U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

EDUCATION
in the
UNITED STATES
THE PRE-UNIVERSITY YEARS

CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

FROM THE EDITORS

The human capacity to learn — and our determination to do so — propels much of our daily existence. It is for that reason that in a civilized society, education invariably is one of the preeminent passions and concerns. The content of our education, and the extent to which we make use of it, marks us as a community and as a nation.

The United States has had a strong commitment to education from colonial times. Over the years, since its founding and expansion in the 19th century, the free public school system has been the great assimilator, embracing generation after generation of new immigrants, and providing them with skills and knowledge, and in the process access and upward mobility within society. For the most part, that system — and the decision-making accompanying it — has been maintained and enhanced at the local and state level, according to principles of government first outlined in the U.S. Constitution more than 200 years ago. A considerable amount of effort, commitment, imagination and — yes — fierce debate is attributable to average citizens, from the inner cities to rural environs, who revel in the democratic process.

As this new century unfolds, questions as to how education can be improved, or should evolve, are high on the national, state and local agendas, in the public and private sectors alike. Business men and women, the media, parents and politicians, among others, weigh in on the issues at hand. Today, choice and standards-based reform, safety in schools, the uses of technology in education, community service, character-building, inclusion and the recruitment and training of a teacher cadre for the next generation are among the matters that are on the minds of most American citizens.

This Journal presents a portrait of the current U.S. primary and secondary education landscape, offering resources for further exploration of the subject. The themes the various articles explore, when taken together, reflect a nation that honors accessibility in its educational system and benefits from its substance, even as citizens seek imaginative ways of resolving familiar and unanticipated challenges. ❑

EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES:
THE PRE-UNIVERSITY YEARS

CONTENTS

A SNAPSHOT OF
EDUCATION
in the
UNITED STATES
TODAY

BY RICHARD W. RILEY
U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Many of us mark holidays, birthdays and other celebrations by taking photographs that capture a special event in a way that our eyes and our memories cannot. The opening of a new century is an excellent occasion for focusing our attention — and a metaphorical camera — on where we are today. As someone who has devoted his career to education, on the local and national levels, I would like to share with you a "snapshot" of U.S. education, taken from my perspective, halfway through the year 2000.

We are looking at an aspect of U.S. society — education — that is more open, more diverse and more inclusive than ever before in our history. Public education is changing for the better. On the other hand, there is much more to be done to fulfill the American promise of equal opportunity for all and to close the gaps between rich and poor, white and non-white. By continuing to adapt and improve our system of education, the United States can become a stronger nation and continue to work with other nations to bring peace, prosperity and education to citizens throughout the world.

THE CURRENT PICTURE

Let's begin looking at the contours of the snapshot — certain trends and statistics. This past spring, the U.S. Department of Education issued a report, *The Condition of Education 2000* [at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2000062]. Some of the trends it pinpointed offer evidence that our current policies and programs are on the right track. Other indicators highlight areas that policymakers and educators need to address so our nation can continue to grow and prosper in the Information Age.

The report found that the benefits of attending college are greater today than ever before. In 1970, the average young American male with a bachelor's degree had an income 24 percent higher than that of one possessing merely a high school diploma. As of 1998, the "college bonus" for men had risen to 56 percent. For young American women, the "college bonus" rose from 82 percent in 1970 to 100 percent in 1998. That means that young women in the United States who graduated from college earned twice as much as their female peers who never attended college.

In addition, more students are going directly from high school to college. Between 1992 and 1998 alone, that percentage rose from 62 percent to 66

percent. But the rates are lower for students from low-income families. Our research has found that providing academic preparation and encouragement can help to close this gap. To get on the path to college, students need to take rigorous high school courses in mathematics and science, and gateway courses in middle school — that is, from grades six through eight. These findings offer strong evidence for two courses of action: to provide financial aid for students attending college, and to help disadvantaged children in their early teens think about and prepare for college.

Today, many more students in the United States are taking rigorous science and math courses that prepare them for college than in years past. In 1982, 11 percent of high school graduates completed courses like trigonometry, pre-calculus and calculus. By 1998, 27 percent had completed that type of advanced coursework. Over the same period, the percentage taking advanced science courses rose from 31 percent to 60 percent.

Still, although there is improvement in our math and science coursework, many believe that the United States has much to learn from other nations in this area. Data collected for the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) show that the content of eighth-grade mathematics lessons in the United States was more likely to be rated of lower quality than similar lessons in Japan and Germany. Also, statistics showed that there were more "student-controlled tasks," reflecting independent student solutions, in eighth-grade mathematics classes in Germany and Japan than in this country, in which the overwhelming number of lessons were "task-controlled" — demonstrated by teachers and then replicated by students. Educators and policymakers in the United States plan to use the TIMSS videotape classrooms to help improve our math and science teaching, and, in the process, student achievement.

The Condition of Education 2000 also includes research on younger students. It notes that 66 percent of children entering kindergarten can recognize letters of the alphabet. That means most are ready to begin the process of learning to read, but one-third are not. We can raise this number by providing effective pre-school programs for more children and by encouraging parents to read with their children. While we are encouraged by the results, we are also working to increase our efforts to support and expand early childhood learning and parental involvement.

The student population in our public schools is not only growing but also changing. Hispanic enrollment increased from six percent in 1972 to 15 percent in 1998. With significant increases in the number of students who may not speak English at home, this report suggests that we need to be prepared to help students with limited English proficiency to succeed in school.

EDUCATION IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Today, international travel is common, the Internet allows technologies to cross national borders, and even small businesses are importing and exporting. The education system of the United States should reflect these changes. In response to these developments and to our continuing effort to strengthen international relations, President Clinton launched an historic initiative to strengthen America's commitment to international education. http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/I2R?urn:pdi://oma.eop.gov.us/2000/4/20/3.text.1 It is the first initiative of its kind in the United States in over 35 years. It establishes four main goals: To increase the number of student exchanges; to expand educational technology and distance learning opportunities; to ensure that all American students learn at least one foreign language and learn about foreign cultures; and to share information about good education practices with other countries.

In an international economy, knowledge — and knowledge of language — is power. Knowing a second language is more valuable than ever. I believe that citizens who speak English and another language will be a great resource for our nation in the coming years. To that end, I am encouraging schools in the United States to adopt the dual language approach, which we also sometimes refer to as "English plus one." This approach challenges young

people to meet high academic standards in two languages.

For the last 100 years, U.S. education has been defined by certain assumptions that are now outdated — such as teaching being seen as a nine-month responsibility, and held mostly by women who are paid comparatively low wages. We must hire more than two million new teachers in the next decade. This will require a dramatic overhaul of how we recruit, prepare, induct and retain good teachers. The Clinton Administration has proposed a $1 billion investment to support efforts to improve the quality of our teachers. Furthermore, I have proposed that school districts begin moving to make teaching a year-round profession over the course of the next five years, and to pay teachers accordingly for that additional commitment of time.

RAISING EXPECTATIONS AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

At the core of all these efforts to raise student achievement and improve schools has been an unprecedented effort in the last decade to help states put new high standards into place for all our children. We believe that a quality education for every child is a "new civil right" for the 21st century. Our effort to raise standards for all students is an important step towards guaranteeing this new civil right. But setting new expectations and reaching for high standards has to be accomplished in an appropriate way. I have called for a review of the standards movement. High-stakes tests, including high school exit exams, are part of setting high standards. At the same time, students and teachers need the preparation time and resources in order to succeed. Morevoer, students must have multiple opportunities to demonstrate competence. Educators should rely on more than one measure to make a final decision.

To give students and teachers every opportunity to succeed, President Clinton and Vice President Gore have proposed the largest increase ever in the U.S. education budget. We are working to create alternatives and offer intensive help to students who are struggling to pass high-stakes tests.
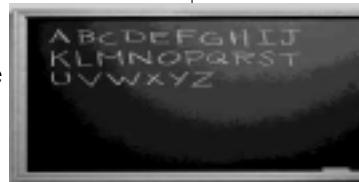
Students' difficulties often start before they enter school or take their first classroom exam. As a result, we have put a new focus on early childhood education and early reading. If all parents would read to their children 30 minutes a day, we could revolutionize education in America. Many parents in the U.S. have full-time jobs, during which they cannot care for their children. We are working to provide safe learning environments for children too young to begin formal schooling.

School-age children with working parents also benefit from after-school programs. The fact is that children's minds don't shut down at three o'clock in the afternoon. Neither should their schools. To counter this, we have increased investments in after-school enrichment programs that provide safe havens for constructive activities. Statistics show that children who attend regularly get better grades, improve in math and reading, have better classroom deportment, spend less time watching television and have better relations with their peers. They are also not on the streets or in shopping malls between 2 and 8 p.m., when statistics indicate youth crime is at its peak.

Student safety is an important aspect of education because children can learn more if they feel safe and secure. In general, our schools are safe — safer than many other environments in which children find themselves. Although students spend as much as eight hours a day at school, less than one percent of homicides among school-age children occur in or

around school grounds or on the way to and from school. And in 1997, 90 percent of schools reported that they had no serious crime. I believe that we can keep children safe by giving them a strong sense of connection that can be fostered in schools. To do this, schools can establish programs to help children resolve conflicts and discover the difference between right and wrong. Equitable discipline policies, smaller schools and smaller classes often help build stronger connections in schools.

One of the resources that is not distributed equally in our schools is technology. We call this gap the "digital divide." Technology is an important part of the way we live and work. Education, including technology training, can lift people out of poverty and help them overcome adversity. In that regard, we are working to provide every school with the technology that students will need if they are going to succeed in this century. Our E-Rate program, which gives schools discounts of up to 90 percent for Internet access, has helped us connect 95 percent of schools to the Internet.

Computers and Internet access are important factors in helping students learn to use technology, but they have little value if teachers do not know how to use technology effectively. The U.S. Department of Education has established several programs to address this. The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund supports professional development programs so teachers can learn to use technology effectively in the classroom. Another initiative, Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology, provides grants to colleges to help ensure that students preparing to become teachers can learn new teaching and learning styles enabled by technology.

EDUCATION POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE

Across the United States, on every level of activity, education policies are subjects of discussion and debate among our citizens. We believe that the nation's education policies must change to reflect the increasing importance of education, the pervasiveness of technology and changes in student enrollment. A glimpse toward the future suggests that charter schools will become more prevalent in the United States. Although they use public funds, charter schools operate with more freedom and flexibility than typical public schools. The Clinton Administration has supported, and continues to support, charter schools and other innovations that give parents more choices in public schools.

I predict our schools will be open to students and adults for longer hours, providing access to computers for families that cannot afford their own personal computers and classes for adults who are seeking to improve their careers. Public education will be less about a fixed location and a fixed schedule, and much more about learning anytime and anywhere. Technology — electronic learning — will change every aspect of U.S. education.

SUMMING UP

Obviously, making wise decisions about our education policies today will help us build a bright future. If our counterparts — policymakers in other nations — establish research-based policies that reflect technological advances and challenge all students to do their very best, we will be giving our children and grandchildren around the world a most precious legacy. ❏

AT THE CORE OF
EDUCATION
in the
UNITED STATES,
A PASSION FOR LEARNING

BY MARGARET STIMMANN BRANSON

Of all the politically salient issues in the United States today, none is of greater moment to Americans than education. Public opinion polls repeatedly confirm that citizens are more concerned about education than they are about any other issue — including the economy, employment, crime and international affairs. Other data corroborate those polls and attest to the primacy of education.

Within the last 11 years, three U.S. "summits" have confronted educational issues. Months after becoming president in 1989, George Bush convened the nation's 50 governors (including Bill Clinton of Arkansas) to focus on the need to improve the quality of pre-collegiate education for all children. The states' chief executives reached a consensus on national objectives and the need for performance standards. In 1994, the U.S. Congress shaped that declaration of purposes into the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The most recent gathering, including U.S. corporate leaders as well as the governors, reaffirmed a commitment to public education, assessed progress toward the achievement of the national goals, and recommended course corrections as they deemed necessary.

The heightened national interest in education has spurred candidates for national, state and local offices — as well as the major political parties themselves — to present their ideas, to pledge to seek continued improvement in education, and to commit themselves to programs that will meet the need, across the United States, not only for more teachers, but for those who are fully qualified. Moreover, politicians have vowed to devote special attention to narrowing the achievement gap between the most and the least advantaged students.
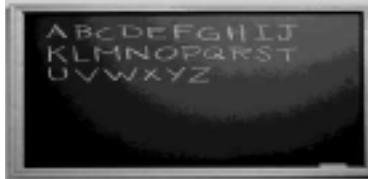
This continuing concern about education in the United States is rooted in the fundamental passion of Americans for learning. It is, indeed, the latest chapter in a national saga that goes back to colonial times, but which took on great significance slightly more than a half-century ago, when the Supreme Court of the United States issued its landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ending segregation in public education. Since that ruling, the Court (and lower courts throughout the judicial system) has been involved in an ever-increasing number of cases regarding education. It is a measure of the intensity of the issue.

The present era — at the dawn of a new century

— is marked by a national fascination with seeking, and experimenting with, alternatives to traditional forms of schooling. The "deschooling," home schooling and alternative schooling movements all have their advocates. There are proponents of private and charter schools, and of "choice" or voucher plans. Interest groups vie with one another as they attempt to persuade decision-making bodies to give consideration to the special needs of students such as those with disabilities, students for whom English is a foreign language, students who are gifted and talented, or students who are mired in poverty.

While it is true that this is a time of ferment in education, it is important to remember that neither public interest in education nor the desire to extend and improve schooling are new phenomena in the United States. Even a cursory glance at history bears out the fact that education not only has been a central concern of Americans even before the founding of the republic; it also has been a continuing source of controversy. What is more, the basic philosophical questions about which Americans have contended in the past bear a striking resemblance to those about which Americans contend today.

Evidence of Americans' continuing concern for education is not hard to find. It can be found in the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 passed by Congress under the Articles of Confederation. The first of these made possible the sale of public lands, provided that the sixteenth lot in each township was set aside for educational purposes. The second created a plan of administration and declared that "religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

These ordinances laid the basis for future federal educational support, which came in a succession of U.S. congressional enactments still in force today. An early, significant piece of legislation was the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, signed enthusiastically by President Abraham Lincoln. It enabled the states to address the need for practical education by establishing colleges for agriculture, the mechanical arts and military sciences. A host of subsequent legislation has extended the benefits of education to those who because of poverty, race, gender, disabilities or other conditions were excluded. Notable among those enactments have been the G.I. Bill of Rights for military veterans, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Head Start Act, the Bilingual Education Act and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (the name was changed in 1990 to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

From the onset of the republic, presidents of the United States also have voiced their commitment to education by taking advantage of what Theodore Roosevelt aptly called their "bully pulpit." Education was a priority for the earliest chief executives. George Washington specifically addressed the subject in both his first inaugural address and his final message to Congress. He urged the establishment of a national university, a dream he was not able to realize. Thomas Jefferson, the nation's third president, was an ardent advocate of education even before he took the highest office in the land. He proposed a law to establish public schools in his native state of Virginia, maintaining that "an amendment of our constitution must come here in aid of the public education. The influence of government must be shared among all the people." And, more recently, Lyndon Johnson — who, long before his White House years in the 1960s, taught school in an impoverished rural Texas sector — staunchly advocated attention to educational matters.

It would be wrong, however, to presume that all of the initiatives on behalf of education have emanated from the federal government. Education in the United States is primarily a state function, which is delegated in large part to the more than 15,000 local school districts. Within them, school board members, superintendents, professional organizations of educators, citizens committees and the students themselves can claim credit for extending and improving educational opportunities.

The fact that Americans have long shared a belief in the importance of education, and have exhibited a determination to extend and improve educational opportunities, does not mean that they are, or have been, of one mind on the subject. In the course of the nation's history they have engaged in debate, often

heated, over such fundamental questions as these:

☞ What constitutes a "good" education?

☞ What should be the content of schooling?

☞ How should education be distributed?

☞ How should educational authority be distributed?

☞ Who should bear the burden of the costs of education?

☞ How much of our resources should be devoted to education?

☞ Who is accountable for how much and how well students learn?

☞ How should the results of schooling be assessed and what should be the consequences of such assessment?

Those questions and their corollaries have yet to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, and it is doubtful they ever will be. R. Freeman Butts, noted Columbia University scholar and author of numerous books on education, offers a credible explanation for the durability of this often fierce national debate. Tensions and disagreements, he suggests, arise from the interplay of three persistent themes in American life:

1. The cohesive value claims of the democratic political community and the long-range constitutional order. Those cohesive values include liberty, equality, popular consent and personal obligation for the public good. More traditional or conservative cohesive values also embrace individualism, free enterprise and allegiance to the "American way of life."

2. The differentiating value claims of pluralism that give identity to diverse groups or segments in American society. These claims can be made on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, language, economic circumstances, previous deprivation of rights or other distinguishing factors.

3. The worldwide drive toward modernization and globalization that continues to effect deep changes in societies all over the world. Among these changes are industrialization, urbanization, centralization of power of the national state, and secularization of knowledge.

Those who argue that education should promote cohesive value claims contend that schooling should serve a basic civic role. The primary goal of elementary and secondary education should be to produce informed, effective and responsible citizens. Those who believe that education should serve differentiating claims insist that their values be honored and that their particular needs be met. Not infrequently, they seek to break away from the cohesive values to form their own schools as the basis for building their own kind of community. Those who are most concerned about modernization and globalization emphasize the need to prepare students for the interdependent, technological, urbanized world in which they will live their lives. They often urge that greater attention be given to "world citizenship" or to the ties that bind one to all of humanity rather than those they deem more parochial.

