC, according to the White House News Summary of June 16.

- Democratic Governor Toney Anaya of New Mexico said he was "outraged that President Reagan came to New Mexico masquerading as a champion of education when every fact and figure shows he is a foe of the classroom... I would submit to the citizens of New Mexico and the American public that the enemy of education is Ronald Reagan." Anaya, an emerging political leader among Hispanics, listed over $100 million in planned cuts in federal educational funding for New Mexico for 1984, including funding for bilingual, vocational and Indian education.

- Education Secretary Terrel Bell was the guest on NBC's "Meet The Press" on Sunday, June 12. The Secretary was grilled on the Democratic assertions that the President has proposed massive cutbacks in federal funding for education. His response was that in this "horrible" fiscal situation we are in, the President remains committed to controlling federal spending and that initial budget proposals were made knowing that the President would have to compromise to higher figures. He pointed out that the President agreed to, and signed an education appropriation for this year that is virtually level with previous spending. He explained that the reduction in the interest rates for the guaranteed student loan program has made it possible to finance the same number of loans for $1.1 to $1.2 billion less than the previous year. The Secretary said "We're not going to be pushing legislation to abolish the department in the next few months."

- Walter Mondale appeared at a news conference with Shirley Hufstedler, the Carter Administration's Secretary of Education, ostensibly in connection with a study entitled "Educating Our Citizens:The Search for Excellence" by the liberal think-tank, Center for National Policy. He took the opportunity to say, "Reagan offers no program at all. He has tried to divert us with a sideshow on the question of standards." Mondale said he supported the principle of merit pay, but added "that can mean any number of things... I'm for higher standards, not double standards... (Mr. Reagan's) support of merit pay diverts us from the urgency of raising all teachers' pay."

- Senator Ernest Hollings called a news conference to announce his proposal for the federal government to spend an additional $14 billion a year to give $5,000 raises to all full-time public school teachers and $10,000 raises for some 500,000 teachers in inner-city schools. Hollings said he was not trying "to buy the teachers' vote," nor "to hit the President with one-line zingers" (in a slap at Mondale). Hollings said he would take the $14 billion from the President's defense increases, saying, "Upgrading education in this country seems to me to be worth at least as much as one weapons system."

- Senator Alan Cranston offered a seven-point education program that included better pay for teachers, but not merit pay. "Merit pay will not attract better candidates into teaching in the first place," said Cranston. He said that schools that demonstrate education gains should receive financial bonuses. His program did not have a price tag. No press report could be found which offered any details of the Cranston program. The Los Angeles Times in his home state, for example, carried only a brief wire-service report.

- House Democrats mounted an offensive designed to "set the record straight" on the President's claims on federal funding for education during his administration. Representative Carl Perkins (D.-Ky.), Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, said, "President Reagan is a great salesman, but somehow he has misstated a lot of facts. He says we're spending just as much on education. That certainly is not true." Perkins and Representative Paul Simon (D.-Ill.), at a news conference to announce formation of a task force to study merit pay for teachers, reeled off a list of education cuts proposed by the President over the past 2 1/2 years that were rejected by Congress. Perkins and Simon joined 19 other House Democrats, all former teachers or school administrators, in sending the President a letter warning that his effort to "exploit political issue for the 1984 campaign...is a serious mistake which can only work against the best interest of public education."

- Both Houses of the California legislature approved a "master teacher" program as part of a $1 billion package of increased aid to public schools. The plan would make it possible for up to 5 percent of the state's 200,000 teachers to be named master teachers, or "mentors", who would be nominated by their peers and school principals, with the local school board having final say. Each master teacher would receive a $4,000 raise, with the state paying the cost. The proposal has the support of the California Teacher's Association, but only with the inclusion of a $4,500 increase over three years in the starting salaries of all new teachers, and the rest of the $1 billion package. The master teacher program, alone, would cost $26 million.

The National Education Association is supporting the package. Republican Governor George Deukmejian opposes tax increases to pay for the package. The proposal goes to conference for final legislative approval before being sent to the Governor for his signature or veto.

- Leaders of the National Education Association say the President is misstating their stand on merit pay and other issues and say they want a chance to meet with him. Mary Hatwood Futrell (a black women expected to succeed Willard McGuire as NEA president next month) said, "Instead of passing barbs back and forth, why don't we sit down and talk?" "The issue is larger than the White House, it's larger than the NEA," said Futrell. McGuire pointed out that while the NEA opposes Governor Lamar Alexander's master teacher plan in Tennessee, it supports the California package.

Teachers' pay varies greatly across USA

USA TODAY
6/15

The average salary of elementary and secondary school teachers in the USA is $20,531 this year. Alaska's teachers make the most — $33,953 — and Mississippi's the least — $14,285. Figures represent an average 7.3 percent increase over 1981-82. Here's a state-by-state list:

	1982-83	Percent of increase over 1981-82
Ala.	$17,850	14.4%
Alaska	33,953	6.4
Ariz.	18,849	4.6
Ark.	15,176	4.6
Calif.	23,555	3.5
Colo.	21,500	9.8
Conn.	20,300	7.5
Del.	20,665	7.1
D.C.	26,048	7.3
Fla.	18,538	10.5
Ga.	17,412	6.4
Hawaii	24,796	10.0
Idaho	17,549	7.0
Ill.	22,618	7.6
Ind.	20,067	7.8
Iowa	18,709	4.0
Kan.	18,299	9.5
Ky.	18,400	6.4
La.(1)	19,265	4.1
Maine	15,772	4.4
Md.	22,786	7.9
Mass.	19,000	1.1
Mich.	23,965	7.2
Minn.	22,296	12.0
Miss.	14,285	1.1
Mo.	17,726	8.0
Mont.	19,463	9.5
Neb.	17,412	5.1
Nev.	20,944	4.2
N.H.	15,353	4.4
N.J.(2)	21,642	8.7
N.M.	20,600	10.2
N.Y.	25,100	7.1
N.C.	17,836	5.2
N.D.	18,390	4.0
Ohio	20,360	9.8
Okla.(3)	18,110	11.7
Ore.	22,334	10.0
Pa.	21,000	7.8
R.I.	23,175	7.0
S.C.	16,380	8.0
S.D.	15,595	6.0
Tenn.	17,425	7.0
Texas	19,500	10.9
Utah	19,677	8.4
Vt.	15,338	4.2
Va.	18,707	10.0
Wash.	23,413	2.0
W.Va.	17,370	1.4
Wis.	20,940	8.0
Wyo.	24,000	12.9

(1)Teacher salary data do not include an average of $1,900 per teacher from the Louisiana Professional Employees Improvement Program for training.
(2)Total teacher salary figure does not include data for 111 teachers paid on a per diem basis.
(3)Classroom teacher salary figures do not include fringe benefits as follows: 1981-81: $840; 1982-83: $940.

Source: National Education Association

By Marcy Eckroth, USA TODAY

Pro and Con

Merit Pay for Good Teachers?

YES—"The longer we reward mediocrity, the longer we'll get mediocrity"

Interview With Lamar Alexander

Governor of Tennessee

Q Governor Alexander, why do you favor a merit-pay system that provides higher salaries for more-skillful teachers?

A If you want the best results, you hire the best people. In this day and time, you can't hire the best people with a pay scale that rewards mediocrity. Our present system features low wages, lifetime contracts, little real evaluation—and not one penny of extra pay for outstanding performance. Unless we change, we won't be able to keep and attract the teachers we will need to lead our crusade for excellence in education.

Q Why not just raise teacher salaries in general?

A No one can afford to raise the salaries of everyone high enough to keep the best people teaching. Nor does every teacher deserve that special raise. So you do what you do in almost every other line of work in the United States: You evaluate people every so often to see how they're performing, and if they're doing well, you pay them more.

Q How would the plan that you proposed in Tennessee work?

A We would evaluate teachers every five years and, based upon their classroom performance, would elevate about 40 percent of them to the position of either senior teacher or master teacher—with an additional pay raise of between $2,000 and $7,000. In addition, every tenured teacher who joins the program gets a $1,000 raise. All this is on top of across-the-board increases for every teacher.

Right now we pay teachers for going back to school for more courses and pay them for staying on the job a long time. This plan would pay them more for doing a good job at what they were hired to do—teach.

Q But critics say that in the few places where merit pay has been tried it created jealousy among teachers that weakened, rather than strengthened, the school system—

A Nothing could create more jealousy among teachers than having the best teacher make the same as the worst teacher—or having the worst teacher make more, which is possible and often happens under the present pay scale. Merit pay gives everyone in a school pride that a number of teachers are capable of superior performance. It causes other people to try to perform in the same way.

Jealousy could be avoided, though, by having a fair evaluation plan. For example, under our plan, the evaluators would be three master teachers and principals from outside the evaluated teacher's district. This would help eliminate local politics. Teachers would also be judged against published criteria now being drawn up by a panel of educators and laypersons.

Q Isn't there a danger that additional pay could still be awarded for reasons other than quality of performance, such as favoritism or political considerations?

NO—It's a device "to pay a few people more so that many could be paid less"

Interview With Willard McGuire

President of the National Education Association

Q Mr. McGuire, why are you opposed to the idea of merit pay for teachers?

A Merit pay has been used time and time again in the past to pay a few people more so that many more could be paid less. We object to that, especially at a time such as we face in 1983 when all teachers must receive substantial increases or else the teaching profession will continue to be shorn of many of the good people in it and will have greater problems attracting bright, capable young teachers.

It seems that if you find any fault with the idea of merit pay, then people assume you favor mediocrity or something other than merit. That certainly isn't true of the National Education Association. We're opposed to merit pay as it has been described in the past and continues to be described, but that doesn't mean we oppose the idea under any and all circumstances.

Q What aspects of merit pay do you find objectionable?

A Probably the most serious fault is that merit pay assumes that only a small percentage of teachers is meritorious and that they can be identified. If, for example, you make 40 percent of the teachers in Tennessee senior or master teachers, you're telling the people of Tennessee: "Sixty percent of your teachers are not going to measure up. And, therefore, 60 percent of the students are destined to have teachers that we don't consider to be either senior teachers or master teachers." This creates a strong adversarial relationship between school administrators and parents, as parents seek to see that their child has a meritorious teacher while someone else's child does not. That's a battleground we don't need in our schools.

Merit pay also can foster competition—rather than cooperation—between teachers who feel they must do whatever is necessary to earn the extra money. Good schools depend upon an environment of teamwork, and merit pay works against that.

Q But the idea of rewarding people who do unusually good work is a basic one in our society. What is it about teachers that justifies denying them this system?

A Merit in teaching is very difficult to measure, and so far no one has come up with a fair way to assess all the different variables. For example, if student achievement is used as a measure of merit, then a teacher with a class of gifted and motivated children would be far more apt to be selected than one with less-willing students. There are many considerations other than teacher performance that enter into these evaluations.

Q Such as?

A Certainly favoritism is one of them. In some systems,

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Interview With Governor Alexander *(continued)*

A There is always that possibility. But there also was a danger when the United States Constitution was written that it wouldn't work. Virtually every other important part of the American workplace has found some fair way to pay people more money for doing a good job. There's absolutely no reason we can't do it in public-school teaching.

Q. Wouldn't pay tied to individual merit make teachers more competitive and break up the teamwork that exists?

A I can't believe that rewarding people for doing a good job breaks up teamwork. In the professional basketball championships recently, I noticed that the other members of the Philadelphia 76ers threw the ball pretty well to Moses Malone, even though he makes the largest salary on the team.

Q. Wouldn't parents be upset if their child were placed in a classroom where the teacher was not getting merit pay?

A Parents already try hard to get their children in the classrooms with the best teachers. They already know who they are. They also know that many of our best teachers are leaving the classroom because of our outmoded pay scale. Under the Tennessee plan, 40 percent of all the teachers in a school system could receive one of the two higher-pay supplements. A public-school system that features a large number of better teachers is bound to be able to present itself more effectively to the parents than one that features no superior teachers.

Q. You have said that merit pay would attract brighter students into the teaching profession to begin with. On the other hand, isn't it possible that some current teachers would leave if they felt they were being penalized?

A The truly competent teacher ought not to fear a review every five years of whether he or she is doing a good job. Teachers grade students every six weeks A to F; they ought to be willing to be graded every five years on whether they're A, A+ or A++.

Q. With so many states struggling with budget deficits, is this really the time to start such a costly program?

A We can't afford not to. Tennessee's incentive-pay program will cost 110 million dollars by the time it's fully implemented by 1986-87. It—and other parts of our "Better Schools" program—will be paid for by phasing in a 1-cent increase in the sales tax over the next two years.

Tennessee is as poor as just about any state. But we know that better schools mean better jobs. Our polls show that taxpayers are willing to pay the extra taxes if they believe changes are going to be made.

Q. Isn't merit pay merely a simple—and currently popular—solution to much more complex problems in our schools?

A Most everyone agrees on what areas need to be improved—basic skills, computer skills, new job skills, higher standards—and most states already are tackling these issues. The heart of the problem is that we don't pay people more for doing a good job. Superior men and women simply won't stay in a profession, no matter how much they may want to, that has no career path and no reward for outstanding performance.

Merit pay is a simple concept, but it is the fundamental way to improve the quality of the most basic public service we have in America today.

Q. And if we don't adopt a merit-pay plan—

A The longer we reward mediocrity, the longer we'll get mediocrity. □

Interview With Mr. McGuire *(continued)*

there is also the whole matter of how easy a particular teacher is to administer. The truly exciting, creative teacher may be very difficult to manage. Parents may complain that young people are being pushed too hard or that a particular project is unfair. As excellent as that teacher might be, he or she could be passed over for a merit rating in favor of another teacher who is more pleasant to have around administratively.

Q. Couldn't favoritism be ended by having outside evaluators?

A There's no question that certain evaluators and criteria would be better than others. However, even if both of these factors are valid, there still are the problems with parents and teamwork that have not made merit pay work.

Q. But critics say the present system of across-the-board raises protects incompetent or lower-quality teachers—

A There is a due-process procedure that allows for the administrative removal of incompetents, and that has worked. Too much has been said negatively about the single-salary structure. It's an objective standard that the community, the administration and teachers all understand. It recognizes years of experience—and in any line of work, experience helps a person become more proficient at a job. It speaks to the amount of education that has been attained beyond the entry-level degree. And probably most important, the single-salary structure has worked well in community after community while merit-pay systems have failed.

Q. Would more bright students enter the teaching profession if they saw a greater premium placed on performance?

A It's difficult to judge whether that would be true or not. Under past plans and those currently being proposed, the pot of gold is usually several years down the road for beginning teachers. And even then, there's no assurance that a new teacher would attain it simply by being good.

Q. Do you consider it a risk that, by resisting various merit-pay proposals, the NEA may weaken public support for teacher-salary increases in general?

A There probably is a risk. But I don't think there's any alternative, because merit pay doesn't help raise teachers' salaries in general, either. In fact, it has had the opposite effect of keeping the many down to pay a few a bit more.

Q. If merit pay is not the way to improve the quality of the teaching profession, what is?

A All teachers are woefully underpaid, so you can't even talk about adding salary incentives until you have adequate pay for everyone. Teachers also need to feel they have a meaningful voice in the educational decisions that are being made. Too often, the spokespersons for education are those who are not in the classroom teaching young people. That frustration is as great as any.

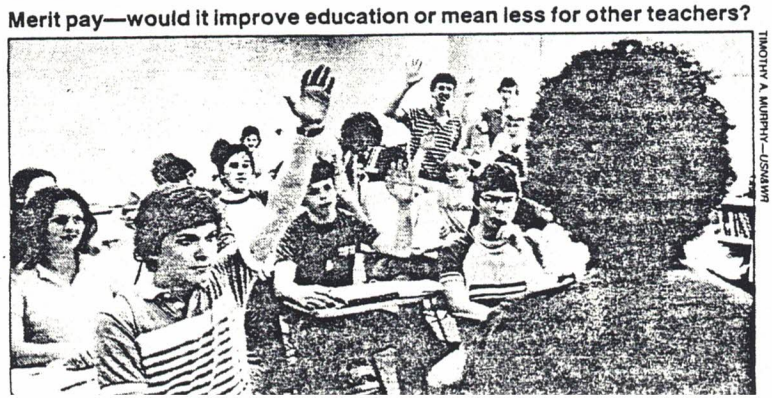
Q. Is there any way that excellence can be rewarded without financial incentives?

A We're not closing our eyes to the fact that excellence might be rewarded in some way. But we're not certain what those ways are, given the problems that have been associated with merit-pay plans in the past.

The bottom line is that the present system of payment works, but we at the NEA would never say that's the only way.

We haven't yet seen the plan that meets the criteria we are looking for, but we're not ruling out the fact that one may exist. □

Merit pay—would it improve education or mean less for other teachers?



TIMOTHY A. McGARRY—USN&WR

Issue and Debate

Merit Pay for Teachers vs. Single Salary Schedule

N.Y. TIMES 6/17

By GENE I. MAEROFF

Hardly anyone would have thought it possible just a few months ago that a matter seemingly so mundane as the salary schedule of schoolteachers would become a matter of debate among those contending to be elected President of the United States in 1984, but it has happened.

Interest in the issue is so intense that the House Education and Labor Committee yesterday appointed 17 citizens to join three of its members on a group to study the question of merit pay for the nation's teachers.

Discussions of merit pay for teachers in elementary and secondary schools are cropping up alongside such topics as the economy and disarmament as President Reagan and the contenders for the Democratic nomination begin their early rounds of sparring. Mr. Reagan favors merit pay and the Democrats are divided on the concept.

The issue revolves around the question of whether the teachers judged to be doing the best job should be paid the most. Such a policy would break with current practice in most places, especially in districts with collective bargaining, where teachers with equal experience and the same degrees are paid identical salaries.

It would also be at odds with the established stand of the country's two large teacher organizations, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. They have long favored the single salary schedule, which pays all teachers at the top of the scale equally.

The Background

The debate over merit pay is an outgrowth of the wave of attention that has recently been lavished on the nation's schools, which were out of the political spotlight for years.

Now, though, reports from various commissions have created a climate in which long-neglected shortcomings of elementary and secondary education are being addressed. Much of the dissatisfaction has to do with declining achievement, lack of discipline in classrooms and the inability of many graduates to perform adequately in college or in the workplace.

Increasingly, one of the main solutions seems to lie in improving the teaching force, both by rewarding the best teachers so that they do not continue to leave and by luring talented newcomers into teaching. Implicit is the idea that students will perform better when they are taught by the best teachers, a notion that seems reasonable though it is backed by no substantial body of research.

What persuades some people that the promise of higher pay for a good job is a key to attracting better teachers are statistics showing that teachers are increasingly being drawn from the ranks of students who score lowest on college entrance tests. Furthermore, there is a special imperative to find ways to draw science and mathematics graduates into teaching because huge shortages are developing as lucrative opportunities in business and industry entice the graduates.

A small number of school districts, including Los Angeles and Houston, have recently adopted merit pay plans, often linking up the approach with the recognition of certain people as "master" teachers.

For the first time this year in Los Angeles, for instance, 200 of the system's 26,000 teachers were identified as master teachers after being evaluated by committees of principals, supervisors, fellow teachers and parents. The master teachers, in addition to regular classroom duties, were given some responsibility for helping train other teachers. Each master teacher received a raise of $1,008 for the year.

For Merit Pay

"How else do you provide an incentive for attracting the best and the brightest into education?" President Reagan said in defending his advocacy of merit pay in a letter last month to Willard H. McGuire, president of the National Education Association.

T. H. Bell, the Secretary of Education, who has been the leading Administration spokesmen for merit pay, maintains that there is a precedent for merit pay in higher education since those who teach at colleges and universities do not necessarily get equal pay for equal experience.

Many workers in all kinds jobs, in fact, do not get paid the same as others performing identical duties for the same employer. Though teachers say they are suspicious of supervisors making decisions about who should get raises, the practice is widespread in other fields.

Representative. Paul Simon, an Illinois Democrat on the House Education and Labor Committee who is chairman of its new group on merit pay, said yesterday that the objections of teachers might be overcome by an evaluation process free of arbitrariness and subjectivity. He thinks this might be achieved by awarding merit pay on the basis of peer review, letting other teachers make the decision instead of administrators.

Such an approach to evaluation is similar to that contained in a master teacher and merit pay proposal recently turned down by the Tennessee Legislature.

Against Merit Pay

"Experience indicates that personal relationships or subservient behavior is too often equated with merit," Mr. McGuire said in response to Mr. Reagan.

A basic element in the opposition of organized teachers to merit pay, one that Representative Simon was trying to anticipate, is a fear that decisions about raises would not be made in an objective manner, demoralizing other teachers.

Moreover, the teachers' groups maintain that salaries for all teachers are still too low to justify raising the pay of just a few and that higher overall salaries would be the best enticement for attracting able newcomers. The average starting pay in the country for a teacher is $12,000, rising to an average of $19,000 for experienced teachers.

"Teachers want to do the best job of teaching and the presence of a master teacher plan or an extra $1,000 a year in pay will not make a teachers work harder or better," argues Judy Solko-

more...

vits, president of United Teachers Los Angeles, which opposed the plan implemented by the Los Angeles Board of Education.

Merit pay alone also leaves unaddressed a host of other factors that experts think may be as important as the salary structure in dissuading candidates from entering teaching: the problems of violence in the schools, unsupportive parents and unmotivated students.

Finally, as articulated by a concerned junior high school principal in Ohio, there is the potential difficulty of having to explain to irate parents why their children were not placed in the classroom of the teachers rated good enough for merit pay.

The Outlook

The fact that merit pay has become a political issue means that the idea is going to get a thorough airing whether or not teachers like it.

In fact, the pressure for change has already induced Albert Shanker, the politically savvy president of the teachers' federation, to warn his members that they can no longer automatically oppose merit pay and that they ought to listen to the proposals.

The National Education Association has been less flexible, leaving itself vulnerable as a whipping boy for Mr. Reagan. But Don Cameron, its new executive director, did say recently that he was not necessarily opposed to a pay incentive plan that would tie higher salaries to extra work.

It may well be that the resolution of differences will involve linking merit pay to extra work, thereby leaving intact the equal pay for equal work policy that the teachers' groups cherish.

The Tennessee plan would have have given extra duties to the master teachers, requiring them to work additional hours for their extra pay. They would have helped train their colleagues to be better teachers.

What could turn out to be more difficult than getting merit pay adopted, however, may be finding enough new money to make the salary raises meaningful. Many critics concur with Miss Solkovits in wondering how many good people would be drawn to teaching by the chance to make $1,000 more than their less able colleagues.

The battle Mr. Reagan is fighting for merit pay could return to haunt him if school districts embrace the policy only to come back and ask the Federal Government to help them pay for it.

California May Pass Incentive Pay Plan For Master Teachers

By Jay Mathews
Washington Post Staff Writer

WASH. POST 6/15

LOS ANGELES, June 14—Incentive pay for "master teachers," the foundation of President Reagan's plan to improve American education, neared final passage today after being approved by both houses of the California legislature.

But the price of passing this legislation in the nation's most populous state will be a $1 billion package of increased aid to public schools and the inclusion of teachers in the master teacher selection process.

California Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig avoided the strong teacher opposition that incentive pay has encountered in other states by working closely with teacher organizations, proposing general pay raises for new teachers and giving master teachers more responsibility for training new or ineffective teachers.

Education officials here and in Washington say the California plan may become a model for the approximately 30 states considering incentive pay proposals.

California Gov. George Deukmejian (R) opposes tax increases to pay for a $4,000 annual raise for each master teacher and a $4,500 increase over three years in the

TEACHERS, From A1

starting salaries of new teachers. But he has endorsed the concept of incentives for the most skilled public school instructors.

State senate and assembly conferees are working out differences between two master teacher bills before the final incentive pay proposal is sent on to Deukmejian for his signature or veto.

Deukmejian has suggested that the legislature enact educational reforms, including longer school days and tougher graduation requirements but wait a year for state money to help finance them.

Educators and legislators are sticking with demands for sales or corporate tax increases to fund the changes now.

"Our principle is, no reform without money and no money without reform," said Joe Holsinger, a deputy state school superintendent. Demands for improvement in the state's faltering schools helped his boss, Honig, upset incumbent state school superintendent Wilson Riles in a statewide election last year.

A similiar effort to enact master teacher incentive pay in Tennessee has attracted attention across the nation. The Tennessee Education Association lobbied heavily and successfully against the master teacher proposal of Gov. Lamar Alexander (R). The TEA called the criteria for superior teachers too vague and the selection process too long and cumbersome.

National Education Association President Willard H. McGuire reacted sharply to Reagan's criticism of his organization's opposition to the Tennessee merit pay plan. "Experience indicates that personal relationships or subservient behavior is too often equated with 'merit'," he said.

California teacher organizations have expressed the same distrust of merit pay proposals heard in Tennessee. Marilyn Russell Bittle, president of the powerful California Teachers Association, said that merit pay has in the past "proved to be too political and too costly."

Nevertheless, her organization supports the $26 million master teacher proposals in combination with proposals to increase the annual starting salary for new California teachers from $13,500 to $18,000.

"It's the carrot approach rather than the stick approach," said state Sen. Gary Hart, a former high school teacher who has led the effort to get the new proposals approved.

The bill that Hart steered through the senate to a 31-to-5 vote calls for the designation of master teachers who would be called "mentors." They would be "nominated by their peers and school principals," with the local school board having final say.

Both the senate and assembly bills would make it possible for up to 5 percent of the state's 200,000 teachers to be named master teachers, with the state paying the extra cost. The assembly bill specifies that master teachers spend 60 percent of their time teaching, with the rest devoted to assisting younger or ineffective teachers. They would have no administrative duties and would not formally evaluate other teachers.

As in Tennessee, California teachers have asked how teachers and principals can decide what makes a good teacher and how parents could be kept from insisting that their children be enrolled only in master teachers' classes.

Scattered school districts throughout the country have recently experimented with merit pay and master teacher proposals. The Los Angeles city schools now pay an extra $504 per semester to 197 master teachers selected from the city's 25,000 elementary and high schools. Substitutes are provided so the master teachers may visit others' classes and advise them on their techniques.

more ...

Jaime Escalante, a Los Angeles teacher nationally recognized for his success in producing top mathematics students in an impoverished Hispanic neighborhood, said that he has not been selected for the master teacher program and feels that most veteran teachers "would not want to change their procedures" even if a master teacher suggested they do so.

Escalante also said that the extra pay the city gives master teachers is insufficient for the extra time involved. But he is enthusiastic about the $4,000 master teacher bonus progressing through the state legislature. "You're going to see a very positive response to that much money," he said.

National education officials said they know of only one state, Oklahoma, that has a master teacher plan in effect.

Weldon Davis, president of the Oklahoma Education Association, said that the program pays $500 extra a year to selected teachers who help train beginning instructors. Davis said the new program helped direct the energies of "an onslaught of people in the state legislature who had so-called good ideas of how to help education."

One tiny school district in the Oklahoma farming community of Seiling has for four years run just the kind of merit pay system that teacher organizations protest. Seiling School Superintendent Gerald Daughtery said that the 39 of his 41 teachers who signed up for the voluntary program can earn up to $1,000 a year above their salaries if they are designated master teachers. The designation is based on student scores on standardized tests. If the scores rise above a certain average, all teachers in the school receive a bonus. Individual teachers receive extra bonuses if the students in their own class exceed the average.

Standardized scores have risen a full grade level since the program began, Daughtery said.

Educational Reform Begins at Home

By Victor R. Fuchs

The recent report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education confirms what most observers already know: Many American children are poorly educated. The report does not, however, provide a systematic analysis of *why* educational standards and achievement have fallen so far in recent decades. Without such an analysis what confidence can we have that the proposed reforms will remedy the problem? In particular, is it wise to focus exclusively on the schools while neglecting the impact of social changes on the education of children?

Consider first the funding of public education. Is the decline in performance the result of a decrease in financial support to the schools? Certainly not. In fact, there was a sharp rise in teacher/pupil ratios and an even sharper rise in real expenditures per child during the 1960s and 1970s. Between 1960 and 1978 the number of teachers per thousand pupils in public elementary schools rose to 47 from 35. After taking account of inflation, expenditures per pupil in the public schools increased by almost 5% per annum between 1965 and 1978. This was double the rate of growth of real GNP per capita, and more rapid than the growth of real expenditures per pupil between 1950 and 1965. Perhaps society expects too much from schools, or expects the wrong things, but if the schools have been "failing our children," it is not because they have been denied an ever-increasing share of resources.

Have the schools "wasted" these resources? Probably no more so than in earlier decades. It is easy to accuse school administrators of being inefficient, and some probably are, but no theory or evidence has been proposed to prove that inefficiency has increased since 1965. A more plausible explanation is that the schools have used the additional funds to respond to pressures for a more egalitarian society. In retrospect, it is clear that since the mid-1960s the schools have concentrated on "leveling up"—that is, improving the educational experiences of those children who were most in need rather than providing for pupils with average or above-average performance. The increased resources in most school districts were devoted to special-education classes, remedial programs, bilingual classes, school desegregation and similar efforts to aid disadvantaged children. As a result of such efforts and possibly for other reasons, white-black differentials in test scores at age nine declined appreciably during the 1970s. A difference of 17.8 percentage points in mathematics in 1972-73 was cut to 12.8 by 1977-78, and the race differential in reading fell from 16.7 percentage points in 1971-72 to 13.2 in 1974-75.

Too Much TV Viewing

The schools have also had to devote time and money to cope with the discipline and instructional problems resulting from the spread of television, the fragmentation of families and the influx of mothers of young children into paid employment. According to a recent Nielsen Survey, the average child aged three to five spends about 30 hours per week watching TV. Moreover, once children are in school there is little erage of over 25 hours per week at ages six to 11, and only slightly less TV viewing by teen-agers. A survey of sixth-grade students in California discovered that one-half watch TV until 11 p.m. or later, and one-third watch TV in their own or a sibling's bedroom. The programs most popular with sixth-graders rarely have much educational content, and the time spent in front of the set is time that could be spent reading or doing homework.

Schools have also been affected by soaring divorce rates and an extraordinary increase in the proportion of births to unwed mothers. These social changes have resulted in almost one-fourth of all children being raised in one-parent or no-parent homes. Comparisons of children from one-parent and two-parent homes attending the same school usually show the former performing worse by almost every criterion: attendance, behavior, achievement. Several researchers have concluded that these differences tend to disappear after controlling for family income and other socioeconomic variables, but divorce and unwed motherhood usually have a huge negative effect on income. Currently more than half of the children in female-headed families are living in poverty compared to only 8% in husband-wife families.

The success of children of Asian background in U.S. public schools provides vivid testimony that study, hard work, respect for teachers and heavy parental involvement still pay off.

Not only are more and more children being raised by one parent (predominantly the mother), but many children in two-parent homes find that both parents are at work away from the home during the day. Between 1960 and 1980 the labor force participation rate of married mothers with children under 6 rose to 47% from 18% and the rate for those with children six-17 rose to 62% from 38%. Who takes care of small children when the mother works for pay? According to a special report based on the Current Population Survey, a surprisingly large number are said to be cared for by "child's parent in own home." When the mother works part time, 77% of white and 63% of black children ages three to six are reported as being cared for by "own parent in own home." Even when the mothers work full time, over 40% of the children are reported as being cared for in this way.

What does this mean? In some families, the father may be at home while the mother is at work, but studies show that most fathers do very little primary child care, even when the mother is employed full time. Some mothers work at home and take care of the child at the same time, but the proportion in this category is small. Often the child is in nursery school or kindergarten while the mother is at work, and is many young children are left alone or with another child. A 1979 survey of families who had previously been involved in New York City's public day-care program revealed that 19% leave their children alone at some time during working hours, and almost 30% of the respondents indicated that they left children in the care of a sibling who was under 14. The study concluded: "There are large numbers of 'latch key' children coming home after school either to sit by the television or to roam the streets."

Extraordinary Success Story

There can be little doubt that the investments parents make in their children and the values they instill in them are major determinants of how the children will fare in school. The success of children of Asian background in U.S. public schools provides vivid testimony that study, hard work, respect for teachers and heavy parental involvement in the educational progress of children still pay off. Many of these children come from low-income families and many from families in which English is the second language or not spoken at all, but their educational achievements are extraordinary. On average, Asian-American students score higher than any other group on standardized tests. They are winning top honors at high schools across the country and are being admitted to the leading universities at rates far out of proportion to their presence in the population. In Harvard's class of 1985, for instance, 9% of the students are Asian-Americans—six times their representation in the U.S. population. This extraordinary success story is undoubtedly related to the high value placed on scholarship in Asian societies and to a strong family structure that transmits this value. The Japanese *kyoiku-mama* (the "education-mama") is now taking her place alongside the stereotypical "Jewish mother" because of the time and attention she devotes to her children and the extent to which she encourages and helps them to do well in school.

Schools are only one element in the education of children. By all means we need to improve the schools and we need to support them adequately. But let's not imagine that the schools can solve all the problems that arise in the community and in the home. Furthermore, let's be clear about what it is we want the schools to do. School districts are usually quite sensitive to the demands of their communities (witness their willingness to remove books from school libraries). If most parents want more homework and are willing to spend the time making sure that it is done, and if most parents want higher standards and firmer discipline and are willing to accept the consequences, it is unlikely that school superintendents, principals and teachers will not cooperate. Just as we have learned that good health depends on more than medical care, we must realize that good education depends on more than schooling.