The "pulling and hauling" of these contending claims of a democratic polity, of segmental pluralisms, and of relentless technological modernity and globalization is readily apparent today. It can be seen and heard on every hand ranging from deliberations by school boards and debates in our legislatures to private conversations among parents and concerned citizens.

Ultimately, contention, debate and deliberation form the essence of a democratic society. ❑

Margaret Stimmann Branson is associate director of the Center for Civic Education, in Calabasas, California, a renowned scholar and consultant on civic education and the author of numerous textbooks and professional articles. She was an editorial director and a principal researcher and writer of the National Standards for Civics and Government, and is serving on the International Education Association National Expert Panel on U.S. Civic Education, and the International Framework for Education for Democracy Development Committee.
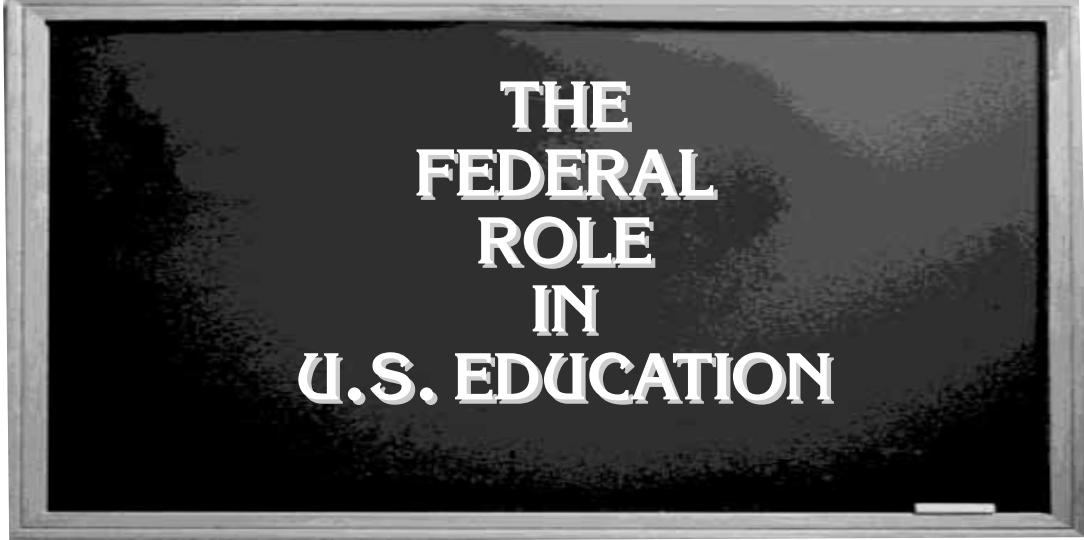
THE FEDERAL ROLE IN U.S. EDUCATION

T he 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution articulates the principle that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

As a result of this fundamental legal pillar, governance in the United States is quite decentralized when compared with that of most other nations. The U.S. system is based on the philosophy that government ought to be limited and control of many public functions, such as schooling, should rest primarily with states and local communities.

Over the years, a limited but critical federal (U.S. Government) role in education has evolved within this decentralized system. The seeds of this role can be found in the writings of the nation's founders, who understood that education was essential to building a strong, unified democracy. In general, the federal government has entered the field of education when a vital national interest was not being met by states or localities, or when national leadership was required to address a national problem. The courts usually have upheld the federal role in education based on the constitutional clause (Article I, Section 8) giving the U.S. Congress the power to provide for the nation's "general

welfare," the 14th Amendment ensuring citizens due process of law, and other legal grounds.

The federal government has always been a subordinate partner to states and localities in terms of the amount of education funding that comes directly from its level. The federal share of total revenues for elementary and secondary school education peaked in the late 1970s at less than 10 percent, and today is less than seven percent of the overall expenditures. States and local school districts have retained control over curriculum content and instructional methods; in fact, federal law prohibits U.S. Government interference in these areas.

Still, the federal government has influenced education to a degree that goes well beyond the small share of funding provided. In recent years, to achieve greater impact, federal dollars have been heavily concentrated on certain priorities, such as educating children from lower-income backgrounds, rather than on general school support. Presidents and other national leaders have used the prominence of their office to call attention to a problem and rally people around a

national goal. When the rights of individuals are at stake, the federal government has required states and localities to take certain corrective actions.

There are four major reasons why the federal government has become involved in education:

☞ To promote democracy.
☞ To ensure equality of educational opportunity.
☞ To enhance national productivity.
☞ To strengthen national defense.

Abridged with permission from A Brief History of the Federal Role in Education: Why It Began and Why It's Still Needed, *by the Center on Education Policy, Washington, D.C.* ❏
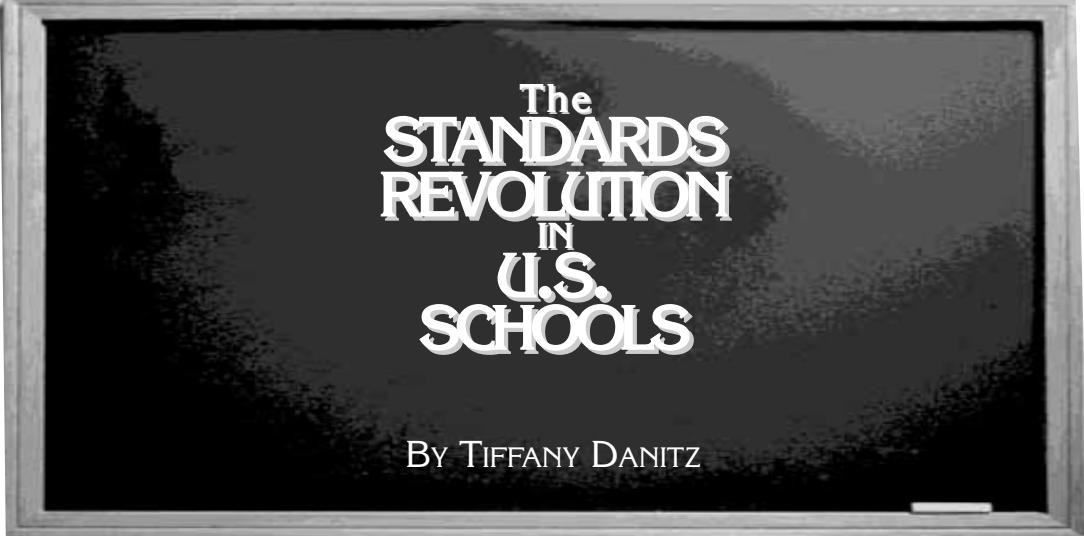
The STANDARDS REVOLUTION in U.S. SCHOOLS

By Tiffany Danitz

Standards.

They've become a mantra for politicians in nearly every jurisdiction in the United States. With polls indicating that education is front and center among voters' premier concerns, politicians in nearly every state have been eager to pick up the banner of school reform.

Armed with a booming economy and the seeming absence of an international threat, state governors have turned their attention to fixing whatever needs to be fixed in the nation's public school system, employing standards-based reforms to resuscitate education.

The concept is simple. Standards-based reform holds the schools and their workforce accountable for student learning. It is a logical, politically and economically appealing policy that sets forward what students should know by the time they complete each grade level, with tests used to assess whether or not students have achieved the goals, or standards, lawmakers have set. These goals vary from state to state.

The new policy doesn't come without its critics, however. Conservatives wedded to local control take issue with the centralization of education policy under statewide standards. Then, too, some teachers fear that their entire curriculum will be dictated by test content. Moreover, opponents to high-stakes testing, which judges students' futures on a single score, have argued against the wholesale, top-down approach to reform.

Nevertheless, proponents of standards are counting on the system to yield results. A crisis in confidence in public education spurred reform. Politicians searching for an expedient way to fix the situation decided to set goals or standards and test students to ensure the goals were being met. Now that the standards are in place in 49 states, proponents and opponents alike await results.

About 15 years ago, a sobering series of reports, including *A Nation At Risk* (1983) and *Time For Results* (1986), lamented the state of public education, and warned that U.S. students' failure to live up to their potential could lead to an economic crisis and could even become a national security issue.

In 1989, in response to the studies, President George Bush summoned the nation's governors, including Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, to the first-ever "education summit" in Charlottesville, Virginia. The intent was to find a way to raise academic achievement so U.S. students would be able to compete in the global economy. The result was Goals 2000, a commitment by the participating governors to improve U.S. education through a series of education goals to be reached by the year 2000.

In 1994, President Clinton shepherded through the U.S. Congress the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

The legislation gave states federal (U.S. Government) aid to help them devise their own academic standards and create assessments to measure progress toward those goals. Standards language also made its way into reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed by Congress that same year.

It was at this point that some states began setting academic standards, clearly defining what they wanted students to learn at each grade level. But progress was slow. By the time governors and business leaders met for their second summit in 1996, only 14 states had adopted standards. The nation's students continued to score low on international tests. Business executives were consumed with concern over the growing need for highly skilled workers, and university professors complained that high school graduates were woefully underprepared. Parents, too, were not blind to the quality issue within public school education, and were demanding to know how their tax dollars were being spent. Politicians were put on notice. Confronted with the issue at the education summits, they pledged systemic reforms, agreeing to write standards into statewide policy and to commission the preparation of tests that would measure whether the standards had been met. Rewards and sanctions were to be put in place to hold schools and students responsible for meeting the state's goals.

Since the 1996 summit, every state but one has adopted the concept of standards. More than 40 have created tests to measure whether students are reaching the new goals that have been set for them. Only Iowa, deferring to local control, has failed to pass state standards legislation.

Generally, the process of establishing standards has been a democratic one. Legislators appointed special commissions comprised of teachers, university professors, community leaders, business leaders and politicians to establish statewide standards for English, mathematics, science and history. In Delaware, for example, a team set academic standards and produced a test to measure how students are learning and performing at the benchmark school grades of 3, 5, 8 and 10. During its most recent legislative season, Delaware lawmakers passed a package of accountability laws to back up the standards they put in place in 1995. The tests will allow educators to compare student performance at the school, state and national level.

"To succeed in an increasingly competitive world in the 21st century," the legislation states, in language resembling that of other jurisdictions, "Delaware's children must meet high standards. Establishing rigorous standards in core academic subjects — and attaching consequences for failing to meet them — creates powerful incentives for schools, students, teachers, administrators and parents to strive for academic excellence."

For those students who fail the test, most states have adopted repercussions — both for students and for schools. These accountability measures include: ending social promotion (the practice of sending a child on to the next grade even though he or she has not mastered the standards for the present one); prohibiting graduation for secondary school students unless they pass the state exit exam; ranking the schools (sometimes with letter grades) based on student performance on the test. Some states are also tying teachers' evaluations to student improvement. In fact, nearly 40 states issue "report cards" on the schools — evaluations by the state educational departments — measuring whether the institutions are meeting state academic standards. Naturally, because of the keen interest in educational progress everywhere, these report cards receive wide media attention.

Grading the schools has not been without controversy. Invariably, schools that regularly receive failing grades are in lower-income sectors of the state, which often do not inherently enjoy the resources or social climate necessary to help them turn around. What's more, the allocation of resources often depends upon the school's ranking. Over the last decade, 23 states passed laws giving them the power to take over failing schools. Eleven have done just that. A few districts in large urban areas, such as Chicago, have followed suit. The Chicago mayor even has the authority to shut down failing schools.

In 1999, Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania championed through the state legislature the Academic Recovery Act, which frees the state's eight

worst performing schools from state mandates on hiring and contracting. If the schools continue to fail under the relaxed mandates, they will be placed under the direction of a state-appointed control board.

When a school is taken over, or reconstituted, a team of experts goes into the school and does whatever it takes to turn it around. Once standards are set and it is clear what students should know, testing and accountability come into play. This is the real challenge for many lawmakers. They find it difficult, frequently, to maintain the policies they set in motion, because prohibiting social promotion or denying seniors their graduation day can plant the seeds of public outrage.

In Virginia, for instance, where the new Standards of Learning (SOL) statewide test has seen very low passing rates its first two years, lawmakers were urged by test opponents to consider six pieces of legislation that would have diluted the standards set. None passed. And in Wisconsin, lawmakers were forced to repeal the graduation examination that had been put in place.

The debate over assessment strikes at the cornerstone of the standards reform movement. For politicians, tests are an attractive tool because they are relatively inexpensive, can be swiftly put in place, show quick results for better or worse, and allow immediate action. And they can be applied without meddling in classroom instruction — which normally comes under local control. Yet at the third education summit, held in 1999, a number of governors, educators and officials expressed concern about staying the course on reform because of the growing backlash. Some parents, students and teachers oppose standards from the outset, seeing them as too rigorous and routine. Other opponents have no problem with the standards — but rather with the high-stakes testing. As more states link school and teacher performance to students' test scores — and offer rewards or sanctions accordingly — many parents and educators fear that classroom education will consist of rote learning. Among the targets of their concern: the exit exams in two dozen states that students must pass before they are allowed to graduate. In Massachusetts this past spring, students delivered petitions with 7,000 signatures demanding that the state repeal the law that ties their high school diploma to passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Exam. In all, grassroots parent groups opposed to high-stakes tests have sprung up in at least a dozen states.

In some cases the rush toward accountability has outpaced the ability of politicians and educators to provide schools and teachers with the tools they need to help students meet the standards. In states where education reforms and graduation tests were phased in slowly — Texas, Kentucky and Maryland — resistance from parents, students and teachers has been minimal. Both Texas and North Carolina have been lauded by policy experts for their standards and assessments, which have been more comprehensive and have been in place longer than in other states. They rank schools, issue school-wide report cards, require graduation exams, and provide assistance to struggling schools and reward those that do well.

According to David Grissmer, a researcher at the Rand Corporation who has analyzed the two states' reforms, the centerpiece of the two models is very similar. Both states have aligned standards to the textbooks and the curriculum that is taught in the schools; the tests are closely linked with the standards material; local school districts have received policy-making and funding flexibility, and both states keep track of test score data in order to continually improve reform policies. As a result, Texas and North Carolina have made significant statistical advancement in student performance on state tests as well as on the National Assessment of Education Progress, a voluntary national test. In Texas, even minority students (for whom the challenge of a rigorous state test may be greater) have pulled up their scores.

Still, the standards-based approach represents a shift from the traditional commitment in the United States to local control of public education. For more than a century, the nation's youth — and their families — have enjoyed the benefit of free schooling, under the aegis of local governments. The shift in

responsibility from local school districts and elected school boards to state legislatures and executives is a sea change in U.S. education. To be sure, local school boards and district school chiefs still may set policy. But the emphasis on results has spurred state officials to act.

One question that arises is whether public education reform is hampered by the political process — the frequent turnover in control of executive and legislative branches of states following elections. However, in addition to designating state education administrators, many governors also appoint school board members to rolling terms. This means that even when a governor's administration ends, the people he has named to school boards remain in place to help carry out his or her reforms.

The power shift in governance over the schools has taken place over the past decade or two, fueled by such chief executives as Lamar Alexander in Tennessee, Richard Riley (now U.S. Secretary of Education) in South Carolina, Colorado's Roy Romer, Thomas H. Kean in New Jersey and Bill Clinton in Arkansas, who drove standards-based reform forward. James Hunt of North Carolina is the last of this breed, and he is leaving office when his term ends at the end of this year.

Will there be a new generation of leaders to propel Goals 2000 forward? If it does emerge, most likely the next wave of standards-based reforms will deal directly with the classroom. The 1999 education summit concentrated on quality teaching, at a time of an approaching teacher shortage. Political and business leaders and education officials are now looking for ways to improve teacher preparation, and to align training and professional development with state standards. They are working with graduate schools of education to develop courses that will enable future teachers to have the resources to meet standards.

As the teacher shortage looms, as the student population expands, states are competing to hire the best and brightest, especially in math, science and computer science. Urban and rural schools especially are feeling the pinch. State legislators are engaged in a competition — tempting candidates with scholarships, loan forgiveness, housing and signing bonuses. Recently, Governor Gray Davis of California proposed that new teachers be excused from paying state income taxes — a revolutionary stance. Still, even as they try to recruit new teachers, state officials seek to raise the quality of teaching by presenting challenging qualifying tests to teaching candidates and mandating the continuing professional development of veteran teachers.

Ultimately, quality teaching is vital to the success of standards-based reform. The hope of politicians on state and local levels — as well as in Washington — plus the business community and the public at large is that standards-based reforms will create a skilled, educated work force, a new American pioneer, able to embrace with vigor the challenges of this new century. ❏

Tiffany Danitz monitors education as a staff writer for stateline.org*, an online news service that covers politics and issues in the 50 U.S. states.* Stateline.org *can be found on the Internet at www.stateline.org. The site is funded with a grant from the Pew Charitable Trust and is offered free to the public.*

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DIVERSITY IN U.S. EDUCATION

By Anne C. Lewis

In the wake of the tumultuous arrival of millions of immigrants to the United States around the turn of the last century, between 1890 and 1920, children streamed into the public school system. Joining the already arrived, they were faced with a "sink or swim" choice, and, with determination, most forged ahead.

For the past few decades, particularly the past 15 years or so, U.S. immigration has brought to the nation's shores countless newcomers representing countries, languages, traditions and religions underrepresented here in the past. At the same time, the schools have continued to acknowledge the need for inclusionary programming — not only for immigrants, but also for those with special needs, including children with disabilities of one kind or another, and youngsters of varying educational achievement levels.

As a result, the U.S. classroom — in primary and secondary schools — is more diverse than at any time in the nation's history, with more issues needing to be explored, more challenges needing to be met and more attention needing to be paid.

Providing a solid education for all has not been a goal easily accomplished. Controversy over issues of one kind or another, parental advocacy, U.S Government and state policymaking and use of the judicial system to enforce rights have all played a role in the march toward a universal system of education. The important message, however, is that the goal remains strong and is central to changes taking place in American education from kindergarten through the 12th grade, traditionally the end of secondary school (K-12).

One of the United States' eminent researchers in this field, Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University, summed up the challenge in her 1997 book, *The Right to Learn*:

"If the challenge of the twentieth century was creating a system of schools that could provide minimal education and basic socialization for masses of previously uneducated citizens, the challenge of the twenty-first century is creating schools that ensure — for all students in all communities — a genuine right to learn. Meeting this new challenge is not an incremental undertaking. It requires a fundamentally different enterprise."

A BIT OF HISTORY

To understand the evolution of diversity in the K-12 school system, one needs a brief introduction to how schools are governed. The early colonizers tutored their children at home or pooled monies to hire a teacher for several families. As more and more settlers moved to the West, the U.S. Government required new communities to establish schools and set aside parcels of land for that purpose. In return for paying taxes to educate other people's children, citizens were promised local control of their schools. Thus, to this day, what happens in schools and for

children depends very much on local decisions. This independence is tempered somewhat by court decisions and U.S. laws affecting all schools, as well as by a growing influence by state governments. Nevertheless, every community basically decides how its schools will address diversity in its schools.

That might explain why a school in one of the New England states may have few students receiving special education, while one in Utah has a special education enrollment far above the national average. A school in Connecticut may include a fourth or more of its students in gifted and talented programs, while a school in Colorado may be closer to the national average of three to five percent. California might limit bilingual programs, as it did in recent legislation, but Texas and Florida, also heavily affected by the presence of language-minority children, may strongly support bilingual education. Where a child lives in the United States largely determines what policies will govern how schools deal with diversity.

At one time, resources usually went into educating a mostly white, upper-class population. In the Southern states, for example, for the most part, African-American slaves were denied an education. Even after the U.S. Civil War ended slavery in the 1860s, public schools established for African-American children were separate and poorly supported. In the middle of the 19th century, waves of immigrants, mostly from Western Europe, began to fill schools in the cities or move into farming communities of the Midwest, such as Germans in Wisconsin or Scandinavians in Minnesota.

By the turn of the century, immigrant children defined city school systems in the Northeast and Midwest. A 1908 study in New York City, for example, found that 71 percent of the students had foreign-born fathers. Nearly a century later, great diversity again characterizes urban school systems. Only this time, students come from all parts of the world, joining a great migration of African-American families out of the South that had begun during World War II.

STUDENT ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHICS

The new language diversity in American schools contrasts significantly with that of previous influxes of immigrants. It is extensive. For example,

Montgomery County, Maryland, and Arlington, Virginia, both within the metropolitan area of Washington, D.C., enroll students whose families speak more than three dozen languages. In Long Beach, California, once known as a haven for people moving from the U.S. Midwest, more than one-third of the total enrollment of students in the public schools, K-12, today is from Southeast Asia. Furthermore, ties with the "old country" are easier to maintain. Modern transportation and communication allow immigrant families to keep up contacts and, thus, their languages and culture. In one middle school in Long Beach, Cambodian families helped establish daily lessons in Khmer for their children.

Recent immigration is responsible for most of the diversity in American schools. Yet, the schools would be diverse even without it. About 17 percent of K-12 students are African American, and about one percent are Native American. The families of many of those listed as Hispanic, or Latino, can trace their heritage to ancestors living in the areas that became the U.S. Southwest. Among the many sub-groups within the Hispanic school population, the highest percentage of native-born students are of Mexican ancestry. Other large sub-groups include Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans, whose migration started before that of Central American families. Altogether, Hispanics will become the largest minority group in American public schools by the year 2005.

At one time, the goal of the schools was to foster the "melting pot," a policy that minimized one's cultural background in favor of assimilation. Today, schools still stress literacy in English, but they also focus on understanding different cultures. Textbooks and other classroom resources attempt to provide a wide exposure to diverse cultures, and many teacher recruitment efforts are aimed at building much greater diversity among the teaching force.

Federal and some state programs provide funding for bilingual education. This strategy — of learning some academic subjects in the native language while studying English — was used in the early part of the last century to keep German-speaking students in midwestern U.S. cities in the public schools. Fear of foreigners after World War I led to a backlash against bilingual programs. A U.S. Supreme Court decision

in the 1970s guaranteed language-minority students an appropriate education, thus supporting a return of bilingual or similar programs. Concern about the surge in immigration in California, however, contributed to voter approval of a referendum that severely limits bilingual classes in that state — preferring a quick transition to English-only as the approach to comply with the Supreme Court ruling. On the other hand, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley recently endorsed dual language immersion programs to help language-minority students maintain fluency in their home language while learning English and to give English-speaking students a full opportunity to learn another language.

The impact of racial and ethnic diversity in the schools varies among the states. Five states — California, Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois — are experiencing the largest growth in language minority enrollments. Diverse enrollments also tend to concentrate in central-city schools (almost all large urban districts now have more minority students than white students). Yet, even rural schools in such states as Alabama or Kansas may find a growing number of language-minority families in their schools, attracted to the communities by low-skill industries.

What also is different, and most significant, about the racial/ethnic diversity in U.S. schools is how these institutions are responding. In the past, school officials usually expected minority student achievement to be lower than that of white students, which resulted in large percentages of ethnic and racial-minority students being placed in remedial and/or vocational programs. They dropped out of school before obtaining a high school diploma at much higher rates than white students.

Education reforms that began more than a decade ago focus on higher standards for all students. The reforms present a special challenge to low-performing schools, which enroll mostly low-income and/or minority children. "Closing the gap" in achievement has become a priority for these schools, and there is some evidence of progress. The graduation rate of white and African-American students is now almost the same, although Hispanic students still lag far behind. Some states, such as Texas, require schools to show improved achievement among sub-groups of students, meaning that overall scores cannot hide problems with minority students. Where schools are focusing special help for low-performing minority students — such as smaller classes, research-based early reading strategies, and motivation to prepare for college — minority student achievement often exceeds national averages.

BECOMING TRULY INCLUSIVE

From living in segregated institutions to segregated classrooms in public schools to inclusion in regular classrooms — this has been the history of education of students with disabilities in American schools. Most of the success in getting disabled students accepted into regular classrooms has occurred since the 1950s, when parents and other advocates — heartened by court decisions that struck down racial segregation in the schools — began to organize on behalf of students with disabilities.

Several court decisions and federal laws finally led to a significant policy change: major legislation requiring that schools provide "a free, appropriate public education" to all handicapped children. Now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it guarantees that each disabled child receives an individualized education program agreed to by parents and educators. As more has been learned about educating students with disabilities, the law has been amended to emphasize "full inclusion" of students with disabilities in regular classrooms and their access to the same curriculum and standards as other students.

The nature of disabilities among students changes over time. When IDEA began as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in the mid-1970s, speech problems accounted for the largest percentage of students with disabilities (35 percent) and mental retardation was second (26 percent). Twenty years later, in the 1990s, learning disabilities was the largest category (46 percent), while speech problems had fallen to 18 percent and mental retardation to 10 percent. During this time, medical and educational research determined that there was a new category among the disabled — attention deficit disorder (ADD), which is now covered by U.S. Government programs.

Programs to diagnose developmental delays in very young children and give them early help prevent

many children from being labeled disabled. Also, federal investments in the education of children with disabilities include teacher training and research on new technologies. The latter effort has led to assistive technologies, such as the use of computers that enable physically disabled children to better remain on grade level in regular classrooms. Other U.S. laws make school facilities physically accessible to students through ramps, in place of stairs or elevators in multi-floor buildings.

Approximately 12 percent of the K-12 enrollment receives services under IDEA. About three-fourths of them are taught in regular classrooms. Often regular teachers are helped by teachers trained in special education, either in the classroom or in resource rooms where the challenged students receive extra help. Almost one-fourth of students with disabilities attend separate classes in regular school buildings; a small percentage enroll at special schools or are placed in residential institutions.

DIVERSITY IN ACHIEVEMENT

While schools are moving toward higher standards for all students, there is a time-honored tradition in American K-12 education of providing for the exceptionally gifted and talented as well. In the early days of the nation, before there was legislation that provided public education for everyone, families pooled their resources to educate their children in the parlors at home or in other facilities. (Today, on a comparatively modest scale, home schooling for children still exists across the United States.) Affluent families maintained this separate education through exclusive private, college-preparatory schools. But the expectation and legislative fiat in the last century that all students attend school through the age of 16 stimulated the educational system to provide a range of programs for all levels of ability.

This led to the development of programs for the gifted and talented. Because of differences in state laws and local practices, the number of students enrolled in these programs varies greatly, from five percent in some states to more than 10 percent in others, but all except a handful of states either fund or require gifted education. While advocates always say more efforts and better funding are needed, schools employ a number of methods to challenge

the gifted. For example, there are "pull-out" programs — in which students leave their regular classrooms several times a week to participate in enrichment activities. This is most common on the primary school level. Magnet high schools that focus on the arts, math or the sciences offer students more intensive work in these areas. Schools such as Bronx High School of Science in New York City, and the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., abound nationally. Eleven states have created residential schools for advanced instruction in math, science, or the arts. "Governors' schools," which function during warm-weather vacation periods, are open to highly gifted and talented students. Some states, such as Minnesota, allow proficient high school juniors and seniors to take post-secondary classes on college campuses at state expense.

High schools also offer a number of ways for high-ability students to be challenged. They might take part in such national programs as Future Problem Solving, Odyssey of the Mind or the Great Books reading series. More than 60 percent of public high schools and 46 percent of nonpublic schools participate in the Advanced Placement (AP) program of the College Board. Highly qualified teachers volunteer to teach AP courses, which offer more intensive, advanced work in academic subjects than the regular high school curriculum. In 1999, more than 700,000 high school students enrolled in AP classes and took the AP exams. A good score on the exam, a three or above, qualifies the student for credit and/or enrollment in advanced courses at almost all four-year colleges and universities.

About 30 percent of the students in AP courses in 1999 were minorities. Efforts are underway to encourage high schools without AP courses — most of them in high-poverty, high-minority areas — to prepare teachers and students for AP courses.

ADDRESSING THE GENDER BIAS

As part of the general demand for greater equity in the schools stimulated by the civil rights movement, attention turned to the exclusion of girls from certain programs. While most of the lawsuits and focus on discrimination on the basis of sex took place in higher education, Title IX, an amendment to the Higher Education Act in 1972, barred discrimination "under any education program or activity receiving Federal

financial assistance." Because most K-12 schools benefit from U.S. Government aid in some form, Title IX applied to them as well. Consequently, schools began offering more athletic programs for girls, selected textbooks and other materials that promoted gender equity, and opened up enrollment in traditionally male-oriented vocational programs to girls.

The goal of gender equity resulted in ongoing scrutiny of girls' participation in school life. The attention to inequities probably accounts for the higher enrollments of girls in advanced math and science courses at present, and the efforts that are underway to ensure that girls have as much access to computers as boys. Research on the gender issue also influenced teacher preparation and professional development programs, since findings have shown that teachers sometimes slighted girls in their instruction — without being conscious of it. The research reveals, for example, that teachers may ask boys to respond or participate more in classrooms and, at the same time, accept less complex answers from girls.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Unlike educational systems in many other countries, the United States conducts a strict separation of church and state in schools. Public funds are for public schools only, although a few states and cities now are experimenting with voucher programs that allow public funds to be spent at schools outside of the public system, including parochial (religious) schools. Most of these plans are being challenged in the courts.

Because of this separation, there is a healthy private and parochial school sector in the United States. About five million students, or 10 percent of the K-12 enrollment, attend private primary and secondary schools. Catholic schools comprise half the private school enrollment; other religious denominations account for 35 percent. Within parochial school education, the most rapid expansion is within the Muslim community, which now has about 200 schools across the United States.

CONCLUSION

Responding to the needs of diverse students in the public schools is an issue that never sits still in the United States. Policymakers, educators, the courts, and parents constantly search for the best ways to educate all students. Court-ordered desegregation and affirmative action, for example, are giving way to initiatives that improve the quality of education in all schools and especially the preparation and support of teachers to teach in highly diverse classrooms. Assessment programs are being expanded to include appropriate testing of language-minority students and those with disabilities. Instead of excluding them from testing, policymakers who design the accountability systems are saying that true progress in the schools can be measured only if all students are included in the accountability. Bilingual education remains controversial, but it also has a strong hold in most communities, and there is a growing demand among parents in general to improve the foreign language instruction for all students.

This persistent commitment to meeting learners' needs, no matter their differences, will be needed to prepare American schools for a future in which, as projected for the end of this new century, minorities will account for 60 percent of the population in the United States. ❑

Anne C. Lewis is an education policy writer and national columnist for Phi Delta Kappan, *a leading U.S. education journal.*
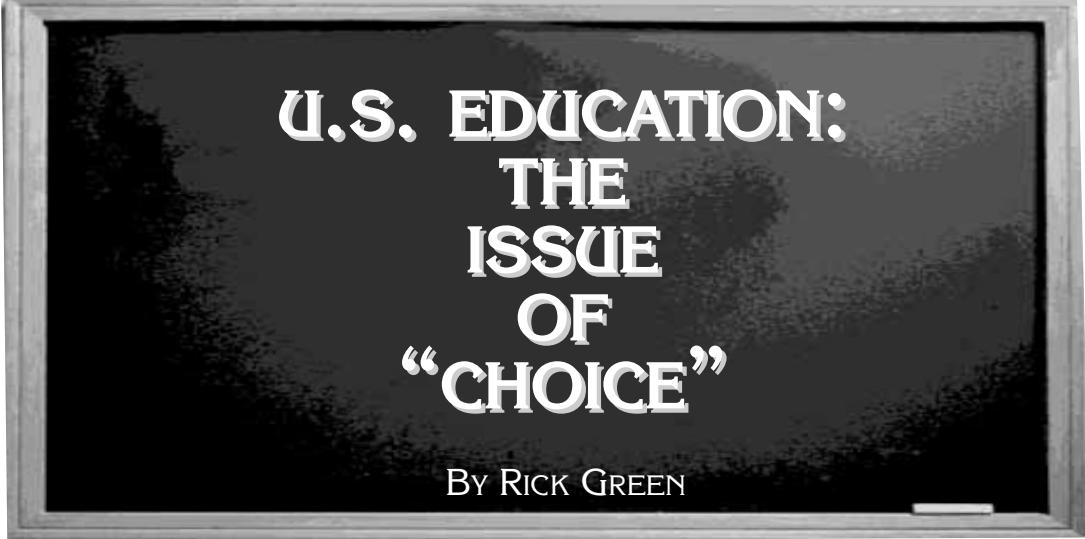
U.S. EDUCATION: THE ISSUE OF "CHOICE"

By Rick Green

Gail Watson is a self-contained school reform movement, though she claims only to be a mother looking for the best education for her children.

Her son Jevonte goes to a small neighborhood elementary school in Hartford, Connecticut, where character development and values are as important as classroom learning. Another son, Dashawn, travels by bus to another town to attend a middle school (grades six through eight) for students with special needs. Her daughter Taquonda will graduate next year from a "magnet" program at one of this city's four high (secondary) schools where students take Latin and read the Greek classics.

All are public schools. But instead of just sending her children down the street to the neighborhood schools as most parents in this aging factory town have always done, Watson has carefully selected each of them under a small but growing "school choice" initiative.

Watson and her children are the first glimpse of an emerging concept, one where education is based on a simple idea: let parents decide.

The concept of school choice — whereby parents may select the schools their children will attend, where they feel they will derive the most benefit — has burst upon the national education scene.

To be sure, most children in the United States come together at the neighborhood or regional level under the "common school" philosophy that began in New England cities such as Hartford hundreds of years ago, even before U.S. independence was declared in 1776.

(Common schools were public and theoretically open to all, yet they had a religious orientation and normally charged fees. The U.S. public school system developed in the mid-19th century, spurred initially by educator Horace Mann in Massachusetts and later expanded to the rest of the northeastern United States and, eventually, nationwide.)

In general today, public school education is getting stronger. The achievement level for students across the country is on the rise, and indicators such as dropout rates are on the decline. Public opinion surveys often show that parents are satisfied with the quality of education at their neighborhood public school. Still, there are distinct gaps in performance between urban and suburban school districts, and between white and minority students. Those dissatisfied with their local public education are exploring school choice. Indeed, for state legislatures and local school boards, as well as for many citizens, the question of whether or not to create more choice for parents has become one of the leading education issues in the United States today.

"I just want my kids to get the best [education] they can. This is really getting them thinking," says Watson, who attended average public schools while

growing up in Hartford. She now thinks competition and choice are the only way to revive low-performing school districts like hers, located in one of the poorest cities in the nation.

Watson discovered school choice mostly by luck, when her children attended a neighborhood school where a crusading teacher was trying to launch an alternative program that stressed values and character education as well as learning.

It has been her good fortune to be a parent at a time when school districts and states have been desperate to improve student performance and have begun experimenting with a number of dramatic ideas, such as school choice.

This strategy gives parents a true menu of options — offering them different types of schools once open only to those wealthy enough to afford private school education. Often, this means selecting a school or specialized program built around a particular theme, such as the arts, science and technology, or character education (although character education — the instilling of values in students as part of the school program — has become more of a given in schools across the nation today).