Mr. Fuchs is a professor of economics at Stanford University, affiliated with the National Bureau of Economic Research and author of "How We Live" (Harvard University Press, 1983).

Denis P. Doyle

WP 6-17-83

How We Got the Good Teachers . . .

There is an old canard about professional economists: their job is to see if things that work in practice work in theory. So it is with education. What accounts for the quality of teachers? The economic and social realities of a given time and place. F. Scott Fitzgerald is reported to have said that nostalgia is being sentimental about something that never was. For those of us who graduated from high school before 1960, it is hard to distinguish between romantic memory and reality.

Were my best high school teachers—Mrs. Nesbit and Mr. Cunnea, Miss Callahan and Mr. Dean, Miss Walters and Mrs. Roberts—really as demanding, and rewarding, as they appear through the mists of time? The question answers itself: the good teachers, the ones who really challenged you, forced you to think, are the ones you remember because they changed your life. And there are individual teachers like that today.

By Tom Brima

The more difficult question has to do with teachers as a group: were the teachers of 10, 20, 30 years ago "better" teachers than those teaching today? The numbers give one pause, for they paint a dismal picture.

Gary Sykes, a reseacher at the National Institute of Education and an authority on teacher quality, reports some sobering facts: "Graduate Record Exam . . . scores . . . have declined significantly since 1970, and were substantially lower than scores of majors in eight other professional fields." After analyzing data from a wide variety of sources, Sykes somberly concludes that ". . . a mass of evidence converges to show that academic ability of education majors is both low and declining. Teaching appears to attract the least academically able and to be decreasingly attractive."

The probability that yesterday's teachers were better than their successors is so plausible that various explanations are making the rounds. The most popular is that it is all the result of women's liberation.

The argument is by now familiar and goes like this: for generations, only one socially desirable job was available to women: teaching. The only other female employment options—scullery work, telephone operator, household domestic, chambermaid, and the like—acted as a negative incentive, encouraging the best and the brightest women to enter teaching, a public school bonus enjoyed at women's expense.

The most talented and ambitious women became teachers and they worked for very low wages. Indeed, for years the situation was so extreme that women teachers were actually on a separate salary schedule and paid less than male teachers.

What was true for women in general was also true for minority group members, particularly black women. It is an old story in the black community that one of the few jobs in which a black woman was secure was teaching: secure, at least, from the advances of unscrupulous employers in domestic, farm or factory service.

The halting emergence of equal employment opportunities for both women and minorities, then, has denied public schools a supply of low-cost, high-quality labor. That is only part of the story, however. Another equally important pair of events does much to explain why the overall quality of today's teaching force has declined.

The events in question are the Great Depression and the Wondrous Recovery that followed the Second World War. First, the Depression. It tipped untold thousands of highly qualified adults into teaching, a group that in more sanguine economic times would have done other things. By 1931, unemployment had reached 15.9 percent; by 1933, the absolute depth of the Depression, unemployment reached an incredible number: 24.9 percent. A teaching job was worth its weight in gold, and the competition for those that were available was intense.

There were not only no other jobs available, teaching was one of the few jobs a bright and eager person could prepare for at reasonable cost. During the Depression, for many, a two-year teaching degree from Normal U. was possible, while Harvard was financially out of reach.

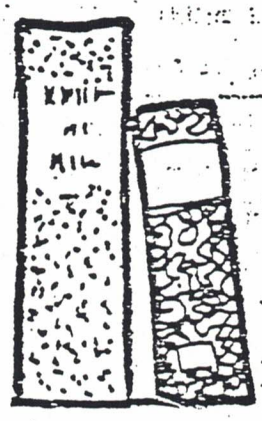
All but unnoticed, an interesting scenario unfolded. The entering Depression teacher stayed in the profession because no lateral employment options were available. The interruption of the war cemented the situation firmly into place. Teachers who entered the armed forces returned to their old jobs with seniority and pension benefits intact.

Hard upon the end of the war came unparalleled recovery and real economic growth. Schools shared in this, and it was not long until the children of the baby boom swelled the schools' ranks. By the early '50s, in certain growth areas it was not uncommon for a school district to spend most of its energies building schools: adding a school building a year was not uncommon for a medium-size district in California, and even this did not prevent double shifts and overcrowding.

The effect of this for Depression teachers was quite dramatic: 20 years after entering teaching (by default) they found themselves committed by force of circumstance to their craft.

It is, indeed, an ill wind that blows no good, and the Depression produced a generation of teachers of exceptional talent and intelligence that we began to take for granted. We thought their high standards, intellectual accomplishment and dedication were the norm. But high standards for elementary and secondary school teachers have never been the norm: among the best, the pay was never sufficient to attract any but the most dedicated.

Today's good teachers—of whom there are still many—are in the classroom because they believe in teaching, not because of financial rewards. That, of course, is an old story: in the "helping" professions, "psychic" income is important. But schools cannot be run on good will and dedication alone.



It should come as no surprise to learn that as the Depression generation teachers began to retire, the slow slide in the test scores began. The young teachers who began in 1929 are now in their mid seventies; they began retiring in the 1960s. The teachers who began in the depths of the Depression retired in the 1970s.

Well, if you think that teachers used to be better—on average—they probably were—compliments of the Great Depression. And if you think that things will get better without paying teachers more, ponder this: the 22-year-old who began teaching in the last year of the Depression (1940, when unemployment stood at 14.6 percent) is 65 this year. He or she will retire this month. Goodbye Depression bonus, hello reality.

The writer is director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Republican
National
Committee

Philip Kawior
Director of
Research

June 10, 1983

TO: CHAIRMAN FAHRENKOPF

ATTENTION: BILL PHILLIPS
Executive Assistant to the Chairman

THROUGH: WILLIAM I. GREENER, III
Director of Communications

THROUGH: PHILIP KAWIOR
Director of Research

FROM: RICHARD HANSEN
Issues Analyst

SUBJECT: EDUCATION BRIEFING

Contents of this briefing:

I. The Week in Review

II. More on the National Education Association

Appendices:

-- Legislative update.
-- "Teacher Politics" by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Commentary, 2/83.
-- Selected press stories from the past week.

I. The Week in Review

The week ending Friday, June 10, saw a flurry of activity on the issue of education.

- President Reagan asked Secretary of Education Terrel Bell to develop "a national agenda for excellence in education." The agenda will include merit pay for teachers, tuition tax credits, education vouchers, raising high school graduation standards and persuading colleges and universities to give a higher priority to teacher education, to stiffen foreign language requirements, and to tighten admission standards.

- White House spokesman Larry Speakes signalled a shift in the President's previous adament position on abolishing the Department of Education. When asked whether the President still will attempt to kill the department, Speakes replied, "I wouldn't assume either way ... obviously, it could be very difficult legislatively ... there is an opportunity for the functions of the department to continue." There is speculation that a possible course for the President to take would be to give the department a new focus geared toward pushing for quality education.

- President Reagan began the first of a series of travel engagements with a focus on education issues, appearing in Minneapolis on June 9, before a regional panel of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The President is scheduled to appear at a high school in Knoxville, Tennessee on Tuesday, June 14th and to address the national PTA convention in Albuquerque New Mexico on Wednesday, June 15.

- Senator Edward Kennedy (D. Mass.) introduced a bill calling for a $500,000 "national summit conference" of teachers, parents and others on education issues.

- Walter Mondale launched a series of attacks on President Reagan's education policies, beginning at commencement exercises at the City University of New York, where he said in part:

  -- "(Mr. Reagan) has never lifted a finger for education, except to point it in blame. He is out of step with the American people who are demanding educational excellence for our children today."

  -- There has never been a president who tried to cut education more deeply, more ruthlessly or more insensitively. He can play with the numbers all he wants. The facts are unalterable. And the indictment is profound."

- At a press conference at the University of Minnesota on June 9, designed to counter President Reagan's appearance in the state on the same day, Mondale accused the President of creating a "sideshow" by posing as a friend of education and of pursuing a policy "not to spend any money on education" -- "a policy of slippage and decline."

LATE DEVELOPMENT, FRI. 6/10

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+PM-Reagan-Education; 1st Ld; a034;230
+Updates with Democrats' attack
+Precede HOPKINS, Minn.
+By CHRISTOPHER CONNELL
+Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) - Congressional Democrats lashed out today at President Reagan's education record, accusing him of trying ''to knock down ... and destroy'' the entire network of federal programs to help American schools.
House Majority Leader Jim Wright, D-Texas, said Reagan ''is not telling the truth'' when he denied Thursday that his administration had cut education spending. ''He has totally skewed the truth.''
Congress has raised federal spending on education somewhat in Reagan's term, ignoring Reagan's call for sharp cuts.
Reagan traveled to a Minneapolis suburb, Hopkins, Minn., on Thursday to defend his education policies and discuss how to implement the National Commission on Excellence in Education's call for tougher standards and better teaching in U.S. schools.
Wright joined Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., Rep. Carl D. Perkins, D-Ky., and Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., at a news conference called to launch a Democratic counterattack.
Kennedy derided Reagan's ''barnstorming and finger-pointing tour'' and accused him of ''unfairly blaming teachers for the conditions that exist.''
Reagan will make his first visit to a public school as president next Tuesday in Tennessee, then address a Parents Teachers Association convention in New Mexico. He said Wednesday in Hopkins that he intends to keep up the pressure to raise standards in schools and change the way teachers are paid.
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LATE DEVELOPMENT, CONT.

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DEMOCRATS
BY THOMAS FERRARO
WASHINGTON (UPI) -- TOP CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS FRIDAY WELCOMED PRESIDENT REAGAN'S "SUDDEN AND NEWFOUND DEVOTION TO EDUCATION," BUT SAID IT SHOULD BE TAKEN "WITH A GRAIN OF SALT."
IN TURN, HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADER JIM WRIGHT OF TEXAS, SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY OF MASSACHUSETTS, REP. CARL PERKINS OF KENTUCKY AND SEN. CLAIBORNE PELL OF RHODE ISLAND RIPPED THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD ON EDUCATION.
STANDING BEFORE CHARTS THAT SHOWED CUTS THE PAST TWO YEARS IN PROGRAMS RANGING FROM STUDENT AID TO SCHOOL LUNCH, THEY TOLD A PACKED NEWS CONFERENCE REAGAN HAS FAILED TO SEEK EXCELLENCE IN THE CLASSROOM.
"THE RHETORIC EMANATING FROM THE WHITE HOUSE IN RECENT DAYS HAS A VERY HOLLOW RING," KENNEDY SAID, REFERRING TO FIGURES SUCH AS REAGAN'S PROPOSED 29-PERCENT CUT IN VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION FUNDS AND A PROPOSED 77-PERCENT CUT IN PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED COLLEGE STUDENTS.
"THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORS OBVIOUSLY HOPE THAT ON THE ISSUE OF EDUCATION, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL WATCH WHAT HE SAYS, NOT WHAT HE DOES," HE SAID. "IN FACT, THE WHITE HOUSE HAS ALREADY EARNED ITS REPUTATION AS THE MOST ANTI-EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION IN OUR MODEN HISTORY."
DURING THE PAST MONTH, REAGAN HAS INCREASED HIS ATTENTION TO EDUCATION, MAKING SEVERAL SPEECHES ON THE NEED TO UPGRADE AMERICA'S SCHOOLS. HIS MOST RECENT WAS THURSDAY IN MINNESOTA WHERE HE CONCEDED IT WILL COST MORE TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS.
IN A JOINT STATEMENT, THE FOUR DEMOCRATS SAID:
"THE PRESIDENT'S RECORD ON EDUCATION PROVES THAT EDUCATION IS NOT A TOP PRIORITY -- NOT EVEN A PRIORITY -- OF THIS ADMINISTRATION.
"SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE, PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS DOGGEDLY PURSUED A STRATEGY OF CUTTING BUDGETS, ELIMINATING PROGRAMS AND ABOLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION."
THEY SAID, "THE PRESIDENT'S SUDDEN AND NEWFOUND DEVOTION TO EDUCATION IS WELCOME -- BUT WITH A GRAIN OF SALT."
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II. More on the National Education Association

Excerpts from the feature article "Teacher Politics" by Chester E. Finn, Jr., professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University, in the February issue of Commentary magazine:

- "... (E)xit polls in 1980 showed that more teachers voted for Reagan-Bush than for Carter-Mondale. But while rank-and-file members display political attitudes and voting behaviors that resemble those of their neighbors, the national unions and most of their state affiliates are firmly in the Democratic camp."

- "... (T)he successful schooling of children has steadily receded in the universe of NEA concerns."

- "At a time when many Americans are understandably alarmed by the slipshod quality of their children's education, we might fairly expect the major teacher's organizations to respond, perhaps even to take the lead in raising school standards, stiffening the curriculum, and insisting on stronger student achievement. In recent years, however, the National Education Association and its subdivisions have taken almost precisely the opposite approach to matters of educational quality. Their response has been,

  -- first, to discredit the evidence of qualitative deterioration and the means of acquiring such evidence;

  -- second, to savage the critics of school quality;

  -- third, to mount elaborate campaigns to persuade the public that American education is basically fine, and that any minor problems would be solved by the application of more money;

  -- fourth, steadfastly to refuse to let teachers be rewarded (or penalized) on the basis of their own, their pupils' or their schools' performance;

  -- fifth, to seek control of the agencies and processes by which standards are set for students and teachers alike; and,

  -- sixth, skillfully to employ the rhetoric of educational quality and excellence in advocating policies that would bring about nothing of the sort."

- "Terry Herndon, who is about to step down after ten eventful years as executive director of the NEA, compared the Educational Testing Service (which administers the SAT and other college and graduate-school entrance examinations) to 'armament manufacturers', ... and informed the 1979 NEA convention that

'Standardized tests maim in equally harsh ways more people than do Detroit cars.' "

- "The AFT (American Federation of Teachers) thinks otherwise. Indeed his union 'strongly supports testing,' wrote AFT president Albert Shanker in the Washington Post in 1980. 'We believe that tests tell us things that are important for students, parents, teachers, colleges, government, and the society at large to know. We also believe the public unquestionably has a right to know what we are doing in the schools -- how well or how badly.' "

- "The NEA's assault on the legitimacy of tests and the utility of testing naturally extends to examinations devised to appraise teacher qualifications, too ... (H)ere, too, the NEA has elected to stonewall, while the AFT has solidly endorsed the concept of testing new teachers before putting them in front of students."

- "Even mainstream educators such as the respected dean of the Stanford School of Education, J. Myron Atkin, and Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, have begun to voice their displeasure (with the NEA). 'The NEA,' writes Thomson in the widely-read educators journal Phi Delta Kappan, for example,'no longer contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning for students. It looks after the narrow interests of its members rather than after the broader interests of its constituency.' "

- "Though the federal government's role in elementary and secondary education is marginal, having furnished only eight cents of the school dollar even at its peak, Washington has been the NEA's political and policy focus since the mid-60's. And there has not been a single significant national candidate, issue, or congressional vote bearing on education on which the NEA has taken the side of caution, decentralization, diversity, or deregulation. Rather, it has systematically sought to extend the reach and augment the power of all three branches of the federal government."

- "The NEA's two great-and interwoven- goals have been the establishment of a Cabinet-level Department of Education and the boosting of federal spending on education to one-third of the nation's total public-school budget."

- "The NEA ... would fragment schooling itself along racial and ethnic lines. Bilingual education is only the beginning. Almost every imaginable minority group is the subject of an NEA resolution calling for special attention to its 'heritage and culture' in the curriculum, for various forms of 'self-determination' in educational policy-making (and often in general governance) for the affected group, for community or

parental control of its childrens' schools, and for classroom instruction by teachers of similar backgrounds."

- "The NEA and the organizations with which it cooperates would have children absorb the same values and beliefs that permeate its own governance system, its public-policy pronouncements, its lobbying efforts, its television and magazine advertisements, and the criteria by which it decides which candidates to support in state and national elections. Running throughout is an unstated but fairly coherent ideology familiar to all who have watched the evolution of radical political movements within the Western democracies during the past two decades."

- "The arms-freeze position adopted at the 1982 NEA convention warmly endorsed the Kennedy-Hatfield nuclear-freeze proposal and called for a 'complete halt in the nuclear-arms race.' "

- "(NEA executive director Terry) Herndon is as energetic as he is loquacious, and in recent months he has pushed the 'peace issue' to the top of the NEA's public-policy agenda ... and has assumed a major leadership role in forming peace coalitions and organizations. He is president of a new umbrella group called Citizens Against Nuclear War, and provides it with office space in the NEA headquarters building in Washington."

- "The current NEA legislative program ... calls upon Washington not to give military or economic assistance 'to any foreign government which violates or permits the violation of the basic rights of its citizens.' Well and good. But the next sentence states that 'For example, NEA shall work for cessation of aid to the current administrations in Guatemala and El Salvador.' No other examples are given."