At the same time, supporters of even more freedom advocate giving cash "vouchers" to parents who opt to send their children to the private school of their choice, for use in paying tuition. A handful of cities, such as Cleveland (Ohio) and Milwaukee (Wisconsin), have been flirting with this idea. Thus far, U.S. courts generally have held that the use of public funds to pay for private schools is not legal. Soon, perhaps as early as 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court — the nation's highest judicial panel — may consider this issue.

Meanwhile, a minuscule percentage of students — one million out of 53 million public and private school students — are opting out completely from traditional schools. Known as "home schoolers," these students are taught at home by their parents. Although small, the number has grown substantially during the last 10 years and is yet another reflection of a growing desire for educational choice in the United States.

"Parents ought to be able to choose," argues Stephen C. Tracy, a former superintendent of a public school district and now an executive with Edison Schools, Inc., a leading for-profit company that manages public schools under contract. "Even within the establishment today, there is recognition that this

demand for choice is almost undeniable." Edison, which has yet to turn a profit, will be running about 100 schools serving more than 50,000 children when the fall 2000 term begins.

"We live in a consumer society — we are so used to having choices," Tracy adds, pointing out that people no longer accept "the notion that you have no choice when it comes to schooling. There are two essential arguments for choice. The first is that things will get better...that competition leads to better performance. The other is that choice is about liberty."

In the last five years, Tracy and others maintain, a "tremendous change" has begun to seep into America's classrooms. As many as three percent of American students now have some sort of choice in their public education — a number unheard of just 10 years ago.

The landscape is varied. In some states, like California, there can be a variety of choices for parents living in cities or suburbs. In other states, like Watson's Connecticut, the choice movement is largely confined to cities where student achievement has been the lowest — and poverty rates are the highest.

Slowly, however, the idea that schools should offer choices — not unlike the selections of food in supermarkets or movies at multiplex theaters — is taking hold in a country where a free and public education is one of the most closely-held values.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Two of Gail Watson's children attend "charter" schools, which receive public tax dollars but operate largely independent of local education bureaucracies. These schools, begun in Minnesota just eight years ago, have quickly become the focus of the choice movement in the United States.

By fall 2000, more than 2,000 charter schools are expected to be functioning in more than three dozen of the nation's 50 states. In some states, schools are free

of long-established mandates, such as the requirement to hire certified teachers. This, in itself, is a matter of controversy and debate.

Supporters say charter schools allow innovative teachers to try new ideas, as parents select the type of school they want for their child. These institutions tend to be small, often faculty-directed and organized around a theme. Critics say the schools are rife with mismanagement, with little oversight and even less evidence that they improve student achievement over the long-term.

"More school districts are going to start charters," says Joe Nathan of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota. "The public is demanding options. The charter movement says we can have higher expectations of public education."

So broad is the charter movement that it is supported by both the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. Government (the Clinton Administration and the Congress), advocates of for-profit schools, Christian fundamentalists. and the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, the two largest unions representing public school teachers.

"The movement has grown from one state to 37," Nathan points out. "It is expanding and it is expanding very fast. There are hundreds of thousands of kids doing better in school than they were before,'' said Nathan, who works with charter schools across the country.

The midwestern state of Michigan could very well be the focal point of the school choice and charter schools movements. While some states have only made tentative forays into the choice movement, and have comparatively few charter schools running, Michigan has granted charters to dozens of the independently run schools, largely because of chronic low-performance in its urban schools and long-standing inequities in school funding between cities and towns. Nearly four percent of the state's students are enrolled in charter schools, many managed by for-profit firms like Edison.

"There are a lot of reasons why people are doing this,'' David Arsen, a professor at Michigan State University, suggests. "There are some charter schools that are very innovative, but that is not an apt characterization of the set of schools as a whole. It is still a heterogenous set of schools.''

Arsen's research supports the notion that parents in the worst schools want an option, even if it means depleting resources at traditional community public schools that are most in need. Charter critics have long charged that these schools merely drain away vital dollars from schools that are often trying to educate the poorest Americans coming from families with the least education.

The new charter schools are "tending to locate where the traditional public schools are more troubled," Arsen says. "They are draining funds from the public schools facing the most challenges.''

And yet, in states such as Michigan and Arizona, where charters are common, Arsen and others believe, charters have also begun to force regular schools to make some changes, lest too many families pull out.

"If you lose three or four percent of your students to choice, you are paying attention,'' Arsen says, citing growing marketing efforts such as instituting all-day kindergarten and advertising on billboards and on the radio. "There is a new ethos to be more solicitous to parents,'' he adds.

Most of the time what's different is how the schools are run — not what is taught, according to research by Arsen and his colleagues.

"There is very little change in the instructional core,'' he said. "The innovation is coming in governance and school organization.''

PRIVATE VOUCHERS

Although the courts have blocked most of the limited voucher programs, supporters of the idea have come up with another method to keep the idea alive: free scholarships.

Wealthy investors who eventually want to see a public voucher program have begun privately funded voucher initiatives in dozens of cities across the United States. The largest experiment to date has been in San Antonio, Texas, where a group of conservative

business people raised $50 million and offered every child in one of the city's public school districts a voucher to use toward private school. Still, for nearly all of the 47 million children attending public primary and secondary schools in the United States, private school scholarships are not an option.

Nina Shokrai Rees, an education analyst with the Heritage Foundation, a free-market supporting policy research group, says school choice's strongest advocates are found among supporters of parochial school education and inner-city minorities who are seeking better schools. Opponents of vouchers include those citizens who view the taking of public money for private schools as a violation of the federal constitutional provision separating church and state. Still others argue against vouchers as something that takes money away from the neediest schools, thereby draining funds from the nation's inner cities.

Earlier this year, in a variation of the "voucher" theme, a federal (U.S. court) judge in the state of Florida halted one of the most dramatic school choice experiments. It would have allowed parents of students attending failing public schools to attend another school, public or private, at state expense. The court said public tax dollars must go to public, not private, schools.

MORE PARENTS WANT A CHOICE

During the 1990s, steadily rising percentages of Americans have said they favor giving parents the right to choose the school their children attend. Some districts and a few states even offer parents the right to select virtually any public school they want, provided there is classroom space.

Ted Carroll, a public school parent and former elected member of the board of education in Hartford, says he believes that giving parents the right to select from a menu of small schools is critical to the future of public education.

Carroll is now a member of the board of directors at the Breakthrough Charter School, a small publicly funded elementary school that attracts students from throughout the Hartford area, including Gail Watson's son Jevonte. It is one of the few charter schools in the city.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the parents who have their children at Breakthrough are thrilled,'' says Carroll. "They feel very engaged in the children's education process. The staff and the board of Breakthrough clearly expect that. Every staff person understands the mission. And size [of the student population] is pretty important. There is a point beyond which schools could lose the intimacy required for groups to feel like a genuine community."

Breakthrough's 150 students easily fit into the school auditorium. On Friday mornings, school director Norma Neumann-Johnson leads them through a few songs or a discussion topic. It's the sort of small-school event common at Breakthrough.

Inspired by the success of small schools in New York City's East Harlem school district, Neumann-Johnson has built an alternative school around real-world problem solving, character development and parent education programs.

"If every parent has to choose, they get on their horses and start investigating,'' she says.

Her school not only attracts motivated parents, but teachers looking for something different.

"Research shows that results occur when there is teacher commitment," Neumann-Johnson maintains. "There were 98 applications for seven teaching positions [when the school opened]. Everybody here is passionate. If you had only schools of choice you wouldn't have bad teachers.''

It's that kind of logic that supporters hope will push charter schools and school choice into even the most conservative of American communities.

"The charter movement says that we can have higher expectations of public education," says Nathan, of the University of Minnesota. "It is a very positive view of what schools can accomplish.''

Perhaps the most striking change of all is that merely being against choice is now viewed as being opposed to school reform, according to Jeanne Allen, director of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Education Reform.

"The concept of choice is now well-ingrained in public policy. If you are not for it you are defining yourself against it,'' she explains. "The public's appetite has been whetted.''

For Watson and her three children, the choice remains a simple one — how to find the best public schools around.

"Charter and magnet schools are one of the best things that have come about,'' she says. "These schools have so many ways of helping kids to learn. They just didn't have this when I was in school." ❏

Rick Green is a veteran education reporter for the Hartford Courant *in Connecticut and winner of the Education Writers Association grand prize for his coverage.*

The AMERICAN CLASSROOM

Citizenship, community and safety increasingly are matters for discussion and resolution in U.S. schools. The following articles briefly describe developments in these areas.
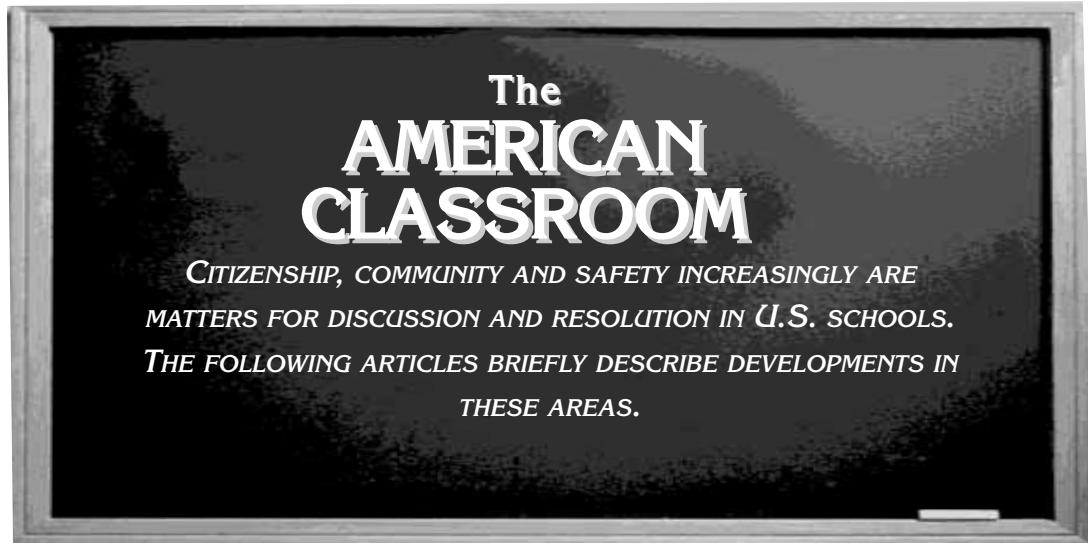
IMPLEMENTING CHARACTER EDUCATION

By Esther F. Schaeffer

Character education is traceable to the foundation of the U.S. school system, and was always intended to be an integral part of schooling. But for a time, just when it may have been needed most, educational institutions failed to incorporate character development in their work.

Today, however, it has reappeared on the nation's educational radar screen. Early signs indicate that schools emphasizing character education, which focuses on the development of characteral virtue, are seeing impressive results.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) — a national nonpartisan coalition of individuals and organizations devoted to developing moral character in youths — defines this principle as "the long-term process of helping young people develop good character," that is, knowing, caring about and acting on core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility and respect for oneself and others. The goal is to surround students in an environment that exhibits, teaches and encourages practice in the values society needs. As a result, children will not only be informed of these values, but also will internalize them and make decisions and act in accordance with them. This requires a focus on values throughout the school curriculum and culture.

It takes time, effort and often staff development to integrate character education into schools, but the investment is proving to be worth the effort. Middle schools and high schools across the country that have adopted the twin goals of academic and character development have seen impressive results in their overall climate and culture, in the level of the students' community commitment, in parental involvement and even in higher academic achievement. Character education works in schools of diverse size, with populations ranging from homogeneous to heterogeneous, and with students from families across the socioeconomic spectrum.

To be effective, character education must be deliberate and intentional. It must be incorporated into all aspects of school life — from the academic day to sports and other extracurricular activities. It must be a hallmark of all interpersonal relationships among adults and students.

Schools that have established good character education have created caring environments that are sensitive to behavioral issues — the isolation of certain children and animosities among different groups or factions. These institutions have built strong communication and understanding among students and with adults. They are responsive to problems and have teachers, administrators and students who often are willing to take action and

assume responsibility when another student appears troubled.

The schools that stand out in this regard share certain characteristics. Invariably, they have a committed administrative leadership — which includes not only principals, but also assistants and guidance counselors. They have a common vocabulary — a set of values integrated into the study of literature, history and other subjects. (Mount Lebanon High School, outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, accomplishes this even in less likely subjects as science and mathematics.) They weave character education into staff development. (Leesville Middle School in Wake County, North Carolina, for example, organizes teachers into teams that use character development as a central element in their joint curricular and lesson planning.) They focus on mutual respect. They find ways of incorporating community service into their agenda. And, like Youth Opportunities Unlimited — an alternative public school in San Diego, California, populated by at-risk students redirected or expelled from other district schools — they get results. At Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the dropout rate fell from 23 percent during the 1994-95 term to less than 13 percent two years later.

While character education is neither a short-term solution, nor a guarantee against the eruption of violence, it certainly is a vital part of the solution overall.

Esther F. Schaeffer is executive director of CEP in Washington, D.C. This article is reprinted with permission from the October 1999 issue of the National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin. Copyright © National Association of Secondary School Principals. ❏

PLANNING SAFER SCHOOLS
BY RICHARD DIEFFENBACH

While the public in the United States debates the causes of, and solutions to, the recent spate of incidents of violent crime in schools, these institutions are facing up to the need to be prepared to deal with anything that might happen. To assist them, state emergency management agencies across the nation are offering their services to help make schools safer and protect children.

For emergency managers, the shootings in Littleton, Colorado, in April 1999 and other events elsewhere demonstrated how vital a swift and effective response must be. School officials and local authorities are becoming aware of the need to coordinate emergency services — including sheriff's offices, city and state police, bomb squads, firefighters, telephone dispatchers, paramedics and hospitals. And they must learn how to deal with the media, government officials on various levels, and, of course, parents. Less dramatic crises, from bomb scares to natural disasters, can also stir up frenzied activity.

"The problem with emergencies is that they happen so rarely," says Peter Clark, a Vermont school principal whose building was threatened by flooding. "The problem is how quickly they happen."

State emergency managers are prepared to help schools develop good plans because they deal with all kinds of crises on a regular basis. "We're experts in all-hazards planning," says Gary McConnell, director of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. "I think we have a lot to offer schools in this regard."

School violence prompted him to implement a new program for schools and local officials in a state in which several incidents brought the topic home. The program tailors training sessions for each school district. It includes instruction on how to create an emergency plan, conduct drills and searches, coordinate with emergency services and respond to the media.

State emergency managers say schools need foresight that is as broad and inclusive as possible.

"We help our schools write comprehensive plans that apply to all kinds of hazards, like storms and chemical spills," says Woody Fogg, director of New Hampshire's Emergency Management Office. "That kind of plan will make schools ready for anything."

The key to planning, say emergency management coordinators, is through partnerships with educators, community leaders, parents and public safety personnel. In Arizona, the partnership involves the state department of education, state universities and the corporate world, represented by the Bank of America. Partners provide technical and financial support to make schools safe. The program that has been established by these partnerships includes two days of training for local teams — including school board members, administrators, faculty, school maintenance personnel, parents, local officials and public safety staffers.

With members of the community involved, it is more likely that plans will actually be implemented. Ed von Turkovich, director of emergency management for the state of Vermont, believes that students should be a facet of the partnership. "Most important, having students involved helps build better citizens in the future."

For the most part, state emergency management directors feel their role is to assist schools and local authorities — "to provide communities with the tools they need to prepare for and respond effectively to anything, not to tell them what to do," says Fogg.

In creating their programs, state emergency officials have taken advantage of existing resources and methods. Arizona makes use of a school safety course taught by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that has been adapted to meet the state's needs, including adding a major school violence component. New Hampshire's curriculum uses an "incident command system" originally designed for the military. Under this system, school personnel become emergency managers with specific roles and responsibilities.

Many state lawmakers are considering legislation encouraging or requiring schools to plan. In addition, they are studying a wide variety of preventive measures — additional school counselors, toll-free phone "tip" lines — as well as increasing punishments for students involved in threats, assaults, or other forms of violent behavior.

In all, these state programs, which continue to expand, have given school systems a sense of reassurance that the emergency management corps will be present if or when schools face life-threatening situations. At the same time, the state agencies have brought a degree of empowerment to these communities, providing them with the tools to help and protect themselves, to make their schools, and their children, safer.

Richard Dieffenbach is a policy analyst with the National Emergency Management Association of the Council of State Governments. Copyright © 1999 The Council of State Governments. Reprinted with permission from State Government News. ❏

PEER HELP THROUGH SERVICE: LEARNING HELPFULNESS

By Deborah Hecht

Walk into the Hoboken (New Jersey) Charter School and you might see a high school student engaged in a lively discussion with a third-grader about an art exhibit they visited the day before. In another classroom, you may find a second-grader reading a book to a kindergarten youngster. Further down the hall, two first-graders are discussing the city's plans for a new recycling program.

This is a school committed to education through service learning — using it as an educational pedagogy to encourage students from all parts of a culturally, ethnically and economically diverse urban region to work together to address their community's needs. The children are urged to define "community," and "needs," as they apply to themselves, their families, their school and their city.

The term "service learning" refers to an experiential teaching and learning method that is becoming common in schools across the United States. It provides students with the opportunity to apply both academic and non-academic skills to real-life situations. Students become involved in some type of meaningful community service activity that is then linked to their learning through carefully guided periods of reflection and analysis. It is a concept that has been endorsed universally — by educators, youth program specialists, politicians and even those engaged in monitoring the juvenile justice system. A number of states require community service for high school graduation eligibility, and increasingly, college application forms seek evidence of such voluntary involvement by prospective students. Indeed, through various acts of the U.S. Congress during the past decade, service learning, in effect, has become the law of the land, with more than one million children actively involved in community service.

Although both community service and service learning are encouraged and supported, there is a difference between the two. For example, planting a community garden might be a community service project. It would evolve into service learning if the goal would be to help students develop an understanding of botany or geometry. Furthermore, as is generally agreed by participants and supervisors, a service learning activity must meet a real need, must be ongoing, and should include four key elements — planning, service, reflection and celebration.

The types of learning that occur in the process are as varied as the service activities themselves. The most commonly identified learning goals are students' growth in academic areas, advancement in personal development (such as increased tolerance for others or self-comprehension), preparation for careers and enhancing one's sense of civic responsibility. Frequently, the programs are conceived to help students meet national, state and local standards. For example, students might learn history by interviewing and spending time with senior citizens. They might learn effective literary techniques by writing books for younger children. And they might expand their awareness of citizenship and science skills by cleaning up neighborhoods and planting gardens.

Is service learning *real* learning? If students spend time engaged in these activities, doesn't it reduce the amount of time available for their classroom assignments and preparation? The fact is that research shows that even when students spend time away from school because of service commitments, their academic achievement does not suffer. The greatest and most demonstrable impact, however, has been in the psychosocial and personal-development areas. Students invariably view their work as meaningful. They develop a sense of self-confidence. They maintain that they care about others and learn to understand differences among people. And generally, they wind up feeling good about themselves.

Intriguing, too, is the fact that carefully designed service experiences do not show preference to the most popular, the brightest or the most affluent student. Service learning is a leveler. Indeed, it is often the case that those students who are typically either disruptive or disengaged during traditional classroom learning thrive when they have the opportunity to work on a service program. For example, a student unable, or unwilling, to sit still

during a 40-minute history period may welcome the opportunity to facilitate a senior citizen dance.

Through service learning, young people find that their efforts are valued by others, that they can make a positive difference, and they can connect with caring adults, thereby establishing themselves as contributing members of the community at large. ❏

Deborah Hecht is an educational psychologist and researcher at the Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate Center, City University of New York. Copyright © 1999 by Social Policy Corporation. Reprinted with permission from the Fall 1999 issue of Social Policy.
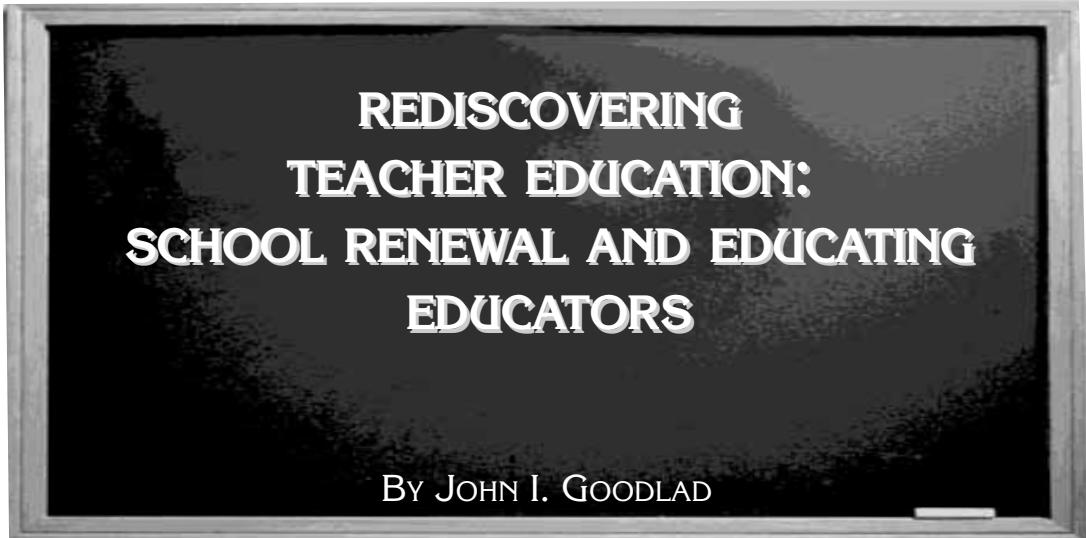
REDISCOVERING TEACHER EDUCATION: SCHOOL RENEWAL AND EDUCATING EDUCATORS

By John I. Goodlad

Teacher education — the professional preparation of elementary and secondary school teachers — has been a neglected enterprise, long suffering from status deprivation. As the field's host institutions made the transition over the decades from normal schools to teachers colleges to state colleges to state universities, some colleges of education found it prudent to downplay their teacher-education role and sought status through identification with the research criteria of the arts and sciences. Many dropped pre-service, undergraduate teacher preparation and moved entirely to graduate status.

In fact, most of today's top-ranked schools of education prepare only a handful of beginning teachers or none at all. Since each of these schools is housed in a major, research-oriented university, an observer might conclude that there is no dwelling place for teacher education in the most prestigious mansions of higher education.

My primary assumption in what follows is that higher education has a moral responsibility to provide leadership in ensuring well-educated teachers for U.S. schools. Deliberately eschewing teacher education rather than elevating it to a position of high priority confers shame, not prestige.

Suddenly, however, teacher education has been rediscovered in policy circles and linked significantly to school reform. Fifteen years of public attention to school reform has now expanded to include higher education and the teacher education function traditionally attached to it. The stances institutions can take in the domain of teacher education are narrowing down to just three, the first of which is probably untenable: opt out, comply with state regulations, or assume moral and programmatic leadership.

There exists today in the United States an unusual educational improvement initiative called the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER). Its agenda — the Agenda for Education in a Democracy — guides the efforts of educators in 33 colleges and universities, over 100 school districts, and more than 500 schools joined in partnership for the simultaneous renewal of schooling *and* the education of educators. Three of these school-college partnerships educate more than half the teachers produced in their respective states, in programs quite different from those in place just a few years ago.

One of the remarkable features of NNER is that key leaders at all levels made a voluntary choice. NNER participants are doing what they are doing for the best of reasons: they want to, stirred by two major stimulants — a growing body of evidence regarding teacher education as a neglected enterprise, and an agenda of challenging intellectual substance and moral grounding.

The Agenda for Education in a Democracy — which grew out of two inquiries of mine, conducted with colleagues, into the nature of schooling and school change — has three parts: mission, conditions necessary to the mission and strategies for implementation. They present a daunting challenge.

The four-part mission sets for teachers and teacher-educators: enculturation of the school-age population in a social and political democracy, comprehensive introduction of the young to the human conversation, the exercise of caring pedagogy, and the moral stewardship of schools and teacher education programs. The necessary conditions to be established for the conduct of this mission number at least 60. And the strategies call for symbiotic partnerships between schools and institutions of higher education. The latter is expected to bring to the collaboration professors from both colleges of education and departments of the arts and sciences.

Intensive immersion of key actors in the agenda through a year-long leadership program, an annual meeting of participants, site-to-site networking and full use of the wonders of modern electronic communications has produced the psychic energy and synergy necessary to individual and institutional renewal. Lacking the common agenda, it is unlikely that the three long-separated cultures — teacher education, the arts and sciences, and the schools — each with a piece of the curriculum, would have come together in partnership to put the programmatic pieces together in a reasonably coherent, mission-driven whole.

In terms of preparing teachers for their careers, questions arise. Assuming that we want all teachers to be both well-educated citizens and well prepared in the subject matters of their teaching, do present curricular offerings and student advisement ensure such outcomes? Assuming that teachers require grounding in certain subject matters in order to advance the public mission of schooling in our democracy, how is that outcome to be ensured? Assuming that future teachers need to learn certain subject matters twice — once for themselves and once more for the teaching of children or adolescents — are the provisions for such deep learning adequate? And given our increased understanding of the pedagogy required to deal with a diverse school population, is it reasonable to assume that a well-educated teacher versed in the relevant subject maters and pedagogy requires only four years of higher education? In that light, today, a campus-wide response to these questions is imperative for any college or university that wants to prepare teachers for elementary and secondary schools.

There is now a sizable domain of fundamental agreement on what needs to be done if teacher education is to become a robust enterprise. The major elements of this agreement are rapidly becoming part of the conventional wisdom regarding the improvement of this subject area. They include the necessity for school-university partnering, for the regular commitment and involvement of faculty members in the arts and sciences, for partner or professional schools serving as "teaching" institutions, and for these schools and university-based teacher education to renew together. There is also considerable agreement about the need for top-level leadership in both higher education and the pre-university school system to elevate teacher education as a priority. Furthermore, there is a growing commitment to increasing field experiences in the curriculum and to integrating university- and school-base activities into a coherent whole.

Not quite as widely articulated is considerable agreement on the need for top-level leadership in both higher education and the pre-university school system to elevate teacher education as a priority.

To be sure, these agreements are fraught with difficulties, including the cultural differences between professional schools and universities. In addition, school administrators and faculty are under increasing pressures these days from parents responding anxiously to calls for school reform, and from the reform proposals themselves. Greater involvement in teacher education, in that light, is readily perceived as an additional burden.

And yet, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future has set as a goal a qualified, caring, competent teacher for every child in the United States by the year 2006. It should be taken as a challenge toward which we should work.

There are two reasons for institutions of higher education to join with partner schools in picking up that challenge. First, from a practical standpoint, mere token compliance is likely to be viewed

negatively by state policy-makers — with implications in state appropriations. Second, in moral terms, exerting leadership in designing programs that will attract and produce superb teachers for the nation's schools is simply the right thing to do.

In the minds of many would-be reformers, teacher education is in the quick-fix category. But a more thoughtful inquiry into the history of teacher education, its neglect in the emergence of the American university, and the recommendations for major change now gaining attention provides some potentially useful lessons to guide institutions committed to major improvement.

First, there must be a symbiotic partnership between colleges and universities to pursue a common mission, with both engaged in renewal.

Second, the time and work involved in creating and maintaining this partnership for simultaneous renewal necessitates a continuous relationship somewhat akin to that between a medical school and a hospital, except that in that case, several "teaching" schools are needed.

Third, the more collaborative schools and universities become, and the more they recognize their need for one another in seeking better teachers and better schools, the more troublesome the mechanics of management will become. This will call for imaginative leadership in the creation of new organizational arrangements and perhaps new settings — such as a recommended center of pedagogy — to handle a budget for the whole of teacher education, determine governmental procedures, select partner schools, ensure curricular renewal, and much more.

Fourth, whether it is adapted from elsewhere or created anew, there must be a clear and common agenda of mission, conditions to be put in place, and designated roles for the three groups of major participants. Given these necessary components, the agenda will be complex and, consequently, a continuing source of conversation regarding the meanings and implications of the messages it contains.

Fifth, the tenure of designated leaders in schools, school districts, colleges and universities is markedly shorter than it was even a dozen years ago. Consequently, change dependent on just a few such

individuals is hazardous. The message: Leadership must be widely shared, which in turn means that preparation for leadership must be a built-in, continuing activity.

The sixth lesson is directed specifically to the top leadership of colleges and universities. Top-level campus administrators must take the lead in articulating changing expectations. Furthermore, given the degree to which external pressures, to be successfully met, call for responses that transcend the schools, colleges and departments of education to embrace the arts and sciences in particular, the leadership responsibility cannot successfully be delegated to the dean of education. Nor can it be assumed successfully by the central administration in the absence of serious effort to learn enough about teacher education to make wise decisions.

A campus-by-campus perspective on higher education reveals the extent to which progress has been uneven. Rarely have there been sufficient resources to develop the whole at once. And so, the primary effort in one era has been directed to medicine, in another to law, in another to engineering and in still another to business.

The time is long overdue to address an era of concentrated attention to teacher education. The reasons are both practical and moral: practical because the conditions of future survival are at stake; moral because it is the right thing to do.   ❏

John I. Goodlad, former dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Los Angeles, is co-director of the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington, and president, Institute for Educational Inquiry, in Seattle. This article was abridged with permission from the Fall 1999 issue of National CrossTalk*, a publication of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Copyright © 1999 the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.*

RECRUITING NEW TEACHERS: "THINK CREATIVELY"

A CONVERSATION WITH DR. MILDRED HUDSON

BY MICHAEL J. BANDLER

For most of the past two decades, Dr. Mildred Hudson has been intensively engaged in pursuing various models for bringing enthusiastic, skilled men and women to U.S. classrooms as educators at a time of significant teacher shortage. In this interview, Hudson — senior advisor and acting chief executive officer of the Boston-based nonprofit research and information center, Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. — focuses on some of the lessons she has learned, the progress she and others have sparked, the attitudinal refinements that are needed and the challenges that remain. Formerly, she spent seven years at the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund developing and implementing a teacher recruitment and preparation program, Pathways to Teaching Careers, that was hailed by the White House and the U.S. Department of Education as an initiative to be embraced. At a time of a high attrition rate in the U.S. teacher corps, with 30 to 50 percent of all incoming primary and secondary school educators leaving the profession within the first five years of employment, imaginative thinking is the obvious response, Dr. Hudson maintains.

Q: Let's begin by focusing on the recent history of teaching as a profession.

A: Historically, one reality in the culture was that teachers selected themselves for the profession. They followed various degree programs, like arts and sciences, with a few education credits on the side, or traditional teacher education programs. They graduated, but many never went into teaching. Gradually, over the past 20 years, we in the educational community — researchers and evaluators — came to realize that this self-selection process in itself — how people came into the profession — needed to be looked at. Were they serious? Did they really want to be teachers, or was it a fall-back profession? What propelled us was the fact that not only was there a shortage of teachers in the United States, but that there was a severe shortage of minority teachers, particularly African Americans. In that process of beginning to find the means of recruiting and training African American teachers through the Pathways to Teaching Careers project, we began to come up with models for recruitment for everyone. And we built on each other's experiences, and upon the knowledge base that had been established. For example, there was a belief that returning Peace Corps volunteers would be a good group to try to attract to the teaching field — that because of their international experience, they might know different languages and be more empathetic to a multicultural student population. Paraprofessionals were another group that could be tapped, we found.

Many programs were popping up spontaneously, on an individual or independent basis, because of a

need in one state or another, one region or another, even one school or another. Of course, if you're building recruitment models, you've got to do something about training. The training program had to be modified to suit the particular group of prospective teachers. Sometimes they had classroom experience but no theory, and sometimes they knew theory but had no classroom experience.

Q: You're addressing two different aspects of the subject — first, encouraging people to become teachers and stick with it as a career, and second, to take people who have no particular interest in teaching, and bring them into the field. Are the employment needs so great that the second of these approaches is vital?

A: Absolutely. But that's one model of hundreds.

Q: I guess what I'm asking is, is there more than one route into the profession?

A: Yes. Besides the traditional way, there are all kinds of efforts that begin as early as middle school and continue through graduate programs. There are pre-collegiate teacher recruitment programs around the United States taking children in middle school, getting them interested in teaching as a profession, and even giving them what amounts to educational courses — scaled down to their level, of course — and involving them in tutoring or peer counseling, to work with other children. The rationale behind this is that by the time many minority or low-income children are completing high school, it's too late to get them interested in teaching. So the idea is to open up the pipeline early so that kids who might not have even gone to college can be introduced to teaching as a possible career path. Another approach is to see who's around the classroom, the school and the community who — with some educational help — might be drawn into the profession. That can include paraprofessionals, guards, truck drivers, lunchroom attendants, and so on, who have potential, and who often go to school in the evening on their own, but are generally taken for granted. That model has become quite successful, and is part of what's known as the "grow-your-own" movement. In education lingo this says, look in your own community, find out who's there, and support them. There's also that second-career group — lawyers or businessmen who decide to leave their professions and become teachers. Often local

universities will offer scholarships as part of the recruitment of these people. In addition, many universities offer programs that shorten the time it takes for these mid-career changers to become teachers — without sacrificing the quality of training. Recruiting New Teachers — which was created in 1989 to lift the esteem of the teaching profession and to provide knowledge and information — has received more than a million calls in response to its national advertising public service campaign over the past ten years.

Q: Have you any idea of the retention rate among teachers who have come into the profession through these newer models or programs in various U.S. regions or locales that you included in the Pathways project?

A: It's tremendous. Concurrently with the Pathways program, the Urban Institute initiated a five-year national evaluation that has found that the retention rate — particularly among paraprofessionals and returning Peace Corps veterans, the groups tapped most extensively — has been around 90 percent. So we can no longer afford to limit ourselves to the traditional way of recruiting teachers — which has always been haphazard. Today, we're more proactive, building upon sound theoretical knowledge and information.

Q: Tell me about some of the other independent efforts underway to recruit teachers.

A: Teach For America and Troops to Teachers tap two other viable pools. And these groups keep improving. Teach For America brings college graduates to schools in the inner cities and rural America for a two-year tenure, following a six-week summertime training program. And Troops For Teachers encourages retired members of the military to enter the teaching profession in school districts that are difficult to staff. What's exciting about all of this is that in this crunch to get teachers, we have become quite creative in our recruitment. That's really quite satisfying. What's more, concurrently, almost purely by chance, we've developed a new way of working with adult learners who might be, in fact, develop into teachers.

Q: We've been focusing on the teacher shortage and recruitment options and models as an issue unique to the United States. Is that a misguided assumption?

A: Yes. I think it's important to state that the

problem is not just within our borders. It's all over the world. In Australia, for example, it's hard to get people to work in the aboriginal communities. They're trying to develop "grow-your-own" programs. In The Netherlands it's true as well. What you find with the Havasupai [Native American] tribe in the Grand Canyon region can be found in The Netherlands as well.

Q: So the point is to think creatively.

A: To think creatively, to be proactive, to be inclusive, and to build long-term solutions to resolving the teacher shortage.