- "In the case of the National Education Association, implicit and explicit politics seem to have converged around a single set of ideas and values. On the whole, these are now the doctrines of the Left. This is not true of the American Federation of Teachers, which is apt to end up supporting most of the same candidates on election day, but which infuses a quite different set of moral, cultural, and political values into the educational system itself, and into the society whose children it teaches."

STILL PENDING...

Fiscal 1983 Supplemental Appropriations, **H.R. 3069**	Awaiting Senate floor action is a bill to give the $134.4 million Title III program for financially needy institutions $4.8 million extra in fiscal 1983. The Senate Appropriations Committee May 26 approved the measure, which has not been scheduled for floor action (HED, May 30). The House May 25 approved its version of the bill, which also includes the Title III funds.
Fiscal 1984 Education Appropriations	Many education witnesses testified before the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee May 23-24. The Senate Labor-HHS-ED Appropriations Subcommittee wrapped up its hearings May 10 (HED, May 11). No date is set for a markup by either panel.
National Institutes of Health Reauthorization, **H.R. 2350, H.R. 1510**	Awaiting House floor action is the NIH bill passed May 10 by the Energy and Commerce Committee. That measure, for which no floor action has been set, would allow greater authorization increases in the cancer and heart institutes and National Research Service Awards than would the bill passed April 13 by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee (HED, May 13).
Education of the Handicapped Amendments, **S. 1341, H.R. 2999**	The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee May 18 approved the bill to reauthorize sections of the Education of the Handicapped Act and create a program to help handicapped students go from high school to college or job training (HED, May 20). The marked-up bill was introduced May 23 by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah.
Sea Grant Reauthorization, **S. 855, H.R. 1643**	The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee May 4 approved the bill to reauthorize the National Sea Grant College Program. The House measure was passed by the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee April 13. No date has been set for floor action in either chamber.
National Science Foundation Reauthorization, **H.R. 2066, S. 1087, S. 1024**	The House May 12 approved a $1.3 billion NSF authorization bill for fiscal 1984, allowing $50 million more than the administration's $180 million request for improving academic research equipment. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee May 9 announced approval of its $1.3 billion bill, which leaves science education to the science and math bill pending before the Senate, S. 1285 (HED, May 10). The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee March 22 approved the administration's $1.3 billion request verbatim. No date has been set for floor action on either Senate bill.
Veterans' Education Assistance, **H.R. 1400, S. 8, S. 9, S. 667, S. 691**	Military personnel with three years of service would get education benefits of $300 a month for three years under the measure approved May 10 by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HED, May 11). No date has been set for floor action on the bill. June hearings are planned on the Senate measures.
Foreign Student Immigration Restrictions, **S. 529, H.R. 1510**	The Senate May 18 passed the measure that would, among other things, restrict the immigration of some foreign students. The House Judiciary Committee May 5 approved its measure, which was passed by the Immigration, Refugees and International Law Subcommittee April 6. Floor action has not been set in the House.
Mathematics, Science and Foreign Language Education Improvement, **S. 1285, H.R. 1310**	The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee May 11 approved a $425 million bill to authorize fiscal 1984 math and science education programs administered by the Education Department and the National Science Foundation. The House bill, passed March 2, would authorize the same amount for fiscal 1984 (HED, May 12). Senate floor action has not yet been set.
Vocational Education Reauthorization, **H.R. 11, H.R. 2940, S. 1039**	Vocational education was the topic of May 18 and 19 hearings in the House Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee (HED, May 20). No further action is scheduled on the matter before the House panel or the Senate Education, Arts and Humanities Subcommittee.
Contributions of Scientific Equipment, **S. 1194, S. 1195**	The Senate Finance Subcommittee on Taxation and Debt Management held a hearing May 27 on bills to give tax breaks to businesses for donations of scientific equipment to colleges and schools and to expand the tax credit provided for support of basic research (HED, May 30). No other action is expected soon.

Teacher Politics

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

THE political activism of America's two major teachers' unions is well known. The National Education Association (NEA), with 1.6 million members, and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), now numbering 600,000, are among the largest, best organized, and most energetic interest groups in the United States. As campaign consultant Matt Reese once observed, "Teachers are the ideal political organization. They're in every precinct." Moreover, they are generally well-educated, likely to vote, mindful of public affairs, articulate, and possessed of ample spare time. All that this long-slumbering political giant needed was to be awakened, a process that commenced within the AFT during the 1960's and within the NEA in the early 70's.

Teacher-backed candidates sometimes lose. The most celebrated defeat, of course, was Jimmy Carter's political erasure by Ronald Reagan despite fierce NEA support of and moderate AFT enthusiasm for Carter. But the teachers' choices more often win. Even after discounting for such canny tactics as betting on a number of candidates who are sure to triumph, and claiming credit for some victories in which teacher support actually made little or no difference, the electoral influence of the AFT and the NEA remains a force to conjure with, if not so strong a force as they would have us think.

NEA and AFT support and endorsements nearly always go to the Democratic candidate in a general election. The same cannot be said for the votes of individual teachers. A quarter of all public-school teachers—and nearly two-fifths of those with any party affiliation—describe themselves as Republicans, and exit polls in 1980 showed that more teachers voted for Reagan-Bush than for Carter-Mondale. But while rank-and-file members display political attitudes and voting behaviors that resemble those of their neighbors, the national unions and most of their state affiliates are firmly in the Democratic camp, except when an occasional Republican "friend of education" gains their support for his incumbency, as Senators Stafford and Weicker did from the NEA (but not the AFT) in 1982. Of course this means that victorious Republicans rarely owe any debts or favors to the teachers' unions, and that Republican platforms and legislative programs now pay little heed to teacher interests. Insofar as those interests are thought by candidates and officials to be identical with the well-being of American education, we will tend to see education labeled as a "Democratic concern" rather than as an integral part of the culture and the society, which in turn will foster the further politicization along partisan lines of major educational policy decisions at the state and national level.

The teachers' unions, however, do not confine themselves to education issues. In fact, the successful schooling of children has steadily receded in the universe of NEA concerns. While it shines far brighter in the AFT cosmos, it would be as inaccurate to describe the politics and policies of either union primarily in educational terms as to characterize either one as a "professional organization of teachers"—something that the AFT never called itself, but that the NEA used for many years to veil its transformation into a militant public-employees' union.

In view of the breadth and diversity of the issues, domestic and international, educational and noneducational, that now suffuse both groups, one can reasonably ask what they stand for, how they define the culture, perceive the society, and view the nation's role in the world. This would be a significant question even if the only power of the teachers' unions were electoral. It becomes infinitely more consequential when we consider that their members also wield what is left of the moral power and intellectual authority that virtually all the world's civilizations have ceded to those in whose trust they place the education of the young. When that implicit moral power of the teacher is joined to the explicit political force of a major national organization, it is important to understand the ideological foundations. And these, one quickly learns, differ markedly between the two major teachers' unions, notwithstanding their outward similarities. Both the NEA and the AFT are ambitious, aggressive, and fiercely competitive unions with all the trappings, admirable and otherwise, of such organizations. But there the likenesses cease and the differences begin, both in their pronounce-

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ments and actions on national affairs and in the curricular and pedagogical guidance that they give teachers.

AT A time when many Americans are understandably alarmed by the slipshod quality of their children's education, we might fairly expect the major teachers' organizations to respond, perhaps even to take the lead in raising school standards, stiffening the curriculum, and insisting on stronger student achievement. Self-interest alone should dictate this, as it is clear that taxpayers will not spend more for unsatisfactory schools, nor will parents who can find alternatives willingly leave their children in them. With enrollments shrinking as a result of demographic changes, teaching jobs in most fields are already scarce, and any large-scale exodus to private schools (which are rarely unionized) or to home instruction would palpably worsen the situation. With teacher salaries much the largest item in school budgets, and exquisitely sensitive to voter action on bond issues, levies, and tax-limitation initiatives, concern for the "bread-and-butter" issues that have been the real strength of the teachers' unions would also seem to dictate close attention to educational quality, if only to persuade the voting public that schools offer value for money.

At one time, the National Education Association conscientiously assumed such responsibilities. When it invited Charles W. Eliot and Nicholas Murray Butler to convene the Committee on Secondary School Studies in 1892, it was responding to the wholesale confusion, curricular disarray, and variegated standards that marked American high-school education at the time. And the result, after barely a year of intensive work by dozens of the nation's most distinguished educators, was a report on curriculum and teacher preparation that for a quarter-century served as the premier national standard by which schools and school systems evaluated their own policies. It was a high, even unbending, standard that was as firm toward teachers and the institutions that prepare them as toward the curricula and students in their schools.

In recent years, however, the National Education Association and its subdivisions have taken almost precisely the opposite approach to matters of educational quality. Their response has been, first, to discredit the evidence of qualitative deterioration and the means of acquiring such evidence; second, to savage the critics of school quality; third, to mount elaborate campaigns to persuade the public that American education is basically fine, and that any minor problems would be solved by the application of more money; fourth, steadfastly to refuse to let teachers be rewarded (or penalized) on the basis of their own, their pupils', or their schools' performance; fifth, to seek control of the agencies and processes by which standards are set for students and teachers alike; and, sixth, skillfully to employ the rhetoric of educational quality and excellence in advocating policies that would bring about nothing of the sort.

For all their shortcomings, tests and test results are the surest and most objective indicators of whether youngsters are learning what they should. And most of the results of most of the tests given to American students over the past decade and a half show with painful clarity that overall pupil performance is inadequate and worsening. The long decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores is merely the best known. After an extensive review for the *Public Interest* of virtually all the available evidence on educational attainment, Barbara Lerner accurately concluded that, while youngsters in the first four grades have held their own, the achievement decline in grades five through twelve is large and irrefutable. Moreover, when American students were compared with their counterparts in other lands on 19 different tests, Lerner found, "[W]e were never ranked first or second; we came in last three times and, if comparisons are limited to other developed nations only, the U.S. ranked at the bottom seven times. . . ."

THE evidence, in sum, is conclusive. But of course it bears attention only if one accepts the validity of tests and testing. The National Education Association, in the main, does not. In the late 1970's, it declared war on standardized testing—the only kind that permits comparisons to be made among children, schools, states, generations of pupils, or nations. Terry Herndon, who is about to step down after ten eventful years as executive director of the NEA, compared the Educational Testing Service (which administers the SAT and other college and graduate-school entrance examinations) to "armament manufacturers," and —perhaps mirroring the close collaboration on this issue between his organization and Ralph Nader— informed the 1979 NEA convention that "Standardized tests maim in equally harsh ways more people than do Detroit cars."

The NEA's anti-testing campaign continues today in the media, in the corridors of Congress and state legislatures (which can discourage and discredit testing, while escalating its cost, through so-called "truth in testing" statutes), and in gatherings of educators.

The association's speeches, testimony, and advertisements are often ingenious, replete with photographs of tearful six-year-olds—allegedly branded "below average" by their first standardized tests— and bright-eyed high-school students whose college and career prospects are being blighted by examinations. They are aimed primarily at parents, who naturally seek to maximize their children's opportunities, and at minority groups and others apt to resonate to the suggestion that tests foster inequality. "Intelligence, aptitude, and achievement tests," states an NEA resolution, "have historically been used to differentiate rather than to measure performance and have, therefore, prevented equal educational opportunities for all students, particularly

minorities, lower socioeconomic groups, and women." Hence tests should not be administered when they are "biased," which word is left entirely undefined, or when they are "potentially damaging to a student's self-concept," which potential naturally dwells in every imaginable test, achievement measure, or assessment. The NEA also rejects the use of any test to "compare individual schools or teachers," or as "a basis for monetary remuneration or promotions." Though teachers are encouraged to devise quizzes and tests for use with their own students, no one outside the individual classroom should be permitted to impose such measures, or to do anything with—or about—their results.

The AFT thinks otherwise. Indeed, his union "strongly supports testing," wrote AFT president Albert Shanker in the Washington *Post* in 1980. "We believe that tests tell us things that are important for students, parents, teachers, colleges, government, and the society at large to know. We also believe the public unquestionably has a right to know what we are doing in the schools—how well or how badly."

Available evidence suggests that a majority of individual teachers share Shanker's view. The NEA's own poll in 1980 showed that half or more of all teachers deemed standardized achievement tests to be appropriate for evaluating school effectiveness, as the "primary measure of student learning," and for determining pupil promotion, while three-quarters would also use such tests to help evaluate curriculum and to track or group students.

The NEA's assault on the legitimacy of tests and the utility of testing naturally extends to examinations devised to appraise teacher qualifications, too. Eighteen states now administer, or are preparing, systematic assessments of individual competence prior to awarding teaching certificates. Some use the National Teachers Examination, developed by the Educational Testing Service. Others have devised their own measures, as have a few large city school systems. This widening movement contrasts sharply with the historic pattern of licensing anyone who graduates from an "approved" teacher-education program or who can display a prescribed list of courses on his college transcript. The change results partly from the slackening demand for new teachers, which permits greater selectivity than was possible when pupil enrollments were soaring, but even more from mounting national alarm about the deteriorating intellectual caliber of such teachers, now drawn increasingly from the bottom quarter of college classes that may be no great shakes even in their higher elevations.

Although a legitimate debate persists about the utility of paper-and-pencil tests as a means of gauging the *skills* that teachers use in the classroom, there is no doubt that such examinations can assess the breadth of a teacher's general education and the depth of his knowledge of the particular subjects he will teach. But here, too, the NEA has elected to stonewall, while the AFT has solidly endorsed the concept of testing new teachers before putting them in front of students. A resolution adopted at the NEA convention states that "[E]xaminations such as the National Teachers Examination must not be used as a condition of employment, evaluation, [or as a] criterion for certification, placement, or promotion of teachers." But the AFT, Shanker says, "would *like* to see the testing of all new teachers before they are hired, a far from universal practice at present. . . . Why not begin now to insure at least minimal qualifications . . . through universal entry tests?"

THE NEA is not so naive as to suppose that public concern with teacher quality can be entirely shrugged off. And so, after several years of effort and internal dissension, it came forth in late 1982 with a 64-page "action plan" to promote "excellence in our schools" through teacher education, primarily by spelling out dozens of criteria for college programs in teacher preparation. This is a useful document, as far as it goes, but that is not very far. As noted by Virginia Robinson, the editor of a respected newsletter called *Education Times*: "Missing from the NEA position paper . . . is any attempt to assess existing teacher-education programs. . . . [It] does not address one of the most troublesome problems currently plaguing teacher education—the evidently poor academic qualifications of teacher candidates. . . . There is no mention of test scores—on which current teacher candidates apparently rank well below entrants to most other professional preparations. . . ."

Tucked away in the recommendations, however, is another cardinal tenet of the NEA, namely, that it should control all teacher training and employment via the establishment within each state of an "autonomous agency" that would be "governed by a majority of teachers who are members of the majority national teachers' organization, to approve teacher-preparation programs and certificate prospective teachers." This derives from the NEA's long-standing assertion that "the profession must govern itself" and is of course consistent with the approach of doctors and lawyers to their own professions. In righteously advancing such policies, the NEA benefits enormously from its prior status as a professional association rather than a labor union (as it is now officially designated by both the Labor Department and the Internal Revenue Service). But it is questionable how far society should go in permitting a public-employees' union, which has won exclusive bargaining rights and compulsory dues in many jurisdictions, which insists on (and not infrequently practices) the right to strike, and which demands permanent tenure for any teacher with more than three years' experience, also to control the terms and procedures by which the state determines individual qualifications to enter the classroom in the first place, particularly at a time when student achievement and teacher quality are both declining and when the NEA denies the legitimacy of the primary indicators of those declines.

Tests are not the only villains in the NEA's account of what is right and what is wrong with American education. The standards that underlie "standardized" tests are themselves held to be invalid. Because every child (and every teacher) is unique, the reasoning goes, it is unfair to force him into any kind of mold. Because educational aspirations and career plans differ, it is wrong to make everyone leap the same hurdles. Because minority groups may be disadvantaged by standards devised by the "majority," all such standards are immoral, illegal, and probably unconstitutional. And because fulfilling any set of "minimum standards" will tend to become the foremost objective of schooling, the minimum may become a ceiling, thereby blocking the achievement of true excellence.