Q: Let's talk for a moment about the incentives that are in place to attract people to teaching as a career, and to retain them.

A: Here, too, communities and schools and local and state governments are starting to be creative. A major incentive is scholarship support — loan forgiveness for one's education — as well as child care, or other services, such as a university education course taught in the community. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. There are many models already in place. Our organization has just published a series of guides for districts, outlining ways to improve recruitment efforts.

Q: Do those men and women who enter teaching through some of these non-traditional routes — as second careers, or right out of college — eventually complete the appropriate course work for full certification and degrees?

A: They have to. You can only be certified provisionally for so long. Certification is mandatory. It may take somewhat longer for some people — they might need an extra course or two. But you can't stay in the profession and not be fully certified.

Q: What are some of the developments regarding retraining of teachers to update their knowledge and methodologies?

A: One of the nicest things that has come out of the alternative routes to teaching has been an expansion of lifelong learning. That's really great. Universities must find new ways of being more creative in terms of working with adult learners.

Q: Define that term.

A: An adult learner is anyone who goes back to school later in life. We're talking about someone above 22 or so who goes back to school part-time, or full-time, for some reason. It can be an 80-year-old who decides to take a language course. What happened was that — by having alternative models for entering the teaching profession, and trying to meet the needs of that population — the education community has had to think through how you work with adult learners in the broader sense. Let me give you an example. We have discovered the advantages of what we call "cohort groups." You bring individual adult learners in and let them take one or two courses together, as a group, at a university, or at a community center. We now know that by coming in together, and sharing a few courses, they become friends and professional colleagues. They might babysit for each other, or be supportive if one of them might want to drop out. Overall, it's very beneficial.

Q: So it expands a sense of community.

A: That's right. And over two or three or four years, we find, these adult learners do better in their courses when they're in cohort groups than as individuals.

Q: What can you tell me about mentoring programs in the field?

A: They've become very important in the last few years. In fact, universities are developing these programs for their graduates, and in doing so, are sending a signal that they believe strong induction programs are the wave of the future — to help both the novice and also the veteran teacher who is moving from one school to another. In fact, our latest study, *Learning the Ropes: Urban Teacher Induction Programs and Practices in the United States*, reflects how strong programs of support and assessment, that include mentoring, can help to retain teachers.

Q: So at a time when there is an intense national concern about education in the United States, where do you see American education heading at this time, from the perspective of developing the teacher corps of the future?

A: I think that the clash in theories and the building of new models make this a wonderful time. Contentiousness is very healthy. We in education have gotten the country's attention and the policy-makers' attention. In this field, you can't have too many friends. ❏
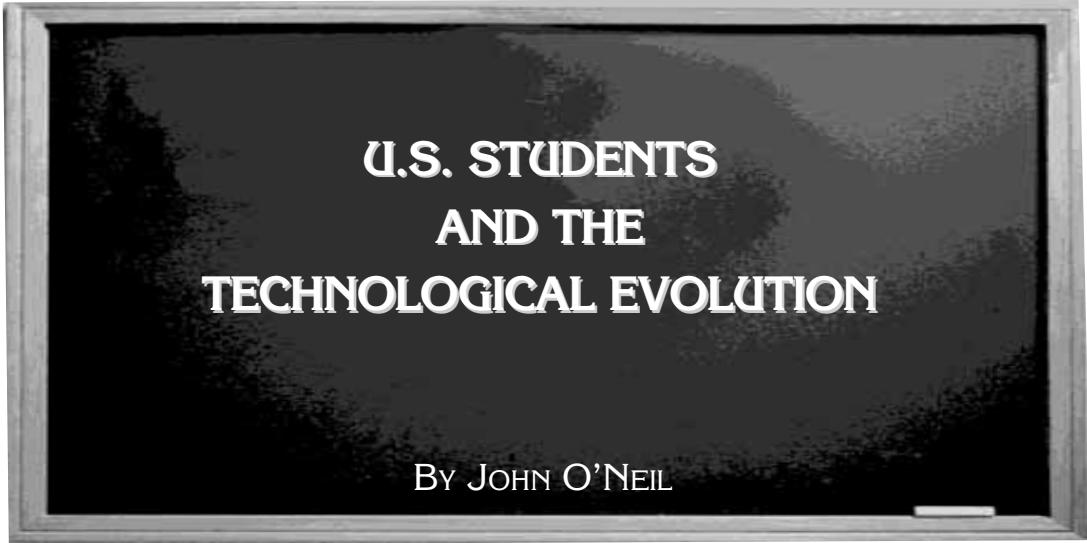
U.S. STUDENTS AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

BY JOHN O'NEIL

From the hand-held devices that allow us to read our favorite books, check the latest stock quotes or send electronic mail across the globe, to the vast array of resources, discussion groups and software available on the World Wide Web, clearly technology is transforming the landscape of life in the United States at an ever faster pace. Technologies also are influencing the lives of students and teachers in U.S. schools. Personal computers, the Web and related digital innovations are helping to unleash creativity and broaden the curricula in many classrooms.

Computers in schools today are far more numerous and more powerful than they were less than a decade ago. According to a survey published in *Education Week* in September 1999, U.S. schools lowered the ratio of students to computers from about 19-to-1 in 1992 to less than six-to-one in 1999. Nearly 90 percent of U.S. schools and 51 percent of classrooms are now hooked up to the Internet, according to *Education Week*. A more recent poll, by the National Center for Education Statistics, suggests that the figures are even higher — that 95 percent of public school buildings and 63 percent of instructional rooms are connected to the Internet.

One reason for this electronic outpouring is the affordability of equipment. Computer prices have dropped dramatically — by about one-half every three years, according to one estimate. In addition, many funding opportunities have emerged to support greater use of educational technologies. While U.S. public schools are funded primarily by tax money (and private schools by tuition payments), numerous businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies offer grants to support the use of innovative technologies in schools.

As computers have become more available, they also have become more powerful, with computational power and speed quadrupling every three years.

With all this equipment and capability in students' hands, experts emphasize that the key to unleashing technology's power in schools is a commitment to new views of teaching and learning. Technology, they say, can help shift the student's role from passively absorbing material to constructing new knowledge as part of a larger community of learners that includes experts in the disciplines, adult "telementors" and even peers across the globe. "The new technologies have helped create a culture for learning in which the learner enjoys enhanced connectivity and connections with others," says Don Tapscott, president of the Paradigm Learning Corporation. "The ultimate interactive learning environment is the Internet itself. Increasingly, this technology includes the vast repository of human knowledge, access to people, and a growing galaxy of services ranging from sandbox environments for preschoolers to virtual laboratories for medical students studying neural psychiatry."

One example of the manner in which technology

can support education is the popular JASON Project. Now in its 11th year, JASON is the brainchild of Dr. Robert Ballard, the oceanographer who discovered the wreck of the *RMS Titanic*. This year, about 400,000 students from the United States, Australia, Bermuda, Great Britain and Mexico took part. JASON enables students to join researchers as they investigate phenomena in real time. By "doing science," rather than just reading about it, students are more likely to gain a deep understanding of the concepts and skills involved, the project's proponents believe. Since the project began, involving expeditions in the rainforests of Peru and on the Galapagos Islands, among other sites, teachers use the project's curriculum materials to plan a range of in-class activities for students to prepare for the expedition and to follow up. High-tech tools — such as message boards, electronic workshops and simulations — make it possible for students to "be there" during each expedition and to facilitate interactivity between students and scientists all year long. A highlight of the expedition is a live satellite broadcast, during which researchers describe their experiments and discoveries and field questions from students.

JASON is just one example of how students are engaged hands-on in scientific activity using technology. In Orange County, California, educators are transforming the typical gym class through the extensive integration of new tools. Students in one class use video technology to record and then study their tennis swings and golf strokes. In another class, students use electronic monitors to track their heart rates during exercise and then use computers to portray the data in graphic form.

The resources available on the Web and on CD-ROMs burst with material to fit any topic in the curriculum. With the click of a mouse, students can tour art galleries, view primary source documents for a history project, or download highly specialized information they never could have found five to 10 years ago.

In the field of mathematics, the World Wide Web is making rich databases available to students, who are increasingly being asked to use data to solve problems. Content on the Web site of the National Geophysical Data Center (http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov), for example, can be manipulated by students in order to make predictions about temperatures or tides. Another Web site (http://library.advanced.org/10326/market_simulation/index.html) gives students the chance to simulate playing the stock market — without risking real cash.

In another exciting development, students, increasingly, are filling the role of producers, and not just consumers, of useful content, particularly on the Web. Florence McGinn, a high school English teacher in Flemington, New Jersey, firmly believes that creating and publishing their work "intensifies the learning process" for her students. In McGinn's honors class for 11th and 12th graders, students videotape presentations and then make them available on the Web to students who were absent.

Such progress notwithstanding, those wishing to tap into the potential of new technologies to transform teaching and learning have obstacles to overcome as well. How successful educators and others are at addressing some of the issues discussed below will go a long way toward predicting how influential today's technologies will be in taking education in new directions.

For example, the dizzying growth of Web-based resources has led to more complex issues: How do you choose which content to use as a resource in the curriculum? How do you guide students toward sites that offer promising resources and away from deleterious content?

Some experts compare trying to mine the Web for content to "drinking from a fire hose." Fortunately, a number of top educators are making available carefully screened lists of URLs so students can surf for information within a domain of tried-and-tested sites. To help students determine useful Web sites on their own, one teacher encourages her students to ask themselves the "4 Ws": Who wrote this site? What are they saying on this site? When was the site created? Where is the site from?

The second major challenge is to continue to expand the availability of new technologies while addressing disparities in access. Experts have coined the phrase "digital divide" to describe the digital haves and have-nots. One study estimated that in schools with the poorest students (in terms of family economic status), the ratio of students to computers was 16-to-1 — far higher than the national average. In homes, the disparities are even greater.

Households with annual incomes over $75,000 were more than nine times likely to have a home computer and 20 times more likely to have Internet access than low-income households, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

One initiative aimed at closing the gap is the three-year-old E-rate program. Administered by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission, E-rate provides discounts — ranging from 20 to 90 percent — to schools and libraries for technology and telecommunications services. In 1999, 82 percent of the nation's public schools and more than 50 percent of public libraries received discounted services under the program. The U.S. Congress approved $2.25 billion in funding for the 12-month period ending in June 2000. "In part because of the E-rate, we are now well on our way to closing the digital divide in our schools," U.S. Secretary of Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said earlier this year.

With all the emphasis on the students, educators, too, need support — hands-on training, as well as relief from some of the headaches that impede instruction.

The conventional wisdom — the general presumption — is that teachers are reluctant to try out new technologies. Larry Cuban, professor of education at Stanford University in California, disagrees. He has conducted research on how teachers use technology and has found that teachers use computers frequently — but far more often at home that at school. They are sometimes reluctant to conduct lessons using computers, because when technical problems, commonly called "glitches," occur (servers don't operate, Web pages freeze, passwords don't work), they can distract the students and disrupt the classroom. "You can't expect a teacher to have a contingency lesson B when lesson A, which relies on the computer, doesn't work," Cuban says. "That's why teachers continue to use the textbook, the overhead projector, the chalk. They're reliable. They're flexible."

Training of teachers in educational technologies basically began with fundamentals two decades ago. Since that time, modest gains have been made. The majority of teachers who participated in the recent *Education Week* survey reported receiving training in basic technology skills and in integrating technology into the curriculum. Among teachers who received

this kind of training, 54 percent said they felt "somewhat better prepared" and another 37 percent reported being "much better prepared" than they did the previous year.

Compared to a decade or two ago, school districts and state education departments are putting a much stronger emphasis on providing training and assistance to teachers in how to incorporate technologies into their curriculum. And virtually all of the leading Web-based programs incorporate a strong teacher-training element.

When will we know how much influence these new technologies are having in shaping new ways of teaching and learning? Perhaps the most telling sign will be when they are so ubiquitous and integrated that they become almost transparent; when students and teachers use these tools on a routine basis to enhance their work. After all, everything from blackboards to yellow school buses were considered "technologies" in their infancy, but they gradually became part of the fabric of education. Students themselves are likely to instigate change. As Don Tapscott puts it, "They are different from any generation before them. They are the first to grow up surrounded by digital media. Computers are everywhere — in the home, school, factory and office — as are digital technologies — cameras, video games and CD-ROMs. Today's students are so bathed in bits that they think technology is part of the natural landscape." ❏

John O'Neil is contributing editor of Educational Leadership *magazine, based in Alexandria, Virginia.*

ON THE FRONT LINES OF
EDUCATION:
A
CONVERSATION WITH
DR. ROY SETTLES

BY MICHAEL J. BANDLER
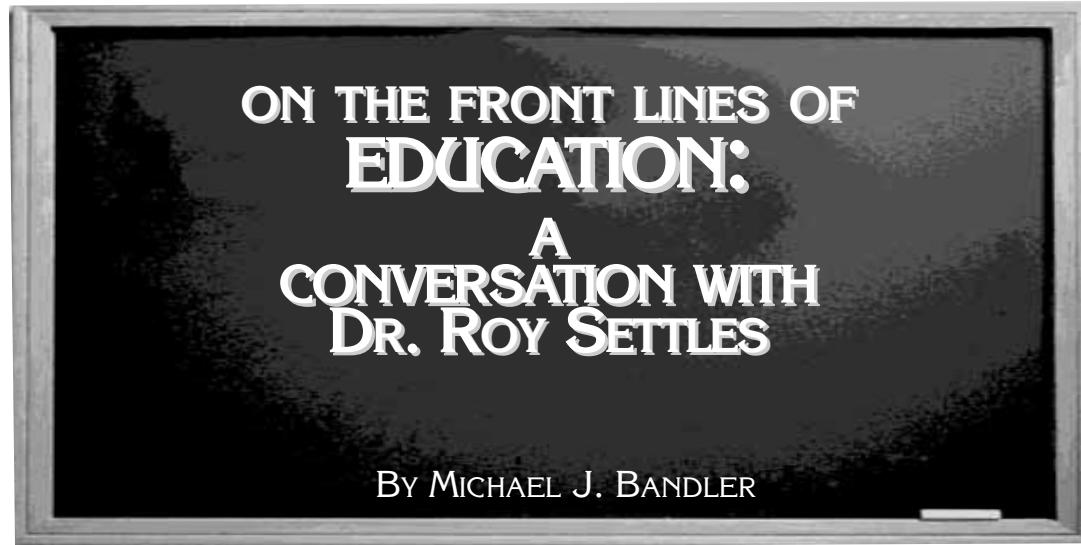
Walk into the Judith A. Resnik Elementary School, a one-level, expansive plant on a rolling tract of land in Gaithersburg, Maryland, in Montgomery County, about 20 miles north of Washington, D.C., and you are immediately struck by words — words of significance — on a floor mat featuring the emblem of the nine-year-old school. Trustworthiness. Respect. Responsibility. Fairness. Caring. Citizenship. Almost immediately, the visitor comes to an intersection of two corridors, one marked Helping Others Highway, the other Right Street. Above, a poster reads, "Character Counts." Encompassing 700 youngsters from pre-school years through the fifth grade, it would seem to be a typical institution — except that roughly one-fourth of its student population require special services of some kind — that is, either they have special learning needs, or they are orthopedically or neurologically challenged. In the following interview, its principal, Dr. Roy Settles, whose perspective and philosophy have been shaped by his personal history, explains how the school is unique, on the one hand, and on the other, mirrors current trends and issues in primary and secondary schools across the United States.

Q: What is your sense of what is different about education in the United States today, as opposed to a decade or more ago?

Settles: First of all, it's a different society today. The dynamics are different. We're looking at the urbanization of a suburban school. We have many characteristics that urban schools have. Our children are exposed to much more today. The communications stimuli bombard our students; they are born into communicating quickly — getting information coming in their direction quickly. So they're growing up being much more aware. A long time ago, you were much more reliant upon what you got from home, what the teacher said to you, what you may have gotten from television. Today, the children can get information from everywhere more quickly. That contributes. Transportation is such that people can get from one corner of a city to another fast. We're living in a different culture. Communication is heightened. People are more mobile. Development is occurring. Therefore, the schools directly reflect these concurring dynamics right now. When I came to Montgomery County in 1979, there were predominantly Caucasian students, black students, and a sprinkling of Hispanics and Asians. Now, looking at this school, with homes built around it, it is diverse in many ways.

Q: Tell me about the ethnic/racial breakdown.

A: Forty-two percent are Caucasian, 22 percent are African American, about the same amount Hispanic, and the rest — about 15 percent — are Asian. But let's look at diversity another way — at how the instructional program is designed to meet the needs

of children from varied experiences and backgrounds. We're talking about being able to teach all children, given their modalities of learning, their different levels of intelligence, their experiential backgrounds. That all comes first. We have to be equipped, in today's culture, to have our instructional program engaging, motivating and appropriate, with clarity and momentum. Then we weave into it cultural points, so children see themselves in the curriculum. What I call "culturalizing the curriculum" has to occur in a matter-of-fact, natural way.

Q: Your interest with regard to diversity extends to the staff as well, I understand.

A: Well, not directly proportionate to the student body. But keep in mind that this school was philosophically, and structurally, designed to have a regular education program and also one for students with neurological and/or orthopedic concerns. So that's a part of how it came to life. That's why our halls are wide, our office space is wide, the bathrooms have accommodating space, the doors open automatically. We have one level. In this school, we have students who are ambulatory, others who use walkers, others who are wheelchair-mobile, some who might need certain types of accommodations or adaptations with regard to instructional programs — special word processing equipment or desks, staff support to help with writing. We are given the staffing and financial resources to deal with all of this. In the neurological/orthopedic program, we're talking about 30 children. But there are large numbers of "resource children" with learning disabilities or emotional concerns who form an additional aspect of our programming. We have one faculty member who's wheelchair-mobile, and in order to enable her to perform professionally as well as she would like to, the system gives her a teaching assistant to help with some of her physical needs.