Each of these assertions has a long and sometimes honorable tradition that dates back to the earliest days of formal education. Each is capable of evoking nods of agreement from parents and murmurs of approval from teachers. But when applied to schools and children, at least in the forms in which these principles have been most widely practiced in the past two decades, each is also a warrant for educational mediocrity. Of the many critics and commentators who have pointed this out, few are more perceptive than the AFT's Shanker, whose weekly New York *Times* column (run as a paid advertisement) is regularly used for thoughtful exhortations to higher school standards and for summaries of research findings on school effectiveness, and whose union resolutions and publications bespeak seriousness of purpose about the development of student skills and character, curriculum content, and measurable achievement. Whether one views Shanker as an educational statesman or as the crafty guardian-nurturer of a goose that lays golden eggs, a public school run according to his lights would probably be a better school than most children attend today.*

The NEA, however, is reasonably satisfied with the educational system the way it is, save perhaps for insufficient funding. That, at least, is what it would have us believe. To encourage such thinking, the association has engaged the services of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency and embarked on a major national public-relations campaign on behalf of "American education." This has included full-page ads in general-circulation magazines such as *Newsweek*, and extended commercials on network television. Furthermore, when skeptical journalists inquire about educational problems, the NEA tends to deny that they are serious. The Washington *Post* recently ran a thoughtful, three-part series on illiteracy by Joanne Omang. "Prominent among the nonbelievers," she reported, "is the National Education Association. . . . 'The problem is not nearly as great as some people claim,' said Don Cameron, NEA's assistant executive director. '[T]he tendency is to stress the 15 percent of students who do poorly over the 85 percent who do well.' "

EVEN while denying the existence of significant shortcomings, discrediting educational standards, and disavowing the surest means of enforcing them, the NEA leadership is much too adroit not to recognize the need for a more satisfying explanation to the public and, especially, to its own members, of why so many people are disgruntled about the quality of American education. And the chosen explanation is shrewd indeed. Evil people, one learns, are saying bad things about schools and teachers in order to further their own unsavory ends: the destruction of public education; the oppression of minorities, the poor, and the dispossessed; the transfer of resources into less worthy purposes (including, especially, the arms race); and the victory of reactionary social policies and political objectives over progressive goals.

The Reagan administration and its budget priorities have become the chief scapegoats, but assuredly not the only ones. "In recent months," NEA president Willard H. McGuire proclaimed in his opening address to the 1982 convention in Los Angeles, "the education profession has seen an unprecedented attack on public education. The attackers assault our schools, burn our books, deny funding and even loans to our students, defame our system, and attack educators directly." In case the martial imagery were not clear enough to the 7,000 delegates, McGuire returned to it later in the proceedings: "It's been said of America that every generation must fight a war to preserve its freedom. I submit that we are in a war today," he said. "It is not a war on foreign soil, but a war that is taking place in every schoolroom and in every state capital and in every congressional district. It is a war for the survival of public education."

This was strong talk for a convention dominated by disarmament resolutions, anti-war rallies, and anti-nuclear addresses, but the contemporary NEA leadership seems less diffident about targeting enemies when they are Americans. "When school opens this fall," McGuire explained, "many of our colleagues won't be there because of the Reagan budget cuts. Many of our children will come to school hungry because of the Reagan budget cuts. . . . There are citizens and special-interest groups who would destroy our public schools, and in the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, they have found an agent. . . ."

The NEA's attack on these "groups" and their "agent" is shrill, well-coordinated, and sustained, notwithstanding McGuire's bland assertion that "[w]e refuse to emulate our critics. We will continue to appeal to the more charitable and more sensible instincts of the American public."

There is little charity to be found in a 292-page "workshop-resource book" published by the NEA

* Unfortunately, his educational vision has a large blind spot when it comes to private schools, which the AFT—here in complete accord with the NEA—regards as a threat and spares no effort to bar from educational legitimacy, social approbation, and governmental funds.

in 1981 to assist teachers with "survival-skills training . . . in countering the attacks on public education by the conglomerates of the radical Right." But there are long lists of individuals, groups, and organizations said to be devoted to "the goal of putting into place their own economic and political agenda for the nation—an agenda that would escalate military expenditures and erase most of the social and educational advances of the past generation." With a fine lack of concern for ideological nuance and policy focus, the lists run from tax-limitation groups to gun-owners' associations, from the Moral Majority to the Council for a Union-free Environment, from the Heritage Foundation to the Coalition for Peace through Strength, from the Eagle Forum to the Hoover Institution, from the International Center for Economic Policy Studies to the John Birch Society.

The single most striking characteristic of the lists is how little most of the named organizations have to do with elementary and secondary education. For in reality, apart from a handful of education specialists at such places as the National Right to Work Committee and the Heritage Foundation, the Right pays much less attention to the NEA than Herndon and his associates would have the rank-and-file believe. Far more biting criticism has come in recent months from such inconvenient quarters as the *Reader's Digest*, the *New Republic*, and the *Washington Monthly*. Even mainstream educators such as the respected dean of the Stanford School of Education, J. Myron Atkin, and Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, have begun to voice their displeasure. "The NEA," writes Thomson in the widely-read educators' journal *Phi Delta Kappan*, for example, "no longer contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning for students. It looks after the narrow interests of its members rather than after the broader interests of its constituency."

FACED with such open peer criticism, the NEA naturally needs a larger cause around which to rally its members, each of whom pays several hundred dollars a year to belong to the national, state, and local associations (for which one receives few direct benefits other than group-liability insurance), and it needs a convincing rationale to elicit from teachers the additional millions in Political Action Committee contributions that form the fiscal foundation of its political edifice. Ronald Reagan's "war" on federal school aid and the New Right's alleged assault on education itself meet these needs quite satisfactorily.

Though the federal government's role in elementary and secondary education is marginal, having furnished only eight cents of the school dollar even at its peak, Washington has been the NEA's political and policy focus since the mid-60's. And there has not been a single significant national candidate, issue, or congressional vote bearing on education on which the NEA has taken the side of caution, decentralization, diversity, or deregulation. Rather, it has systematically sought to extend the reach and augment the power of all three branches of the federal government. The NEA favors compulsory busing, the vigorous enforcement of affirmative-action quotas, bilingual education that "uses a student's primary language as the principal medium of instruction in a bicultural setting," and exacting federal requirements for the education of handicapped youngsters. It has endorsed virtually every one of the dozens of "categorical" programs —from metric education to women's education to small-business-management education to career education—that have cluttered up the federal statute books, bureaucratized the nation's school systems, and homogenized the curriculum in recent years, and it has bitterly opposed "block grants," program consolidations, and any restoration of authority to state and local governments.

The NEA's two great—and interwoven—goals have been the establishment of a Cabinet-level Department of Education and the boosting of federal spending on education to one-third of the nation's total public-school budget. The first of these was achieved in 1979, when the Carter administration dutifully kept the promise that the President had made to the NEA in return for its 1976 election endorsement and pushed through Congress the legislation establishing the Cabinet agency, despite the misgivings of some of his own advisers and the opposition of many other education groups, including the American Federation of Teachers. The second goal, which would add about $25 billion to the federal budget, is far from realization, and likely to stay that way for some time to come. Indeed, few people outside NEA Washington headquarters even take it seriously. But the preservation of existing federal funds and programs from attack is a satisfactory replacement on the NEA's political agenda. And the maladroit education policies of the Reagan administration have helped the NEA to reshape its image from promoter of big government and federal intervention to a defender of the public schools themselves.

During the Carter years, the NEA tended to isolate itself from the school-board associations, the principals' associations, and other moderate education groups, from most of the rest of organized labor, and from such exponents of liberal opinion as the editorial page of the Washington *Post*. It was too greedy, its federal-policy agenda too interventionist, and its quest for political power too brazen. The Reagan administration has almost singlehandedly ended that isolation through its lack of evident interest in public education, the sharp reductions it has sought in existing school-aid programs, its parallel willingness to succor private schools, its uneven handling of civil-rights policy,* and its support for several New Right educational causes, particularly classroom prayer.

* See my article, "'Affirmative Action' Under Reagan," COMMENTARY, April 1982.

It has thereby unified the education community more solidly than anything since Richard Nixon's vetoes of congressional school-aid appropriations, has strengthened the links among education, labor, and civil-rights organizations, and has enormously improved relations between that coalition and many journalists, academics, and Democratic politicians. Even the AFT has buried the hatchet with the NEA for purposes of salvaging federal school-aid programs, combating tuition tax credits and—remarkably—preserving the Department of Education. The enemy of his enemy, Shanker recognizes, must be his ally, at least in the battles over federal education policy being fought on Capitol Hill.

Such alliances of convenience do not, however, represent a significant narrowing of the ideological chasm between the NEA and the AFT or, for that matter, between the NEA and the political culture of most Americans.

A reasonable facsimile of any organization's political ethos can usually be glimpsed in the rules and procedures by which it governs itself. The National Education Association proudly and openly organizes its own governing bodies and staffing patterns around racial and ethnic quotas. The bylaws state: "It is the policy of the association to achieve ethnic-minority delegate representation at least equal to the proportion of identified ethnic-minority populations within the state." Any affiliate that fails to gain executive approval of its plan "to achieve a total state and local delegation . . . which reflects these ethnic-minority proportions" risks being denied the right to participate in the annual convention (except to vote for national officers and dues increases!).

Color-consciousness also governs election of directors and top association leadership. The NEA constitution stipulates that "members from ethnic minorities shall comprise at least 20 percent of the board," a quota that must be met even if it is necessary for the annual convention to elect *additional* directors "to assure such ethnic-minority representation." Each state delegation on the national board must likewise meet a quota; if the first three directors from a particular state "do not include at least one ethnic-minority person," a fourth shall be elected "who is from an ethnic-minority group."

For uninhibited attentiveness to race, however, it is difficult to improve upon the practice of the NEA, at its annual presentation of "human and civil-rights awards," of identifying recipients by their color in the printed program of the ceremony itself.

Not surprisingly, the NEA envisions a society in which other institutions are organized along similar lines. This is manifest in its policy resolutions and other public statements, which exhibit none of the usual confusion about goals and quotas, or any misgivings about reverse discrimination. "It may be necessary," resolution E-13 states bluntly, for employers "to give preference in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies to certain racial groups or women or men to overcome past discrimination." Nor are race, color, religion, and gender the only characteristics that warrant protection. The current list also includes "residence, physical disability, political activities, professional-association activity, age, marital status, family relationship, sex and sexual orientation." And the personnel decisions that must be protected from all such discrimination include those under which a person is "employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, or retired." In fact, the only quotas explicitly frowned upon in NEA resolutions are "tenure quotas."

Because declining school enrollments and budget constraints are shrinking the nation's overall teaching force, the NEA has sought to give special protection to minority-group members when layoffs and reductions-in-force are carried out by school systems. The contract it negotiated in South Bend, Indiana, for example, states baldly that "No minority bargaining unit employee shall be laid off."

Such practices clash sharply with the time-honored union doctrine of seniority, and have produced a particularly vigorous dispute between the NEA and the AFT, which adheres to that doctrine in particular, and has opposed race-based employment practices and quotas in general.

Whatever one may think of teacher seniority as an educational policy, it is preferable to racialism as a social policy. In this, as in its overall view of the proper ordering of the democracy, the American Federation of Teachers resists the classification of individuals according to outward characteristics and group identities, both in its own actions and in the actions of others. The AFT's commitment to nondiscrimination is long-standing, firm, and sincere—it abolished "dual" (black and white) affiliates at the state and local level well before the NEA, and 7 of its 34 current executive-council members are black, while 11 are women—but it is a commitment to individual opportunity, not to group quotas and reverse discrimination. The pertinent AFT resolution "reject[s] quota policies which violate the very meaning of 'equal protection' by prescribing remedies for discrimination that are themselves discriminatory." The same view animates Shanker's frequent columns and forceful speeches on federal affirmative-action mandates, Office for Civil Rights regulations, and Supreme Court decisions. And it permeates the AFT's view of what children should be taught in school, the language in which they should be taught, and the values that should undergird their education.

The NEA, by contrast, would fragment schooling itself along racial and ethnic lines. Bilingual education is only the beginning. Almost every imaginable minority group is the subject of an NEA resolution calling for special attention to its "heritage and culture" in the cur-

riculum, for various forms of "self-determination" in educational policy-making (and often in general governance) for the affected group, for community or parental control of its children's schools, and for classroom instruction by teachers of similar backgrounds.

What is missing, of course, is any clear recognition of a common American culture, nationhood, or polity. This lack of an anchor not infrequently causes the NEA to get caught in some treacherous currents when it seeks to give specific guidance to classroom teachers. One example may be seen in a 1977 volume entitled *Cross-Cultural Education* which the NEA still distributes as part of its extensive curriculum library. Here, and in similar publications, one encounters a far clearer and more purposeful ideology than the bland "pluralism" that pervades the association's public statements and resolutions. One encounters the unmistakable hint that American social, political, and economic values are, in a word, evil.

How else is one to view the statement in this volume that "Americans have allowed a national climate of prejudice, hate, racism, and sexism to grow"?

How else is one to interpret a suggested interdisciplinary unit on "the recent oil embargo in West Asia and its international sociopolitical consequences" in which these topics for discussions are proposed to the teaching team?:

> The economics class might address the nomenclature of the international economic system, exploring how it is possible that a few Western nations control the flow of goods and services around the world. A mode of inquiry might center around the statement that three million whites in Africa enjoy a very high standard of living, while fifteen million blacks on the same continent exist essentially in economic slavery. The language-arts class might explore the reasons why English is the international language or examine the influence of English in promulgating European values and attitudes among non-European nations. . . . The political-science class might explore the sociopolitical impact of the oil embargo on American multinational corporations operating in newly decolonized countries such as Angola and Mozambique.

Lest any teacher be troubled by the discrepancy between the implicit world view encountered here and the ideas that he may have come upon elsewhere, *Cross-Cultural Education* offers reassurance. A chapter entitled "So-Called Liberals and So-Called Intellectuals" explains who is and is not to be trusted: "Organizational efforts to address manifestations of dehumanization have been effectively resisted, and in too many instances, completely stifled—not by the so-called racists, but by the so-called liberals and the so-called intellectuals. . . . [B]oth types have special destructive potentials for negating polycultural efforts." The worrisome potential of the "so-called liberals" is their propensity to engage in "complex behaviors" that have, at their roots, the "psychology of racism." Such behaviors include a tendency to defer action on one problem until an antecedent condition is alleviated, and to engage in "the well-known liberal ploy, divide-and-conquer," which amounts to fostering "certain conditions that set one oppressed ethnocultural group against another."

As for the "so-called intellectuals," their cardinal sin is to "obscure major issues affecting the progress of oppressed ethnocultural groups" and thereby "to prolong any decision-making process that could facilitate the achievement of humanistic equity." The solitary example given is the practice of using data attesting to increased minority enrollment in college "to support the distorted contention of some liberals and intellectuals that competence via educational preparation assures equitable upward mobility." A remarkable statement in any situation, but truly striking when published under the imprimatur of the National Education Association, even when accompanied by the standard disclaimer of responsibility for the contents. The man who wrote *Cross-Cultural Education*, it may be noted, was identified as Associate Superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

ONE wants to avoid recklessness in attributing motives and affixing political labels, but in reflecting upon the many societies that at one time or another have encouraged their teachers and students to view the world through lenses such as these, it is difficult to identify a single one that could accurately be termed democratic. Certainly this interpretation of the role of ideas and intellectuals within a political culture ill-becomes an organization whose principal criticism of its own perceived antagonists is the threat they purportedly pose to academic freedom.

The steadiest flow of such material into the NEA circulation system comes from an organization called the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC), which is not part of the NEA but which has co-sponsored several individual projects with it, which received an NEA "Human and Civil-Rights Special Award" in 1982, and which is listed in the NEA "yellow pages" of useful resources for teachers.

One such venture was the preparation by CIBC, in conjunction with the National and Connecticut Education Associations, of a kit of teacher materials about the Ku Klux Klan. The purpose was certainly laudable, and many of the materials are informative and useful, but the interpretation leaves something to be desired. "[I]t is important to remember," the authors caution, "that the Klan is only the tip of the iceberg, the most visible and obvious manifestation of the entrenched racism in our society."

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) termed this approach "disturbing and troublesome," and pointed out that "racist ideas, contrary to the NEA's basic theme, are antithetical to most Americans today. The nation's thrust is to achieve racial

equality, undo past wrongs, and insure the growth of freedom."

The AFT's Shanker echoed the ADL's concern in his column. "Why aren't all the facts given to the students so that they can arrive at conclusions for themselves?" he asked. "Should students leave the classroom filled with shame about what America once was—and without any sense of pride in what it is now and is trying to be?"

But the NEA is undaunted. It continues to distribute *Violence, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Struggle for Equality* through its "professional library" for $4.95 a copy, and its December 1982 newsletter announced that sales had topped 13,000 copies, indicating "that teachers nationwide are using this curriculum resource."

The joint ventures of the NEA and the Council on Interracial Books for Children are not confined to the Klan, or indeed to the detection and elimination of racism. Another combined project was a 1981 report on romantic novels aimed at the preteen and teen-age markets. That many such books are dreadful scarcely bears repeating. What is noteworthy, however, are the assumptions underlying the criticisms proffered by the NEA and the CIBC. The stated objective of the exercise, of course, was to "eliminate bias" from children's books. But it turns out that among the prominent varieties of bias of which many such books are culpable is a disposition to favor heterosexual love. In one of the briefer articles in the report, a self-described "adult lesbian" observes that "No romance novel ever gave me the slightest hint that girls (and women) could, and did, stay together.... Fortunately, I eventually escaped from the entrapment of these novels. I am concerned that the adolescent years of those who may be gay or lesbian and are now reading these 'happiness package' novels will be made far more difficult than necessary."

The other forms of "bias" that the CIBC excoriates in its regular bulletin and miscellaneous publications are numerous, pervasive, and occasionally inventive. Criticisms range from "stereotypes in amusement parks" to an attack on *Sesame Street*. But some of them are unfunny. In an adulatory review of a new Harper & Row children's novel about a fourteen-year-old Puerto Rican "street punk" in New York, for example, the youthful protagonist is hailed for being a "hustler with morals" (who "hustles a full meal from a sympathetic waitress but leaves her a large tip, explaining 'I'm broke for restaurants, not people' "). More remarkable still, we are asked to admire the book's portrayal of the lad's father, who "is in Attica for having assaulted a policeman during a Puerto Rico independence day rally" which "suggests that he has a sense of self-respect and self-determination."

Such materials are a long way from bland convention resolutions in support of federal aid for bilingual education, but they partake of essentially the same view of American society, of the role of education in that society, and of the teacher's responsibilities. The NEA and the organizations with which it cooperates would have children absorb the same values and beliefs that permeate its own governance system, its public-policy pronouncements, its lobbying efforts, its television and magazine advertisements, and the criteria by which it decides which candidates to support in state and national elections. Running throughout is an unstated but fairly coherent ideology familiar to all who have watched the evolution of radical political movements within the Western democracies during the past two decades. It includes the denial of nationhood; the celebration of individual and, especially, group differences; the substitution of color (and gender, ethnic, linguistic, etc.) consciousness for color-blindness; the delegitimization of all authority save that of the state; the purification and reconstruction of political institutions to make them more "responsive"; the gradual eclipse of liberty by equality; the defaming of economic structures and the ethos that sustains them; the creeping politicization of the culture; the degradation of traditional morality; the idealization of modernism and relativism in values, attitudes, and behavior; and the encouragement of citizens in general and children in particular to despise the rules and customs by which their society orders itself, including those that make it a functional (if imperfect) democracy.

It would be wrong to infer that the NEA harbors such an ideology at the level of organizational consciousness; and certainly it would be inaccurate to impute such views to American classroom teachers, 70 percent of whom describe their political philosophies as "conservative" or "tending" that way, and most of whom share the values and beliefs of their relatives and neighbors in every community in the land. But it is impossible to examine the policies, practices, and publications of the National Education Association without at least concluding that it has lost (or jettisoned) its anchor and is drifting rapidly into some well-charted but exceedingly dangerous waters. And probably carrying more than a few teachers and pupils with it.

The American Federation of Teachers, by contrast, is securely moored. A fair sampling of the educational and political values it seeks to impart can be found in the Winter 1982 issue of its journal, *American Educator*, which in recent years has emerged as one of the most solid of the innumerable periodicals aimed at schoolteachers. It contains six major articles. In one, the president of St. John's College urges restoration in the schools of "a traditional liberal-arts education—not just job training—which will provide a solid foundation for youngsters to become imaginative citizens prepared for the world of work and able to enjoy and contribute to society." Another celebrates the ability of the "great books" to rekindle teachers' "excitement about learning." A third, by philosopher Mortimer J. Adler, summarizes the boldest and most imaginative of the many recent commission

reports on restructuring the curriculum and strengthening the pedagogy of American schools. The fourth is an essay-review by Judge Robert Bork of a recent history of key Supreme Court decisions and constitutional evolution. The fifth is a selection of material that teachers might use in teaching "honesty," this being the latest in a superb series on "traditional values" that previously addressed responsibility, courage, and compassion. Finally, there is a critical appraisal by Harold Isaacs of "myths" about the Chinese Cultural Revolution that are fostered by writers who fail to note "how many died, were shot, beaten, tortured, frozen, or starved to death during this ordeal."

This is not the first time that the American Federation of Teachers has chided those who romanticize the People's Republic of China. In 1977, Shanker sent an open letter to Dr. Mary Berry, then the Carter administration's senior education official (and today a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights), who had recently returned from Peking and pronounced in a speech that "The whole relationship between the academy and the real world represents an area in which I believe we have much to learn from the Chinese." Shanker expressed his "shock" that "you have chosen to extol various aspects of Chinese education as models for us to emulate. . . . How . . . can you ignore that they are part of an educational system in which the highest purpose of learning is service to the state—in which the suppression of criticism and the screening for political opinion are major functions of the schools?"

BOTH national teachers' unions, it turns out, have what could fairly be termed "foreign policies," and these are sharply divergent. The AFT's world view closely resembles that of the AFL-CIO. It was forged in the political tradition of democratic socialism from which some key AFT leaders come, and toughened in the 1940's and 50's when the union forcefully (and painfully) expelled several locals with Stalinist leanings.

The AFT is quite active in foreign affairs, both on its own and through the AFL-CIO. Shanker currently serves as president of the International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions, the major world assembly of non-Communist teacher groups, which provides funds, technical assistance, and moral support to fledgling democratic unions in many countries.*

The AFT has also given vigorous moral and financial support to Poland's Solidarity union and to Soviet dissidents, many of whom it has publicly honored, invited to speak at its conventions, and publicized in its journals. Recent AFT speakers and human-rights award recipients include Alexander Ginzburg, Vladimir Bukovsky, and Yugoslav writer Mihajlo Mihajlov. Shanker helped organize the International Sakharov Hearings, provided office space in New York for a Solidarity spokesman, and frequently devotes his column to such issues as the plight of Cambodian refugees, the imprisonment of Huber Matos in Cuba, and the results of annual human-rights assessments by Freedom House and Amnesty International. *American Educator* and other AFT publications include critical accounts of human rights in Eastern Europe and Cuba, and of the parlous condition of democracy in Central America. Union policy resolutions are strongly supportive of Israel (and critical of the PLO), skeptical of a wide array of United Nations activities, and impatient with the United States government for its cautious responses to Soviet actions in Afghanistan and Poland. The union's general position on national defense is consistent with the AFL-CIO view that strength begets security and that domestic and defense spending must not be pitted against one another in budget decisions. As for nuclear weapons, the 1982 AFT convention called for a "mutual and verifiable freeze" but insisted that American arms reductions be "consistent with the maintenance of overall parity with the Soviet Union," and condemned Moscow for its military build-up.

The NEA's positions on most foreign-policy and defense issues are different both in detail and in spirit, as suggested by the association's unsmiling characterization of Shanker as a man "suspected of brushing his teeth with gunpowder." The arms-freeze position adopted at the 1982 NEA convention warmly endorsed the Kennedy-Hatfield nuclear-freeze proposal and called for a "complete halt in the nuclear-arms race." Part of the philosophical basis for that position can be seen in a paragraph on "education and national security" contained in the NEA's current statement of priorities for Congress:

> The security and well-being of our nation are enhanced by the pursuit of peace. The most effective guarantees of peace are a solid economy, a well-educated populace, and a stable world community. All efforts which detract from those guarantees shall be actively opposed. The goal of national security through peace can be achieved only by the education of the citizenry to compete and succeed in a complex and interdependent world. Therefore the proposed disproportionate allocation of funds increasing the national defense budget and decreasing federal funding for education must be reversed.

UP TO a point, the NEA's position on national defense reflects the familiar worry of any domestic interest group that each

* The NEA's international is the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), and it is largely outside the worldwide network of democratic labor activities and organizations with which most major American unions are affiliated. Although included in the celebrated *Ramparts* list of onetime CIA conduits, the WCOTP today has no very clear ideology, save a strong yearning for cooperation among all the world's teaching organizations, regardless of their politics or those of the regimes under which they exist. WCOTP does not currently include teacher groups from Warsaw Pact nations, however, though the Yugoslavian teachers are members.

dollar spent by the military will be a dollar subtracted from its pet programs.* At times, however, one catches a whiff of something else, perhaps just the faintest suggestion that the clash of budget priorities can be turned to tactical advantage in the pursuit of ends that have little directly to do with domestic programs after all. Ronald Reagan has, of course, made such left-wing political craftsmanship more inviting and occasionally more gratifying, and in the hands of a master craftsman the results can be seductive indeed. One need only review Terry Herndon's remarkable National Press Club address in April 1982 (which Herbert Stein could well have used as the basis for his brilliant essay on "How World War III Was Lost"†):

> The President may speak of our social programs as "hungry stray pups" to be spurned, but I speak to him of war machines which he pets and feeds without limit as ravenous lions which must be tamed lest they consume us all. . . . [I]t is increasingly clear that we lack the food to both feed the hungry pup and sate the ravening lion. Yet, both within and beyond our borders, we see hungry children seeking food, destitute families seeking homes, ignorant masses seeking schools . . . while the Congress debates a budget which diminishes or threatens to eliminate nearly all of the relevant relief programs. . . . Is it not time to question "Why?" The answer is inescapable, it is proposed that we spend $1.6 trillion to achieve military superiority in five years. . . . [T]o build redundant weapons with dollars stripped from the millions of children served by Head Start or from the millions served by Title I, to install the MX system with money wrenched from the education of handicapped children and aspiring college students . . . is to sacrifice self-determination to reaction. . . . Our dependence on the implements of war seemingly threatens our will and our capacity to establish justice. . . . In this world the "common defense" is to be found only in the aggressive pursuit of peace. . . . We ring the globe with military installations because of the Soviets. We flood Europe with missiles because of the Soviets. . . . [O]ur government seems more responsive to the Soviet presence than to the needs of its own people or the needs of the desperate peoples of the world. . . . The omnipresent nuclear umbrella has not created jobs, filled bellies, ended oppression, or forestalled Soviet exploitation of human misery in the Third World. Moreover, aggressive arms supply and bellicose diplomacy did not arrest the creep of Marxism into Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, or Afghanistan. Then why do we rely on these policies for future defense? It seems to me clear that, at home and abroad, we must instead compassionately attend to the promotion of justice and human rights; the encouragement of economic development; the provision of food, medicine, and schools; and the preservation of peace. . . .

Herndon is as energetic as he is loquacious, and in recent months he has pushed the "peace issue" to the top of the NEA's public-policy agenda (where it took the place of the defunct Equal Rights Amendment) and has assumed a major leadership role in forming new peace coalitions and organizations. He is president of a new umbrella group called Citizens Against Nuclear War, and provides it with office space in the NEA headquarters building in Washington. This coalition of 26 other groups—primarily civil-rights, religious, and environmentalist—has three specific objectives: negotiation of a bilateral nuclear-weapons freeze, cancellation of "irrational civil-defense programs for evacuation of American cities," and "observance of all previously negotiated international arms agreements," which is evidently meant to include SALT II.

THE salient characteristic of Citizens Against Nuclear War is that, while its laudable objective is "world peace," its governing principles speak only to American policy and to the responsibility for foreign policy of "the citizens of a democracy." Thus, "the U.S. must urgently seek international agreements to reduce the risk of war" and "U.S. policy should not be based on an effort to win or survive a nuclear war."

While the absence of any parallel admonitions to those who might make war on the United States could be mere oversight, and while it is reasonable to suppose that the primary concern of an American group will be the policies of its own government, this inattention to the policies and actions of adversary nations is nonetheless striking. But it is not unprecedented in the foreign-policy pronouncements of the NEA and the organizations with which it is affiliated. Although the resolutions adopted in 1982 include a mild statement of support for Solidarity, as recently as 1981 the reporter covering that year's NEA convention for the Communist party's *Daily World* (himself a New Jersey high-school teacher and convention delegate) could approvingly write that "Nowhere in the basic documents of NEA, in their resolutions or new business items, are there any anti-Soviet or anti-socialist positions."

Yet NEA convention proceedings and resolutions in both years contained multiple denunciations of various aspects of American foreign and defense policy, and admonitions to the government to change its ways. The current NEA legislative program, for example, calls upon Washington not to

* This position is sufficiently flexible, however, to permit the association to seek federal education funds in the *name* of national defense. In an action slightly reminiscent of the man who murdered his parents and then beseeched the judge for mercy on grounds that he was now an orphan, the NEA has endorsed the American Defense Education Act, which would, if enacted, provide funds to public schools for instruction in math, foreign languages, science, and the like. The NEA's statement noted, without intentional irony, that the program would "provide the necessary training programs . . . to answer the nation's needs for the maintenance and operation of weapons systems."

† *Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 1982.

give military or economic assistance "to any foreign government which violates or permits the violation of the basic rights of its citizens." Well and good. But the next sentence states that "For example, NEA shall work for cessation of aid to the current administrations in Guatemala and El Salvador." No other examples are given. Certainly there is no suggestion that the United States might reconsider the various kinds of preferential treatment and indirect economic assistance that it gives to Warsaw Pact nations or, for that matter, to the Soviet Union itself. The government is similarly advised to refrain from any "overt or covert action that would destabilize Nicaragua," but no one is admonished to stop using poison gas in Afghanistan and Indochina or to refrain from destabilizing countries in Africa.

The NEA's generally uncritical stance toward Moscow occasionally yields domestic public-relations problems. This was particularly evident in 1978 when the association officially endorsed and recommended the television series *The Unknown War*. Much could be said about this twenty-hour cinematic treatment of World War II from the Soviet standpoint.* Tom Buckley termed it "soft-core propaganda." Shanker's column described it as a "whitewash of Stalin." Adrian Karatnycky and Alexander Motyl, writing in *Freedom at Issue*, called it a "disservice to the millions who suffered the ravages of both Nazism and Stalinism" and a "shameful model for the clichés and falsifications that animate the Soviet version of reality." The NEA's tepid response to these criticisms did not address the substance of these concerns at all. Rather, explained the association's spokesman, "The NEA has acknowledged from the start that there may be distortions of history (distortions from the American and other views) in the series."

In and of itself, such seeming innocence about the motives of other nations on the part of leaders of our oldest and largest education group is merely astonishing. But when combined with deep-seated mistrust and carefully-elaborated analyses of the motivations of one's own government and its elected leaders, and when that combination is enveloped in the language of international brotherhood and shared human understanding, the result is truly insidious. The inescapable result of such ratiocination is the conviction that the United States is the main obstacle to worldwide fellowship, to the permanent conversion of swords into plowshares, and to the long overdue elevation of education and other worthy social goods to the priority that they deserve. It is, in short, a recipe for despising the society whose children one is charged with teaching.

Hence the real significance of NEA endorsement of *The Unknown War* lies not in the domain of foreign policy *per se*, but rather in the insight it gives into the association's ideas about what people should learn. In that instance, television was the pedagogical medium. But the same world view often enough enters into school-curriculum and teacher-guidance materials endorsed by the NEA and by organizations that it esteems.

THE association itself has published relatively little on international relations and defense policy thus far, perhaps because such subjects do not yet loom large in most elementary and secondary-school curricula, but recently it has been generous in referring teachers to "peace-resource groups."† In June 1982, for example, the NEA weekly newsletter identified thirty such, ranging from the Council for a Livable World to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Educators for Social Responsibility, one of the "peacework" organizations listed in the NEA guide, has produced a 209-page "planning and curriculum-resource guide" for "dealing with issues of nuclear war in the classroom." Some of it, in fact, has little directly to do with the classroom, instead consisting of sample letters that teachers can send to parents, school boards, and newspaper editors to invite their participation in a "day of dialogue." But much pertains directly to the content of what teachers may wish to impart to their students, the questions they might raise, and the readings they might assign. For instance, high-school teachers are encouraged to use "imaginative literature . . . to acquaint students with the dangers we face in our nuclear world, and the opportunities we have to lessen them."

How, for example, might teachers employ literature to answer the question, "But who are the Soviets?" Answer: "The short story, 'The Fate of Man,' by Mikhail Sholokov, is a good choice. It is the story of a Soviet soldier in World War II; he spends time in Nazi prison camps, and returns home to find his family has been killed in a bombing attack. The World War II setting—when the U.S. and Soviet Union were allies fighting a common enemy—may help your students bypass cold-war distortion to reach an understanding of the Soviets as people." Any teacher uncertain how to obtain this work is referred to Imported Publications, Inc. in Chicago, or Progress Publishers in Moscow. Perhaps it goes without saying that there is no parallel reference to the works of Solzhenitsyn.

A still more creative suggestion is offered in the section explaining how "Inflammatory Words Can Teach You to Hate." There, teachers and students are encouraged to consult the memoirs of Lt. William Calley to gain a better understanding of how his simplistic grasp of the inflammatory word "Communism" led to his actions at Mylai. "In all my years in the army," the Calley excerpts explain,

* See Joshua Rubenstein, "World War II—Soviet Style," COMMENTARY, May 1979.

† Such materials are under active development, however. A new curriculum on nuclear weapons and conflict resolution, prepared jointly by the NEA and the Union of Concerned Scientists, was field-tested in 37 states during the autumn of 1982 and is expected to be published by mid-1983.

"I was never taught the Communists were human beings. We weren't in Mylai to kill human beings. We were there to kill ideology carried by—I don't know—pawns, blobs, pieces of flesh. I was there to destroy Communism. We never conceived of old people, men, women, children, babies."

And that is just about all that the entire curriculum-resource guide has to say to teachers and students on the subject of Communism or, for that matter, on American involvement in Vietnam.

Additional teacher guidance on foreign-policy curriculum issues, textbooks, and supplementary readings is provided by the ever-helpful Council on Interracial Books for Children which has devoted several of its recent bulletins to salient international issues.* One such volume was given over to a report on the "literacy crusade in Nicaragua." Another, devoted to Central America as a whole, examined 71 books (texts, encyclopedias, etc.) to determine their suitability for U.S. classrooms. The level of analysis, and the values coloring it, are adequately revealed in this brief excerpt:

> Several texts attribute complex events—including revolution—in Central America simply to the proximity of Communism in Cuba. Instead of explaining how internal events in each nation might cause dissatisfaction or revolt, readers are left with the idea that : (1) Cuba is bad because it is Communist; (2) Central American revolutions might be bad because they include ideologies similar to Cuba's; (3) therefore, the U.S. should not support these revolutions. . . .

But the showpiece of the Council's recent contributions to our understanding of world affairs is a new *Bulletin* devoted to "Militarism and Education" (subtitled "Racism, Sexism, and Militarism: The Links"). This has some (unintentionally) amusing articles, such as a brief sidebar on "militarism and handicapism," both of which turn out to be "elitist, hierarchical ideologies which value strength over human qualities and deny the equal worth of nations and individuals." But there is little to smile at in the article entitled "But What about the Russians?" by Irving Lerner, which purports to answer seven of "the questions most frequently raised about the arms race." Two brief examples will suffice:

> *Q*. But aren't we risking our way of life if we allow the Russians to get ahead?
>
> *A*. The $1 trillion defense budget that President Reagan seeks for the next four years will do more to undermine our democratic values and standard of living than anything the Russians can do. . . .
>
> *Q*. But how can we trust the Russians? How can we be sure they won't cheat?
>
> *A*. We can trust them as much as they can trust us. . . .

The Council on Interracial Books for Children, it seems fair to say, does not suffer from an inordinate fear of Communism or an overweening passion for democracy. Neither do many of the other organizations now preparing and distributing curriculum materials to the nation's teachers and students on issues of foreign policy in general and nuclear war in particular. A number of these are recommended by the NEA to its members. Most teachers feel a keen sense of obligation to do right by their students in explaining this and the other great issues facing the nation and the world. The teacher's instinct is to be accurate, informed, fair, and constructive, which is what practically every parent would want his child's teacher to be. How often, after all, does that child preface his comments on pressing issues of the day and of the ages with the phrase, "My teacher says . . ." It stands to reason that many conscientious teachers will seek curricular information and pedagogical direction from their local, state, and national organizations, and will carry that guidance into their classrooms, where it will be imparted to their youthful charges.

WHAT guidance, finally, does the National Education Association provide? How does it suggest that the moral authority and intellectual power of the teacher should be deployed? President Willard McGuire addressed the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament on June 25, 1982, offering this helpful advice to mankind on behalf of himself, the NEA, and the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession:

> Our students must be taught to love, not hate. To respect others different from themselves, not condemn them for being different. And, the most difficult thing of all, we must teach our students that positions their governments take are not necessarily the right positions. And that they, like their teachers, have not only a right but an obligation to protest when their government's action, as in the case of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, threaten our very existence.

No doubt McGuire was well-received in Turtle Bay. For what he was there proposing, and what his colleagues have for the past decade been promoting in word and deed, is something that most UN member nations already take for granted but that the democratic societies that are heir to the educational traditions of Western civilization have tended to resist. Namely, the use of the classroom to pursue the agendas of the policy arena, the cession of the teacher's moral authority to the advancement of particular causes, the displacement of liberal learning and cognitive growth by lessons in

* As noted above, the CIBC is not an NEA affiliate and not all of its publications bear explicit NEA endorsement. However, the two organizations frequently collaborate; the NEA uncritically refers teachers to CIBC for "bias-free children's books and learning materials"; and the special "human rights" award that the NEA conferred on the Council in 1982 would seem to suggest general approbation.

political action, and even the corruption of childhood's simple truths and pleasures by the confusions and anxieties of the adult world.

Totalitarian regimes have long recognized the teacher's power to mold ideas, influence behavior, and shape belief. That is why their schools are integral parts of the governmental-control apparatus. Radical movements, too, have come to appreciate the potency of the classroom in forming the ideology and attitudes of children, families, and communities. Hence the leader of any nation, party, or movement that wishes the United States no good would instantly see McGuire's plea to the United Nations, though cast in the language of a higher morality that transcends politics, as the very essence of politics as practiced in most of the world, thus particularly insidious when reflected back into our own schools. For it has been one of the abiding strengths of American education and of the society that nurtured it that we have not politicized the classroom, or turned teachers into propagandists, or willfully instructed our children through curricula that seek to indoctrinate. Politicization and indoctrination are, of course, what the NEA charges the "radical Right" with seeking to infuse into the nation's educational system, and this concern is legitimate. But it is not clear that an educational system organized around the views of the NEA would be any less politicized, or its curriculum any less doctrinaire, though the doctrines would surely differ.

Nor is it clear that such a system would itself retain popular respect and electoral approval. The long-term strength of public education in a democracy depends on its success in imparting skills, knowledge, and fundamental values to children without intruding politics into the schoolhouse. The parent whose child learns to read, write, and reason for himself, to weigh evidence and evaluate ideas, to respect the central tenets of a free society and to honor the terms that make him a member of it, is a parent who is apt to respect the teacher, esteem the school, and willingly pay taxes for the educational system. The parent whose child is taught that he has an obligation to protest—or, for that matter, to support—particular policies and practices that the teacher, or the teacher's national union, happens to dispute, is a parent whose lasting faith in public education dare not be taken for granted.

Over time, the signals that the national teachers' unions send into the educational system itself will have a more profound effect on the nature of American society than their decisions about which candidates to endorse and finance at election time. The implicit politics of the organization, transmitted into the classroom, the curriculum, the teachers' colleges and journals, the lessons that are taught, the homework that is assigned, the books that are read, the values that are inculcated, and the ways in which teachers represent themselves in the world of ideas and to their counterparts in other lands, will count for more than the organization's explicit political activities in the governmental domain. Moreover, the implicit politics are less visible, harder for others to appraise, more difficult either to reinforce or to combat, and far more apt to intimidate the average citizen through the aura of superior knowledge, expertise, and moral authority associated with the teacher's role in society.

In the case of the National Education Association, implicit and explicit politics seem to have converged around a single set of ideas and values. On the whole, these are now the doctrines of the Left. This is not true of the American Federation of Teachers, which is apt to end up supporting most of the same candidates on election day, but which infuses a quite different set of moral, cultural, and political values into the educational system itself, and into the society whose children it teaches. Indeed, the AFT's value structure seems to have emerged remarkably strong and resilient from a period in which so many of our major social and cultural institutions—and the elected officials who respond to them—have allowed their own to soften and bend. This discrepancy between its inward and outward politics may eventually produce symptoms of organizational schizophrenia in the AFT, but that is less worrisome than the singlemindedness of the NEA. It would, of course, be well if the AFT could bring itself to support more candidates who share its faith in freedom and its pride in liberal democracy. As for the NEA, however, unless the new executive director finds a more reliable compass with which to steer its course away from the ideological shores to which it is drifting, perhaps the most that can be hoped is that both the teachers who belong to it and the candidates who accept its support will take their own navigational bearings from other sources.

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Education Emerges as Major Issue In 1984 Presidential Campaigning

By PHIL GAILEY
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 8 — Education is emerging as a major issue in the 1984 Presidential campaign, and so far the debate is being shaped by President Reagan and Walter F. Mondale, the Democrat who is expected to win the endorsement of the nation's largest teacher organization.

Mr. Mondale has delivered two major speeches attacking what he called the "voodoo education" policies of the Reagan Administration, hitting hard on Mr. Reagan's proposals to reduce the Federal education budget.

The President has moved swiftly to establish his position in the debate as favoring a return to the basics in education and merit pay for teachers, positions that his aides say reflect a popular view. Mr. Reagan is planning a series of speeches on education, the first on Thursday in Hopkins, Minn., at a regional forum to discuss the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

It was that commission, created by the President, that brought the issue to the forefront of the political debate with an urgency not felt since the first Soviet space satellite shook American confidence in its public schools in 1957. In its recent report, the commission found a "rising tide of mediocrity in the nation's schools" and called for tougher academic standards, higher pay for teachers, more homework, stricter discipline and other changes in public education.

The most critical issue that separates Mr. Reagan from the Democratic field is the commission's recommendation that there be increased spending on education at all levels. The President opposes increasing the Federal contribution to education, while all the Democratic Presidential candidates support it. Mr. Mondale already has proposed $11 billion in additional Federal spending for public education.

Unlike most of the other Democratic candidates, Mr. Mondale believes it is to his political advantage to meet Mr. Reagan head on over this issue on the hustings. To make sure Mr. Reagan does not have an open field in Minneapolis, Mr. Mondale plans to hold a news conference at the University of Minnesota Thursday morning to challenge the President's position.

Mr. Reagan, who met at the White House today with a group of education leaders, plans to continue his political blitz next week, traveling to Knoxville to have lunch with teachers at Farragut High School, attend an English class and hold discussions with a panel of educators. On Wednesday, he is scheduled to address the national Parent-Teacher Association convention in Albuquerque. The Mondale camp is considering how its candidate should try to counter those Presidential appearances.

The White House strategy on this issue is built around a theme that is at the heart of Mr. Reagan's political philsophy: a restoration of old values. He is calling for merit pay for teachers, a return to academic basics, sterner discipline, more homework and less Federal involvement in education.

Other than to propose tuition tax credits and prayer in the public schools, Mr. Reagan had little to say about education before the commission released its recommendations. The President then moved swiftly to set the terms of the public debate while most Democrats cautiously sifted the report for its political implications.

One indication of how seriously the White House takes the education issue was the acknowledgement today by Education Secretary T. H. Bell that Mr. Reagan has all but abandoned his idea of abolishing the department, a turnaround that his strategists hope will deprive the Democrats of a symbolic target.

Mr. Reagan has taken the political initiative by hammering hard on the question of merit pay, an issue that appears to have some Democrats on the defensive. Merit pay, the concept of rewarding good teachers with more money, is opposed by the 1.7-million-member National Education Association, which is expected to endorse Mr. Mondale. Nevertheless, it is a concept that appears to have wide public support.

"Reagan has got the popular view on education and I'm surprised he latched on to it so soon," said Dr. C. Emily Feistritzer, a former high school math teacher who publishes a number of education newsletters in Washington. "Any Democrat who opposes merit pay for teachers is going to cut his throat."

She added that Mr. Mondale was probably the most vulnerable of the Democrats on this issue because of his close ties with the N.E.A., which President Reagan hopes to make a symbol of what he sees as the nation's wrong turns in education.

Strength at Convention

Regardless of the teacher organization's image, however, it has emerged as a powerful force in Democratic politics, especially in the delegate selection process of the primaries and caucuses. The N.E.A. sent the largest special interest bloc of delegates and alternates, 464, to the 1980 Democratic Convention, and the organization is working to increase its political weight in 1984.

The only Democratic candidates this far to publicly oppose merit pay are Mr. Mondale and Senators Alan Cranston of California and Gary Hart of Colorado. Former Florida Gov. Reubin Askew and Senator John Glenn of Ohio view merit pay favorably, but contend that it must be part of a comprehensive package of initiatives. Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina is keeping his head down on this issue, saying he is working on a set of recommendations that will deal with the question of teacher pay.

Jim Johnson, one of Mr. Mondale's campaign strategists, said he expected that Mr. Reagan would gain "a little temporary political advantage" on the education issue, but he added, "The politics of this is whether you can really convince people you are going to do something about the problem. That's why gimmicks and rhetoric won't work in the long run."

Gaining Political Upper Hand

Republican strategists, however, said the Democrats already have allowed Mr. Reagan to grab the political upper hand on education. "The President is on the winning side of this issue as it is being played," said one Reagan aide. "The question is quality and not quantity, and the Democrats are offering their standard solution to any problem at any time: throw money at it."

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said in an interview: "I think both sides have a half position on this issue. The Democrats say we need more money, but they're skirting the issue of quality and standards. Reagan, on the other hand, is running around saying a lot of ridiculous things and taking the position that Federal money is part of the problem. The Democrats are not viewed as supporting standards and, in my opinion, that's going to hurt them."

Mr. Shanker, who has urged his group's 580,000 members to keep an "open mind" on the merit pay question, was among the education leaders who met today at the White House with President Reagan. Officials of the larger National Education Association, who were not invited to the session, last month requested a meeting with the President to discuss their differences.

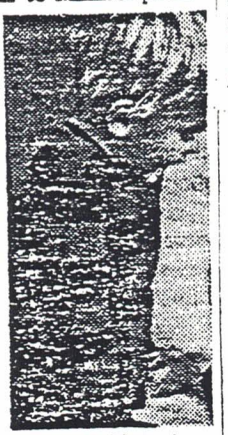
Quality of public education in US looms as key issue in '84 race

By Richard J. Cattani
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

Education – rocket engine of the American dream – has been irrecoverably launched as a major issue for the 1984 campaign.

President Reagan is off to Minneapolis and to Albuquerque, N.M., for major speeches this month before parent and teacher groups. Democratic rivals continue to attack Mr. Reagan's record on education issues, linking American progress and world clout to a strong public school system, much as Reagan in 1980 keyed America's global status to its military strength.



McLean, Va., class

Four of eight major education studies have been issued this spring, with the rest to be made public by fall. The powerful teacher groups hold annual meetings at the end of June – the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in Los Angeles, the National Education Association in Philadelphia. Public education reform is expected to dominate their agendas.

The visibility of the education debate will be increased yet again – by a congressional proposal this week to hold "a national summit conference" on education.

Beneath this surface attention to the nation's schools lie important political forces. A primer on the politics of education would include:

y Paul Conklin

• Education is central to a cluster of American values that have seemed threatened by the recession, economic competition from abroad, and social change. In a recent ABC/Washington Post survey, for example, only 3 percent of the public singled out "a good education for myself and my children" as their major life goal. But related to education were other key hopes – "financial security" (36 percent), "to lead the good life" (21 percent), "satisfying job for myself and my children" (13 percent), and "the American Dream of a happy marriage, my own home, and children" (11 percent).

political vehicle for touching these elemental public aspirations.

• Americans are more concerned about their schools than down on them. Yet there is considerable anger, an undercurrent that ranges from concern about drugs and vandalism to the fear of inducing wrong values and teaching irrelevant subjects. A California Poll survey last August, for example, showed that the proportion of that state's citizens favoring more spending for schools had climbed from 43 percent in 1977 to 53 percent. An April CBS/New York Times poll found 81 percent of the public willing to spend more in taxes for schools. Two-thirds of the Californians (65 percent) thought the schools were not paying enough attention to reading, writing, arithmetic – the basics.

• In strictly partisan terms, the politics of education involves its own sets of players and forces. The major teacher groups have supported Democrats in the past. They are likely to support Democrats in the future. The AFT at its Los Angeles meeting will conduct a straw poll of members for an assessment of which Democratic primary candidate would compete best against Reagan. Reagan himself had built his 1980 campaign partly on issues like school prayer and tuition tax credits, which put him in tune with the Moral Majority and Southern and many Roman Catholic private school advocates.

Reagan's vow to abolish the Department of Education, established by President Carter, has apparently been abandoned as education issues in Washington have moved to the fore. But again, Reagan's dislike of the department reflects his conviction that education should remain a local, not federal, responsibility.

Educators seem to feel that Reagan, in advocating merit pay and tougher school graduation requirements – part of an "agenda for excellence" under preparation by Education Secretary T. H. Bell – is at least partly rebuffing his political antagonists in education.

The women's vote also figures into Washington's thinking on education.

"Women tend to be more concerned with the welfare of the next generation and how they're brought up," says Donald Faree, a Roper Center opinion analyst. "It is similar to their concerns about nuclear power and warfare."

Reagan aides say his major emphasis education matters this month is keyed overcoming his weakness among women ers. Reagan will speak to women educator San Francisco at the end of the month.

"Historically, education has never bee major political issue at the national lev says Stuart E. Eizenstat, Mr. Carter's c domestic adviser. The first higher-educa bill, the National Defense Education Ac 1958 during the Eisenhower administrat was passed in the context of defense needs

The first major secondary and element bill, "Title I," was passed in 1965 and ca for compensatory education for the disadv taged. More recently the "Pell grant" was passed providing grant, loan, and w study programs for poor students.

"President Carter created the Dep ment of Education," Mr. Eizenstat says, cause he felt at the Cabinet table educa was *never* discussed. It was in effect bu within HEW."

"We'd be better off spending less on *tr fer* programs and more on *human cap* programs where you invest in peop Eizenstat says. "Transfer payments or man support helps people keep their he above water. But investment in educa gives a lifetime return – in a more able, ductive worker, who will buy more goods, more taxes, and enable the US to com better in world markets."

Reagan Defends Education Policies Says Spending Is Still High

By Juan Williams
Washington Post Staff Writer

MINNEAPOLIS, June 9—President Reagan, engaged in what he termed "a little self-defense" against his critics, said today that his administration has not cut the federal education budget and that "each budget is still bigger than the last one."

Although he didn't identify the critics, before Reagan spoke here one of the leading Democratic presidential candidates, former vice president Walter F. Mondale, accused Reagan of pursuing an education policy that is "not to spend any money on education." Mondale, at an earlier separate appearance at the University of Minnesota, said he would not "let [Reagan] whitewash his own record."

Reagan came to the Twin Cities to push his program for education, which is emerging as a major issue, and for a fund-raiser for Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.), who is up for reelection next year. He was heckled on the streets by several thousand demonstrators protesting his tax cuts and nuclear arms and education policies.

Appearing in the gymnasium of a high school that was closed last year partly because of budget cuts, Reagan told a regional panel of the Commission on Excellence in Education that "the amount of money in education today" is greater than the national defense budget. In April the commission released a critical report on the state of American schools.

"In 1982 the total budget for national defense was $179 billion," he told an audience of about 1,000. "It was $215 billion for education. And I don't fault that at all. Education is truly important, and as important to our national security as defense."

Deputy White House press secretary Larry Speakes said the president was referring to "all spending" on education-related programs and to the "volume of [student] loans, not necessarily federal expenditures," in the budget numbers he cited.

According to figures in the president's last budget, funding for educational purposes has fallen from $14.3 billion in fiscal 1982 to an estimated $13.5 billion in fiscal 1984. In addition, the administration proposed cutting funds for higher education programs from $6.5 billion to $6.3 billion. The proposal was stymied by Congress.

Funding for elementary, secondary and vocational education dropped from $6.7 billion in 1982 to an estimated $6.5 billion in 1983, and guaranteed student loans fell from $3 billion in 1982 to an estimated $2.2 billion in 1983.

"The truth of the matter is we haven't cut any budgets," Reagan said, in direct contradiction to the numbers. "What we've done is reduce the proposed increases in the budget. But each budget is still bigger than the last one."

The president then spoke of his experience in paying for schooling.

"I have had students accost me and tell me that we have reduced their ability to get help. Well, for a fellow that worked his own way through school, I understand the problem of students that have to. I must say it wasn't too arduous. I washed dishes in a girls' dormitory."

Reagan then cited figures for several education programs that again differed significantly from official budget numbers.

One panelist told Reagan that a committee that met earlier suggested that the United States "put one last missile in the Midwest and spend that money on education." Reagan did not laugh or respond to the comment.

The president seemed to drift in his thoughts during the panel discussion. At one point he asked Education Secretary T.H. Bell to announce what steps the administration is taking to respond to the national commission's report, entitled "A Nation at Risk."

Bell told of a plan to begin a major effort to "help the huge number of adult illiterates we have in this country." Bell also reminded Reagan that in his State of the Union speech he had recommended a block grant to aid students in math and sciences.

Bell, who like Reagan took off his jacket in the hot school gym, said the student aid program also is being reviewed to see if "we can rewrite it [to] . . . encourage more gifted and talented and promising young people to move into teaching."

Reagan has made merit pay for teachers the linchpin of his program for improving schools, much to the distress of many teachers groups, including the National Education Association—a group closely tied to Mondale. The president said today that concerns that administrators will not be able to judge teachers fairly and accurately are baseless.

"Teachers who grade students ought to be able to grade each other," Reagan said. He added that if extra pay is needed to reward the best teachers it can come from local school boards who can make paying the best teachers their first priority.

Reagan's trip here is the first of several dedicated to the issue of public education. He is scheduled to travel to Tennessee and New Mexico next week and to speak on behalf of merit pay for teachers.

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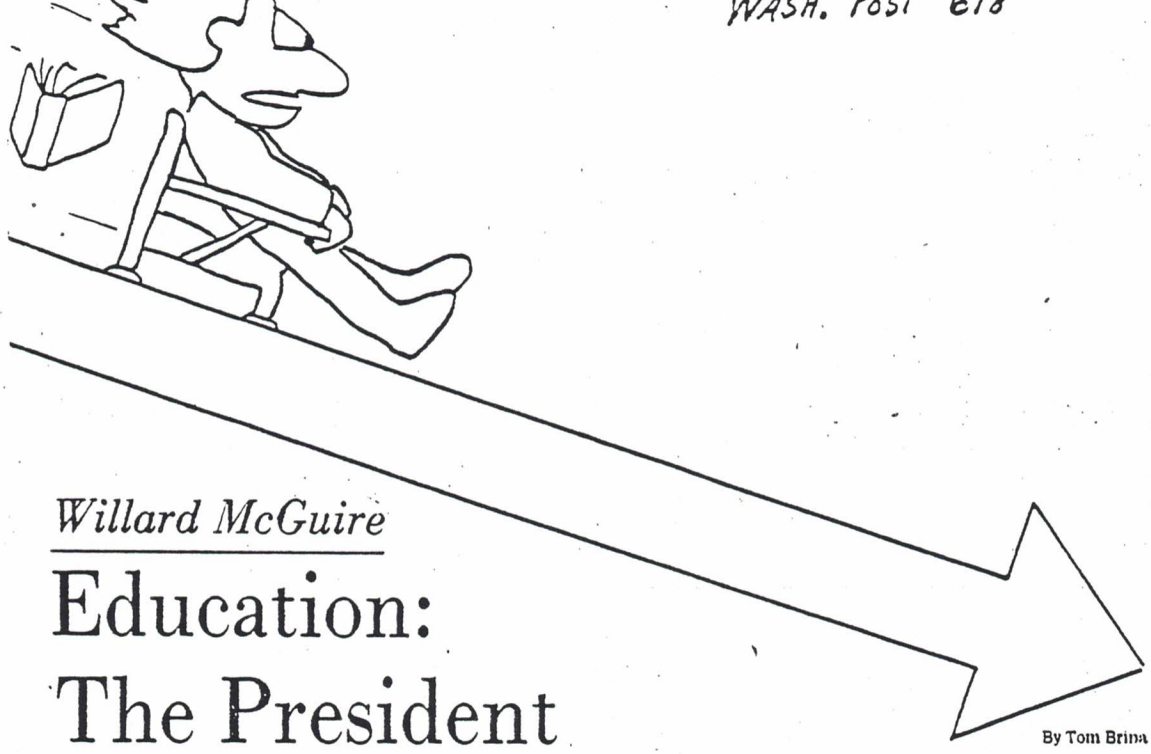


By Tom Brina

Willard McGuire

Education: The President Didn't Get the Message . . .

Since April 26 four major blue-ribbon commissions have released landmark studies on American education. Each of these reports has candidly assessed the status of American education—and urged a new commitment to educational excellence, at every level of our society.

We at the National Education Association welcome these commission reports. In fact, we are downright excited by them. All these studies recognize that there are no shortcuts to quality education. Excellence, as one commission put it so aptly, costs.

Sadly, the president of the United States has missed that message. President Reagan has, in highly politicized language, even rejected the widely acclaimed findings of the commission appointed by his very own secretary of education.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education—the panel appointed by Education Secretary Terrel Bell—called for national leadership. Reagan tells us the federal government ought to end its "interference" in education.

The National Commission on Excellence called for increased financial support for education—dollars that could go for up-to-date textbooks, higher teacher salaries, computers and a host of other desperately needed resources. Reagan proposes $2 billion in cuts out of federal aid to education.

The National Commission on Excellence called for real educational reform and rethinking. The president asks for prayers, tuition tax credits for private schools and the abolition of the Department of Education.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education has outlined an educational policy framework that can be discussed and debated seriously by parents, teachers, school boards, and the general public alike. The president has outlined an approach to education that makes no sense.

Let me amend that. The president's approach makes no *educational* sense. Apparently, he must feel his approach makes considerable *political* sense. For the New Right, there are prayers. For private school parents, there are tuition tax credits. For hard-pressed taxpayers, there are spending cuts.

And for teachers? The president appears to believe he has nothing to lose by claiming that large numbers of teachers are mediocre or worse.

He's wrong. The president has misread the spirit that permeates his own commission's report and misread the attitude of the American people. Americans who care about education aren't looking for someone to blame. They're looking for solutions, for partnerships that can take on and address problems head on.

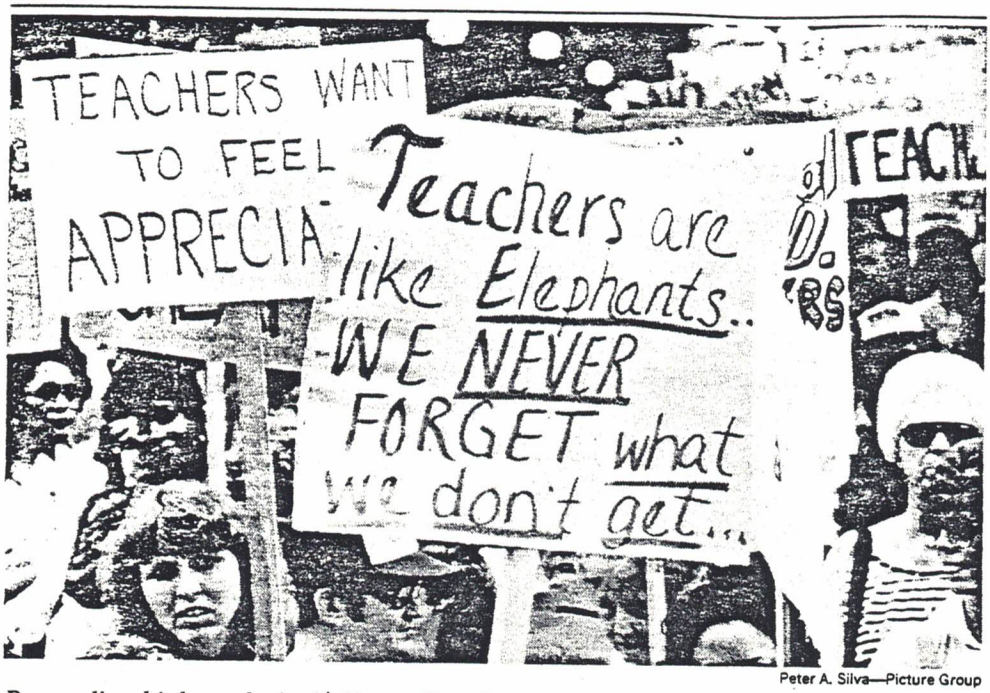
We're encouraged by this atmosphere of cooperation, and we're also encouraged by the wide areas of agreement that are emerging—outside the White House. Commissions and citizens are agreeing that we need higher standards in classrooms and lecture halls, that we need higher starting salaries for teachers to attract young talent into the schools, that we need a federal government that understands its responsibilities to assist local school districts.

There will, of course, be disagreements. Those of us in education who are old enough to remember when male teachers made more than female, when white teachers made more than black, when high school teachers made more than elementary, when the superintendent's favorites made more than imaginative teachers who dared rock the boat are understandably not going to rush and embrace proposals to overhaul objective salary schedules.

But we will work with, we will listen to, we will discuss ideas from any commission, from any government official, from any school board that shares our interest in guaranteeing our young people the best possible education.

Our public schools have made an awesome contribution to our nation. We're confident they can make an equally important contribution for tomorrow.

The writer is president of the National Education Association.



Peter A. Silva—Picture Group

Demanding higher salaries in Texas: Can the union maintain credibility and clout?

The NEA in a Cross Fire

Once a genteel professional society too mannerly to form a picket line, the National Education Association is now the nation's largest teacher union—tough-minded, blatantly political and facing one of the most critical junctures in its 126-year history. Even as the union prepares an all-out challenge to Ronald Reagan in next year's presidential campaign, it finds itself caught in a cross fire of recent reports that found the American public-school system and its teachers wanting. So, while union officials call Reagan "a walking disaster for public education," the president has begun scolding the teachers—clearly aiming to make the issue of educational quality his own in 1984. "Until NEA supports badly needed reforms in salary, promotion and tenure policies," Reagan wrote in a letter to the union, "the improvements we so desperately need will only be delayed."

Even other educators complain that the 1.6 million-member NEA is losing credibility because of its long opposition to reforms such as teacher testing and merit pay that are increasingly favored by the public. "The NEA has misused its charter, its position and its place to become a boisterous, partisan advocacy group," says Scott Thomson of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. "I think they've severely damaged public education." Conservative critics, meanwhile, argue that the NEA has become too cozy with the Democratic Party through its strong backing of Jimmy Carter in 1976 and 1980 and its vigorous pursuit of such goals as the Equal Rights Amendment and a nuclear freeze.

The task of damage control at NEA last week fell to a new leader, onetime history teacher Don Cameron, who succeeds veteran executive director Terry Herndon. Cameron makes no apologies for the union's political activities but realizes that some changes, at least in tone, are in order. "Our top priority has to be to re-emphasize educational issues and our commitment to educational excellence," he says. The question is what form that commitment will take. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, the National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth and a panel of educators convened by the Twentieth Century Fund all have offered one common recommendation: merit pay for teachers to attract and keep more talented people in the profession. Last month, in a commencement address at Seton Hall University, even President Reagan joined the merit-pay chorus in a calculated attempt to move beyond his prayer-and-vouchers rhetoric. In the face of all this, Cameron cautiously concedes a "need to join the debate" on merit pay.

'Knee-Jerk': The union's biggest objection to merit pay grows out of distrust of administrators: teachers, says Cameron, fear that extra pay would be given arbitrarily or withheld for political reasons. Somewhat less offensive to the NEA is the notion of "master teachers," skilled veterans rewarded with added pay but given enhanced responsibility. But Cameron complains that politicians too often push such schemes unilaterally to impress voters. "Where there's cooperative spirit you won't get a knee-jerk reaction from teachers," he insists. There has been little cooperative spirit in Tennessee, where the master-teacher plan advocated by Gov. Lamar Alexander has become a test case. The Tennessee Education Association, charging that the plan would benefit few teachers, has stalled the measure in the state legislature. Alexander in turn has vetoed two TEA-backed bills.

Cameron: No apology

John Ficara—Newsweek

Standardized competency testing for teachers and students poses another problem for the NEA. The union has stridently opposed such tests, although they have gained popular support as the public has grown dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and with what teachers themselves are taught. Cameron now says the NEA's position "could use some dialogue."

Responsive Approach: One reason for the NEA to re-evaluate some of its positions is that its union rival, the American Federation of Teachers, has gained new respect with a more responsive approach to educational issues. Though the smaller (580,000 members) AFT made its name as a militant union, it is now, ironically, viewed by many as the more reasonable of the two unions. It too opposes merit pay, but president Albert Shanker has taken pains to find virtues in the Tennessee plan. And the AFT has no objection to testing new teachers. "Talk about role reversal," says an exasperated Cameron. "Twenty years ago the AFT was renowned as the group that cared about union organization. Now Shanker is speaking out on these educational issues which are our heritage. Well, we're not going to relinquish our role to Albert Shanker."

But neither is the NEA ready to relinquish the role it obviously relishes as a power broker within the Democratic Party. It moved into presidential politics in 1976, and in 1980 the teachers—having won from Carter the federal Department of Education he had promised—arrived at the Democratic National Convention with the largest single special-interest bloc (464 delegates and alternates). Last year the NEA's political-action committee spent nearly $1.5 million in the midterm elections and 73 percent of the 334 candidates it backed were successful. This fall, despite official coyness, the union is expected to endorse the presidential campaign of Walter Mondale, who has already floated a proposal for $11 billion in additional federal spending for education.

The problem for the NEA is that if it continues to be seen as a roadblock to progress on the crucial issue of education, it may further undermine its credibility and its political influence. The union's blessing of a candidate could become a burden, a taint of selfish special interest that would defeat the NEA's goals for the Oval Office and the nation's classrooms.

DENNIS A. WILLIAMS with LUCY HOWARD in Washington and bureau reports