Q: We seem to have moved from mainstreaming — that is, bringing children into regular schools but then placing them in special classes — to inclusion — making them an integral part of the regular classroom — as a philosophy for special needs. Is that typically the case?

A: Well, we're really looking at what we call the "least restrictive environment," or LRE, as we term it in this county. That means that we want to give the students the types of support they need to be successful. That could mean, for example, that a wheelchair-mobile child can be in the regular classroom all day, with someone coming in on a consultative basis to collaborate with the regular teacher. In this school, as in others, it is common for children with various abilities to be included in the regular education format. That represents a huge change in education over the past couple of decades.

Q: Let's talk for a moment about bilingual education. In the old days, a century ago, during earlier waves of immigration, it was "sink or swim" for the newcomers. What is happening today, in terms of reaching out to this generation of immigrants?

A: We now have a greater influx of Hispanic and Asian students coming to us with varying levels of understanding English. Last week, we accepted an Asian-American child who knew no English. With more of that happening, the schools must do several things at one time. First, they must train the parents. That wasn't the case years back. We have to bring parents in, teach them what to do at home, how to address homework, what types of questions to ask. We explain to them basics, like what a report card is, how it's composed — things we would take for granted before. Also, we now have to get as many resources as possible from varied aspects of our communities. We have to include parents, the corporate world, and social agencies to help us — to teach children after school and during the summer, to give them experiential types of learning activities.

Q: There's a lot of evidence that despite the growth of the two-career households, parental involvement in schools, and in their children's education, is expanding. What is the degree of such involvement at your school, and how do you foster it?

A: The dynamics of today's society are such that parents have to be included in some of the school-based management activities that they were not included in in earlier years. For example, my former school was a site-based managed school, with parents, faculty and administrators actually sitting down together to make decisions about curriculum, about staffing, about how the money was being spent. That's one example. Quality management councils have been introduced into the county schools — in which parents, faculty and administrators formally collaborate on the management of the schools.

Q: To play the devil's advocate, U.S. education flourished for nearly two centuries without parents being intimately involved in significant decision-making in their children's schools. Why is it necessary now?

A: Today, parents are much more educated and aware of many aspects of the educational process than they were years back. With regard to educating our parents, we make an extra effort to provide information to them — brochures, videotapes. It's common that school systems are doing a much better job of informing and educating parents. This is a group that understands what the needs and demands are, what the philosophy is. They come to the table aware of things they weren't aware of before. Therefore, we need them to be more involved. Because of the dynamics of our society, we cannot do it alone anymore. There are too many demands. We have to educate formally. We have to be counselors, to deal with kids who are having problems in their home or health concerns. We have to hold hands with the parents and with community organizations, to collaborate for the well-being of the kids.

Q: Give me an example of that reaching out.

A: I've established "principal coffees." In my biweekly newsletter to parents, I ask to be invited to someone's home in the evening. Once a month, a parent volunteers to be host, and we publicize the event. The parents coalesce at that home. I introduce the evening by saying I'm available for an open, honest discussion of the concerns they have about aspects of school life. The parents, in a forthcoming, brutally honest manner, communicate what's on their minds. I take notes, and bring them back to our monthly advisory council meetings — which include parents — and discuss those concerns. So we have that connection. I think going into the home is symbolic of an outreach effort. You have to include them in the decision-making process, but also go out to them.

Q: Your staff also can be described as diverse.

A: Yes, we have Hispanic and Asian staff members, and a woman from India. It is critical for the students' self-esteem to see staff members, in leadership capacities, who are like them. I also think it is important for students in our more homogeneous schools to encounter staff members of varying

ethnicities — as well as it is important for them to include in the curriculum aspects touching on various cultures. It's imperative to have staff members that reflect the student population — although if you're a good teacher, you should relate to every student.

Q: I understand you've been dealing with ethnicity among the professionals themselves.

A: For years, I've been teaching a course on ethnic roots in American society — a required in-service course for all professionals who are new to Montgomery County schools. I explain how to teach children in a multicultural setting, and how to get along with fellow staff members of various roots. It's imperative that staff members know about various holidays and celebrations, and how to conduct oneself on other occasions. For example, what do you bring to a "shiva" (Jewish mourning) house? We're proud of being sensitive to some of the idiosyncrasies of varied cultures in this county.

Q: It's obvious, from so many indicators visible to anyone entering the building, that you believe in establishing character traits in people beginning at the earliest age possible.

A: Absolutely. We all contribute to building the character of our children, and the school has to do its part. And parents agree with that — when once they felt it was their role alone. Our guidance advisory council — which also includes parents — looks at how and what we give to our children. That prevents any conflict over roles. It's a prime example of how collaborative or participatory decision-making is critical. We weave character into the curriculum. The children read about it, write about it and talk about it. The test is how they perform when they're not around you — when they're in the playground and there's a conflict. Will they use what we've taught?

Q: An April 2000 *USA Today*/CNN poll noted that despite some incidents of violence that have occurred in schools in different parts of the United States over the past few years, 68 percent of those surveyed believed that their children's schools had done the right amount to keep their students safe. Taking your school as a case in point, explain what you do to maintain as safe an environment as possible.

A: First of all, safety is our number one priority, and you communicate that very clearly to students, staff and parents. Every year, at our back-to-school night,

I stand before the packed room and tell them that. If the children are physically and psychologically safe, they are available for learning. If our staff members are physically and psychologically safe, then they can teach all day — which is why they're here. And parents can rest and relax at home or at their jobs, knowing that the children are safe. But after having said that, you're talking about doing everything that's reasonable and prudent to ensure, to the best of your ability, that indeed everyone's safe. There are practices that we're relentless about. Nobody can enter our building without going directly to the office, signing a form and getting a visitor's sticker. Volunteers wear badges to that effect. Children know that they cannot set foot out of their classroom without a pass in their hands. I'm rigid about that. Staff members and the children have been taught to notify the office immediately if they see someone without a badge or sticker in our building or on our grounds. The children are alert, and share quickly. Our building services staff, as part of their role, police the grounds. That gives us extra eyes. So what makes me rest much better — given a large elementary school, very much in the open — is that I know that everyone knows what's expected in terms of safety and security.

Q: On balance, from what you've seen and read, from what your colleagues and peers are saying, what is your impression of the public school system in the United States, from the front line?

A: I think we are focusing very deliberately on our quality of instruction. I feel that we are improving — that children, for example, are learning to read well, with comprehension, and are increasing their ability with regard to numeracy. And we're attracting 90 percent of the children in the United States. I went to private school myself, and sent my children to private schools at times, but I brought them back to public education. We desperately want to meet the challenge. I feel confident regarding our accountability efforts that we have to have in place. We have to show the community how well we are progressing, so I like those efforts. We've found out, too, that it is absolutely essential that we devote an appropriate amount of our budget to ongoing, cyclical retraining in the schools and as a county. I had to take a course this year on the observation and analysis of teaching — fascinating! — to enable me to be better equipped at what I do. So I feel we are rising to the challenge.

Q: Your roots are relevant to the goals you've set for yourself, aren't they?

A: They are. I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. My family lived not far from Central High School [site of one of the tense chapters in the history of court-mandated desegregation of public education in the 1950s and 1960s]. It's part of my collective memory, and it gives me an appreciation of how far we've come in this country as a society. ❏

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Government.

HOW SAFE ARE OUR SCHOOLS?

By Kate Stetzner

Although recent polls indicate that parents in the United States believe school officials and the educational community are expending the right amount of time, effort and funds to protect their students, there have been some worrisome isolated violent incidents at a number of schools in the past several years. In the following article, the principal of a Butte, Montana, elementary school that unexpectedly confronted such violence reflects upon how, in the aftermath of that unanticipated event, the healing began in Butte, and a local, regional and nationwide resolve ensued.

I was the principal of Margaret Leary Elementary School on April 11, 1994, when a 10-year-old brought a semi-automatic handgun to school and killed Jeremy Bullock, a fifth-grader. At the time, Jeremy was the youngest student to be murdered at a school in the United States.

The tragedy served as a terrible wakeup call, not only to our town of Butte, Montana, but also to the rest of the nation. After each subsequent fatal school-based shooting these past six years, communities have issued a common refrain: "We didn't think that could happen here."

In Butte, we were left wondering how a community could be nursed back to health after such a sudden and violent schoolyard calamity. We also needed to learn how secondary victims could receive caring support and long-term rehabilitation for post-traumatic stress.

We looked for solutions that would address the multifaceted problems wrought by the homicide and that would allow students, teachers and the entire school community to move on with our lives.

A SAFETY TEAM

Our school district's initial step was to create a school-based safety team. Consisting of teachers, counselors, parents, law enforcement officials, representatives of the county attorney's office and child service agencies, plus local clergymen, the team focused on crisis debriefing, monitoring children at risk of troubled behavior, and restoring the school to some measure of normality. This interagency group continues to meet on a weekly basis today, to discuss crisis procedures and operational safety.

We discovered that immediate crisis debriefing in the hours after a serious act of violence was an absolute necessity. Ideally, this debriefing should be conducted by someone trained in critical incidence work. In Butte, I filled that role, having been trained years earlier by Community Intervention, a Minnesota-based training organization that deals with crisis management.

I immediately gave notice to fellow team members that I needed assistance. More than 40 counselors, law enforcement officers and school board members responded from across Montana. Teachers and other school staffers needed first-hand information on how to deal with traumatized children and, more so, how to get the classroom back to normal as quickly as

possible.

The tragedy propelled our community into action. Ultimately, these efforts gained national attention for our district. In April 1998, I was appointed to a presidential task force to study the causes of youth violence and to discuss preventive measures that could be shared with educators and others nationwide.

ANALYZING CAUSES

The first meeting of the Presidential Task Force on Youth Violence, hosted by Attorney General Janet Reno, focused on analyzing the causes of violence in the schools. We raised three key questions:

☞ Is there a trend among recent school shootings?

☞ What can the federal government do to help schools deal with gun violence?

☞ What common factors have been present in the recent incidents?

Subsequently, we met with President Clinton and his Cabinet at the White House for a three-hour roundtable discussion, and presented our recommendation for U.S. Government funding of early prevention and intervention programs in schools. It became clear to me, quite quickly, that our leaders were beginning to understand the need for early intervention at the local level, as well as for after-school programs and other counseling and guidance services for students.

FEDERAL SUPPORT

At the first White House Conference on School Safety, in October 1998, President Clinton announced his intention to place 100,000 teachers in kindergarten through third grade classrooms during the next seven years, and to provide $600 million to redesign and fund the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project. Teachers know that smaller class sizes are essential to a safe learning environment at this age.

Federal initiatives include a number of funded programs and policy directives that local school officials can apply to their own violence prevention plans:

☞ Enforcing zero tolerance for guns on school property by enacting state laws while promoting blended sentencing for juvenile offenders tried as adults. This is supported by educators and law enforcement agencies.

☞ Providing support for civic, community and religious organizations to initiate a values-based violence prevention initiative.

☞ Providing safe after-school opportunities to 500,000 children annually.

☞ Encouraging schools to deal forthrightly with truancy, and to adopt school uniform policies.

☞ Supporting local curfews.

☞ Developing a comprehensive anti-gang effort.

☞ Supporting stricter enforcement of laws to keep weapons away from children and for legislation that places child safety locking devices on guns.

☞ Providing more than $140 million to assist community coalitions in eliminating drugs, and combating youth alcohol and tobacco abuse.

In addition, the Clinton Administration has pledged to provide funding for early intervention, smaller class sizes, well-prepared teachers, replacement of deteriorating school facilities and expansion of after-school programs.

A SHARED EXPERIENCE

As a principal who witnessed the horror of school violence and shared the terrible experience of the loss of a child, I am honored, nonetheless, to be able to apply this experience to assist other educational leaders to improve school safety for all of our children nationwide.

INNOVATION & EVOLUTION AT WORK

By Suzanne Dawkins

As the intense national debate continues in the United States over exactly what schools should accomplish and how this can be achieved, grassroots efforts have created imaginative new options in terms of programs, schools and policies. They reflect considerable thought on the part of individuals with regard to types of schools children might attend, the use of technology, the nature of the classroom itself. What follow are some examples of the ferment of activity that is underway across the United States.

A "Seamless" Bridge to Higher Education

Greenville Technical Charter High School (GTCHS), located on the campus of Greenville Technical College in South Carolina, was the nation's 30th "middle college" secondary school when it opened in the fall of 1999. According to principal David Church, the charter school provides a new vision of secondary education as it seeks to expand technical education by offering a "seamless" bridge from high school to college. He points out that the relationship between the community college and GTCHS allows resource sharing — giving the students access to Greenville Technical College's labs and state-of-the-art equipment. By working with local business and industry, the charter school has been able to tailor its programs to reflect what companies are looking for in employees. While still in high school the students can take, and get credit for, courses at the community college. Church expects to have over 150 students taking college-level courses in the near future.

Museum School Offers Real-World Experience

Picture a public school where students have access to the resources of a fine museum and science center. Such is the case at the Henry Ford Academy of Manufacturing Arts & Sciences, a charter public high school located on the premises of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. The popular four-year school was founded by the Ford Motor Company and the museum in 1997, and chartered by Wayne County. Students are selected through a simple countywide lottery — which has resulted in a diverse student body. The curriculum, developed in consultation with experts on national and state curriculum standards, including standards for advanced manufacturing education, is geared to help students see real-world applications for their studies, with students using the museum for analysis, inspiration, and association. The school's goals focus on providing educational experiences that prepare adolescents for a world in which they are constantly learning and applying new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The For-Profit School Movement Takes Hold

Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School in Hamden, Connecticut, a kindergarten-through-eighth-grade school run by Edison Schools Inc., is a for-profit institution that boasts an exuberant following among its students, parents and teachers. Today there are more than 1,000 students on Wintergreen's waiting list. Like other Edison schools, Wintergreen focuses on instilling pride and discipline in their students — and providing students with computers and more instruction than the typical public school. At present, there are only about 250 for-profit public schools in the United States. They are catching on fast, but face daunting challenges as they attempt to make a profit operating schools for local school boards or independent chartering organizations, using the same public funds routinely allotted for public schools. Edison's founder and CEO, Chris Whittle, is staking his company's future on its ability to slash administrative costs while delivering top-quality schooling.

Magnet School Concept Proves A Winner in Science

Six Montgomery Blair High School (Silver Spring, Maryland) seniors were recently among the 40 finalists in the United States' prestigious nationwide Intel Science Talent Search — a remarkable academic achievement for the Montgomery County math and science magnet school that was created in 1985 to promote desegregation. The suburban Washington school has sent more than 1,000 graduates on to the nation's top universities. Admission is based on tests that evaluate mathematical reasoning, verbal reasoning and critical thinking, along with a motivational statement from the applicant. Competition is keen: For the 1999 school year there were over 800 applicants, but only 100 openings.

New York City's Liberty Meets Immigrants' Language and Literacy Needs

Immigrant youth who have had limited opportunities for education and literacy in their native countries face great challenges as they take their places in U.S. schools, and sometimes "English as a Second Language" programs are not enough to bridge the gap. New York City's Liberty High School's goal is to help these students. It is a school limited to the ninth grade, which normally includes students ages 14 or 15. Nearly two-thirds of Liberty's students are 17 or older and a fifth are 19 or older. One class, for example, includes students from Panama, Haiti, Yemen, China, Vietnam and Sierra Leone. Liberty offers three literacy programs — in English, Spanish and Chinese. The final phase of the program focuses on preparing the teenagers for the transition to regular high school — to be able to have as much chance for success as any of their peers.

Ninth-Graders Boast: A School Just For Us

In some school districts ninth-graders are part of the high school, in others part of the middle school — but in Alexandria, Virginia, ninth-graders have a school of their own. In 1993, faced with overcrowding in its schools, the Alexandria school system embarked on a bold new experiment, converting an administrative building into a colorful, welcoming center for its ninth-grade students. To the surprise of many, the Minnie Howard School has been a resounding success — and parents and teachers give its principal, Margaret May Walsh, much of the credit. Named Virginia's principal of the year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1998, Walsh provides strong leadership and an understanding and empathy for her students. Students are divided into six teams, and are encouraged to think of themselves as part of the local secondary school, where they will attend the 10th through 12th grades. Students report that they are truly learning to advocate for themselves — a skill that will serve them well as they move on to high school. The percentage of students taking honors classes has increased from 20 to 35 percent, says Walsh, and she wants it to go higher.

Middle-School Clusters Bring Students Closer

While segmenting a school into smaller units — often called clusters — is not the traditional way of organizing middle schools, the school-within-a-school design can provide a gradual change as children move from the protected environment of a small elementary school to the much larger, more open environment of middle school. Creekland Middle School, the largest middle school in Georgia's Gwinnett County, with over 3,100 students, was designed using the school-within-a-school model so

that its students would reap the benefits of a smaller school setting. The school is divided into five communities, each with its own assistant principal, school counselor and secretary. Interest in the model used at Creekland has grown in response to recent incidents of school violence in the United States — with the hope that if students and teachers know each other well, problems can be detected before they turn into tragedy.

Home Schooling Outgrows the Home

In 1983, in Wichita, Kansas, about 50 families were educating their children at home, mostly for religious or other personal reasons. But today, with the legality of home schooling established by the U.S. courts in recent years, more and more traditional public school families are embracing home schooling. In 1998 there were more than 1,500 home school families in Wichita, and the city's home school movement had literally outgrown the home — as students formed athletic teams, bands, a choir and a bowling group, as well as a number of group academic classes. As the home school movement expands, research shows most home-schooled children score well on standardized tests, are well adjusted and succeed in college.

Muslims Find Havens for Religious and Cultural Identity

In early days in colonial America, religious movements who came to the continent seeking freedom from religious oppression established schools for their members. Religious schools continue to flourish nearly four centuries later. For example, besides the Christian and Jewish institutions that have been in existence for a century or more, the number of full-time Islamic schools operating in the United States has grown, over the past decade, from 49 to around 200, most of them covering grades kindergarten through eighth. These days, Detroit, Michigan, which has had a sizable Muslim population since the 1920's, boasts nine full-time private Islamic schools. Among them are the Al-Ikhlas Training Academy, a 190-student pre-K-12 school founded by African American Muslims in 1991; and the Crescent Academy, a 150-student pre-K-8 school founded the same year, whose students are largely American-born children of highly educated immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia. Although the financial resources of the schools vary greatly, each teaches a basic curriculum recommended by the state in addition to courses in Islamic studies and Arabic.

Rural School Succeeds by Adopting Tough Standards and Accountability

Pleasant Grove Elementary, a public one-school district in a rural area near Sacramento, California, was struggling with declining enrollments about six years ago. At that time the school board hired Jeff Holland, a principal who aggressively pursued the state's emphasis on tough standards and accountability. By taking the lead on standards-based instruction, Pleasant Grove has attained some of the highest test scores in the region. Today each grade follows an explicit set of standards that say exactly what students are expected to learn in each subject. Teachers receive extensive training in standards-based instruction. Due to its success with standards and its small nurturing environment, more and more parents are transferring their children to Pleasant Grove. For the first time ever, the school has a waiting list.

Internet Schools Add New Dimensions to Home Schooling

As home schooled students become older and their needs become more varied, parents have been turning to a new breed of online courses to augment home schooling. These online schools are allowing parents to provide standardized, accredited education to their children while they remain in their own homes. "This is one of the new ways to do your home schooling, where parents aren't the sole teachers," says Janet Hale, who founded the private Willoway Cyber School in 1994. Willoway's 24 students take a full curriculum over the Internet for $2,250 per year. Online schools can also provide benefits for children with special needs who may find traditional schools difficult to navigate.

Turning a New Page in Online Education

The Daniel Jenkins Academy, a groundbreaking public school in Polk County, Florida, will have as many students as it can accept when it opens its doors in the fall of 2000. Students will register for

online classes through the state's Florida High School, which will act as a subcontractor to the new school and provide all academic courses and online teachers. Jenkins will have no classroom teachers. Instead, in-school facilitators, counselors, resource teachers and a technical team will guide students through the curriculum. Full-time online teachers in homes throughout Florida will provide instruction, assignments and grades. *USA Today* plans to monitor the school closely and report on its progress in a series of articles.

Teaching Elementary Students Life Skills

More than a quarter-century ago, as an outgrowth of some experiences while teaching in public schools, Jon Oliver conceived a program to instruct young students — in primary grades — about controlling their anger and possibly violent impulses. He posited that by learning self-control early on, children might deal more effectively with these angry impulses as teens or adults. The program, Skills for Life, became part of the nonprofit Boston-based Lesson One Foundation he established, which now serves elementary schools across the United States. It is particularly apt at a time when concerns over safety in U.S. schools are widely discussed. The program teaches young children how to integrate the skills of self-control, self-confidence, responsibility and consequences, thinking and problem solving, and cooperation into their lives.

Teaching Teachers to Master Technology

Marlboro College, a small school in southern Vermont, opened a new graduate center in 1998 that offers teachers a Master of Arts degree in "teaching with Internet technologies." The program, which allows students to do much of the work online, is intended to help teachers navigate the rapidly changing world of cyberspace so they can effectively bring this knowledge into the schools — making teachers the masters of technology and giving them the tools to effectively integrate technology into the classroom. Some see programs like Marlboro's as the answer to the "white-coat syndrome" common in schools today — where there is only one specialist assigned to integrate technology into the entire institution, not nearly enough to meet the demand.

Parents as Partners Make a Difference in Inner-City Schools

East Cleveland, Ohio, is a predominately black community in which the majority of students come from single-parent homes, and almost half live below the poverty line. Between the fall of 1993 and the fall of 1996, the public schools of East Cleveland and Cleveland State University piloted a project called FAST (Families are Students and Teachers). As students retained the same teachers for three years, parents monitored the class assignments; engaged in summer enrichment programs with their children; and took part in monthly workshops to teach parents how to reinforce instruction at home, to develop a home environment that facilitates achievement, and to enhance their basic parenting skills. The early results of the program have been impressive, with students participating in the program showing considerable achievement in reading, language and mathematics.

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http://www.aft.org/
Approximately one million teachers and other school-related personnel on all education levels belong to this organization. The Educational Issues Department works closely with "affiliates involved in K-12 education reform and restructuring" efforts and provides links to its programs on teacher quality, raising student achievement, school choice, academic standards and safety on this site.

The Brookings Institution — Research: Topics in U.S. Education
http://www.brookings.org/es/research/ra3.htm
This page lists articles and books that discuss various aspects of education policy in the United States. Also located at Brookings is the Brown Center on Education Policy
http://www.brookings.org/gs/brown/brown_hp.htm
dedicated to researching the most recent issues in education reform.

Center for Civic Education
http://www.civiced.org/
The mission of the Center is "to promote informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy." This page provides access to the materials developed in support of its curricular, teacher-training, and community-based programs.

Education Week on the Web
http://www.edweek.org/
Articles from *Education Week* and *Teacher Magazine* are accessible on this page, created for "people interested in education reform, schools, and the policies that guide them." Special reports, series, basic state-by-state information and daily news clips are some useful features of this important site. Of particular note are the *Education Week: Issues Pages* http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/issues.cfm. These useful pages contain background essays on key education issues, such as Assessment, Charter Schools, Choice, Community Service, Parent Involvement and Violence and Safety. Each page

includes links to a glossary, relevant stories from the *Education Week* and *Teacher Magazine* archives and pertinent organizations.

Educational Resource Organizations Directory (EROD)
http://www.ed.gov/Programs/EROD
Searchable by keyword or by state, this page provides links and contact information for state, regional and national educational organizations. EROD includes a fact sheet for each association listed, describing its focus, agenda, target audience and publications. Annotated links to public and private organizations are also listed on the Dept. of Education's page, *Educational Associations and Organizations.*
http://www.ed.gov/EdRes/EdAssoc.html

ERIC — Educational Resources Information Center
http://www.accesseric.org/
The home page for ERIC's vast collection of education information, this site offers background for understanding and using the ERIC network. ERIC consists of virtual libraries, almost thirty clearinghouses, links to major education journals and organizations on line, and a database that answers questions from the public (AskERIC http://ericir.syr.edu/). The *ERIC Digests* http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/, "short reports that synthesize research and ideas about emerging issues in education," are another useful feature.

Idea Central: Education
http://www.epn.org/ideacentral/education/
The "Virtual Magazine of the Electronic Policy Network" highlights recent reports and documents from a consortium of related organizations.   In addition, a lengthy list of recommended links is available. http://epn.org/idea/edlinks.html

National Center for Education Statistics
http://nces.ed.gov/
A major resource from the "primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data that are related to education in the United States and other nations." Publications of all kinds are available on this site, such as the comprehensive *1999 Digest of Education*

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National Education Association (NEA)
http://www.nea.org/
"NEA is America's oldest and largest organization committed to advancing the cause of public education." Its members number nearly 2.3 million and represent all levels of education from kindergarten to graduate school. Public policy debates on topics ranging from bilingual education to vouchers are addressed on NEA's issues pages, which include an overview and a list of related resources.

National Education Goals Panel: Building a Nation of Learners (NEGP)
http://www.negp.gov/
For the last ten years, the National Education Goals Panel has been reporting on national and state progress, identifying promising practices for improving education, and helping to build a nationwide, bipartisan consensus. Reports, newsletters and other resources pertaining to NEGP's mission are listed on this site.

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U.S. Dept. of Education
http://www.ed.gov/
The main page from the Dept. of Education offers a wealth of information about the agency and its programs from funding opportunities to the latest news. Useful sections include:
Initiatives and Priorities
http://www.ed.gov/inits.html
Publications and Products
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ and
Legislation, Regulations, and Policy Guidance
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/legsregs.html

Yahoo! Education: Index
http://dir.yahoo.com/education/index.html
This index includes numerous categories reflecting current issues in education, with links to bibliographies, journals, Web sites, Web directories and recent speeches on education. The variety of topics and links included in the index provides a good overview of the state of U.S. education today.

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http://ericae.net/
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http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/able/
Fact sheets, official transcripts, governmental and non-governmental links, legislation, court decisions and an extensive bibliography are available on this rich site from the Dept. of State's Office of International Information Programs.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
http://ericec.org/index.html
Fact sheets, bibliographies, links to relevant legislation and access to online resources are located on this site, as well as links to a special education discussion group and other e-mail. ERIC EC is operated by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
http://www.cec.sped.org/index.html, an international advocacy group dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and the gifted.

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For background information on this act, see IDEA 1997. http://ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/

U.S. Dept. of Education. Office of Bilingual and Minority Languages Affairs
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http://www.edreform.com/charter_schools/laws/index.html

Frontline: The Battle over School Choice
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/vouchers/
This site, based on a PBS Democracy Project/Election 2000 Special program, includes analyses of the condition of public schools; information and critiques on vouchers, charter schools and for-profit academies; and state-by-state resources on school reform initiatives. Video excerpts from the broadcast, interviews, links and a synopsis of the candidates' views can also be found here.

InfoUSA: Education
http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/educ/educover.htm
InfoUSA is an authoritative resource from the Office of International Programs, U.S. Dept. of State for foreign audiences seeking information about official U.S. policies, American society and culture. The section on education includes survey articles, reports and links to major education resources.

U.S. Charter Schools
http://www.uscharterschools.org/
This national Web site supports the sharing of practical information and innovations among charter school operators. Major sections on this Web page include Starting and Running Your School, State and School Profiles, Resource Directory, Links and Searching Other Charter School Sites. For example, resources on charter schools from the Dept. of Education are located here.
http://www.uscharterschools.org/res_dir/res_5.htm

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Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html
Developed jointly by the U.S. Dept. of Education and the Dept. of Justice, this guide helps identify "early indicators of troubling and potentially dangerous student behavior." Characteristics of a safe school, early warning signs, getting help for troubled children, developing a prevention and response plan, responding to crisis, resources and research support are covered.

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CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition
http://www.charactercounts.org/
This youth-education initiative is a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. The coalition, a national, diverse partnership of schools, communities, education and human-service organizations, sponsors character development seminars, forums, workshops, surveys and awards programs for young people.

Character Education Partnership (CEP)
http://www.character.org/
CEP is a "nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue in our nation's youth." CEP's online resources include a database, publications, articles and links to other organizations.

Democracy.org
http://www.democracy.org/
This educational non-profit organization is a member of the Washington State Partnership on Character Education. The site provides an extensive list of links on character education, citizenship, civic engagement, service learning, school renewal and

reform in addition to bibliographies of related books.

National School Safety Center (NSSC)
http://www.nssc1.org/
School safety surveys and crime and violence statistics are among the useful features of this page from the National School Safety Center. Created by presidential directive in 1984, the center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote safe schools and ensure quality education for all children.

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE)
http://pfie.ed.gov/
The U.S. Dept. of Education administers the partnership and offers "resources, ideas, funding and conferences relevant to family involvement in education." This site can be approached from the perspectives of four sectors: Family-School, Employers for Learning, Community Organizations and Religious Groups; and provides information about each sector's activities for increasing family participation in children's learning.

PAVNET Online: Partnerships Against Violence Network
http://www.pavnet.org/
This is a "virtual library" of information about "violence and youth-at-risk, representing data from seven different Federal agencies." It is a one-stop, searchable, information resource to "help reduce redundancy in information management and provide clear and comprehensive access to information for States and local communities."

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/
The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Education, is the Federal government's 'primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and violence, through education and prevention activities in our nation's schools." See this site to learn more about model school programs, grants, research, news and related Web pages.

Safety and Violence in U.S. Schools
http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/schools/
Developed by the Society and Values team of the
Department of State's Office of International
Information Programs, this page contains links to
White House conferences, speeches and fact sheets
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Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention

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Internet Sites

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
http://www.nbpts.org/nbpts/
The mission of this nonprofit group is to establish
"high and rigorous standards" for teachers, to
develop and operate a national, voluntary system for
assessment and certification and to advance related
education reforms. This page provides detailed
information about the latest standards, how to
achieve certification and state-by-state program
information.

*National Center for Public Policy and Higher
Education*
http://www.highereducation.org/
The center is a good source for research related to
state and federal policies affecting education beyond
high school. Several studies address the role of
colleges and universities in improving public
education.

*National Commission on Teaching and America's
Future*
http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm/home.htm
This page, based at Teachers College, Columbia
University, represents a bipartisan group of leaders,
who view teacher quality as the most essential
element in school reform. A report compiled in 1996,
What Matters Most: Teaching For America's Future
http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm/What.htm
presented detailed goals for the year 2006. A follow-
up report written a year later, *Doing What Matters
Most: Investing in Quality Teaching,*
http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm/dwhat.htm
measures the progress the commission has made
toward enforcing the changes suggested in the
original report.

National Teacher of the Year Program
http://www.ccsso.org/ntoy.html
The National Teacher of the Year program, sponsored
by the Council of Chief State School Officers and
Scholastic, Inc., focuses public attention on
excellence in teaching.

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.
http://www.rnt.org/
Guidance and resources for prospective teachers, as well as insight on current trends and issues in the field, are located on this page. Information is also provided on networking opportunities for educators; summaries of RNT's policy research and surveys; and highlights of its publications, services and advocacy efforts.

Teacher Quality
http://www.ed.gov/inits/teachers/index.html
This Web site from the U.S. Dept. of Education "offers information for policymakers and educators on a range of issues — recruiting and preparing teachers, providing professional development opportunities, and raising teaching standards. It includes classroom resources, research, and information for individuals interested in becoming a teacher."

Troops to Teachers
http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/ttt/
This successful program provides "referral assistance and placement services to service members and civilian employees of Department of Defense who are interested in beginning a second career in public education as teachers or teacher's aides." Links are to program information, employment opportunities, mentors, school districts and a bulletin board.

Technology

Books, Recent Articles and Documents

Cuban, Larry. *Reconstructing the Common Good in Education.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.

"Issuing a National Call to Action to Close the Digital Divide." *The White House at Work*, April 4, 2000. http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Work/040500.html
This briefing paper announces President Clinton's challenge to the public and private sectors to focus attention to the digital divide and bring digital opportunity to youth, families and communities nationwide.

Pea, Roy, ed. *Jossey-Bass Reader on Technology and Learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, June 2000.

National Center for Education Statistics. *Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-1999.* Washington: NCES, 2000. http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2000086

Peterson, Molly. "Net Dreams." *National Journal*, March 11, 2000, pp. 766-772.

Stoll, Clifford. *High Tech Heretic: Why Computers Don't Belong in the Classroom & Other Reflections by a Computer Contrarian.* New York: Doubleday, 1999.

Technology Counts: Schools and Reform in the Information Age. Washington: Editorial Projects in Education, 1997. http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc/tchome97.htm

Technology Counts '98: Putting School Technology to the Test. Washington: Editorial Projects in Education, 1998. http://edweek.org/sreports/tc98/

Technology Counts '99: Building a Digital Curriculum. Washington: Editorial Projects in Education, 1999. http://edweek.org/sreports/tc99/.

Internet Sites

Educational Leadership Toolkit: Change and Technology in America's Schools
http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/
This free online technology resource for school board members is a project of the National School Boards Foundation. The tool kit contains a collection of tips and pointers, articles, case studies and other resources for education leaders addressing issues around technology and education.

The Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM)
http://www.thegateway.org/
A one-stop resource for teachers, parents and students searching for lessons, instructional units and other educational materials by topic and grade level from over 140 Web sites. This page serves as a good example of how technology serves the educational community.

International Technology Education Association
http://www.iteawww.org/
"The ITEA, founded in 1939, is an association of technology education teachers and supervisors in elementary, secondary, and higher education. The ITEA promotes technological literacy and arranges seminars and special projects. It sponsors a national leadership institute and operates placement services."

JASON Project
http://www.jasonproject.org/
Founded by Dr. Robert Ballard, the JASON Project is "a year-round scientific expedition designed to excite and engage students in science and technology and to motivate and provide professional development for teachers." Components of the project include include scientific exploration, curriculum, online systems, teacher training and live broadcasts.

Milken Exchange on Education Technology
http://www.mff.org/edtech/
An initiative of the Milken Family Foundation, this page highlights current research on technology in education for policy makers, educators and researchers. Milken Exchange co-sponsors the *Technology Counts* reports with *Education Week*.

U.S. Dept. of Education: Office of Educational Technology (OET)
http://www.ed.gov/Technology/
The purpose of OET is to encourage and lead education improvement efforts through expanding and improving access to technology. OET is also responsible for reviewing and revising the National Educational Technology Plan.

*Numerals in brackets refer to articles that appeared as Article Alerts.

EDUCATION
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THE PRE-UNIVERSITY YEARS

CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION