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ABSTRACT

Barbara Jordan served as the hearing officer for three-day adversary evaluation hearings about the pros and cons of minimum competency testing (MCT). This report is the complete transcript of the second day of proceedings. The pro team, lead by James Popham, began by presenting representatives of four states (Florida, California, Texas, and Illinois) to describe the MCT programs now operative in their states. These witnesses emphasized the major positive effects resulting from high quality MCT programs: effects on student achievement and self-concept, curriculum and teaching, and public perception of schooling. In addition, Morris Andrews, Executive Secretary of the Wisconsin Education Association, described his organization's support of MCT in his state. Finally, Robert Ebel argued that MCT is valid and reliable. The con team, led by George Madaus, focused on the technical limitations of minimum competency tests. Mary Berry testified that MCT could not solve the problems of quality in education. Robert Calfee, Robert Linn, Nathan Quinones, Roger Farr, and Mel Hall provided testimony on technical testing issues such as test validity, test bias, and setting the cutting score. The remaining testimony was from parents and school personnel expressing their opposition to MCT based on personal experiences with it. (BW)

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MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTING
CLARIFICATION HEARING

JULY 9, 1981

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TM 820 267



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1 pencil tests designed to measure basic academic skills, life
2 or survival skills or functional literacy. A passing score
3 or standard for acceptable levels of student performance
4 have been established and test results may be used to
5 certify students for grade promotion, graduation or diploma
6 award, classify students and place students in remedial or
7 other special services, allocate compensatory funds to
8 school districts, evaluate or certify schools or school
9 districts, or evaluate teachers.

10 The minimum competency testing project is designed
11 to provide quality information for decisionmakers that will
12 assist them in making informed choices about policies and
13 programs, to promote a greater public understanding of the
14 dynamics of MCT programs, and to provide a vehicle for
15 informed public participation in the policy process.

16 The purpose of this hearing, simply put, is to
17 provide a forum for the clarification of some of the most
18 salient issues concerning minimum competency testing. Both
19 teams have agreed that there are certain functions which MCT
20 programs should not serve. Both teams are emphatic in their
21 repudiation that at elementary and secondary levels of MCT
22 uses these three purposes must not be MCT uses: teacher
23 evaluation, for one; allocation of educational or other
24 resources, a second; and, third, retention of non-passing
25 students at all grade levels.

1 The teams do not agree, however, with regard to
2 other functions of minimum competency testing. In this
3 hearing the teams will focus on MCT programs that use test
4 results to certify or classify students. The three major
5 issues in this hearing are: whether such MCT programs will
6 have beneficial or harmful effects on students, on
7 curriculum and teaching, on public perceptions of
8 educational quality.

9 Now while the framework for this hearing borrows
10 extensively from judicial procedures, it is not intended to
11 result in victory for one side or the other. Rather, the
12 clarification hearing is designed to serve an educational
13 function by providing a public forum for discussion of a
14 controversial topic from different, often competing,
15 perspectives.

16 The clarification of issues is the point of
17 concern. The judicial process merely provides the framework
18 and systematic procedures for the discussion of these
19 issues. There will be no jury to deliberate. There will be
20 no formal judgment as to the success, failure, or overall
21 quality of MCT programs. All decisions or judgments
22 concerning the information presented will be left to the
23 viewing public.

24 The target audience for the project includes
25 legislators, state and local policymakers and

1 administrators, special interest groups, parents, teachers,
2 students and the general public.

3 Specific rules of procedure have been agreed upon
4 by both teams. On each day, the designated case presenter
5 for each team will make an opening statement outlining the
6 case to be presented in support of the team's position.

7 On each day, the pro team will present its case
8 first. Each team will rely heavily on the testimony of
9 witnesses rather than on detailed presentation of data.
10 Although some witnesses will be interpreting documentary
11 evidence that will be entered into the record, other
12 witnesses will be stating their observations and opinions.

13 Direct, cross, redirect and recross examination of
14 witnesses will be permitted.

15 Now, finally, I am sure that all of you have
16 observed that we are being videotaped. These proceedings
17 are being videotaped. By this fall gavel-to-gavel
18 videotapes and written transcripts will be available to
19 professional and constituent organizations for use in
20 workshops, seminars and public forums.

21 In addition, PBS will air, in early fall, a
22 four-part television series. The first part will be a
23 documentary. The other three parts will be edited versions
24 of each day of this hearing.

25 Each team will participate in the tape editing.

1 The schedule has been altered today so that we can
2 have as the first witness Shirley Chisholm, Congresswoman
3 from New York. Because of some scheduling difficulties she
4 would not be able to be here at some other time and even
5 though we have said that the pro team presents its case
6 first, Mrs. Chisholm is a witness for the con team and will
7 present her testimony as soon as I will be quiet and let her
8 do so.

9 We will then alter the schedule to have first
10 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm as a witness for this hearing.

11 THE CON TEAM PRESENTS ITS CASE
12 TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE SHIRLEY CHISHOLM
13 UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
14 DIRECT EXAMINATION

15 BY MR. HENDERSON:

16 Q Congresswoman Chisholm, thank you for agreeing to
17 be with us this morning.

18 Let me ask you, would you please inform the
19 audience of your professional background and involvement in
20 education issues and related Federal legislation over the
21 past decade?

22 A Certainly.

23 I am a professional educator by training and the
24 holder of three degrees in the field of education from
25 Brooklyn College and Columbia University. My major has been

1 early childhood education and for many years prior to
2 entering the political arena, I was very involved in all
3 aspects of early childhood education as a teacher,
4 curriculum coordinator and for the seven years that I served
5 in the New York State Legislature, I was a member of the
6 State Education Committee. And then, coming to Washington
7 as a Congresswoman, I served on the Education and Labor
8 Committee for a period of seven years.

9 So that gives you a general background of my
10 involvement. With respect to legislation, particularly on
11 the Federal level, I have been very involved in the
12 compensatory educational programs such as Title I, the
13 bi-lingual educational programs, vocational amendments, the
14 Sex Equity Act and, of course, the Truth in Testing
15 legislation.

16 Q You have also been a Presidential candidate here
17 in the United States. Isn't that right?

18 A Yes. Back in 1971, '72, I dared to have the
19 audacity to say that I would like to be considered to be the
20 master of the ship of state for a period of four years. I
21 wasn't too successful, but it was a wonderful experience.

22 Q From your work as an educator and legislator, are
23 you familiar with issues surrounding minimum competency
24 standards and testing?

25 A I am familiar to a certain extent. The

1 educational amendments of 1978 for the first time authorized
2 the use of Federal funds to states. In order to help the
3 states determine whether or not the students would be able
4 to acquire the mastery of certain basic skills in reading,
5 writing and arithmetic so that they would be able to
6 function in a very highly automated society.

7 Secondly, I would like to say that New York State,
8 in 1979, did acquire the minimum competency standards and
9 just recently the Board of Regents in New York has mandated
10 that all high school graduates move in the direction of
11 taking a statewide examination in writing, reading and
12 mathematics.

13 Q From your vantage point at the Federal level,
14 Congresswoman, what has been the rationale behind the
15 enactment and proliferation of minimum competency testing
16 programs among the states? What about the consideration of
17 these issues by Federal legislators?

18 A I would say that the decline on a national level
19 of achievement scores of students across this nation has
20 been one of the reasons for the proliferation of these
21 competency tests across the nation.

22 Secondly, I would have to say that the students
23 and the parents and the teachers in some instances are very,
24 very concerned as to what instruments or mechanisms would
25 have to be used in order to do something and I firmly

1 believe that there are very basic systemic difficulties in
2 the educational system.

3 Q What has been your position regarding the use of
4 HCT or minimum competency testing among the various states
5 now employing such tests??

6 A I have been very concerned about it because in
7 terms of mandating the question of the subject matters that
8 should be mandated for this test leaves many, many things
9 hanging in the air. There is no basic set of standards.

10 For example, the state of Massachusetts really
11 just indicates that mastery in the skills of communication
12 and computation and career choices and responsibility would
13 all fall into that subject area while, for example, the
14 states of New Mexico and Florida only say that the students
15 need to have basic skills.

16 I think that there are several questions that have
17 to be answered in that entire area.

18 Q Does this mean that you oppose minimum competency
19 testing in all its forms?

20 A No, I don't really oppose minimum competency
21 testing in all forms because we have to try to come up with
22 instrumentalities and mechanisms from time to time in order
23 to enter into some kind of validation process. But I do
24 feel that we have a tendency to rely too heavily on this
25 as an instrument since we realize that, in many, many

1 instances we do not start from a basic premise of an
2 equivalency of educational preparation.

3 Q To your knowledge -- and again, speaking as a
4 Federal legislator, having surveyed the field at a national
5 level -- have you any knowledge about whether minimum
6 competency testing has a differential impact on particular
7 groups of students?

8 A Yes. On the basis of voluminous testimony that I
9 have heard through the years as a state legislator and now a
10 national legislator, I am very concerned about the entire
11 area of student labelling.

12 I am concerned about the fact basically that we do
13 not start from the basic premise that there is an
14 equivalency of educational experiences for all of the
15 children in any one given state so that we can make this
16 kind of a judgment.

17 I am further concerned that this kind of process
18 has built into it the potential labelling of a student for
19 life. I have many, many deep concerns about this entire
20 area.

21 Q Well, given your concerns, what is your view with
22 regard to how states should approach the issue of minimum
23 competency testing?

24 A Well, I really feel that states have to move in
25 the direction of realizing that we cannot approach this

1 issue from an emotional level. We have to have a very
2 rational approach to the question and secondly we have to
3 recognize that the equivalency of educational preparation is
4 not existent in the system of public schools across this
5 nation.

6 Since we are preparing young people to function in
7 a highly automated and technological society, we have to be
8 very sure that we do not place the onus and the burden of
9 responsibility on the shoulders of the students in this
10 country when it has been proven over and over again that
11 students who do not necessarily function in a traditional
12 classroom setting can succeed, and that we use this as some
13 kind of a scapegoat mechanism in order to veer away from the
14 systemic difficulties of the educational system in this
15 country today.

16 Q Is it your perception that damage may be done to
17 students through mislabelling by ECT and that perhaps some
18 of that damage is now going on by tests and standards that
19 are misapplied?

20 A Yes, that is my perception. I am very deeply
21 concerned about that because I know of individualized cases
22 where students were really placed in the trash heap in a
23 sense, the educational trash heap, as a result of this kind
24 of testing only to find later that in a different kind of
25 educational milieu that was responsive to the unique

1 differences and the kinds of backgrounds from which they
2 came, that they succeeded.

3 Recently we discovered two young people who were
4 placed on the educational trash heap and are now near
5 geniuses in terms of the intelligent quotient, whatever that
6 might mean.

7 So there is a real inherent danger in using this
8 kind of testing across-the-board.

9 Q Just one final question. Is it your belief that
10 minimally, further study of this issue is required by states
11 before they begin to adopt additional standards?

12 A Yes. I firmly believe that we further study into
13 this. I want to make it quite clear that there are some
14 potential benefits in competency testing. For example, you
15 have the question of educational accountability on the part
16 of the professionals.

17 Secondly, there are some negatives and the real
18 negative here is the question of student labelling which can
19 follow a student not only in the world of the schools, but
20 in the world of work. We must approach this issue in a
21 very, very rational way, and there certainly needs to be
22 much more research and investigation into this very
23 controversial area.

24 Q You are not opposed to establishing standards for
25 quality education, are you?

1 A Oh, no. I am not opposed to establishing
2 standards for quality education, but I want to be sure that
3 we start from the very, very basic premise that we are going
4 to apply the standards and that the equivalency of
5 educational experiences is applicable in all of the schools
6 that will be engaged in going through these various tests,
7 and that is not so in this country right now.

8 MR. HENDERSON: Mrs. Chisholm, thank you. I have
9 no further questions.

10 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Would you remain seated
11 for cross examination?

12 CROSS EXAMINATION

13 BY DR. POPHAM:

14 Q Congresswoman Chisholm, you indicate that you are
15 not currently satisfied with the quality of schooling in
16 this country. Is that correct?

17 A That is correct.

18 Q And you indicated that you are not opposed to
19 minimum competency testing in all its forms?

20 A That's right.

21 Q Would it be fair to say, therefore, that a minimum
22 competency testing program under optimal circumstances --
23 that is, circumstances designed to improve the quality of
24 instruction rather than to penalize youngsters might provide
25 more students with the skills they would need in later

1 life?

2 A Yes. I would have to say to a certain extent that
3 the quality of instruction is certainly very important but,
4 in addition to that, one has to deal with the commitment and
5 the concern of the persons who will be pursuing the
6 instruction.

7 I have some doubts about that on the basis of my
8 observation during the years.

9 Q Based upon your considerable experience in
10 education, do you think -- and this relates to your
11 observation about the difficulty of isolating the basic
12 skills that are needed and they vary from state to state,
13 given our nation's organization towards local curriculum
14 determination, -- that state educators working
15 collaboratively and involving all concerned groups could
16 come up with a fairly reasonable estimate regarding what
17 fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics ought
18 to be fostered in that state?

19 A Oh, I believe that anyone can really -- given the
20 ~~training~~, background and preparation -- come up with some
21 kind of basic program that would indicate that. But I
22 really still do feel that we also have to look at the
23 background of these persons who usually put these tests
24 together to recognize that so often they are skewed from a
25 certain direction only.

1 I dare say that a person who has come from a
2 poverty-ridden background, a person who has not been at the
3 middle or upper economic rung of the ladder, would actually
4 put questions together in a far different way from a person
5 who has not been exposed to poverty-ridden or so-called
6 inner city areas.

7 This bothers me. There is not enough of an
8 individualization of the different kinds of persons that
9 really come forth with these tests.

10 Q If I understand you, you are displaying concern
11 about the potential bias of tests?

12 A Correct.

13 Q I wonder if you are familiar with some of the
14 recent efforts on the parts of states and many designers of
15 minimum competency testing programs to eradicate this form
16 of bias by subjecting their tests to substantial empirical
17 testing in the field to see if youngsters of different
18 ethnic groups, for example, respond to the items differently
19 and to have those items reviewed very carefully by people
20 representing all such groups?

21 It seems to me there has been a great
22 intensification of effort to eradicate such bias. Are you
23 familiar with some of those efforts?

24 A I am not familiar specifically, but I have done a
25 great deal of reading in terms of the fact that a great many

1 states and professional educators, as well as concerned and
2 knowledgeable lay citizens have been looking at this entire
3 area through their eyes at this particular point, and I note
4 that just recently -- I can't remember which state it was --
5 there was a pull-back in terms of using the standardized
6 test as a way of ascertaining the accomplishment and
7 achievement level of students because they felt that there
8 was something built into these tests that was not exactly
9 fair.

10 Q Your position strikes me as being an inordinately
11 reasonable one and I am glad you are presenting your case
12 early here because I would like to consider you a partial
13 pro team witness. But you have made one statement that I
14 would like you to respond to, and that is that you are
15 concerned about the potential adverse labelling of
16 youngsters as incompetent, as not sufficiently skilled.

17 There is another concern which I have that
18 troubles me even more and that is to falsely deceive
19 youngsters into thinking they possess basic skills which, in
20 fact, they do not. In other words, awarding them diplomas
21 which are essentially meaningless.

22 When you weigh these two fears, which I am sure
23 you must share in part, how do you come down on that
24 choice?

25 A Oh, I will have to come down on the fact that we

1 should not be awarding persons diplomas if these diplomas
2 are not going to help them to compete in this
3 highly-automated society. We have to recognize that certain
4 things would have to be done in the educational area in
5 order to make sure that these students or these young people
6 have the requisite skills.

7 I think, however, that there is a tendency too
8 much in America to place the blame on the shoulders of the
9 victims and on the shoulders of the children, and I have
10 been convinced after 21 years of being out here politically
11 and educationally that just about every child is educable.
12 But it is important to know that there is the commitment,
13 the courage, the concern and compassion on the part of all
14 professionals to move in the direction of this very basic
15 belief.

16 So I just feel that we can't continue to give
17 young people diplomas for which they do not have the
18 skills. The employers all over this country are complaining
19 over the fact that so many young people are not able to
20 write, read, do mathematics or even comprehend, in spite of
21 the tremendous amount of dollars that we place in education
22 in this country on the state level and on the national
23 level.

24 So when you see that disproportionate numbers of
25 young people in this country are not achieving, we then have

1 to take a very serious look at a reassessment of our
2 educational system in terms of the '80s and even the '90s as
3 we move into the years ahead.

4 DR. POPHAM: Congresswoman Chisholm, we are all in
5 your debt.

6 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Redirect?

7 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. HENDERSON:

9 Q Congresswoman Chisholm, you have indicated
10 previously that you believe that there are some proper uses
11 for minimum competency testing. Would you support the use
12 of minimum competency testing as a sole criterion for the
13 award of a diploma or grade-to-grade promotion of students?

14 A No, I would not support minimum competency testing
15 as a sole criterion because I think we have to recognize
16 that requiring getting the skills that are necessary to
17 succeed in this society goes beyond just the mere academic
18 preparation. There are other things that we have to take
19 into consideration, such as teaching the individual to think
20 -- teaching the individual to make judgments on certain
21 decisions which certainly do not come under the purview of
22 educational testing standards.

23 So there is a composite of a number of things that
24 I think should really enter into the preparation of a
25 student for the securing of a diploma rather than just

1 looking at the testing alone.

2 Q You mentioned earlier that you are one of the
3 cosponsors of a bill in Congress in Truth in Testing. Some
4 of the tests which are currently being used among the states
5 are closeted away from public scrutiny and review.

6 What are your views about the secrecy in testing,
7 particularly as it pertains to disclosure of items to
8 students and information which may help them in preparing
9 for future tests?

10 A I have some very negative views about that.
11 Nothing should be done in secrecy, particularly anything
12 that is going to have a determination on the lives of people
13 and their future in this country, the lives of students who
14 are going to be the future adults of this country.

15 The real question about the Truth in Testing
16 legislation can be applicable also to the Truth in Lending
17 legislation, opening up everything so that persons know
18 where their deficiencies are, persons know the areas where
19 there are necessities for improvements so that they can
20 improve, so that they can move in that direction.

21 There has been far too much secrecy surrounding
22 the area of testing in this country and we are convinced
23 that it is necessary to bring this out in the open precisely
24 because the lives of thousands of persons in this country
25 ultimately are decided on the basis and the conclusions of

1 some of these tests.

2 I wish I had time to give you some details on some
3 of the things that I have learned as a result of this
4 inquiry.

5 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you again.

6 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Recross?

7 RECROSS EXAMINATION

8 BY DR. POPHAM:

9 Q Ms. Chisholm, are you familiar with any minimum
10 competency testing programs where passage of the test is the
11 sole and primary criterion for graduation, or is it not the
12 case that frequently a student must also pass a certain
13 number of credits in high school, a certain grade point
14 average and attendance and so on?

15 Are you familiar with any in which it is the sole
16 criterion?

17 A No. I am not familiar with any in which it is the
18 sole criterion, but there is a disproportionate skewing in
19 that direction.

20 There is no question in my mind, particularly with
21 respect to students that come from many, many areas of this
22 country in which there have not been the equitability of
23 educational experiences and there has been a tendency on the
24 part of an insensitive school board and insensitive local
25 educational agencies to rely on the testing as the major

1 determining factor for that particular group of students.

2 Q You have not the opportunity to hear all of the
3 pro team's witnesses, but when you watch this on television,
4 as I am sure you will, you will observe that many of those
5 programs described have a great deal of openness with
6 respect to the tests that are being used. The nature of the
7 tests are well described.

8 MS. PULLIN: I object. Professor Popham is
9 testifying, not examining the witness.

10 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Dr. Popham, it is not
11 necessary for the Chair to remind you constantly that the
12 testimony comes from the witness and not from the
13 interrogator.

14 DR. POPHAM: It is not necessary, Professor
15 Jordan, but it is pleasant to hear from you.

16 (Laughter)

17 BY DR. POPHAM: (Resuming)

18 Q Let me rephrase that, Congresswoman Chisholm.

19 Are you familiar with the many minimum competency
20 testing programs in which there is great clarity regarding
21 the nature of the tests, clarity that is available both to
22 students and to parents?

23 A No, I am not familiar with many of those. I am
24 familiar with a number of tests, but not enough to satisfy
25 me. I might as well put it that way.

1 Q But if there were such programs, they, I suspect
2 would be consonant with your preference for openness with
3 respect to testing?

4 A You see, there are other factors that are involved
5 here. We keep coming back to the question of testing.

6 I cannot think about the testing of young people
7 in this country without also thinking about the preparation
8 of the kinds of teachers and instructional staff that you do
9 have. There is a direct linkage in my own mind between
10 these two component parts.

11 So I just tend to feel that a disproportional
12 amount of attention is focused constantly and persistently
13 in the area of tests..

14 Maybe that is a bias of mine, but I must be honest
15 with you.

16 DR. POPHAM: Thank you.

17 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you.

18 Thank you, Congresswoman Chisholm for coming and
19 helping us on this issue, at least giving us your views.

20 Now we are back to the review and presentation of
21 the argument for today, which I trust Dr. Popham is ready to
22 give us.

23 OPENING ARGUMENT BY DR. JAMES POPHAM,

24 PRO TEAM LEADER

25 DR. POPHAM: We wish to preview briefly what our

1 case will be like today. We are going to start off by
2 presenting representatives of four states: Florida,
3 California, Texas and Illinois, to describe the minimum
4 competency testing programs now operative in their states.

5 Our initial witness, indeed, will be the
6 Commissioner of Education for the State of Florida, Florida
7 having attracted considerable national attention since it
8 was in the forefront in the creation of minimum competency
9 testing programs with binding requirements for the receipt
10 of a high school diploma.

11 In the presentation of their cases, we will
12 attempt to emphasize the major positive effects which we
13 believe result from high quality minimum competency testing
14 programs. More students will learn basic skills. Those
15 students will have positive attitudes towards themselves and
16 school, and they will master skills other than the basics.

17 There will be positive effects on the curriculum
18 and teaching, and these positive effects include the
19 isolation of worthwhile curricular emphases; increased
20 teacher effectiveness because of the clarity with which
21 those competencies are stated; and broadened curriculum
22 coverage, and, finally, positive effects on public
23 perceptions of schooling with the clear recognition that
24 seat time has been abandoned as a criterion for promotion,
25 that the schools' curricular emphases are better understood

1 and that, most importantly, there will be solid evidence
2 that students' skills in reading, writing and arithmetic
3 have been increased.

4 These are the three issues of this hearing.
5 Professor Jordan has reminded us of the three issues of the
6 hearing. They concern whether positive or negative effects
7 occur on students, on the curriculum and teaching, and on
8 the public perceptions of schooling.

9 Note that throughout our presentation of
10 witnesses, we will continually support the positive effects
11 resulting from high quality minimum competency testing
12 programs.

13 We have a witness representing the Wisconsin
14 Education Association who will describe for you the views of
15 his organization with respect to minimum competency testing
16 legislation currently pending in that state. Our concluding
17 witness is one of America's most distinguished experts on
18 educational measurements, who will deal with a myriad of
19 technical issues regarding minimum competency testing.

20 We hope to be able to demonstrate by this array of
21 witnesses that the minimum competency testing programs of
22 high quality would indeed have positive effects.

23 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you, Dr. Popham.

24 We are now ready for the first witness,
25 Commissioner Ralph Turlington, Commissioner of Education,

1 Department of Education, State of Florida, Tallahassee,
2 Florida. Commissioner Turlington?

3 THE PRO TEAM PRESENTS ITS CASE
4 RALPH TURLINGTON
5 COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
6 STATE OF FLORIDA, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
7 DIRECT EXAMINATION

8 BY DR. POPHAM:

9 Q Mr. Turlington, what is your position in the state
10 of Florida and how long have you held that post?

11 A I am Commissioner of Education for the state of
12 Florida. I had that post by appointment to fill a vacancy,
13 appointed by then-Governor Ruben Askew. In November of that
14 year, 1974, I was elected to a full, four-year term. I was
15 re-elected in 1978.

16 Q Briefly, would you please describe the main
17 features of the Florida minimum competency testing program?

18 A Yes. In 1976, after reviewing our previous
19 accountability program, the legislature enacted a law, a
20 great portion of this had been recommended by the Department
21 of Education. It added one feature that the Department did
22 not include in its original recommendation.

23 That provided that we would test for minimum
24 basic competencies at the third, fifth, eighth and eleventh
25 grades and that students would not have to pass that test,

1 but the test could be used as evidence that they had
2 achieved those minimum competencies and then the law also
3 provided that we would test early in the year and that
4 students, during that year, would prove that they had met
5 those minimum competencies.

6 The law did not provide that the student
7 absolutely had to be held back if they did not meet the
8 minimum competencies, but it did provide that that was to be
9 taken into account and the student promoted without those
10 minimum competencies, that the pupil progression plan
11 required of the district would have to include provisions
12 that that student would have those particular minimum
13 competencies met or addressed at a subsequent time.

14 Then the legislature added an additional
15 requirement which frankly, at the time, I think most of the
16 educators and people in Florida, certainly the educators,
17 did not think was such a great idea. That was a diploma
18 requirement.

19 It said that commencing in 1979 that all students
20 who graduated from a Florida public high school would pass a
21 test demonstrating functional literacy. That part of the
22 program subsequently turned out to be one of the most
23 strategically and tactically beneficial actions ever taken
24 to improve education and yet I don't think it was foreseen
25 that that is what the result would be.

1 We had also adopted with that, or in the following
2 session, a provision for a compensatory education program
3 with which to assist the schools in meeting the special
4 needs of the students identified as needing help in order to
5 accomplish these minimum competencies and to pass our
6 functional literacy tests.

7 Q Funds were provided, then, to support students who
8 needed additional help?

9 A Yes, they were.

10 Q In Florida, the legislation that created the
11 diploma requirement was fashioned in such a way that the
12 passage of the minimum competency test was the sole and
13 primary criterion for graduation?

14 A No. The law provided that each district would
15 adopt -- and that would be the school board, that is local
16 control, locally elected school board -- a pupil progression
17 plan. That pupil progression plan would incorporate as a
18 part of its requirement the state minimums, but the district
19 would then make provisions for what other requirements they
20 deemed educationally appropriate, or appropriate.

21 It included as far as graduation requirements were
22 concerned that the districts could specify additional
23 requirements, and they would. All of them have, in addition
24 to the state minimum requirements. So we have a combination
25 of things that a student needs to accomplish in order to

1 graduate with a regular diploma.

2 Q So it is correct to say that the passage of
3 minimum competency test is not the sole criterion for
4 graduation?

5 A No, it's not the sole criterion.

6 Q Are the tests in Florida's minimum competency
7 testing program multiple choice tests?

8 A Yes, they are multiple choice tests.

9 Q Have those multiple choice tests proved suitable
10 for your purposes?

11 A No test proves perfectly suitable. For example,
12 in the writing, we believe that you need -- in order to test
13 someone for writing, to really test them, you need for them
14 to write. But multiple choice is a very useful tool. It is
15 not a perfect tool.

16 I was interested to notice people attack multiple
17 choice questions, that the con team, for example, previously
18 had one witness who testified that under no circumstances
19 was a multiple choice question worthy of use.

20 That was followed by a back-to-back witness who
21 said that he had prepared a test which was the sole
22 criterion as to whether or not --

23 MS. PULLIN: I object to this line of response.
24 The witness is reiterating testimony that we heard
25 yesterday.

1 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: I feel that the witness
2 is laying a predicate for the response which he is giving to
3 the question which was propounded to him by Professor
4 Popham, and as far as I can detect what he has said in
5 recounting and recalling testimony from yesterday is
6 accurate, and I must allow him to proceed.

7 THE WITNESS: The witness was the principal
8 craftsperson or director for putting together what we refer
9 to as the GED test under which millions of persons have
10 received high school diplomas. That test is a multiple
11 choice test. It is a test that a student takes. If he
12 passes it he gets a high school diploma; if he doesn't pass
13 it, he doesn't get the high school diploma.

14 But it is a multiple choice test. It is
15 recommended and proposed and the program, I think, has been
16 a satisfactory program and one that has been found useful in
17 America. They use multiple choice tests.

18 No multiple choice test, no test, is a perfect
19 instrument. Nor do we claim that testing should be the only
20 criteria in terms of how you judge or promote or relate to
21 your students recognition of achievement. Clearly, multiple
22 choice questions can serve a very useful purpose in
23 operation of an educational system.

24 BY DR. POPHAM: (Resuming)

25 Q. Thank you, Commissioner.

1 You have indicated that it was the legislation,
2 indeed modification of earlier legislation, that established
3 the diploma requirement. What factors led the Florida
4 legislature to mandate this requirement?

5 A I think it was a general dissatisfaction about
6 whether or not we were getting the job done. I think here
7 is a statement, the Early Assessment Program developed from
8 the Educational Accountability Act of 1971 -- we had an act
9 in 1971 under which we did some sample testing, and in a
10 year or two we also had universal testing of perhaps one
11 grade or more.

12 It clearly indicated that there were many children
13 in Florida schools who were not learning much of what the
14 schools are expected to teach. In other words, no, we
15 weren't getting the job done.

16 I might add, I think we were getting the job done
17 as well as many schools and states were getting them done in
18 the United States of America, but I think we have to be
19 honest about it and say that we were not accomplishing what
20 we should have been accomplishing and, yes this was a
21 response to that.

22 It was setting up a test program and then moving
23 with our compensatory education program to see that we gave
24 our students a better break and better opportunity in life.

25 Q You believe then, that the legislature was, in

1 fact, reflecting the public sentiment in your state, which
2 suggested that improvements were needed?

3 A It reflected the public sentiment. It reflected,
4 clearly, a great need.

5 Q Speaking as Florida's chief state school officer,
6 what is your assessment of the competency assessment program
7 on Florida's education?

8 A It has been very successful. It has been very
9 positive. And it has grown to be increasingly supported by
10 the people in our state.

11 I look at the support that came out shortly after
12 the test was first given in 1977. It had, although our
13 results were disappointing, the test program had strong
14 support.

15 I looked at a poll that was taken some two years
16 later and I found out that the support had grown still
17 stronger. If you were to take a poll in Florida today among
18 all of the elements and those would include persons in
19 education or persons who are in the population generally,
20 both majority and minority individuals, I think you would
21 find in all of those instances very strong support for our
22 testing program.

23 Q What was your personal view regarding the
24 legislation that created this? One often finds people in
25 your position somewhat threatened by the imposition of those

1 kinds of laws.

2 A Yes. I have noticed quite frankly that educators,
3 at least at first, are very skeptical and very doubtful of
4 the program. I will give one illustration of that. We have
5 Dr. Walter Young who is Chairman of our House Education
6 Committee. Dr. Young said, "You know, this program goes
7 against every philosophy that I was taught and it is
8 working." He was surprised -- and that is really what is
9 happening.

10 When we started off, I don't think we had a
11 majority of educators in Florida that really basically
12 thought that it was going to result in a positive effect.
13 That is no longer the case. There is overwhelming support
14 in Florida for the program from educators and the public
15 generally. from students and from parents.

16 Q It seems very important. You say not only is
17 there positive support from the public which might have been
18 expected to be supportive since, as you indicated, it was
19 the initiating force, but from the educational community as
20 well?

21 A There is now -- and, you know, we talked a little
22 earlier about the diploma requirement which was really not
23 in our original recommendations. Mr. Terry Fall, who was
24 the Director of our Public Schools Division some time after
25 that program started said, "You know, we weren't very strong

1 on that but now that we have implemented that program we
2 have come to realize that was the single greatest catalytic
3 action that we took to bring about educational improvement
4 in Florida."

5 And so today I can say with personal knowledge
6 that we have numerous educators in Florida who were very
7 skeptical of the program at first who are, today, strong
8 supporters. We are supported by the principals, by our
9 superintendents. I am satisfied now that we have a strong
10 majority of teachers who support the program and want to see
11 the program continued.

12 I have talked with students, with parents. I know
13 of no group -- I have talked with minorities and I know of
14 no group in Florida taken as a whole that does not support
15 the continuation of our testing program.

16 Q I realize it is very early in the evolution of
17 your program but, nonetheless, you were one of the earliest
18 states to move in this direction. Do you have any
19 indication that the program is having positive or negative
20 effects on students' skills?

21 A Yes. You can look at the results of our testing
22 program, the basic skills program in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11
23 and you can see in that very positive results. Students
24 have acquired more appreciation and the ability to utilize
25 the basic skills of reading with understanding and math and

1 using math in a functional way.

2 It has had a positive effect in terms of how we
3 regard ourselves in education. Before we adopted this
4 program, we were on the defensive in education, and you can
5 well understand it. Today, the people of Florida are
6 supporting us. The legislature of Florida is supporting
7 education better than before. That wouldn't have happened
8 if we hadn't had this program.

9 We were losing credibility. The people wanted us
10 to be responsive and they wanted us to be accountable.
11 Today, we can go to the legislature and the people of
12 Florida and say this is what we are doing, this is what our
13 commitment is, and we are now working more seriously. Our
14 students are learning more, our schools are better, and we
15 ask for additional support.

16 The legislature has increased the funding for our
17 compensatory education program. We have adopted a program
18 of goals in which we say that over the next five-year period
19 that Florida is going to move up to be a state of
20 educational distinction. We will be in the upper quartile
21 of educational achievement amongst the 50 states in this
22 country, and we can do that.

23 This program was a catalyst for that. It has
24 enabled us to get more resources. You look out and you talk
25 with our people, our teachers, people in schools, and you

1 will find that yes, there is a greater degree of support, a
2 momentum for educational improvement that I don't think
3 would have been there had we not embarked upon this program.

4 Q How would you respond to the criticism that test
5 scores have risen but real student mastery of basic skills
6 has not? Do you have any reason to believe that it's just
7 the scores that have come up?

8 A There's no doubt in mind, from talking to
9 principals, teachers, students, parents and others that real
10 learning has increased. You know, you have to look back and
11 see what was the state of learning in 1976 and before. You
12 recognize that today we have literally thousands of persons
13 who are today better readers, who are able to handle math in
14 a way that they would not have been able to handle it if we
15 had not embarked upon this program.

16 There is no doubt that persons have more learning
17 today. Well, a person who is making that statement is safe
18 only because it is extremely hard to -- well, how do you
19 disprove a statement like that in the absolute? I can say
20 this, that I have complete conviction that that is an
21 erroneous charge.

22 We have absolutely improved learning in the state
23 of Florida. Our commitment and our attitude and our
24 momentum is positive. Yes, we are on the way up.

25 Q You indicated earlier that the response of the

1 public has been most positive. How has that positive
2 response been manifested?

3 A It has been manifested in terms of support. I
4 mentioned earlier that the compensatory education program
5 has been increased. Each year the legislature has made
6 additional contributions into our compensatory education
7 program. We have a program called our Prep Program, and
8 this program, we think, is going to put us in the forefront,
9 particularly of education in our kindergarten through the
10 third grade.

11 That program, by the way, we got what we referred
12 to as our third installment. Some two years ago the
13 legislature enacted this Prep Program to greatly strengthen
14 the kindergarten and our first three grades and they said
15 they were going to do it in three stages. They met every
16 single one of those commitments:

17 We now have, based on our appropriation that
18 passed just this past month, that we would have some 75 or
19 76 additional millions of dollars to improve education in
20 kindergarten through third grade. We feel very positive
21 about that and we know we are going to get some strong
22 improvements in our early years. A good beginning should
23 help to make for a better ending.

24 Q So your program in Florida is, then, definitely
25 oriented instructionally as well as simply a requirement?

1 A It has enabled us to get better resources for our
2 instruction program. It clearly has been a very strong
3 motivator in terms of improvement of our educational
4 program. It has taken us off of the defensive. It has put
5 us in a position to be positive.

6 And it has enabled us to say, yes, we are going to
7 have a goal now in Florida where we don't want to be
8 average. We want to be a state of educational distinction
9 and we expect to move into the higher echelons of education
10 in the United States of America.

11 Q You have indicated that the public and the
12 teachers are positive about the program. What about the
13 students? How have student attitudes been affected by the
14 program as far as you can discern?

15 A I have talked to a number of students and their
16 attitude has been very strongly supportive of the program.
17 Our Florida Council on Education has made a number of
18 hearings around the state. I have attended some of those
19 hearings and in each case students have testified and they
20 have been very positive about it.

21 Students, you know, they want a diploma to mean
22 something. You know, we have been -- that's really
23 basically where we got into a lot of our problems. We have
24 been in the social promotion business. We have been putting
25 students along and not, incidentally, just in grade school

1 or high school. We have been doing it in our colleges and
2 universities.

3 Now you have got to have some standards and you
4 have got to be able to enforce those standards. I have with
5 me here a statement from a teacher. And this was what the
6 teacher said shortly after the program started.

7 "I think that so many teachers have felt over the
8 years that it really didn't matter too much what they did,
9 because we were not allowed, and I used that term advisedly,
10 to retain the child. In this county we have had to give the
11 parents permission to retain a child, as ludicrous as that
12 may seem."

13 We say it is one thing to confer and talk with
14 parents, but it's another thing to be working in a system in
15 which you say you cannot actually hold a child back without
16 the permission of the parent. That is what we have had --
17 social promotion -- in America to the point where we then
18 have persons coming to the diploma stage who literally have
19 not been able to handle reading with understanding, writing,
20 or to handle math -- just fundamental math -- in any kind of
21 basic way.

22 Q I would like your reaction to an observation made
23 by a witness in previous testimony who indicated that the
24 availability of minimum competency testing results might
25 make it possible for the teachers realistically to resist

1 pressure to promote, make it possible, indeed, for them to
2 hold back some students who might need that.

3 A I think there's no doubt, and just in the
4 statement that I read from the teacher here, that the parent
5 or someone, else seemed to think that it was their
6 prerogative as to whether or not the child should be
7 promoted. That was the condition in which we found
8 ourselves in many Florida schools.

9 . And I might add I am not really talking about
10 Florida schools. I'm talking about a number of schools in
11 this country. We checked that. We think Florida schools
12 are today above average in educational accomplishment. We
13 think, incidentally, when we started this program that we
14 may have been a little below average.

15 We know this program has helped to move us up in
16 terms of educational accomplishment.

17 Q Commissioner Turlington, one of the very touchy
18 problem areas associated with the Florida program is the
19 fact that more minority youngsters have not done well on
20 these tests than majority youngsters. How do you respond to
21 the concern about the fact that perhaps more black
22 youngsters may fail the test?

23 A One of the problems for black students has been
24 low expectations and I have talked to many blacks in
25 Florida. And the greatest complaint that they have made is

1 that we have not had the expectation of black students that
2 we should have. Expect little, you get little.

3 Let's take a school -- Ribault High School, for
4 example, in Duvall County -- Jacksonville. That school had
5 only twenty percent of its students pass and it was a
6 predominantly black school. It had only twenty percent of
7 its students pass the math test when we started in October
8 of 1977. That is, on the first administration.

9 This last October the students passed -- 84
10 percent of the students. Now, you know, black students can
11 pass. We just simply haven't had the expectations. And you
12 have to say here is the standard and you can meet that
13 standard. You can be positive about it.

14 We need a positive attitude and a positive
15 commitment. What we get is the negative idea you have been
16 held back. You have been handicapped. But, you know, you
17 can't do it. Actually, some of the very people who I think
18 sincerely seek to help minority students actually implant
19 very negative feelings. I think they do that inadvertently.

20 We need to be very positive and the evidence we
21 have had in Florida is that you can make significant
22 improvement in educational achievement in a relatively
23 modest period of time if you expect it and you go out and
24 you commit yourself to it. You will find those student
25 attitudes will change just like in Ribault.

1 The students that took that test and passed with
2 such a high pass record are essentially the same kinds of
3 students that only one-fifth of them passed just a short
4 time ago. We have to have a positive attitude and a
5 positive commitment.

6 Q Would it not be true that many of the
7 instructional support dollars that you have described have
8 been funneled into improving the caliber of education
9 statewide for minority students as well?

10 A Yes. Minority students have benefited, there is
11 no question, from this program. We have a person in Mr.
12 Rollins' end of Florida who worked for the migrant program.
13 He testified one time, and I didn't know how he was going to
14 testify.

15 He testified that he was for the program. I asked
16 him why. He said, well, I am testifying for the program
17 because this is a program that identifies students that need
18 help and under this program we have identified them, and it
19 puts some accountability on the system to see that the
20 students get help.

21 That's what it does. The real beneficiaries of
22 this program are the ones we have chiseled on or we haven't
23 given a fair shake to in the past because of low
24 expectations. We identify students now that need help and,
25 by the way, when you have a school like Ribault that does

1 well, and here's another school that didn't do so well, they
2 don't have that same excuse any more.

3 You say well, here is a school over here that has
4 accomplished this. Their students and your students are
5 similar and you can do it. And, you know, you put that in
6 there. You can do it, you can do it, you can do it, you can
7 do it. We are not asking for a standard that is anything
8 but a reasonable standard to expect a person to have in the
9 way of educational achievement when they receive a full
10 regular high school diploma from a Florida school or from a
11 school in the United States of America.

12 A diploma has come to mean very little.

13 Q So you believe that the program has installed not
14 only a system of accountability but a series of positive
15 expectations?

16 A That's unquestionable that it has. I can't say
17 unquestionable because you'll have people that question
18 anything, but I would say that I know that's the case.

19 Q You and your colleagues have been involved in the
20 widely-publicized legal struggle involving the Florida
21 minimum competency testing program. How does that situation
22 currently stand?

23 A We had a case -- actually we have had five cases.
24 The first three cases were resolved. We prevailed in all of
25 the first three cases.

1 We have two cases that continue, one called the
2 Debra P. case and the other called the Love case. The Debra
3 P. case was heard recently in Atlanta. They remanded the
4 case back to the Federal District Court in Tampa and said
5 that what we needed to do now was to prove that we taught
6 and that we teach what we test. That suits us fine.

7 We are teaching what it is that we are testing.
8 Now someone will pick up on that and say we are teaching to
9 test. I might add I hope so, because to pass our test you
10 have to read with understanding and you have to be able to
11 do math. So if anybody wants to teach to that test, let
12 them go ahead.

13 So do we teach what it is that we are testing?
14 The answer is yes. And we will go into court and we will
15 present our case on it. And the court said if you do that,
16 that is a fair test. You also have to remember that in the
17 court cases the court ruled that we had a valid basis for
18 setting the state standard for this, and we can
19 constitutionally set such a standard and that our test,
20 incidentally, was a valid test and that it was not a biased
21 test.

22 Q So your obligation, then, is to demonstrate that
23 the test is fair in the sense of the Court of Appeals ruling
24 insofar as you teach what the test tests?

25 A That's right.

1 Q Very good, then, this will be resolved as some
2 future time?

3 A It will be resolved.

4 Now the thing that we were most disappointed about
5 was the postponement in terms of the diploma requirement. I
6 think the postponement was far too long and I think that
7 that cost us some momentum. But we didn't break stride. We
8 kept on. We did not turn back and we are not turning back.

9 The Court has said to go ahead and make this one
10 of our several diploma requirements in school year 1982-83.
11 I think that was too long, but we have a group of students
12 that just took the test and they will be required to pass
13 the test along with meeting their other regular graduation
14 requirements in school year '82-'83 in order to receive a
15 Florida diploma.

16 Q It's quite apparent that you are enthusiastic
17 about your state's minimum competency testing program. What
18 do you view will be the long-term impact, and this is my
19 concluding question, what do you view will be the long-term
20 impact of the Florida minimum competency testing program to
21 be on education in your state?

22 A What it's really done is it has brought about
23 something of a renaissance in Florida education. The
24 program that we have started, and that Governor Graham and
25 the Cabinet and State Board of Education has unanimously

1 adopted, the goal, to put Florida in the forefront of
2 education in the United States.

3 And, incidentally, the legislature is supporting
4 this. With that, incidentally, comes moving our teachers
5 and our instructional personnel into the upper quartile of
6 teacher compensation over a five-year period -- those two
7 things moving together.

8 We have adopted a program to put in the upper
9 quartile of educational achievement amongst the states.

10 Yes. I would give you one of the goals that we expect to
11 set. We have about 3.8 percent of the students in America,
12 maybe a little more. One of the goals is that by that fifth
13 year we will have six percent of all of the outstanding
14 mathematics students in the United States, where our share
15 would be 3.8 percent. And we expect to have six percent.

16 I tell people if we can grow more than our share
17 of tennis players we can grow more than our share of good
18 mathematicians. We can do that. And our program in terms
19 of excellence is not limited to just math, but we put that
20 across a very broad spectrum.

21 We have an excellent vocational program. Yes, we
22 expect to be a leader in America in education, and if we had
23 not embarked on this program I think we would have been back
24 there still in the doldrums, just plodding around from one
25 time to another. It has been an excellent catalyst.

1 It has had the best effect of any single thing
2 that we have done for education since I have been in public
3 life. And although I am a very young man, that goes back to
4 1950.

5 DR. POPHAM: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

6 HEAPING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross?

7 CROSS EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. WENDERSON:

9 Q Mr. Turlington, are you a trained educator?

10 A No.

11 Q What is your background, academic background?

12 A My academic background. I received a degree in
13 business administration from the University of Florida. I
14 received a Master of Business Administration from the
15 Harvard Graduate School of Business.

16 Q You stated that the position of education
17 commissioner in your state is an elected post?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Political popularity, no doubt, plays some part in
20 the election of anyone to that position, is that correct?

21 A Well, if you are going to be elected you would
22 hope that people would vote for the person of their choice.

23 Q I assume that was rather logical. I thought I'd
24 ask it.

25 Based upon your margin of victory, which I

1 understand was considerable, in the last election, is it
2 safe to assume that you are a relatively popular man in the
3 state of Florida?

4 A I don't think that is ever safe to assume.

5 (Laughter.)

6 Q You were at least elected by a relatively wide
7 margin, is that correct?

8 A Yes, and I voted for myself.

9 Q Do you attribute any of your popularity to your
10 stance on the state's functional literacy test?

11 A Well, yes. I think that we are on the right track
12 and you bet, I support the program. I support what we are
13 doing. If I didn't support what we're doing I would need to
14 get out. I believe in what we are doing.

15 Q May I conclude, then, that your support for
16 functional literacy may have played some positive role in
17 your election?

18 A Yes, and I hope you're not opposed to functional
19 literacy.

20 Q Not at all. Let's examine for a moment, if we
21 can, the test itself. Now Mr. Popham, of course, raised the
22 issue of the current litigation which is going on in Florida
23 surrounding the test. We certainly have been very much
24 aware of it.

25 How many studies have you or your department

1 sponsored to determine the validity of the functional-
2 literacy test?

3 A In terms of the nuts and bolts of that, when you
4 say studies, it has been studied continuously. And then, of
5 course, if you want to get into the preciseness, you ask the
6 question of am I professional educator, and my answer is
7 no. But I will say this, that I know that it has been
8 studied, evaluated, and we are constantly -- we are
9 constantly at it.

10 Q Are you familiar with a validity study which was
11 performed on your program by F. J. King in 1977?

12 A Yes, I am partly familiar with that.

13 Q There is a quote extracted from that study -- I
14 believe it's on page 22 of the report, indicating that:
15 "No data exists that indicates that the score," meaning the
16 score on the test, "will actually separate functional from
17 non-functional individuals in a given population". What
18 does that mean to you?

19 A Well, that means that in the field of social
20 science it is extremely difficult for anyone, whether they
21 are a trained statistician or whatever they might be, to
22 prove something in an absolute sense.

23 Q It doesn't mean, though, that the test, because of
24 its imprecision, is not going to do what you suspect it
25 would do in the first instance?

1 A Well, the Court held that we have a test and it
2 has content validity. Is that what you mean?

3 Q That's close enough. Is that really what the Court
4 said? Isn't it true that all the Courts who have considered
5 this issue have ruled that the test illegally perpetuates
6 the effects of past racial discrimination?

7 A You shifted your basis. Before we were talking
8 about validity and we pointed that out. Are you talking
9 about the functional literacy?

10 Q I am talking about the functional literacy test in
11 Florida, that's correct.

12 MR. ALLEYNE: Professor Jordan, I would like to
13 object to the question. The witness is not an expert on
14 Court precedents and I think that he is not in a position to
15 answer a question relating to what all of the courts have
16 held in a particular area.

17 MR. HENDERSON: I would simply like to mention, of
18 course, that Mr. Popham introduced the issue of federal
19 litigation which is currently ongoing in the state of
20 Florida and Mr. Turlington, of course, did testify as to
21 what the Courts had held in various instances. I thought I
22 would get him to elaborate on that.

23 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: I will allow the
24 Commissioner to give his thoughts about these pending cases
25 and the results because he can do that. I thought you wer

1 going to object to the great deal and great amount of
2 testimony that we have coming from the interrogator, but you
3 do not object to that, so I assume that it's all right with
4 you.

5 MR. ALLEYNE: Any time we get a leading question
6 which helps us we will not object.

7 BY MR. HENDERSON: (resuming)

8 Q Mr. Turlington, would you answer the question?
9 Isn't it true that all the Courts that have considered the
10 issue of the functional literacy test in Florida have ruled
11 that the test itself illegally perpetuates the effects of
12 past racial discrimination?

13 A That is not my interpretation of it. Talking
14 about the test, remember that the Court ruled that in
15 1982-83 that we could take the test and give that in 1982-83
16 as a diploma requirement. And in the meantime, that this
17 test, which is a nonbiased test and the Court said it was a
18 nonbiased test, that we could use that test as a basis there
19 for determining students that needed assistance and in
20 effect, to have that used by school districts for assignment
21 of students to courses where they particularly needed help.

22 Now that doesn't sound to me like they said this
23 was not a valid test or a test --

24 Q I didn't say that the Court said the test was
25 invalid. What I asked about about the effects it had on

1 perpetuating past racial discrimination, but you have
2 answered that.

3 Let me ask you, my impression of what the Court
4 said was a bit different. I thought the Court had said that
5 there were errors of considerable magnitude in your test.

6 MR. ALLEYNE: Now the interrogator is testifying.
7 We are getting into a dispute over what the Courts have held
8 and the best evidence of what the Courts have held are the
9 Courts' opinions.

10 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Your objection is well
11 taken and I would caution the interrogator.

12 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you. I will certainly
13 withdraw that question.

14 BY MR. HENDERSON: (resuming)

15 Q You mentioned, of course, that the Court has
16 suspended implementation of the diploma sanction that was a
17 part of the original --

18 A Until 1982-83. I think that that was too long of a
19 delay, yes.

20 Q But you are getting improved results on your tests
21 amongst your students?

22 A Do you want to know how I analyzed that? Yes, we
23 did not break stride. We went out. We did not roll over
24 and play dead. Incidentally, the people that brought the
25 suit were simply, in my judgment and my belief, were trying

1 to destroy the testing program. We did not stop with that.
2 We have continued our program. We have continued our basic
3 skills program. We have continued to use that test, for
4 example, to identify the students and to place them in the
5 classes or courses in which they could receive additional
6 help.

7 Let me give you an illustration if I can.

8 Q You did answer the question and I appreciate it
9 very much.

10 I was just curious about one other point. That
11 was that since you are getting improved results amongst your
12 students as a result of the test, why is it necessary to
13 impose the diploma sanction?

14 A One of the things about the diploma sanction, that
15 is something that is meaningful. Frankly, one, a diploma
16 ought to mean something. It is ridiculous, as one of the
17 witnesses previously testified, it is ridiculous. They
18 didn't say ridiculous, but I agree, we have no business
19 giving diplomas -- high school regular diplomas -- to
20 persons that cannot read with understanding, cannot write
21 and cannot do math in a functional way.

22 Now do you want us to continue an educational
23 system, keep this kind of social promotion and
24 permissiveness going? We need for students to know that
25 this really counts.

1 Q So does it mean, then, that all of diplomas which
2 are issued in the absence of a diploma sanction are invalid,
3 that students who are currently graduating from schools -

4 A Well, it means when I look at a diploma I cannot
5 rely on that diploma as telling me that that person is able
6 to handle reading, that that person is able to handle
7 writing, and that that person is able to handle math. So in
8 that respect you can't rely on that alone.

9 By the way, I comment not just about K through 12;
10 but social promotion and overpermissiveness has been going
11 on throughout colleges and universities, and we are waking
12 up to that. You can't rely on the fact that just because a
13 school is accredited and the person got a diploma that that
14 individual has got those things that we would just
15 fundamentally associate as being basic with those
16 credentials.

17 Q Do I imply correctly that the diplomas now being
18 issued are invalid insofar as academ prediction is
19 concerned because they are not tied to a diploma sanction?

20 A If you want to know the truth, yes. Some of the
21 diplomas are invalid and some are not. I would like to make
22 the diploma valid.

23 Q You have answered the question. I appreciate it.

24 Just a few more. As far as you know, have there
25 been any changes in the Florida functional literacy test

1 since its implementation in 1977?

2 A Of course we have different questions.

3 Q Item-type changes?

4 A Item-type changes, yes.

5 Q Were any of these changes affected by the results
6 of the validity studies conducted?

7 A Any time that you study items and you are working
8 on new items then you are going to do your best to improve
9 any product. By the way, all of us can improve what we are
10 doing. You could improve your questions and perhaps I could
11 improve my answers.

12 Q How do you know that the revised tests have the
13 same degree of difficulty that the original test that you
14 implemented back in '77 had?

15 A As you pointed out, I am not an expert, so I go to
16 the experts. We have experts in our department and others,
17 and they tell me that we are able to say with absolute
18 confidence that those tests represent, in terms of student
19 achievement, an absolute increase.

20 Q But there have been changes over the last several
21 years?

22 A You wouldn't want us to give exactly the same test.

23 Q If it was a perfect instrument I wouldn't have any
24 problem with that.

25 Let me ask you a question.

1 A I would.

2 Q Given what you said about the changes in the test,
3 may we conclude, then, that the test is not in fact a
4 perfect instrument?

5 A Yes, you may conclude that.

6 Q How were the passing scores for the communications
7 and mathematics sections of the test determined?

8 A Those were done by staff, committees, review
9 persons that worked on it, and then they made a
10 recommendation.

11 Q What was the educational basis for preferring the
12 passing score -- I believe it is a 70 percentile passing
13 score?

14 A Yes.

15 Q What was the educational basis for that?

16 A Educational judgment.

17 Q Educational judgment?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Would a one point reduction in that passing score
20 affect the validity of the test, to your knowledge?

21 A It wouldn't affect the validity, nor would a ten
22 point change affect the validity. I don't think that the
23 two would be related.

24 Q So in other words a reduction by one point or ten
25 points would not have any real impact?

1 A You may have something in mind in your question
2 that I don't understand or perceive.

3 A As I understand your question, my response would
4 be correct. You may have asked your question intending
5 something different than I intended to answer.

6 Q Let me see if I can elaborate and help you
7 understand where I am going. If I could demonstrate that by
8 lowering the passing score by three perhaps statistically
9 insignificant points you could increase the passing
10 percentage of black students by almost six percent in
11 communications and almost 13.5 percent in the mathematics
12 section of the test, what would your reaction be to that?

13 A My reaction would be that we should have a test
14 that is set with reasonable expectations for students who
15 are going to receive our diploma, and that's what was done.
16 We would be ready to -- well, that's it. We set that.

17 Q We had a nine-hour hearing in terms of officially
18 adopting the score that we use. Now, you know, you could
19 change that and whatever you do, if you change the score up,
20 then fewer people would pass, and if you change the score
21 down then more people would pass.

22 Q But if I told you that significant numbers of
23 students would pass by a reduction of the passing score by
24 only three points, I am curious as to how you would react to
25 that. What is the concern that you would have about doing

1 so?

2 A I think that, and I think we have evidence of
3 this, that where students can pass -- you know, if you
4 expect more you will get more. There is no reason for us
5 not to expect of our students reasonable standards and
6 requirements.

7 I am not an expert in terms of what a score "ought
8 to be". However, I think I have enough good instincts to
9 hear our experts and others testify and then, along with
10 others, to vote for --

11 Q Suppose you had lost the recent election by a vote
12 or two. Would you have demanded a recount?

13 A I wouldn't have demanded that. I would hope that
14 maybe a friend would.

15 Q You said that the test is not the sole criterion
16 for giving a diploma in Florida, is that right?

17 A That is correct.

18 Q But can a student get a diploma without passing
19 the test?

20 A Well, until 1982-83. And, incidentally, I think
21 that did cost us some momentum in our program. We have
22 continued with our program, and the very fact that our
23 scores have been reported and the media picks that up, it
24 gives great importance or continued importance to the test.

25 But I think that you will find that the diploma

1 sanction is something that very definitely would be a very
2 strong motivator and will improve the educational excellence.

3 Q You said earlier that it was not just the scores
4 on the test but the actual skills. Do you have any evidence
5 to support that idea from your program, or from other data
6 sources?

7 A Actually during this time we have had improvement
8 in terms of our relative standing with other states on such
9 things as college entrance exams, yes. While others have
10 been falling during these past several years our scores have
11 been holding their own or moving up. We have gone contrary
12 to the national trend since we started this program.

13 Q You mentioned earlier that your state now has a
14 compensatory education program that was implemented in 1976
15 with a change in the legislation governing it.

16 A In '77, yes.

17 Q Wasn't, in fact, that compensatory program adopted
18 one year later, after the very high failure rates became
19 evident?

20 A It was adopted in 1977, in the spring. The test
21 was given for the first time in October of 1977. It was
22 adopted in advance.

23 Incidentally, the legislature has been strongly in
24 support of our program, as has been the public and the media.

25 Q Were student sanctions on the tests first imposed

1 at the early grades or at the high school level under the
2 program of functional literacy in Florida?

3 A Were students sanctions?

4 Q First imposed at the earliest grades, meaning K
5 through 3 or 4, or at the high school level?

6 A Well, the sanctions, whatever you care to call it,
7 whatever term you might want to use, the law applied to each
8 of those points -- third, fifth, eighth and eleventh
9 grades. And then, of course, the diploma sanction in '79,
10 where the Court postponed that -- the diploma part -- until
11 1982-83.

12 Q We heard yesterday testimony from witnesses in
13 South Carolina which discussed the program there and
14 indicated that there was concern at least within their state
15 about imposing sanctions on students in high school because
16 they felt that some unfairness would result.

17 A Apparently that is not a concern you have had in
18 Florida.

19 A I think everybody has a concern with fairness and
20 concern with student achievement. I would say this, that I
21 can say with total conviction that today thousands of people
22 in Florida are readers, are able to handle math, who would
23 not be readers or able to handle math if we had not had this
24 program.

25 It has been a lot fairer to them to operate under

1 those circumstances than it is to give them a diploma
2 notwithstanding the fact that they could not read with any
3 understanding or able to do math.

4 MR. HENDERSON: I have no further questions.
5 Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much,
7 Commissioner.

8 The next witness is Mr. Morris Andrews, Executive
9 Secretary, Wisconsin Educational Council, Madison, Wisconsin.

10 TESTIMONY OF MORRIS ANDREWS

11 EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

12 WISCONSIN EDUCATION COUNCIL

13 MADISON, WISCONSIN

14 DIRECT EXAMINATION

15 BY DR. POPHAM:

16 Q Mr. Andrews, what is your current position and how
17 long have you held that post?

18 A I'm the Executive Secretary of the Wisconsin
19 Education Association. I have held that position since
20 September of 1972.

21 Q Would you briefly describe the Wisconsin Education
22 Association? What is it?

23 A It is a voluntary professional labor
24 organization. We have 44,000 members. It was established in
25 1853. The organization has programs for its members in the

1 areas of research, legal services, collective bargaining,
2 professional development, legislation and political action,
3 and we are an affiliate of the National Education
4 Association.

5 Q So, like many state education associations around
6 the land, this is a prominent or the most prominent
7 education association in your state?

8 A That would be a judgment. We are the largest
9 education association or group of educators in our state.

10 Q Very well. Is it true that your organization has
11 taken a formal position regarding the proposed minimum
12 competency testing program being considered by the Wisconsin
13 legislature?

14 A Yes, we have.

15 Q What is that position, Mr. Andrews?

16 A Our organization, through its policymaking bodies,
17 has adopted a position supporting minimum competency testing
18 if that program is developed at the local school district
19 level, if the program is the one in the areas of reading,
20 math and writing, if the tests are reference-based and if
21 teachers play a large, significant role in the development
22 of the test and in the remedial activities which flow from
23 the program.

24 Q In an era when many teachers appear to be opposing
25 minimum competency testing programs it is significant, I

1 suppose, or it would appear significant that your
2 organization is in fact in favor of the program. How do you
3 account for the fact that your organization came to this
4 positive view?

5 A I think it is quite simple. Our organization is
6 composed of individual members. The purpose for those
7 people belonging to the organization is to have the
8 organization do those things the individuals would like
9 done. One of the ways that we make decisions is to do
10 scientifically-designed periodic polls of our members and
11 their attitudes.

12 We found that the members of our organization in
13 large numbers support minimum competency education -- that
14 is, in writing, math and reading -- and they also support
15 the concept of this test being one of the conditions imposed
16 on a student for graduation from public schools.

17 Following that poll the leaders of the
18 organization and our appropriate decisionmaking bodies
19 approved a resolution and directed that the organization
20 seek and support a minimum competency program in Wisconsin.

21 The teachers and the leaders in our state believe
22 that by initiating the program we could have more impact on
23 the form and substance of the program, that the program as
24 the result of educators' participation will stand a better
25 chance of succeeding, as opposed to in many states where the

1 program has been imposed upon education.

2 We also believe that in Wisconsin that education
3 is viewed very positively by the general public. The public
4 schools in Wisconsin are good. For example, statewide
5 students from the public schools do as well as the students
6 from the private schools when they attend the University of
7 Wisconsin at Madison.

8 We believe that by taking a position of being in
9 support of and being one of the initiators that we would
10 continue the public support for education in Wisconsin and
11 that the program would be one that would make the most sense
12 for the students in our state.

13 Q Then in contrast to many states where these
14 programs were installed by legislative mandate or a state
15 board of education, this might be one of the first states in
16 which the teachers' organization played an active role in
17 seeking the creation of that kind of program?

18 A I wouldn't know whether it would be the first
19 state. We are playing an active role in that.

20 Q And as I understand the reason you wish to do so
21 strategically is that you could help create a program which
22 incorporated those several positive features you outlined
23 earlier?

24 A Yes, plus we are representing the interests and
25 the desires and the expressed wishes of our members. I

1 mean, our organization is democratic. We do what our
2 members tell us to do.

3 Q Then it would be fair to say that you see nothing
4 intrinsic in minimum competency testing programs which would
5 cause them to be opposed by teachers organizations such as
6 yours?

7 A I think that properly structured that, at least,
8 in Wisconsin we are willing to support it. However, when we
9 say properly structured we mean some very specific things.

10 First of all, we mean that it is a local program.
11 We mean that the standard for graduation will be established
12 locally. We mean that whether it is a locally-developed
13 test, whether it is a purchased test, or the use of the
14 state sample, that it ought to be developed locally.

15 Whether you are going to make decisions to test or not test,
16 special education children ought to be a local decision.

17 The program absolutely must result in remedial
18 programs and expenditures of money that have not been there
19 before to correct the deficiencies.

20 If someone were to try to be in favor on bring
21 forward a state program where the state did this, we would
22 oppose it and we have opposed it in the past.

23 Q As a concluding question, would you please comment
24 on the assertion that if properly conceptualized and
25 implemented minimum competency testing programs can command

1 the support of enlightened teachers' organizations?

2 A We believe that the program being currently moved
3 through the Wisconsin legislature has the possibility of
4 creating an educational dialogue between the parents, the
5 administration, students and teachers in each of our
6 communities which will change the typical educational
7 dialogue from business management to the education of the
8 students -- what it is, how they learn, what problems we are
9 having and how we can correct those.

10 We view that dialogue as being extremely
11 productive and we think that out of that local discussion
12 will come nothing but good for education.

13 Secondly, if the program is one where the local
14 district has selected the items, we think that it can do
15 productive things for students. And I have already
16 mentioned that we believe that you must have a remedial
17 component, once you find your results.

18 And, finally, we believe that there is good that
19 can come from a local district deciding in White Fish Bay
20 that the cutoff point will be 80 percent and another
21 district they have a different dialogue and discussion.

22 Schools in this country historically are
23 essentially locally controlled and that kind of dialogue and
24 debate, we believe, will focus the attention of the
25 community on the significant educational kinds of issues as

1 opposed to many of the things in the past.

2 We also believe that the test program, if it has
3 multiple opportunities and is started in the early grades,
4 and if there are multiple opportunities throughout the
5 student's educational career and multiple opportunities at
6 the exit level, has merit.

7 Finally, we believe and would not support a
8 program if the program could be or was used for evaluation
9 of teachers. We make no apologies for that position.

10 Q You may be pleased to know, if you didn't, that
11 both sides -- the pro and the con team -- have repudiated
12 that function of minimum competency testing.

13 Thank you very much.

14 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you. Cross?

15 CROSS EXAMINATION

16 BY DR. MADAUS:

17 Q Mr. Andrews, I want to question you on one aspect
18 of the Wisconsin bill. I am a little confused as to why you
19 think that you need the diploma requirement in that bill.
20 Can't teachers in Wisconsin, using tests and other
21 information, make decisions on who should graduate?

22 A We believe that there should be a diploma
23 requirement as one of the standards along with all of the
24 other standards that the district has, such as number of
25 courses, passing grades in those courses. The teachers

1 believe that by establishing a target, a minimum standard
2 for performance in reading, writing and math, that you will
3 increase students' proficiencies and that those students who
4 in fact graduate, the public will clearly know have met that
5 level of competency and thus the high school diploma will
6 guarantee that understanding to anyone who has the diploma
7 and to the general public.

8 Q And teachers themselves, through other educational
9 endeavors that we heard some alternatives yesterday, can't
10 do that? They need this sanction?

11 A Anyone who would say that teachers believe that
12 there aren't other ways or that teachers don't believe that
13 they are capable wouldn't be talking to very many teachers
14 in this country.

15 Q Doesn't it bother you that -- I think it was White
16 Fish Bay, the community you used -- White Fish Bay sets the
17 pass score at 80 percent, and let's say Madison sets it at
18 70 percent? Can't a student move from one town to the other
19 and be adversely affected, get a diploma in one town and not
20 get a diploma in another?

21 A No, it doesn't bother me because the whole history
22 of education in this country is local control, and today a
23 student can move from rural Wisconsin to White Fish Bay,
24 which is a very affluent, upper middle class suburb, and
25 that student will be required to take more courses and

1 academically difficult program for graduation than they
2 would in a rural program.

3 That is the truth and reality that exists
4 throughout this country and has ever since we have had
5 education. Essentially, graduation standards, except from
6 some state-imposed minimums, are left to the local districts.

7 Q Isn't it true that the original bill in Wisconsin
8 did have a provision to evaluate teachers, to use minimum
9 competency testing to evaluate teachers? ✓

10 A Not this bill.

11 Q The original bill. Not the amended bill, the
12 original bill.

13 A The current bill, ever since --

14 Q The original bill, not the amended bill.

15 A I have answered your question twice. No, it
16 didn't.

17 Q It didn't?

18 A It contained a provision with regard to not using
19 the results of the scores for evaluating the teachers ever
20 since this bill has been introduced in the legislature
21 during this session.

22 Q You are saying there is no draft of that bill in
23 which there was a provision to evaluate teachers using
24 minimum competency tests?

25 A There has been an effort by some legislators to

1 take that provision out of the bill. The bill as introduced
2 in the legislature has contained this provision. There have
3 been efforts by other people to take that one provision out.

4 Q And the Wisconsin Education Association would be
5 opposed to that provision?

6 A We would be opposed to taking the provision out,
7 yes.

8 Q You are not opposed, though, to the diploma
9 requirement for students?

10 A No, we support it.

11 Q Do you have a legislative committee in the
12 Wisconsin Education Association?

13 A Sure.

14 Q Is that made up of teachers and chaired by a
15 teacher?

16 A Sure.

17 Q Did you bring this bill to that committee for
18 their input?

19 A No.

20 Q Is it true that the incoming superintendent of
21 public instruction, commissioner of education -- I'm sorry,
22 I don't know the right title -- has indicated that he has
23 doubts about using the minimum competency test to award
24 diplomas, that part of the bill?

25 A So far on at least two different occasions I have

1 seen letters from the newly elected state superintendent of
2 public instruction supporting the bill.

3 Q But in those same letters didn't he have serious
4 doubts about the one provision on the diploma requirement
5 and said that it needs to be studied?

6 A I answered your question. I have seen two letters
7 from Dr. Grover indicating that he is generally in support
8 of the bill.

9 Q But not that particular provision of the bill?

10 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: The witness has answered.

11 BY DR. MADAUS: (Resuming)

12 Q Isn't it true that the Wisconsin School Board
13 Association is opposed to that requirement?

14 A The Wisconsin School Board Association is opposed
15 to the bill in toto.

16 DR. MADAUS: Thank you.

17 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Any further questions?

18 Thank you very much for coming.

19 We will take a break for 15 minutes and return at
20 approximately 10 of 11:00.

21 (Recess.)

22 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: The hearing will come to
23 order, please.

24 We will now have our next witness, Mr. Robert
25 Schilling, Assistant Superintendent, Hacienda La Puente.

1 School District, La Puente, California, and you may clear up
2 that pronunciation once you get in the witness chair.

3

TESTIMONY OF

4

ROBERT SCHILLING, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

5

HACIENDA LA PUENTE SCHOOL DISTRICT

6

LA PUENTE, CALIFORNIA

7

DIRECT EXAMINATION

8

BY DR. POPHAM:

9

Q Mr. Schilling, what is your current position and
10 what are your professional responsibilities associated with

11 that position?

12

A I am the Assistant Superintendent in charge of
13 instruction in the Hacienda La Puente School District in
14 Southern California.

15

Q A little slower.

16

A My primary responsibility personally is the design
17 of the structure and the content of the total curriculum of
18 the district. In addition, I supervise a series of a number
19 of curriculum specialists who design, implement, monitor
20 courses of study to sort of breathe life into the total
21 curriculum, and I administer a group of special services
22 such as bilingual education, special education media to
23 assure that every kid in the district has the best shot
24 possible at achieving his or her maximum of learning.

25

Q So your primary concern is with instruction in

1 Hacienda La Puente?

2 - A That's right.

3 Q Briefly will you describe the California situation
4 with respect to minimum competency testing? What is it like
5 in California? What is minimum competency testing in
6 California?

7 A The California law requires that we assess once in
8 grades 4 through 6, once in grades 7 through 9, and twice in
9 10 through 12. The skills that are tested at the lower
10 level, 4 through 6, must articulate with those that are
11 tested between 7 and 12.

12 The object, the intent of the testing at the lower
13 grades is to diagnose the student's performance and skills.
14 The testing at the upper grades is to determine if or if not
15 the student meets the proficiency standards, and if not, he
16 is denied a diploma.

17 I may say that the proficiency standards are only
18 part of the requirements for a diploma. They have unit
19 course requirements in California as well. The California
20 law requires that each school district adopt its own
21 competencies under the broad general areas of reading
22 comprehension, computation and writing.

23 In addition to that, they develop their own
24 tests. Each school district adopts its own standards of
25 proficiency. The test must be given in English. Students

1 who do not perform well must receive remediation. Parents
2 must be invited for a conference to determine a plan of
3 action for the student, and there must be differential
4 standards for special education.

5 The unique thing in California is that each
6 district is an entity unto itself, essentially, in the
7 minimum competency testing program.

8 Q So this is a state law which required local
9 districts to establish minimum competency testing programs
10 and passage of those tests linked to a high school diploma.

11 A That's correct.

12 Q But everything was done locally?

13 A That's correct. But in addition to that they must
14 meet the unit course requirements of the district as well. So
15 there is the minimum competency testing to graduate, but in
16 addition to that there are unit course requirements that
17 each district must establish as well.

18 Q So students must pass certain courses
19 satisfactorily in order to get a diploma?

20 A That's correct.

21 Q If a student did not pass the minimum competency
22 test, the student would be denied a diploma?

23 A That's right.

24 Q If a student did not pass a course requirement,
25 the student would be denied a diploma?

1 A That's correct.

2 Q Will you please describe the Hacienda La Puente
3 School District's minimum competency testing program, how
4 you did it in your district?

5 A I must say that our system is really colored by
6 the fact that early on we decided to use the legal
7 requirement to drive the system for increased student
8 achievement. There were those of us in the district who
9 believed that many of our students were not achieving as
10 well as they were able to achieve, and we knew that we could
11 design a curriculum for them to achieve.

12 Q What kind of a district is yours, Mr. Schilling?

13 A We are one of the 25 large school districts in
14 California. There are about 27,000 kids, down from about
15 32,000 several years ago, and we are one of the low rent
16 school districts in California. We have 58 percent minority.

17 Q What percent?

18 A Fifty-eight percent minority. Eight percent of our
19 students are limited or non-English speakers. That means
20 that they do not speak English well enough to have
21 instruction with the fluent English speakers. About 8
22 percent of our kids are in some sort of special education
23 program.

24 We have housing in our district that sells in the
25 area close to a million dollars, and we have other houses in

1 the 50 to 60 thousand dollars, and the cost of housing is
2 representative of social economics of the district. So we
3 are extremely heterogeneous.

4 Q So your belief in the district was that this could
5 represent a positive force?

6 A Absolutely.

7 Q Tell us a little bit more about how that program
8 is set up in your district.

9 A Okay. Our program really has three components. We
10 have a testing component, an instructional component and a
11 management component, informational management system. The
12 testing component is directed by the director of tests and
13 evaluation, who reports directly to the superintendent. I
14 manage the instructional component.

15 As we initiated the whole minimum competency
16 program, we utilized input from business, students, parents,
17 community, all segments of the community to determine the
18 competencies that would be tested under the broad general
19 program of reading comprehension, writing and computation as
20 mandated by the state law.

21 Early on we recognized the critical nature of the
22 tests that would be given, and we recognized we did not have
23 the expertise in the district to develop these tests. So we
24 contracted with a test designer whose method of operation
25 was such that the district was in absolute control all the

1 time of the content of the test.

2 Every member of our staff had an opportunity to
3 review the test specifications. Every member of the staff
4 reviewed the test questions. The district was controlled all
5 the time in terms of the content of the test. The items were
6 field tested, rechecked for reliability and validity. They
7 were tested for sex bias, ethnic and racial bias, and we
8 think we have a pretty good test.

9 The instructional component, we took perhaps a
10 different bent than some people. We thought that the
11 minimum competencies form the base of a broader
12 instructional program. We want to be very careful that
13 minimums are not maximums and that minimums are a base but
14 upon which you can build a much broader instructional
15 program.

16 So we redesigned the courses in our district in
17 language, mathematics, reading and writing to ensure that
18 the competencies were embedded in the courses themselves.
19 So the competency skills required to do well in the
20 competency test are embedded in the courses themselves.

21 In addition to that we designed a series of
22 packets. The students who need only maybe two or three
23 points to pass the test can study for themselves. We did a
24 lot of work also in curriculum for the limited and
25 non-English speaker, recognizing that the syntactical

1 differences in language require a different type of
2 instructional program.

3 In addition that we designed two special courses
4 for those few students who for some reason or other may not
5 be able to meet the minimum competencies embedded in the
6 questions. In the four years we have been operating, we
7 have done a lot of program monitoring, in-service training
8 of teachers to ensure that the courses are taught as
9 designed. And even after four years, we have to continue to
10 do this.

11 The management system that we have designed really
12 drives the whole program, in that after every testing we
13 analyzed how we used the test results to analyze the
14 instructional program, to make program modifications on a
15 district level, on the school level. So that we are
16 constantly cognizant. We are looking at how our program
17 relates to the instructional program and how well our kids
18 are doing, and we make program modifications for this.

19 In addition to that, each of the schools in the
20 district receive an update on how the students are doing,
21 and in addition to that we have a student profile of every
22 student that shows how that student is doing on the test.
23 And we use that as we hold conferences with the parents and
24 to assist the student in looking at the areas in which he
25 needs to improve in order to pass the competency tests.

1 Q I understand you correctly, in California
2 districts are free to develop their own tests or choose
3 their own tests. You apparently chose to develop your
4 test. Test construction is a very costly business. How
5 could your district, a low wealth district as you describe
6 it, how could your district afford to develop its own tests?

7 A Well, we formed a consortium of nine local
8 districts. And a feasibility study showed that the
9 competencies were sufficiently similar in the nine
10 districts, which, incidently, are sort of contiguous, that
11 we were able to have tests developed for a number of
12 competencies and the various school districts could buy into
13 the competencies which related to their school district.

14 Q Tell me, how did you go about setting standards
15 for student mastery in Hacienda La Puente? As I understand
16 it, you had the tests but then you still had to decide how
17 well a student had to do. How did you do that in your
18 district?

19 A Well, number one, we examined how our students
20 performed on the field test of the test items, recognizing
21 that the students had no remediation at that time. Then we
22 looked at the test items and we cogitated as to what would
23 be minimum standards: how many items should one be able to
24 pass to be minimum? Then we looked at what we thought would
25 be minimal and looked at what our students were doing and

1 asked ourselves could we put develop a curriculum to the level
2 we selected, which was the 80 percent level.

3 Our data shows that the level was picked fairly
4 differently because the first time that the test was given, the
5 first administration that the test was given, 72 percent of
6 our students passed the reading, 39 percent passed the
7 writing, and 43 percent passed the mathematics.

8 The testing in March, 1981, which is the same
9 group of students, 98 percent passed reading and 96 percent
10 passed writing, and 97 percent passed the mathematics, and
11 we had an additional testing after the March date and I am
12 happy to report that out of 1600 students, we only had two
13 students in the district denied a diploma because of not
14 passing the competency tests.

15 Q Let me stop you for a moment. Only two students
16 out of 1600 didn't pass?

17 A That's right.

18 Q Could we see the prior display, the one about the
19 pre-test performance? Let me go over these figures again.
20 You say the first time the Class of '81 tests were
21 administered, 72 percent passed reading, 59 percent passed
22 writing, and only 43 percent passed math?

23 A That's correct. These were ninth graders.

24 Q Would these fairly low passing rates suggest to
25 you that the test was not a stamp?

1 A I would hope so. We believe that if everybody can
2 pass the test as a ninth grader, then it may not be testing
3 sufficiently what kids should be learning graduating as
4 seniors.

5 Q Given those low pass rates, can we see then the
6 next chart, which suggests that these then in March of '81,
7 of the pass rates, they are 98 percent in reading, 96
8 percent in writing and 97 percent in mathematics: an
9 astonishing advance.

10 Could you indicate if your performance in Hacienda
11 La Puente in any way is corroborated by scores on statewide
12 tests? Is there any indication that you folks are doing
13 especially well there?

14 A That is probably the most pleasing data to me
15 because, you see, the program was meant not only to have
16 kids achieve minimums but to have kids achieve in a broader
17 spectrum of skills as well. In California we have what we
18 call the California Assessment Program, which is a testing
19 program required by the state. It is a program that tests
20 reading, written expression, spelling and mathematics, and
21 they tested grades 3, 6 and 12. It is a general type of
22 achievement test.

23 Unfortunately, Hacienda La Puente has not been
24 doing so well on the 12th grade, and four years ago when we
25 started our program in instructional improvement in the

1 district, we said to ourselves at that time that when these
2 ninth graders become seniors, we should see mammoth
3 improvement in the CAP scores, and we even told our
4 governing board that we would see mammoth improvement in the
5 CAP scores.

6 I am happy to report that this year's seniors
7 scored ten times better, this year's seniors made ten times
8 greater gain than the median district in California in
9 reading and written expression, and five times greater gain
10 in spelling and mathematics.

11 Q Would you characterize five times greater gain in
12 spelling and math and ten times greater gain in reading and
13 written as mammoth gains?

14 A Well, I hope so. I hope that there is something
15 more than by chance.

16 Q I am particularly interested in the fact that your
17 district established an 80 percent standard. How did that
18 80 percent standard compare to other districts in that test
19 development consortium? Was it about the same? The tests
20 apparently were similar.

21 A The districts in the consortium, the passing level
22 varies from 60 to 80 percent, and we give each other on the
23 low passing level. Interestingly enough, a neighboring
24 district has 60 percent and we have 80 percent. Students do
25 not move from our district to go to the lower passing level,

1 you know, as some people would think might happen.

2 Another interesting thing is that we do not have
3 any more kids fail than the other districts. And another
4 very interesting thing, I did a little study of the number
5 of seniors that leave school during the senior year thinking
6 that the high passing rate would drive students from school
7 but in three years the number of seniors leaving has gone
8 down, not gone up.

9 Q Then you set a higher passing standard than all of
10 the other districts?

11 A That's correct.

12 Q And why did you set such a high passing standard?

13 A Because we believe we can help students learn and
14 we can design a curriculum to do that.

15 Q What kind of attitudes do students have in your
16 district towards the minimum competency testing program?

17 A I talk to a number of students and teachers and
18 administrators. Students work hard in our district, and
19 those who have difficulties on the test are very happy when
20 they pass because they recognize that they have some skills
21 that they may not have had had they not worked hard. I
22 think that we are beginning to turn around the idea of
23 diligence to academics and recognize that it is important to
24 be able to read and to write and to perform these kinds of
25 things that are so necessary.

1 An additional thing. I honestly believe that so
2 much is talked about today about self-esteem and these kinds
3 of things. Well, we believe that the closest way, the best
4 way for a student to get self-esteem is to be able to
5 function well in the society, and I cannot imagine anything
6 more dreadful than to not be able to read or not be able to
7 write well. I think that the best thing we can do for kids
8 in self-esteem is to move them ahead academically.

9 Q What kind of effect would you say your program is
10 having on minority youngsters in your district?

11 A Because we are 58 percent minority, we are very
12 concerned about this. The director of testing and
13 evaluation has done an interesting study on how the
14 minorities score and has found that initially there is a
15 difference but the difference lessens and is non-existent as
16 the students move through the system. But more
17 interestingly, in the last testing period, which was for the
18 9th and 10th graders in about March of this year, an
19 analysis of this data shows that even the initial difference
20 is lessening.

21 Q How do you cope with the limited and non-English
22 speakers in your district? You mentioned a fairly
23 substantial percent. Do you believe that those youngsters
24 should be obliged to pass your minimum competency test in
25 English?

1 A Teach them English, that's what we do. The real
2 issue seems to me to be the district's commitment to doing
3 something for these children and knowing how to do it. Let
4 me give you an interesting example. We are getting many
5 Asians into our district. It is the largest growing
6 minority group.

7 And one of the problems that Asians have with
8 writing is that they construct a paragraph differently than
9 we construct a paragraph. So if you expect those students
10 to write a paragraph with a topic sentence and a closing and
11 this sort of thing, they are not going to do it because they
12 don't think that way. So you have to teach them, you see,
13 you have to teach them.

14 In addition to that you must help these students
15 overcome the syntactical differences in their language to be
16 able to write.

17 Q Mr. Schilling, approximately how long have you
18 worked in the field of education?

19 A In July I start my 36th year.

20 Q As a seasoned veteran in the area of education --
21 MS. PULLIN: I have to object.

22 BY DR. POPHAM: (Resuming)

23 Q As a person having talked --

24 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Suspend while the
25 objection is being stated.

1 Why do you object?

2 MS. PULLIN: I think it is up to the audience to
3 make a determination about whether they consider the witness
4 to be a seasoned veteran or not, rather than for Mr. Popham
5 to make that decision himself.

6 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: I think the witness
7 responded that he had been in education for 36 years, and I
8 would assume that Mr. Popham thought that that qualified him
9 as a person of some seasoning. I don't know how strongly
10 you feel about that, but if you have been in education for
11 36 years and someone calls you a seasoned veteran, I am
12 going to allow that.

13 DR. POPHAM: Thank you very much.

14 BY DR. POPHAM: (Resuming)

15 Q As a seasoned veteran in the area of education,
16 and for my concluding comment, would you please describe the
17 overall impact of minimum competency testing on the Hacienda
18 La Puente School District?

19 A Well, I think that we are beginning to turn our
20 system around. Let me give you an example. In the
21 Superintendent's Cabinet in which I participate, when the
22 minimum competency testing law was passed five years ago and
23 we were talking about how we were going to address this,
24 some of my compadres said it's a crazy thing. They're going
25 to get rid of it. Hell, they will never deny anybody a

1 diploma. It's going to go away, and all of these kinds of
2 things. I said: Listen, you guys. You know, we can move
3 the system ahead if we want to do it.

4 Then we started working with teachers, and they
5 said: We're going to have a hard time. You're going to deny
6 diplomas to kids. The cohorts in the Superintendent's
7 Cabinet extol the system today, and I remind them every now
8 and then what they said five years ago. The teachers --
9 there is a fellow who is a math teacher in one of our high
10 schools, and he said: Bob, you're never going to do it. And
11 after the end of the one testing period, I said: How are the
12 kids doing? And he said: You made a believer out of me.
13 That is good enough for me.

14 DR. POPHAM: Thank you ver much.

15 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross?

16 CROSS EXAMINATION

17 BY MS. PULLIN:

18 Q Mr. Schilling, can you get a diploma in your
19 district without passing the minimum competency test?

20 A You cannot.

21 Q All right. And you indicated to us that you had a
22 number of problems in your school district which preceded
23 the implementation of minimum competency tests.

24 A I did not mean to indicate that if I did. What
25 type of problem do you refer to?

1 Q You indicated that you felt that there was a need
2 for a change in the education in your school district, that
3 you welcomed a change.

4 A Absolutely. As a matter of fact, I think that can
5 be said of any school district in the nation.

6 Q Fine.

7 You also indicated that you had initiated a number
8 of changes in the district. You listed, I believe, a new
9 management system, increased teacher training, improved
10 curriculum for non-English speakers, new kinds of
11 instructional packets for students, and the fact that you
12 had redesigned your courses so that you were certain that
13 those courses included the minimum competencies. Is that
14 correct?

15 A That's correct.

16 Q And you did all of those things at the same time
17 that you added the diploma sanction in your district; is
18 that correct?

19 A That is correct, but they go together, my dear.

20 Q I understand that. That was an entire program of
21 changes that you made.

22 A That's correct.

23 Q Do you have any way of knowing the extent to which
24 the diploma sanction itself alone played a significant role
25 in increasing achievement in your district?

1 A The only thing I know is that when one has a
2 distinguishable goal to achieve, it is easier to achieve it
3 than when it is more nebulous.

4 Q All right.

5 Does the teaching staff in your district, as a
6 result of the substantial changes that you have initiated,
7 also now have a new goal for education in your district?

8 A I would certainly hope so. As a matter of fact,
9 in the four years that we have been working on this we
10 haven't had one complaint from a teacher, from a parent,
11 from a student, from a community member, and when you can
12 get a district as large as us and not have one comment on an
13 issue as large as this in five years, that is good enough
14 for me.

15 Q I'm not sure it's good enough for me.

16 A That's why we're here.

17 Q That's right.

18 Is it possible that the parents and students and
19 teachers in your district, are real satisfied with the way
20 things are working now, for any number of reasons?

21 A They are not going to be able to make it possible
22 because we are always going to move ahead in the system.

23 Q You indicated that you feel that the number of
24 dropouts in your senior class has decreased.

25 A Yes.

1 Q Can you say that that decrease is as a result of
2 the test for diploma sanction?

3 A I cannot say that.

4 Q All right, thank you.

5 One last question.

6 A You were a little fast on that last one.

7 (Laughter.)

8 Q You were a little fast on the answers.

9 A Don't I get to rebut that some way or another?

10 Q You will have to let Mr. Popham try to redeem
11 yourself.

12 You have been using this testing program for
13 several years.

14 A Four years.

15 Q Do you use precisely the same test each year?

16 A No, but there is a very interesting question.

17 Q The test is changed from year to year?

18 A The test -- we have a bank of test questions that
19 have been analyzed by the Rosh analysis and you talk to the
20 testing experts. We have five versions of the test, and we
21 are convinced that they are as equitable as possible. As a
22 matter of fact, we have given all versions of the test and
23 we can see no difference in the performance of the kids.

24 MS. PULLIN: Thank you, Mr. Schilling.

25 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much.

1 Our next witness is Mr. Anthony Trujillo, a team
2 member.

3 TESTIMONY OF ANTHONY TRUJILLO
4 SUPERINTENDENT, MT. TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
5 LARKSPUR, CALIFORNIA
6 PRO TEAM MEMBER
7 DIRECT EXAMINATION

8 BY DR. POPHAM.

9 Q Mr. Trujillo, although you are a member of the pro
10 team, at this point you are departing from that role to
11 describe your professional activity in California.

12 What is your current position and what sorts of
13 previous experience have you had as an educator?

14 A I am Superintendent of the the Tamalpais Union
15 High School District in Marin County, California. I have
16 been in education in the last 25 years as a secondary
17 teacher and administrator, and I have also taught at the
18 university level.

19 Q What kind of school district is the Tamalpais
20 School District in which you are superintendent?

21 A Tam District is a high school district that serves
22 eleven feeder elementary districts. It draws from a high
23 socioeconomic level. Marin County is considered to have the
24 highest per capita income in the state of California. It is
25 a high wealth district, in addition.

1 Q Briefly; how has your school district implemented
2 California's local determination of the minimum competency
3 testing law?

4 A In 1977 when the district proceeded to implement
5 what is called in California the Hart Act, the first thing
6 we did was to organize groups of teachers, parents and
7 students -- and we function at a high school level -- to
8 begin to identify and develop minimum competencies. Then
9 from that we began to research the kinds of testing
10 instruments that might be able to give us some assesement
11 of these competencies.

12 We developed -- in reading we chose to use a
13 standardized test. In mathematics, the people decided to
14 develop their own test. We have quite a few very top
15 teachers in our district. And then in writing we chose to
16 use a writing sample. So we developed the assessment
17 instruments, and we tested all incoming eighth graders in
18 1978 in order to try to verify, as Mr. Schilling indicated,
19 or field tests if you will, what the level of competency
20 should be and whether the items we were purporting to use
21 for assessment were valid.

22 Then the following year the board of trustees set
23 the process for testing and the score levels. Then we went
24 ahead and tested the students, and those who did not pass
25 the test were given remediation.

1 Q Is it fair to say that the passage of the minimum
2 competency test in your district is not the sole or primary
3 criterion by which a student receives a diploma?

4 A No, it is not. Mr. Schilling testified that there
5 are course requirements. The teacher himself or herself has
6 an awful lot to do with whether students graduate or not
7 because there is a constant assessment going on in the
8 classrooms every day. There are specific subject areas
9 mandated by the state of California to be achieved prior to
10 graduation. So it is only one of several.

11 Q So the passage of the test is one criterion of
12 several in your district.

13 What, in your estimation, has been the effect of
14 the district's minimum competency testing program on
15 students, both with respect to their mastery of skills as
16 well as their attitudes?

17 A Certainly in the mastery of skills, since our
18 district is a high socioeconomic district, our youngsters
19 generally achieve very well. The major thing, I think, is in
20 a district like this there is apt to be a great deal of
21 attention and self-satisfaction with the achievement of high
22 achieving youngsters, and you tend to neglect sometimes,
23 generally not deliberately, those youngsters.

24 In 1979 we tested all of our youngsters: 264
25 sophomores failed the math exam, 151 failed the reading

1 test, and 178 failed the writing test, which surprised us,
2 actually, for this kind of a high achieving district. This
3 year, which was the first year wherein the sanctions were to
4 occur, five of those students did not graduate as a result
5 of not passing one or more of those examinations.

6 There were more students who did not graduate
7 because they failed to fulfill the grade or course
8 requirements. Incidentally --

9 Q Please repeat that. That seems important. You
10 are saying that more students failed to graduate as a
11 consequence not of failing to pass the minimum competency
12 test but of other deficiencies?

13 A Other deficiencies, although there is generally a
14 high correlation between youngsters who cannot complete the
15 course requirements or do not get the proper grades in those
16 and the examination itself.

17 Q Have there been any effects on teaching and
18 curriculum in your district?

19 A I think so. I think the teachers, although I have
20 to say they have always been very egalitarian in their
21 outlook, I think that the major thing is that in our
22 curriculum we began to spend an awful lot of time on this
23 level of youngster, the youngster who was not achieving, and
24 we spent a lot of time on that.

25 The fact that we are fed by eleven feeder

1 elementary districts, for the first time we began to talk to
2 them and to make sure that our curriculum was cohesive and
3 had a structure to it so that youngsters, you know, had some
4 system of education. This is very important in school
5 districts in California because we are quite fragmented in
6 that regard.

7 The fact that teachers were involved in the
8 competencies, and in two cases constructing the test items
9 and dealing with the level of achievement that was to be
10 passing, I think began to take away traditional excuses of
11 centralized imposition, technology or other aspects of the
12 test being scapegoats. And I think teachers became much
13 more responsible for, so to speak, the students' destiny and
14 their own destiny because they were in charge of the
15 process, from what they taught to how that which they taught
16 was going to be tested.

17 Q How have members of your community responded to
18 the minimum competency testing program in the district?

19 A Generally it has been favorable, but I would have
20 to say that the community is still not satisfied in that
21 they see the competencies as being minimum, and I think
22 there is a big push that we also set some optimal standards
23 of achievement, which I think we are about to do.

24 Q Would it be fair to say that you are a relatively
25 prominent member of the Hispanic community in California?

1 A I would say I am a member of the Hispanic
2 community. I don't know how prominent.

3 Q Would you comment on the allegation that minimum
4 competency testing programs of necessity will disadvantage
5 Hispanic youngsters?

6 A I cannot fathom that concept because, as we have
7 heard testimony, if you have a counterfeit piece of paper
8 called a diploma, at least counterfeit in the eyes of the
9 public or employers or other receiving agencies, and you
10 give this counterfeit piece of paper to a youngster under
11 the pretense that it may be real, that doesn't do anything
12 for them.

13 The real issue is not the piece of paper but the
14 skills that that youngster carries with him, particularly
15 the Hispanic youngster. If they are going to compete with
16 other groups, they are going to do it on the basis of skill
17 levels and knowledge and not on whether they have a piece of
18 paper that today is suspect.

19 So the skills are the important thing, not the
20 piece of paper.

21 Q As far as demonstrating those skills, how do you
22 personally view the wisdom of having students whose primary
23 language is Spanish pass the minimum competency test in the
24 English language?

25 A Categorically, I would say that they should pass

1 the exam in English. Maybe I can use an analogy. I think
2 you used this yourself. You give a driving test, an
3 automobile driving test to people who drive cars, and you
4 give a pilot's test to people who fly planes, and it seems
5 to me that we are asking the youngsters to function in
6 American society in which society English is the language
7 that is primarily used to conduct business, affairs of
8 government, et cetera, et cetera.

9 These youngsters, then, must be literate in that
10 language. So you are not going to give them a test to drive
11 a car if they are going to fly a plane.

12 Q Overall, then, what is your appraisal of
13 California's local implementation of minimum competency
14 testing law?

15 A I will have to say that when it first came out, a
16 lot of us in education were perhaps concerned primarily
17 because it was, again, a central imposition, and I think
18 living in a democratic society, we are very prone to be
19 local minded and independent. I think now, however, I have
20 changed my mind completely, and I think many of the people
21 who were opponents of the program, as has been testified
22 many times, now believe, first of all, that it was the
23 quickest way. I have never seen anything injected into the
24 system that brought about as quick a result as the minimum
25 competency testing.

1 The curriculum changes that occurred -- the
2 structural changes that occurred as a result of this impetus
3 -- were the quickest I have ever seen. Generally what
4 happens in education is that it takes us almost a generation
5 of students to make change. By the time we have changed the
6 curriculum or the structure of the school or whatever needs
7 changing to accommodate the student, we find that that
8 generation of student has gone by and we are now dealing
9 with a new generation of students. And there is a
10 tremendous amount of frustration that we always have the
11 wrong solution for the wrong problem.

12 And I think the minimum competency test injected
13 into the system brought forth a very quick response, and I
14 think that was the important thing.

15 DR. POPHAM: Thank you very much.

16 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross examine?.

17 CROSS EXAMINATION

18 BY MS. MONTOYA:

19 Q You said that the test is not a sole criteria for
20 getting a diploma. Can a youngster get a diploma if they do
21 not pass the minimum competency test examination?

22 A Yes, they can actually. And I think maybe I ought
23 to explain this. The California law provides for
24 alternatives, alternative ways of assessment. If you have a
25 youngster that failed the examination, the paper and pencil

1 examination, you have latitude under the California law to
2 assess that youngster in a different way.

3 So I would have to say, yes, if it is the test
4 that is structured, that is given to most youngsters, you
5 can do individualized types of assessments. As a matter of
6 fact, you are obliged to provide alternative ways of
7 obtaining the diploma for some youngsters.

8 Q Those alternatives take the place of the minimum
9 competency test then?

10 A I would rather use the term "minimum competency
11 assessment." The test itself is only one assessment
12 instrument. It is the most prevalent assessment instrument
13 used, but there can be other assessments. I can sit down,
14 the teachers can sit down, and ask the kid to read.

15 Q I understand. You have alluded to a number of
16 improvements in terms of the curriculum and so forth in your
17 school district. Could you have done all that you have done
18 and get the same kinds of results without the implementation
19 of the diploma regulation, the requirement?

20 A Sure. Somebody could have declared me king with
21 absolute power and I could have mandated it and had the
22 subjects follow orders. I could have done a whole series of
23 things. Minimum competency testing, this instrument is
24 merely a means to an end. It happened to be the means that
25 is prevalent at that time. It is a good means, I think. It

1 is not destructive.

2 Q Thank you. You said that at the time of the
3 implementation of the examination that was the first time
4 that your high school people and your elementary people
5 coordinated a curriculum. Was the test the first time that
6 they had communicated for that result?

7 A I am not sure I understand the question, but I
8 will try to answer what I understand. Yes, I think the test
9 was the impetus. It was important to the elementary
10 districts that they begin to communicate with the high
11 school people, because we were going to be at the tail end
12 of this thing and the consequences were going to be at our
13 level. And it was going to be a reflection, and we made
14 sure that there was some reflection on those elementary
15 schools, because we said we cannot correct deficiencies in
16 one or two years that had been going on for twelve years.

17 Q Thank you. Do you think that you have made a
18 number of comments about limited-English-speaking children?
19 Should limited-English-speaking children be given a test in
20 English if they have not had an opportunity or a fair chance
21 to learn English proficiency?

22 A Well, obviously, the way you structured the
23 question, I am afraid to even answer it, because you are
24 going to say -- once I answer it, you are going to say
25 "Thank you."

1 That is not the issue, as I see it. The issue is
2 that those youngsters should be given the opportunity. If
3 they are not given the opportunity, something is wrong with
4 the system. And yes. Then, no, you should not test them on
5 something they have not been given an opportunity to do but
6 --

7 Q Thank you.

8 (Laughter.)

9 Prior to the legislatively mandated minimum
10 competency program in your district, would you characterize
11 the students as being very high achievers?

12 A Yes. Although I didn't think about it until Mr.
13 Schilling just spoke. In 1976, which is the first year I
14 came to that district, our test scores statewide were in the
15 92nd percentile. Last year they were in the 98th. So I
16 don't know, until I heard that testimony -- I am not sure.
17 I always thought it was my presence there, but maybe there
18 is something else that did move those test scores from a
19 high level to a very, very high level.

20 Q Thank you. Are you aware, Mr. Trujillo, from
21 conversations with your colleagues or from reading the
22 papers and so on that a large percentage of Hispanic
23 youngsters have failed the minimum competency test in other
24 districts this year and, as a result, will not receive their
25 diplomas?

1 A Yes, I am aware of that.

2 Q Mr. Trujillo, we have a copy of a memorandum from
3 your office furnished to us by Mr. Popham, dated June 4,
4 1981, which you have alluded to before. Is it not true that
5 that memorandum reflects a total decline in population of
6 201 students over a two-year period? And what is the
7 portion of the students that are dropouts?

8 A The decline is a decline because of the lower
9 birth rate, the high housing prices in Marin County. It has
10 nothing to do with dropouts. Our dropout rate is very, very
11 minimal. So that is an enrollment decline for other reasons.

12 MS. MONTOYA: Thank you very much.

13 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much.

14 Our next witness, Ms. Hilda Mireles, teacher,
15 Harlingen Public School District, Santa Rosa, Texas.

16 TESTIMONY OF HILDA MIRELES,

17 TEACHER, HARLINGEN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

18 SANTA ROSA, TEXAS

19 DIRECT EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. POPHAM:

21 Q Ms. Mireles, in what city do you live, and what is
22 your professional position?

23 A I live in Santa Rosa, Texas, but I teach in
24 Harlingen School District. I teach in elementary schools,
25 the sixth year.

1 Q What is Harlingen's district like?

2 A Harlingen School District, 95 percent of its
3 student population is Mexican American. It has a low
4 socioeconomic level, and it is basically a Mexican-American
5 community.

6 Q Thank you. Would you please describe in brief the
7 statewide minimum competency testing program in Texas; that
8 is, the Texas assessment of basic skills? What is that like?

9 A Okay. The Texas assessment of basic skills
10 program, acronym TABS, is a program for basic skills
11 improvement, which includes an annual assessment of student
12 achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. It is
13 designed to provide information which can be used in
14 planning instruction for students in these three curriculum
15 areas.

16 The TABS test was developed especially for Texas
17 schools and were reviewed, revised, and renewed by Texas
18 educators. State compensatory education funds have been
19 allocated to provide compensatory instructional services.

20 Q So there is this statewide minimum competency
21 testing program in Texas. Is it true that you also have a
22 local program in Harlingen?

23 A In my school district, Harlingen, we have a
24 minimum competency test in the area of math. We are now
25 working in the area of language. How long has that minimum

1 competency testing program in mathematics been in existence?

2 A Four years.

3 Q For a fair amount of time. Have you seen any
4 evidence that students are being benefited by the program in
5 Harlingen?

6 A Yes. In our district the students are tested in
7 sixth grade. And the state test, they are tested third,
8 fifth, and ninth grades. And I think we have a graph that
9 depicts the growth.

10 Q So if I understand this graph, in the fifth grade
11 -- and this is on the TABS test, the statewide test --
12 students in the Harlingen district are outperforming Region
13 1. Is that the region in which you are located?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Are outperforming Region 1 by about eleven points
16 and four points behind the entire state on the TABS test.
17 Is that right?

18 A That's right.

19 Q Then, what happens later on?

20 A Okay. They are again tested on the statewide
21 level in ninth grade. And again, as you can see, the
22 results.

23 Q So in the ninth grade, four years later, they
24 outdistance the Region 1 youngsters by 23 points and now
25 pass the total state by 14 points. Would you conclude that

1 the Harlingen minimum competency testing program in
2 mathematics was, in part, instrumental in that rapid growth?

3 A Definitely, it has played a vital part.

4 Q How have the students responded to the program in
5 Harlingen with respect to their attitudes?

6 A Okay. As a teacher, student attitude has a lot to
7 do with their success. I feel that student success,
8 student's experience with success, has elevated their
9 self-esteem because they have been able to achieve and
10 achieve well on these tests. They go on and progress into
11 even higher skills.

12 Q So they are feeling better about themselves,
13 particularly in mathematics?

14 A Yes.

15 Q What about teacher attitudes, teacher response in
16 general to the minimum competency testing program? How
17 about math teachers in Harlingen? How have they been
18 affected by the program?

19 A I believe that we have been given direction,
20 clear-cut directions as to where our responsibilities lie
21 with the child. And I think that the attitude is positive,
22 very positive.

23 Q Has the emphasis on the skills in the minimum
24 competency test mathematics program driven out other skills
25 in the mathematics curriculum in Harlingen?

1 A On the contrary, I feel that we lay a basis, a
2 strong foundation of basic skills which then allows us to go
3 on and teach enriching higher skills.

4 Q What about citizens' response to the program in
5 Harlingen, how have citizens in your community responded to
6 this program?

7 A We have in our particular district, we have two
8 parent-teacher conferences a year, and we have found that
9 being able to sit down and talk to the parent and explain
10 what the child is doing, what we expect of the child, in a
11 very simplistic manner has been very positive. They have
12 been able to understand better something like this test
13 rather than something of a national test, CPS or something
14 like that.

15 Q You described your district as predominantly
16 Mexican American. It is sometimes said that minimum
17 competency testing programs disadvantage minority
18 youngsters. How do you feel about that?

19 A I feel exactly the opposite. As a Mexican
20 American and as a Mexican American teacher within a Mexican
21 American community, I feel that we need to have a strong
22 foundation, a strong direction for our children that are
23 going to go out there and compete in American society. And
24 we need to give our children a very strong basis of minimum
25 skills which gives them a positive attitude which enables

1 them to go on and function in higher skills.

2 Q What is your feeling about the issue of whether or
3 not students whose primary language is Spanish, for example,
4 should be allowed to take the test in Spanish? Should we
5 require that they pass these tests in English?

6 A Yes, because, as I said before, we function in an
7 American society with the predominant language being
8 English. That is our purpose: to teach English and the
9 skills in English.

10 Q Ms. Mireles, as a final question, in looking at
11 the overall impact of the Harlingen minimum competency
12 testing program in mathematics, what do you think of it?

13 A I think it is a very good program. Its function
14 is effective. We have been given a clear-cut direction, and
15 we are doing a good job, I think. Our students are
16 benefitting. Our community, in the long run, will benefit
17 from this type of a program.

18 MR. POPHAM: Thank you very much.

19 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross examine.

20 CROSS EXAMINATION

21 BY MS. MONTROYA:

22 Q Hi. Ms. Mireles, I think we need to clarify
23 something. Is the math program that you have been
24 describing different from the minimum competency test in
25 your district? They are not the same thing -- are they?

1 A We have a minimum competency program in math in my
2 district.

3 Q At the higher levels? All levels?

4 A Beginning in the sixth year.

5 Q And the program you have been describing is that
6 test?

7 A Yes.

8 Q It is. Okay. If a student does not pass that
9 test, can the student receive a diploma in your school
10 district, the minimum competency test?

11 A Right now, yes, they can.

12 Q They can?

13 A They can right now.

14 Q When will that change?

15 A In two years we will test it.

16 Q You will begin withholding diplomas if they do not
17 pass?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. You have alluded to a number of
20 improvements in curriculum and so on. Do you feel like you
21 could have made those kinds of strides had it not been for
22 the minimum competency test requirement in California?

23 A I teach children. I think our teachers are good
24 teachers, and I think that this has just given us a clearer
25 path as to our responsibilities.

1 MS. MONTOYA: Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Any further questions?

3 Thank you very much, Ms. Mireles.

4 Our next witness, Ms. Sharon Schneider, teacher,
5 Richwoods High School, Peoria, Illinois.

6 TESTIMONY OF SHARON SCHNEIDER,

7 TEACHER, RICHWOODS HIGH SCHOOL

8 PEORIA, ILLINOIS

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 BY MR. POPHAM:

11 Q Ms. Schneider, what is your current position and
12 how long have you held that position?

13 A I am an English teacher at Richwoods High School
14 in Peoria, and I have held that position for 14 years.

15 Q 14 years. Tell us about Richwoods High School.
16 What kind of a high school is it?

17 A Richwoods is a high school with approximately 1700
18 students, 15 percent minority. It serves every area of the
19 community because we have a busing program. So it is
20 difficult to say anything about socioeconomic level.

21 Q Do you have a minimum competency testing program
22 in Peoria?

23 A Yes, we do.

24 Q Could you describe that program for us briefly?

25 A Okay. In 1976, I believe it was, it was decided

1 that some sort of program had to be put into effect to
2 assure the people of Peoria that we were in fact doing
3 something in the schools, because they were becoming very
4 disgruntled. There were approximately 1200 people involved
5 in the initial rating of skills and so and so forth that
6 they felt were important.

7 In '77 a test was developed by staff members -- I
8 believe it was '77 -- and it was implemented in 1978 as a
9 pilot program. The numbers were very alarming the first
10 time the test was taken.

11 Q Student performance?

12 A Right. Extremely low.

13 Q Was this minimum competency testing program in
14 Peoria instituted because of a statewide law?

15 A No. This was the initiative of Peoria.

16 Q Was it the board, the superintendent? Do you have
17 any recollection of that?

18 A I think that there was perhaps some community
19 pressure.

20 Q Community pressure because of some doubts
21 regarding the caliber of performance?

22 A Right.

23 Q What was the nature of remedial assistance offered
24 to students in Peoria to improve their skills if they do not
25 do well?

1 A All right. After the student takes the test for
2 the first time in the eleventh grade, he is given the
3 opportunity -- it is an optional thing to him -- to take the
4 refresher courses that are offered. He may choose not to
5 take those courses; that is entirely up to him. He then,
6 during the senior year, if he still has not succeeded in
7 passing any one of the three tests, he is required then to
8 go into a refresher program in the particular area where he
9 has shown weakness.

10 Q What kind of refresher program is that? What
11 happens in the courses?

12 A Well, I teach them.

13 Q So you ought to know.

14 A I really should. In language arts there are 25
15 basic skills that are involved. In the courses themselves
16 there are packets that are made out for each of the 25
17 skills in the test. This does not indicate that we are
18 teaching to the test, because we are not. I am teaching far
19 beyond what the test is expecting them to do. They are
20 given one semester to go through the areas where they are
21 extremely weak, and they may take the test again. And in 98
22 percent of the cases, they pass it finally.

23 Q So you would say that that remedial assistance
24 they get is fairly effective?

25 A Right.

1 Q AS an experienced instructor, what is your
2 reaction to the overall impact that the minimum competency
3 testing program is having in Peoria?

4 A I think it is guaranteeing prospective employers
5 and parents, community members in general, that the students
6 do have certain basic skills, that they are capable of
7 reading, that they are capable of understanding certain math
8 skills, that they are capable of handling sentence structure
9 and so on and so forth.

10 And in giving them a diploma, we are at least
11 saying, "Hey, this kid knows something. It may not be much,
12 but he knows something."

13 Q Do you have any reason to believe that the
14 students are benefitting in Peoria?

15 A I certainly do. I have seen too many kids who
16 have come from nothing, the first time they take the test
17 score 24 percent, and be really disgruntled and ready to
18 quit school, but are talked into staying in school and
19 giving it another shot. And I had one student who went from
20 24 percent, and after one semester of remediation scored 84
21 percent.

22 Q What about passing percentages in the Peoria
23 program, are those getting better, getting worse? What is
24 happening with respect to students as they go through the
25 program?

1 A Well, the first administration with the class of
2 1980, which took place during the first semester of those
3 students' junior year -- I think there is a graphic there --
4 91 percent passed the reading, 72 percent passed language
5 arts, and 66 percent passed math.

6 Then the fifth administration, taking those
7 students who had failed, taking them through the
8 remediation, 98 percent passed reading, 95 passed language
9 arts, and 94 passed math.

10 Q So those are very substantial gains, particularly
11 in mathematics and language arts.

12 A Yes.

13 Q What about students' attitudes with respect to the
14 minimum competency testing program, how are they responding?

15 A The attitudes that I have seen, that I have
16 witnessed in the two years I worked with the program, have
17 been excellent. The students are gaining confidence. They
18 realize -- when they come into the course they realize that
19 all of them are in there together and they are all in there
20 for the same reason. They know they have all failed it,
21 many of them four times. They are kind of discouraged by
22 it. And I think that once they achieve a certain level, you
23 know, and they can see things happening that weren't
24 happening before, basic things that they probably should
25 have learned in second, third, and fourth grade, that just

1 went right over their heads and suddenly they are very clear
2 to them and they feel much better about themselves, and I
3 think that is a big part of their success.

4 Q You say you teach these courses.

5 A Yes.

6 Q You seem to enjoy it. Would that be a fair
7 characterization?

8 A Yes, that would be.

9 Q Is this common amongst teachers, that they seek
10 out the remedial courses?

11 A I don't think so. Everybody said I was crazy when
12 I volunteered to teach them. But I felt like I was in a rut
13 with what I was doing, and I wanted something new and I
14 wanted a challenge. And I asked them to just give me one
15 chance at it, and I was very successful with it. So they
16 said, "You are not going to get out of it now. You are
17 stuck." And I said, "That's fine."

18 Q What kind of effect is the program having on
19 teachers other than yourself? Do you see any reactions from
20 them?

21 A Yes, because they are very enthusiastic about the
22 program. I think when it started, they viewed it with a
23 great deal of fear and trepidation, you know, "Is this going
24 to be an evaluation of my ability as a teacher? What
25 happens if I don't teach a kid something that he should know

st?
Since they found out that that is not the case,
ery enthusiastic about it, and we have people
ng. We have practice tests that we give before
the test, and these practice tests are for kids
ever taken the test before.

And we have teachers volunteering to stay after
ve up their lunch hours and so on, to administer
so that all of it doesn't fall on me. And I am
ful for that.

One argument in opposition to the minimum
testing program is that minimums will become
that is, the less important skills focused on in
a competency testing program will be emphasized so
more important skills will be driven out. What is
ion in your school?

I don't think that's true at all, because our
is set up so that there is no time for any
und with any of the skills that are on the test.
h student a pamphlet describing the skills that
the test and the kinds of things that he will be
for knowing. And it is his responsibility then,
ak in any of those areas.

ow, we are talking about the initial time that
taken. If he is weak in any of those areas, it

1 is his responsibility to see an English teacher. Any
2 English teacher will help him to go over those areas where
3 he feels he is weak.

4 Q Is it true that the Peoria public schools have
5 recently been under legal attack for their policy of
6 requiring handicapped students to pass the same test, same
7 standards as nonhandicapped students?

8 A Yes. And there are many other teachers and I who
9 are not in accord with that particular policy.

10 Q So you are not endorsing the district's policy?

11 A Right. On June 29 a bill was placed on the
12 governor's desk, of Illinois, and speculation is that he
13 will sign that bill saying that no longer can the MCT be
14 tied to a diploma for a special education student, that the
15 test would have to be designed for his particular IEP.

16 Q Overall then, and in conclusion, what is your
17 estimate of the minimum competency testing program in Peoria?

18 A I think it is an excellent program. I am sold on
19 it. I think they should have one everywhere.

20 MR. POPHAM: Thank you.

21 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross.

22 CROSS EXAMINATION

23 BY MS. PULLIN:

24 Q I will not spend much time on this because we have
25 some witnesses of our own who will talk about your program.

1 Am I correct that you stated that the test allowed
2 you to identify, by knowing who passed the test, which
3 students were "capable"?

4 A I don't understand what you mean by that.

5 Q Did you say that the test designates students as
6 being "capable" when they pass the test?

7 A No, I don't recall saying that.

8 Q Do you feel that the test sorts capable from
9 incapable students?

10 A Not necessarily, no.

11 MS. PULLIN: I have no more questions.

12 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much.

13 Our next witness, Dr. Robert Ebel, professor,
14 College of Education, Michigan State University, East
15 Lansing, Michigan.

16 TESTIMONY OF ROBERT EBEL,
17 PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
18 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
19 EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN
20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. POPHAM:

22 Q What is your current position?

23 A I am professor of education and psychology at
24 Michigan State University.

25 Q How long have you been a professor at Michigan

1 State?

2 A About 18 years.

3 Q Approximately how many books and articles have you
4 written about educational testing?

5 A Four books, of which I was the sole author, one
6 co-authored, and approximately 100 articles.

7 Q Is it true that you are a past president of the
8 American Educational Research Association?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Modesty aside, would it not be accurate to assert
11 that you are generally regarded as one of the nation's
12 foremost experts in the field of educational testing?

13 A I would rather hear you say that than say it
14 myself.

15 Q If I said it, there would be objection. But I
16 think it is certainly the case.

17 Why are tests used in education, Professor Ebel?

18 A Well, a number of reasons are given, but when you
19 analyze them, I think it all boils down to measuring various
20 aspects of achievement in learning.

21 Q How accurate are tests? And on the basis of your
22 response, would you comment on whether tests should be used
23 to make decisions about individuals?

24 A Well, inevitably there are errors in educational
25 measurements, as in all other measurements, and probably

1 somewhat larger in educational measurements than in physical
2 measurement, for example.

3 But one way of answering that question is to say
4 that it is possible, with a reasonably good test applied to
5 a normal range of achievements in learning, to divide the
6 group or to develop a scale that has 30 steps on it such
7 that each one of those steps is -- well, we call it "one
8 probable error of measurement." Which means that 50
9 percent, for 50 percent of the students the error of
10 measurement is one score unit or less; for the other 50
11 percent it is greater than one score unit.

12 Q So do you believe then that it is legitimate to
13 base important decisions about individuals on a single test?

14 A Yes, under certain circumstances. A student or a
15 person applying for a license to operate an amateur radio
16 station, for example, is granted or denied the license on
17 the basis of a single test. And I believe that is the best
18 way to handle that situation. There are many situations in
19 which it is desirable to take account of other
20 considerations. But in all of these, I personally would
21 give great weight to the scores on a relevant and reliable
22 test.

23 Q If a student failed to pass this test and was
24 allowed numerous other opportunities to pass that test or an
25 equivalent form of that test, would that not make the

1 accuracy of the assessment system greater?

2 A I believe that it does. It also, I think, has the
3 beneficial educational consequence that each time the test
4 is failed presumably there will be additional study, and the
5 result is greater competence when the test is finally passed.

6 Q There has been considerable criticism by witnesses
7 of the opposing team of multiple-choice tests. What is your
8 view regarding the utility of multiple-choice tests?

9 A I think they are widely useful. I would rate them
10 at the top in my scale of excellence, in terms of measuring
11 instruments. The rationale for multiple-choice tests seems
12 to me to be sound and persuasive.

13 Each one of us here, to a very considerable
14 extent, owes our success or lack of it to choices that we
15 have made. The making of choices is essential to living.
16 And the essence of what we are trying to do in most of our
17 courses of instruction is to give students useful knowledge,
18 knowledge that they can use to plan courses of action, to
19 make decisions, et cetera. These can be expressed in the
20 form of questions or statements that ought to be judged.
21 And experiments have shown that there is a very high degree
22 of relationship between scores of a person's achievements or
23 competence derived from multiple-choice tests and those
24 derived from any other reliable method of assessment.

25 Q We heard a previous witness for the opposing side,

1 Mr. Ralph Nader, observe that under no circumstances could a
2 multiple-choice test serve as a useful appraisal of a
3 student's knowledge or skill. I take it that you would not
4 agree with that observation?

5 A I certainly would not. I think that it is absurd.

6 Q Most of the tests used in minimum competency
7 testing programs are paper-and-pencil measures. There are
8 exceptions, but the majority are. What is the relevance of
9 such tests to an individual's actual performance on the job
10 or in other real-world situations?

11 A Well, a person's success on the job depends on
12 many factors. But one important factor is how much the
13 person knows about how to do the job. It will depend on the
14 environment, the work environment, the motivation that the
15 individual has to succeed in those circumstances, and just
16 plain good luck in some instances.

17 So I would be far from claiming that it is all
18 determined by how much is known. But the part that can be
19 measured is very important; and that is, how well the person
20 knows how to do the job.

21 Q Would you agree that on the basis of
22 Probabilities, students who will pass minimum competency
23 tests of the paper-and-pencil variety will be more apt to
24 succeed in later situations than those who fail such
25 paper-and-pencil measures?

1 A I would.

2 Q Do you believe that through the use of tests such
3 as we now see in minimum competency testing programs, that
4 those students who fail will be indelibly and irreparably
5 harmed?

6 A Only if they choose to accept it in that way.
7 There are numerous testing programs for professions in which
8 the failure rate is quite high. And the net effect is not
9 to label a person who fails the CPA exam once as a failure,
10 but simply to induce him to make better preparation to pass
11 it.

12 Q We anticipate a fair amount of criticism regarding
13 the setting of standards in minimum competency testing
14 programs. Is it possible to set a defensible passing score
15 for minimum competency tests?

16 A I think it is. There is no way of doing it
17 mechanically, that I know of. We can go through mechanical
18 motions that hide the basic judgments that are involved.
19 But basically, it is a matter of judgment, and I see no way
20 of avoiding that, nor do I think that we ought to avoid it,
21 because in the highest court in the land decisions are made
22 on the basis of informed judgments.

23 Q Am I correct in asserting that earlier in your
24 career you devised one such standard-setting technique that
25 now carries your name, Ebel Standard-Setting Procedure?

1 A That is correct.

2 Q There are other standards-setting measure that
3 have been devised by other individuals. When these
4 different standard-setting techniques are used, are you
5 surprised that they yield different passing standards?

6 A No, I am not, because they are based on different
7 assumptions and in various situations one may be more or
8 less appropriate than another. I would like to see as much
9 agreement as possible, but inherent in all of those are
10 judgments based on the particular situation in which the
11 procedure is being applied.

12 Q If I understand you correctly, you are suggesting
13 that the schemes for determining passing scores are
14 fundamentally judgmental and that different procedures for
15 setting those standards do in fact involve different kinds
16 of judgments. Therefore, different kinds of procedures
17 might very well yield different kinds of results?

18 A That is correct.

19 Q How serious is the problem of bias in tests of
20 minimum competency?

21 A If they are tests of achievement and if we
22 interpret the results with the kind of caution that we ought
23 to interpret them with, it seems to me the possibility of
24 bias is nonexistent. If all we claim for a test score is
25 that this indicates within reasonable error how well a

1 person can perform these kinds of tests under these
2 circumstances, then whether it is applied to a Russian who
3 speaks no English at all or to anyone else who indicates
4 that, how well can the person do these kinds of tasks.

5 Now, you have to pay careful attention to what
6 kinds of tasks those are, and the inferences you make about
7 the score should always take account of what it is you have
8 asked the student to demonstrate.

9 And where we get into difficulty, where bias comes
10 in, it seems to me, is in making inferences from a test
11 score that are really not relevant to the tasks on the
12 test. We tend to generalize the results -- and this is
13 particularly likely to be true with intelligence tests --
14 beyond what the tasks actually are telling us about the
15 person.

16 Q But that, with respect to achievement tests, is
17 somewhat less likely?

18 A It is less likely with an achievement test.

19 Q Recent efforts to eradicate bias in tests have
20 been somewhat more prevalent than perhaps in past years.
21 Are you encouraged by attempts to eliminate bias on the
22 basis of race, sex, and other procedures of this sort?

23 A Well, I am bothered by them to some extent. If
24 you start with the assumption that a test ought not to
25 discriminate, let us say, between men and women, or that it

1 ought not to discriminate between people who had one kind of
2 an educational background and those who have had another
3 kind, and if you carry that to its logical extreme, you wind
4 up giving everybody exactly the same score. And it seems to
5 me then the utility of the test is gone.

6 I am glad that test producers are sensitive to the
7 problems of bias and trying to do something about it. I
8 would worry if they would make some a priori assumptions as
9 to what the scores have to be in order for the test to be
10 acceptable.

11 Q Do contemporary schools spend too much money on
12 educational testing? And do they have too much faith in
13 test results?

14 A I believe the opposite is true: that we ought to
15 be doing much more on the individual teacher level, on the
16 school level, on the state level, to assess how the learning
17 is progressing.

18 It seems to me if you want quality in education,
19 you have to recognize it and reward it. And tests are means
20 of doing those things.

21 Q In sum, what is your view regarding the current
22 status of educational testing as it relates to uses such as
23 in minimum competency testing programs?

24 A I believe that is a useful educational tool.

25 Q And you think that the quality of testing is up to

1 the requirements of minimum competency programs?

2 A Yes. I would be in favor of improved quality. I
3 think improvements are always possible. But I would not
4 declare a moratorium or delay the application of tests on
5 the grounds that they are inadequate.

6 The most serious inadequacies are in what we do
7 with the scores, our interpretation and use of them. And
8 those are in our control, and I think we ought to
9 concentrate on making wise uses. And on the whole, I think,
10 the uses that are made of tests are good enough so that they
11 are doing far more good than they are harm.

12 MR. POPHAM: Thank you, Professor.

13 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross.

14 CROSS EXAMINATION

15 BY MR. LINN:

16 Q Professor, you indicated that you thought that the
17 inferences on a test should be limited very carefully to the
18 nature and the items that are on it. Is that correct?

19 A It should be guided by the nature of the items.
20 It gets awfully complicated, I think.

21 Q You caution against overgeneralizing from the
22 tests.

23 A Yes.

24 Q On an achievement test that is used for a minimum
25 competency test, would you think the generalization that

1 someone does not have life-survival skills because they
2 failed the test was a legitimate generalization?

3 A Well, I would have to see the test. And I am no
4 fan of "life-survival skills" as a focus for testing
5 achievements in learning. But given certain tests, I would
6 be willing to say in terms of these specifications and this
7 definition of what we mean by "life-survival skills," this
8 individual fails to measure up to our standard.

9 Q So if a person failed a typical test as used in
10 minimum competency testing programs now involving reading
11 and mathematics, those types of items on a functional
12 literacy test, so-called, you would be willing to make that
13 sort of generalization?

14 A I would be willing to say that this person has not
15 achieved satisfactorily.

16 Q But you would not be willing to say that he does
17 not have the skills to survive in life, life-survival skills?

18 A I think that would be going further, and it would
19 be very hard to validate, in any case.

20 Q You also said that if everyone received the same
21 score on a test that it would not be useful.

22 A That is correct.

23 Q If everyone passed the minimum competency test,
24 would that make it useless?

25 A No I think we are talking about two different

1 contexts. We were talking previously about attempting to
2 remove bias by deciding a priori that these scores have to
3 be the same.

4 I would be quite happy with a minimum competency
5 test that everyone passed. If no one ever failed it, I
6 would see very little reason for using it if it does not
7 distinguishing between success at some level and lack of
8 success.

9 Q Thank you. You testified that paper-and-pencil
10 tests can be used to predict on-the-job performance. Is
11 that correct?

12 A They can provide information that is useful in
13 predicting. I wouldn't leave the impression that that is
14 all you need to look at or that you can get very exact
15 predictions.

16 Q Was that information, that judgment, based on a
17 review of validity studies involving minimum competency
18 tests as they are currently used in any existing programs?

19 A It is based more generally than that. I see
20 minimum competency tests as a subset of a much larger
21 variety of similar tests. And I think the generalization
22 that applies to the larger group can be applied without too
23 much distortion to the minimum competency test.

24 Q So are you then saying that minimum competency
25 tests are in fact very similar to norm-referenced tests that

1 we have had around for a good many years, in many cases?

2 A They have many characteristics in common.

3 Q Thank you. So would you say that much of the
4 information that you get from a minimum competency test is
5 already available in terms of the achievement testing that
6 is currently going on in the form of norm-referenced tests?

7 A No, I wouldn't say that. It is not available in
8 the same form or in the same context. I believe that some
9 of the tests that have been around for a long time could be
10 used effectively in the minimum competency testing
11 programs. But I don't think the data already exists or,
12 more importantly, is being used in that way.

13 Q Would you say that one of the important
14 distinguishing characteristics between the two types of
15 tests is the use of a rigid cutting score on minimum
16 competency tests to decide who is going to pass or fail?

17 A Well, I don't like that word "rigid,"
18 particularly. But, yes, I would agree with that.

19 Q Professor, were you a member of the committee that
20 developed the 1974 standards on educational and
21 psychological measurement, published by the American
22 Psychological Association?

23 A Yes, I was.

24 Q What organizations published that set of standards?

25 A The American Psychological Association was the

1 publisher.

2 Q And which other associations cooperated?

3 A The American Educational Research Association and
4 the National Council on Measurement in Education.

5 Q Thank you. Would you say that those standards
6 were very generally agreed-upon guidelines for professional
7 practice?

8 A Well, agreement was hard won, and there were a lot
9 of members of the committee who disagreed with specifics.
10 We needed to get a document out and we went with a consensus.

11 Q Do you recall that one of the standards in that
12 document dealt with the setting of cutting scores?

13 A I don't remember that precisely. But if I were to
14 bet, I would bet that there is something in there on that.

15 Q You would believe me if I said I had just read it
16 and found it?

17 A Yes, I would.

18 Q Would you imagine or accept the notion that that
19 standard which called for the providing of a rationale or
20 justification for setting any cutting score should be
21 provided by any testers?

22 A I would agree with that, yes.

23 Q Would you think that the practice of setting a
24 cutting score at 70 percent because that is the traditional
25 level on an arbitrary basis meets that standard?

1 A Well, if 70 percent means 70 percent correct
2 answers on a multiple-choice test, I would be very
3 skeptical. If it is a derived score, as it is in many
4 cases, and it was that in the -- well, not the Army general
5 classification test, but the one that was used at the time
6 of the Korean conflict --

7 Q The Armed Forces Test?

8 A Yes. The scores were derived so that 70 became,
9 in terms of the test content, a rational passing score.

10 Q If I were to tell you that a state set the
11 standard at 70 percent of the multiple-choice items passed,
12 then you would think that was unreasonable?

13 A Not necessarily. If the test is built with that
14 in mind and particularly if there is some opportunity to
15 pretest the items, it would be quite possible, it seems to
16 me, to select items to make that a reasonable passing score.

17 Q Would you conclude, if you had the same 70-percent
18 passing standard on a reading test and a math test and in
19 fact you had a much higher failure rate in the math test,
20 that students needed more work in math necessarily, or would
21 you conclude something else about the nature of the test
22 items?

23 A There are a number of hypotheses to explain that,
24 and I wouldn't want to jump at any of them without looking
25 at a lot more of the data related to it. It is conceivable

1 that -- although it is very hard to prove -- that students
2 are less good at learning math than they are learning
3 reading, but I see no way of proving that.

4 MR. LINN: Thank you very much. I have no further
5 questions.

6 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Further questions?

7 That concludes the witness list for this morning.

8 We are going to take a break for lunch and plan to
9 reconvene at 1:50, ten minutes to 2:00. See you then.

10 (Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the hearing was
11 recessed, to reconvene at 1:50 p.m., this same day.)

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1 AFTERNOON SESSION

2 (2:00 p.m.)

3 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: The hearing will come to
4 order.

5 This afternoon we have the presentation of the
6 case of the cons, or the con case.

7 Dr. Madaus, would you give us a presentation of
8 what we can expect you to do today?

9 OPENING ARGUMENT BY DR. GEORGE MADAUS,

10 CON TEAM LEADER

11 DR. MADAUS: Actually, laboring under the name the
12 "negative team" or the "con team" connotes a certain image,
13 and the first thing we did yesterday, and I would like to do
14 it again today, is to tell you that our team is not against
15 testing. We think testing has a valuable place to play in
16 education. We think the test scores can be used to make
17 decisions about children if they are used with other
18 information and teachers use that information, and
19 administrators and so on, to make these decisions.

20 We are not against restoring meaning to the
21 diploma. In fact, yesterday and again today and tomorrow,
22 we are going to present alternatives to minimum competency
23 testing to do just that.

24 We are against social promotion. We think there
25 should be standards in school. We think that there are ways

1 of improving the skill levels of our children, but we think
2 there are ways to do this without requiring a single test
3 score be used to deny a diploma, keep a child back, or to
4 put a child into some kind of a classification program. We
5 believe that professional educators should make these
6 decisions using multiple indicators.

7 Now, yesterday I said that our team had basically
8 five contentions, and one of the most important of those
9 contentions, I said yesterday, was the technical adequacy of
10 the tests to be used by itself to deny a diploma, keep a
11 child back, or put a child into some kind of a
12 classification program.

13 We are going to spend a good deal of this
14 afternoon illustrating those technical limitations for you.
15 We are going to talk about issues like, "But does the test
16 really measure what it purports to measure? Is it a good
17 measure of life skills and adult competencies and survival
18 skills? Is it even a good measure of what is taught in the
19 high schools."

20 You will hear testimony about the issue of cut
21 scores. How do we set pass scores? How many items does the
22 kid have to get right? And what does it mean if you use a
23 different method in terms of how the child is labeled? You
24 will see that it makes quite a bit of difference,
25 particularly if you are an individual child around that cut

1 score.

2 We will also talk about the impact of that
3 inherent measurement error which Dr. Ebel this morning said
4 exists in all tests, what the impact of that is for certain
5 kinds of children in certain places in the distribution.

6 We will also show you and describe to you the
7 implications of taking an item and translating it from
8 English to a second language. We will show you that it does
9 not necessarily convey the same meaning to a child-whose
10 first language is not English and that this has serious
11 implications in some states for bilingual education.

12 We will start today and develop later tomorrow the
13 impact that testing has on handicapped children. You will
14 hear testimony today from Peoria about what has gone on in
15 Peoria not only as it relates to the regular program in
16 Peoria with nonhandicapped children in Peoria but as it
17 relates to the handicapped and the disabled population in
18 Peoria.

19 You will hear testimony from a teacher in North
20 Carolina about the use of a test there in grade-to-grade, in
21 promotion decisions at the elementary level, and the impact
22 that that has had on teaching and the impact it has had on
23 children.

24 Finally, today you will hear a good deal of
25 discussion from two educators from Florida about the Florida

1 situation.

2 Now, again, as you listen to this testimony this
3 afternoon, please keep in mind that because we are labeled
4 "negative" or "con" team, we are again advocating restoring
5 standards, but what we think has happened is that there has
6 been a misperception about where we need to put our emphasis.

7 We are going to show you this afternoon that basic
8 skills in the United States are not declining. You will see
9 considerable evidence on that this afternoon. The problem
10 is in higher-order skills, and minimum competency tests
11 linked to a diploma or linked to promotion or linked to some
12 very important individual decision can make that problem
13 worse.

14 This afternoon I think is an important part of our
15 case because it does talk directly to how tests should be
16 used and what their limitations and what their strengths
17 are. So, without further ado, we will start our case.
18 Thank you.

19 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you, Dr. Madaus.

20 The first witness is Dr. Mary Berry.

21 Dr. Berry, would you come forward to the witness
22 chair, please.

23 Dr. Berry is commissioner and vice chairman of the
24 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights of this city.

25 -- THE CON TEAM PRESENTS ITS CASE --

1 TESTIMONY OF DR. MARY BERRY,
2 COMMISSIONER AND VICE CHAIRMAN
3 UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
4 DIRECT EXAMINATION

5 BY MR. HENDERSON:

6 Q Good afternoon, Dr. Berry. Thank you for being
7 with us.

8 Could you briefly describe before the audience
9 your experience in education over the past decade?

10 A After attaining a Ph.D. in constitutional history
11 and a J.D. from the Law School of the University of
12 Michigan, I have been a faculty member in various
13 universities around the country and an administrator. I was
14 Chancellor of the University of Colorado at Boulder, where I
15 was also professor of history and law.

16 I was Assistant Secretary for Education in the
17 Department of Health, Education, and Welfare from 1977 to
18 January 1980. I was Provost at the University of Maryland
19 at College Park. I am now professor of history and law and
20 a Senior Fellow in the Institute for the Study of
21 Educational Policy at Howard University, in addition to my
22 duties at the Commission.

23 Q Thank you. While Assistant Secretary of
24 Education, did you commission a study on basic skills and
25 quality education in this country?

1 A I most certainly did.

2 Q Did this study deal with minimum competency
3 testing?

4 A It did indeed, Mr. Henderson.

5 Q Why was the study commissioned?

6 A We commissioned the study because we had a great
7dea. of concern about the quality of education in the
8country. We were familiar with the decline in scores on
9verbal and mathematical on the SAT and the public complaints
10about the decline in achievement. And those of us who were
11in HEW thought there might be some federal policy initiative
12that could be undertaken that might give support to the
13state and local communities and to private education as it
14worked to deal with this educational quality problem.

15 Q Can you identify the members of the panel who
16examined this issue?

17 A The panel was chosen by the National Academy of
18Education, which is the most distinguished body of people
19who were in that field -- and they selected persons like
20Thorndike and Goodladd and others who are experts in
21education, Ralph Tyler and also other people.

22 Q Ralph Tyler was one of our witnesses yesterday.
23He was a member of that panel?

24 A Yes.

25 Q What were some of the conclusions of the panel

1 regarding the establishment of minimum competency testing?

2 A The panel focused on minimum competency testing
3 because we asked them to, because it was being sold as one
4 of the easy solutions by some of the people in some of the
5 states to the problems of educational quality.

6 And I myself thought that if a minimum competency test
7 will solve this problem, boy, that will be very simple
8 indeed. All we have to do is come up with a program to
9 simply fund some support for those in every community and I
10 was elated that this would be the outcome.

11 " So they looked at minimum competency testing from
12 that standpoint. And the conclusions they reached, in
13 general, were that a minimum competency test would not solve
14 the problem of educational quality in our schools, that the
15 tests, I think, as they put it, are unworkable. They exceed
16 the expertise on measurement arts in the teaching
17 profession, and creates more social problems than they solve.

18 Q I assume the panel would have rejected the notion
19 of instituting an minimum competency test on a national
20 scale?

21 A Well, they looked at that idea because some people
22 were advocating such a test. Admiral Rickover and other
23 people and some of the people in the Congress had asked us
24 to look at the idea of a national minimum competency test.

25 And they looked at that, and they see we need to

1 worry about whether when the Federal Government gets into
2 the business of saying what will be taught in schools or
3 what kinds of tests will be given and what the scores will
4 be, that we might get some less benign governmental
5 officials -- not us, of course -- who might suggest
6 something like a national curriculum and mind control and
7 that we should steer away from that, especially when the
8 minimum competency test itself was not a solution to the
9 educational quality problem.

10 Q That seems to fly in the face of local control of
11 school districts.

12 A Absolutely, they concluded.

13 Q Do you think the use of minimum competency tests
14 to deny diplomas or to promote within grade level helps
15 students encountering academic difficulty?

16 A I think that minimum competency tests could help
17 students and could help to improve student achievement if
18 certain things were true. For example, if the minimum
19 competency test was rigid enough so that once one passed it
20 you would have some reasonable degree of assurance that a
21 person did know enough to attain certain kinds of employment
22 or go on to school and then every student had an opportunity
23 to learn the material that was in such a test and that the
24 makeup of such a test was within the skills and expertise of
25 testing professionals as they understood it.

1 I think in the absence of those three things, that
2 very often a minimum competency test does not help students,
3 because testing is not used for diagnostic purposes, which
4 our panel told me that is what testing is supposed to be
5 used for, to help students, and that it is not to be used to
6 eliminate students.

7 So I would support its use for diagnostic purposes
8 to help us, especially in the early grades, to find out
9 where the problems are with students so that they can be
10 helped rather than simply passing students along from grade
11 to grade and then when they are in the twelfth grade giving
12 them a test and saying, "Well, society should not have to
13 deal with them anymore if they pass."

14 Q From your assessment of the field in this area,
15 does minimum competency testing particularly impact on
16 certain types of students, minority group students, the
17 handicapped?

18 A I believe that any student who does not have some
19 physiological problem or some problem of retardation that is
20 defined adequately by professionals can pass tests if the
21 students are taught the materials. I believe that. But it
22 is the case that in some communities, some students,
23 especially those of minority groups and some handicapped
24 students, have not either been adequately taught the
25 curriculum, there is no evidence that they have been, or

1 they have certain educational deficiencies that are no fault
2 of their own. And all the minimum competency test does is
3 to serve to eliminate them from the educational system so
4 that people do not have to deal with them rather than
5 helping them.

6 Where it has that disproportionate discriminatory
7 effect, I think that it is unfair to impose such a
8 requirement.

9 Q Might a minimum competency test or implementation
10 of a test on a state level limit the access of minority
11 students in particular to higher education opportunities?

12 A If you assume that nonpassage of a minimum
13 competency test means that one does not get a high school
14 diploma and that one needs a high school diploma to be
15 admitted to higher education, obviously students who do not
16 pass and if they are disproportionately minorities would be
17 excluded.

18 I think it would be absolutely essential to see to it
19 that students in those cases did have an opportunity to
20 learn whatever was on such a test and that such a test was
21 validated by experts to be a good predictor of whether in
22 fact students could perform in higher education before one
23 should use such a test to exclude people.

24 You see, the difficulty with these tests is that
25 once one flunks them and there is no credentialing, no high

1 school diploma, that does not mean that society is finished
2 with the problem. I mean the person still exists, and there
3 are social costs associated with dealing with the problem
4 that has been passed along from grade to grade.

5 So the minimum competency test is not a panacea.
6 It is a beginning of a problem, in some cases, and not the
7 end of it.

8 Q Dr. Berry, thank you very much. I have nothing
9 further.

10 A Thank you, Mr. Henderson.

11 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross examination from
12 Dr. Popham is now in order.

13 CROSS EXAMINATION

14 BY MR. POPHAM:

15 Q Dr. Berry, you have observed that there is a
16 growing concern over the quality of education in this
17 country, particularly over the last ten or fifteen years.
18 Correct?

19 A A concern which I share.

20 Q Not only is there a decline in test scores, which
21 you have cited, but also in some of your earlier writings
22 you have cited studies which suggest that a large proportion
23 of our young men and women cannot complete job application
24 forms and the like.

25 A That is true.

1 Q I would like to spend a moment or two dealing with
2 the report that you commissioned by the National Academy of
3 Education group. Is it not true, Dr. Berry, that all
4 members of that panel were professional educators?

5 A They were chosen by the National Academy of
6 Education with the understanding that they would be people
7 who have expertise in the field of education and testing.

8 Q And they certainly are that. But they are also
9 professional educators who one might expect would have a
10 bias, perhaps, in favor of saying that the educational
11 establishment had not been doing that bad a job?

12 A One might suppose as well that lawyers have a
13 bias, if the logic follows, for saying that the legal system
14 works perfectly, and I do not think that is the case.

15 Q Is it not true that the first draft of that
16 particular report was authored by Arthur Wise, who is an
17 avowed critic of minimum competency testing and in fact was
18 one of the prominent witnesses for the con team?

19 A It is not my understanding that he authored the
20 report. That is not my understanding. My understanding is
21 that it was authored by the persons who were there. He may
22 have worked in the collation of it or the revision or
23 writing of it.

24 Q Apparently, the members of the panel responded,
25 and these responses were then collated by Dr. Wise.

1 A Yes, indeed.

2 Q And his preliminary draft was circulated to
3 members of the Academy?

4 A It is quite routine when you have a body of people
5 on such panels to have someone write down and collate the
6 findings. I would not make that an issue, but I would not
7 deem that technically authorship.

8 Q I am simply trying to suggest that this was a
9 report of individuals who certainly have technical
10 expertise, but raise with you the possibility that there
11 might have been some tilt in their view regarding minimum
12 competency testing.

13 A There is always a possibility that everyone has a
14 tilt in some direction or the other.

15 Q Earlier today we heard Professor Ebel describe the
16 technology of testing as thoroughly adequate for the demands
17 of minimum competency testing programs. And yet the panel
18 composed of some experts on that same subject apparently
19 disagreed. Is it then your conclusion that experts can
20 disagree over the issue?

21 A Experts always disagree. As I recall, the reason
22 that was given by the panel on that subject was they cited
23 the example of an English composition; they said there would
24 be a great deal of quibbling and technical argument about
25 what items should be on a test, how they should be answered,

1 what would make an effective minimum cutoff score. I think
2 that those were the technical considerations.

3 Q If pushed to its logical conclusion, would not
4 that argument suggest that since there would never be total
5 accord, that we ought not measure youngsters on anything?

6 A I believe we should use tests, we should measure
7 youngsters on everything. My objections to minimum
8 competency tests are when they are misused, not for
9 diagnostic purposes, not for remediation, not to help
10 students, but to simply pass students along to the twelfth
11 grade and then flunk them and say we have no more
12 accountability.

13 But when they are used appropriately, I would
14 support them. And I know that no test is perfect. So my
15 position is not based on a rationale that the imperfections
16 lead to my rejection of their use for high school graduation.

17 Q We were very impressed with your observations
18 about what would constitute, in your view, an acceptable
19 minimum competency testing program, and those observations
20 coincide very largely with our own team's recommendations,
21 certainly, to have the tests serve a diagnostic function, to
22 have them be reasonable, and so on.

23 But there was one point for potential
24 disagreement, and I would like to push a little in that
25 area. Are you in favor of social promotions? It seems to

1 me you are on record as opposing them.

2 A Absolutely.

3 Q Very well. Then, since you are opposed to social
4 promotions, could we not assume that you might believe that
5 a basic skills test could constitute one, not the only,
6 criterion that might be used in awarding a diploma?

7 A You cannot assume that. If you are asking me the
8 question, I would think that a test given appropriately in
9 the early grades could be used for diagnostic purposes, and
10 a student might be held in whatever classroom environment,
11 whether it is the same grade or whatever people feel is the
12 appropriate thing, until the deficiencies have been remedied.

13 Q What happens when you reach a point where you have
14 tried pretty valiantly through these diagnostically oriented
15 minimum competency tests at lower grade levels to get a
16 youngster up to mastery and finally at the twelfth-grade
17 level, having tried three or four or five times, the
18 youngster still cannot perform satisfactorily in reading,
19 writing, and mathematics? Would it be in your view
20 acceptable to grant that student a diploma?

21 A Your question has pinpointed precisely the
22 problem. If a student is in the twelfth grade and has been
23 passed along by a school system, until that time there has
24 been a failure on the part of the school, the parents, the
25 community to deal with that student's problem. And we

1 should never be in that position. That failure should have
2 been dealt with. And at that point certainly I would not
3 say that a student ought to be given a diploma and it should
4 be said that he has passed all the courses.

5 You have there a problem of discrimination. What
6 I want is accountability built in very early so that we
7 never have to come to the question that you raise as to how
8 do we solve the problem, how do we protect society from this
9 person who doesn't know anything because they have been in
10 the school system all these years and have not been taken
11 care of.

12 Q Or how do we not deceive that person by suggesting
13 that they can perform skills when they really cannot?

14 A I think they really know when they can't. I don't
15 think we are deceiving them. I think the problem of
16 deceiving other people might be greater. People know when
17 they can't read or write, and many of them agonize over it.

18 And I think that it is absolutely insidious to
19 have people in that position after being in school for
20 twelve years. And when it happens to minority students, as
21 it does disproportionately, I think it is even more
22 insidious.

23 Q But failing that perfect world in which we have
24 corrected all these deficits -- and we have not corrected
25 all these deficits up until the last moment -- until we

1 reach that time, what would you do with the student sitting
2 there at the end of the twelfth grade who has tried several
3 times but still cannot read, write, and compute very well?
4 Until we get to that perfect world, what would you do?

5 A I would use the very best methods that are
6 available to try to teach the person how to read and write.
7 That is what I would do.

8 Q But if you were not successful, what would you do
9 then?

10 A I am assuming that there is enough expertise
11 amongst the education profession in this country somewhere
12 that someone knows how to teach people unless they are
13 absolutely mentally retarded and beyond hope and are not
14 even educable.

15 Q I think that is a wonderful aspiration, but you
16 are an experienced educator, and you realize that there are
17 instances in which the situation I describe is not at all
18 fictitious, it will happen. And what would you do then? Of
19 course, you can say if only they had. But they do not have
20 at that point. And I am wondering if at that juncture you
21 would give a diploma to a person who cannot perform those
22 basic skills.

23 A I would teach them to read and write and perform
24 basic skills, and then I would give them a diploma. That is
25 what I would do so they would not be a burden to society.

1 And I would not simply absolve myself of all responsibility
2 at that point.

3 Q One last question from me. You have been asked
4 questions by the con team about whether or not the use of
5 minimum competency tests would prevent large numbers of
6 minority students from going on to college. Would it be
7 your view that those minority students are well served if
8 they enter college without basic skills?

9 A I would think no one would be well served if they
10 entered college without basic skills.

11 MR. POPHAM: We find ourselves in alarming accord
12 with your views.

13 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Any redirect?

14 Thank you very much, Dr. Berry.

15 The next witness, Dr. Robert Calfee, professor of
16 educational psychology, Stanford University, Stanford,
17 California.

18 TESTIMONY OF ROBERT CALFEE,
19 PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
20 STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

21 DIRECT EXAMINATION

22 BY DR. MADDAUS:

23 Q Dr. Calfee, could you describe your area of
24 expertise in education for the audience?

25 A Yes. I am an educational psychologist at

1 Stanford. My specialties are cognitive psychology. I am
2 interested in how people think. I do work in reading and
3 reading instruction. And I have been particularly
4 interested in the relationships between testing and teaching.

5 Q Why are you opposed to minimum competency testing
6 being used for promotion, classification, and graduation
7 decisions for high school students?

8 A My chief concern is the reliance on
9 group-administered multiple-choice paper-and-pencil tests to
10 assess a student's education. What is really important from
11 an education is being able to think intelligently, to
12 express yourself clearly, to generate alternatives, not
13 simply to pick the best one.

14 Secondly, I think, we have yet to establish the
15 validity of these tests for the uses to which they are put.
16 There are really three areas: what is learned in school,
17 what we need in life, and what the test measures. We really
18 don't know what the overlap between those three areas is
19 today with any certainty.

20 I have a concern that competency testing is going
21 to lower the quality of high school education over the long
22 run, and I think that eventually public confidence in the
23 schools is going to be further undermined when they realize
24 that they have been misled by one more educational fad.

25 Q You are concerned that minimum competency tests

1 may not measure what they purport to measure. Could you
2 explain your reasons for this particular concern?

3 A Yes. In simple language, there are three
4 concerns. first of all, deciding what to measure, deciding
5 how you measure it, and deciding what to do with the results
6 of that. Let me say a few words about each of those.

7 What to measure. There is continuing debate about
8 whether we should be measuring basic skills or life skills.
9 Basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics should be
10 achieved before high school. They are, in fact, the
11 foundation of a high school education.

12 I think that defining the basic skills needed for
13 success in high school is difficult, but I think it a
14 possible validation task. You have to look at what schools
15 teach, look in the classroom, and talk with competent
16 students and teachers.

17 As to life skills, I don't think that we really
18 can state with any degree of clarity and certainty what life
19 skills are important for high school students, at least not
20 for all high school students, and to be measured on a
21 group-administered test.

22 How to measure. Well, it is interesting. We take
23 the group-administered multiple-choice format for granted.
24 It is more convenient for administrators. In fact, such
25 tests tell us whether the student is right or wrong, but

1 nothing about the line of reasoning.

2 The basic skill for success in this society, I
3 would argue, is thinking. And that is often hard to assess
4 with a paper-and-pencil test. There are other problem spots
5 for a test of this sort across the board. Any standardized
6 achievement test has the same ones.

7 First of all, going from general conceptions to
8 specific objectives, I have a sense that we tend to drop the
9 more general conception by the board. Once you go from a
10 specific objective to an item, some person is going to have
11 to write that item and that person and their skills and
12 their biases make a great deal of difference.

13 There are problems of evaluating items after
14 tryout, and the techniques we use for standardized tests are
15 not necessarily appropriate for this type of test. There
16 are resources for test construction. If you want local
17 districts to be responsible for their own tests, where do
18 they get their resources, the expertise? In California I
19 think the results of that have been the reason for a good
20 bit of alarm.

21 Finally, there is just the matter of collecting
22 the data, the testing conditions themselves, getting
23 children together into spaces that will hold them, keeping
24 children motivated, keeping youngsters motivated for the
25 length of time that it takes. Those should not be taken for

1 granted.

2 Finally, what to do with the results. Well, there
3 is an interesting problem that we are now confronting, and
4 that is how to use a testing procedure and methodology
5 designed for one set of purposes for quite different ends.
6 I think that we are relying on a new and largely unevaluated
7 testing methodology, "at least unevaluated for this use, to
8 make lifelong decisions for hundreds of thousands of
9 people. To use the current parlance, we need to build a
10 better safety net for that.

11 What is different about competency tests? Well,
12 in the past we used achievement tests as indicators. Not
13 all of them were adequately validated, but they generally
14 looked okay, and they seemed to work well as supporting
15 evidence, not for hard and fast decisions, most of the
16 time. If a test wasn't perfect, we had other evidence.

17 The situation is very different when a single,
18 relatively brief paper-and-pencil test is put to use to
19 assess the outcome of ten or more years of schooling. I
20 just can't imagine any test that we could be sure would meet
21 the validity requirements of that situation.

22 Q Thank you. You seem particularly concerned in
23 what you just said about the shortcomings of what you called
24 the "group-administered multiple-choice paper-and-pencil
25 test." This is the type of test that is widely used with

1 most minimum competency tests around the country. What is
2 wrong with this particular approach to minimum competency
3 tests?

4 . A Basically, it doesn't ask the student to produce
5 anything. It doesn't require the student to integrate, to
6 show that they can think and act with any degree of
7 coherence and understanding. I happen to think those are
8 reasonable minimum requirements from 13 years of schooling.
9 The result is that students may be able to pass the
10 group-administered test even though they don't really know
11 how to do what it is we are trying to measure.

12 Secondly, test writers are often led by this
13 format to emphasize the trivial and tricky. If a kind of
14 item is easy, you write a lot of them because of that ease.
15 If you write them straightforwardly, sometimes you cannot
16 get enough errors, and what is the good of having a test if
17 everybody succeeds on it.

18 So the result on the students is that they are
19 often misled by the format, by the lack of clarity, and by
20 the expectation of trickery. And you know, you can't look
21 at the test page and if it is not clear, ask questions. The
22 page does not talk back to you. And it is simply
23 inappropriate to ask the tester; we all know that.

24 The result is that there are students who in fact
25 could perform tasks if they were asked to do them, but they

1 fail tests.

2 Q Could you give some specific examples of some
3 minimum competency testing items that you have found do not
4 measure what they were designed to measure?

5 A Yes. I have looked over a large number of tests,
6 and I have actually prepared a sample of items from tests
7 around the country that have been slightly modified to show
8 what our youngsters are really facing. Let me just describe
9 verbally some of my favorites.

10 In one test the key item is an understanding of
11 the phrase "loc. ref. nec." That is not a new Loch Ness
12 Monster. "Loc. ref. nec." is from a want ad. It is
13 interpreted to mean "local references necessary."

14 Q I fail that one.

15 A Many students do. These are tough items, and they
16 are selected for that reason. "Interstate." What does
17 "Interstate" mean? The first choice is "between cities
18 within a state. A second choice down the line is "between
19 states." Now, if you are educated, you realize that on a
20 test you are supposed to break "inter" and "state" apart and
21 view it as a Latin combination. In fact, if you are a
22 California student and you drive from Sacramento to Los
23 Angeles on Interstate 5, your life skills are perfectly well
24 served by thinking it means "between cities within a state."

25 I can give other examples. One of my favorites is

1 the income tax form, a rather demanding document for all of
2 us and something that when you begin to get income I guess
3 you have to wrestle with, most of us either taking the short
4 form or seeking advice. I simply don't see the point in
5 asking youngsters for detailed analysis of that form. I
6 don't think it should be in the curriculum. I don't think
7 it should be on a test.

8 Q Suppose that a test does have a few invalid tricky
9 items like the "loc. ref.," whatever it was, is this really
10 a serious problem?

11 A Well, invalid items of this sort are troublesome
12 for two reasons. First of all, the standards for success
13 and failure are subjective and arbitrary. I think that that
14 point has been well made by a number of other witnesses. It
15 is often a political decision rather than a scientific
16 judgment.

17 But missing one or two items can make a big
18 difference for the student even if we say remediation, that
19 is often thrown in. Do you know what remediation amounts
20 to? In fact, it amounts to hours and hours of work for
21 students and teachers to go through the activities.

22 So the result is invalid items are causing
23 students and teachers to waste time. Every one of the items
24 has a label on it. That label is associated with remedial
25 materials. If you fail that item, you go to work. In fact,

1 the problem may be with the item and not with your
2 understanding. The result is wasted time and frustration.

3 Q You said that items might be biased. Could you
4 explain what you mean by that term?

5 A Yes. Other witnesses will talk about bias due to
6 ethnicity and sex. I am concerned about bias due to the
7 educational program. High school students are counseled
8 into various programs or tracks depending on their
9 interests, goals, talents, their aims in life. Each track
10 concentrates on a particular set of instructional goals,
11 uses particular content and methods of instruction.

12 What you do in a Latin class and what you do in an
13 auto shop are different in a variety of ways. Any given
14 test item is going to be a better match to some tracks than
15 it is to others. A test is a collection of those items, and
16 so in fact I can build a test to favor any track that I want.

17 We have been looking recently at the relationship
18 between curriculum and test performance, and we find that in
19 general in the small samples we have looked at attesting to
20 favor students in the academic college-bound track, they had
21 broader training, and part of that training is to solve more
22 complex problems. It puts you in very good stead when
23 facing a competency test or any test.

24 In the data that we are now beginning to see, it
25 is not unusual for youngsters in a vocational track to get

1 40 to 50 percent correct, on the average, in these tests,
2 youngsters in college-bound tracks, 70 to 80 percent. And
3 what is interesting is that some types of items show a
4 bigger track effect than others do. For instance, basic
5 arithmetic computation shows relatively little track effect
6 compared to word problems, geometry problems, and the like.

7 Interestingly, if you look at functional literacy
8 and math, you could categorize them according to the amount
9 of thinking required: The more difficult the thinking, the
10 more the advantaged, the college-bound.

11 Q Are there any other problems that you see in using
12 a minimum competency test to deny students a diploma?

13 A Yes. Let me mention one more. Professor Lee
14 Kronbacher, a colleague of mine and a national expert on
15 testing, has the following to say in his book on
16 psychological testing: "Almost never is a psychological
17 test so valid that a prediction about a single case is
18 certainly true. When making a decision," he advises, "be
19 cautious, check the case history, try another test. Check
20 special circumstances, like language."

21 This just seems to be very good advice, and it is
22 consistent with the ethical standards of the American
23 Psychological Association.

24 Q Whatever the problems with paper-and-pencil
25 format, surely this approach is suitable for establishing

1 minimum standards?

2 A I think the basic flaw is the assumption that we
3 can define a small number of simple skills to be acquired at
4 the same level of all high school graduates regardless of
5 their goals, interests, and talents. We have not built our
6 schools on that assumption, and I do not think we should
7 build tests on that assumption.

8 If you visit a good high school -- and they exist
9 -- you will find variety, not undisciplined, but organized.
10 College-bound, academically inclined youngsters are going to
11 be in a course of study suitable for them. If you want to
12 become a carpenter, an accountant, or what have you, there
13 is a program for you, a program staffed by competent
14 teachers who carry out continuous assessment. They know
15 what the students are doing.

16 I think if there is a single set of minimum
17 standards, it might make sense to apply those to the
18 elementary school. Youngsters coming into the junior high
19 and high school should be able to read and write and think.
20 And I think we need assurance that is in fact the case.

21 One of the greatest dangers of competency tests,
22 in my opinion, as presently implemented, is that it is going
23 to reduce the diversity of offerings in our secondary
24 schools, a diversity that is absolutely essential for our
25 youngsters today.

1 Q Just to clarify a point, even at the elementary
2 level, you would not use the tests by themselves without
3 other teacher input and other indicators to make those
4 decisions about promotion?

5 A Oh, I think that is just bad and harmful practice.

6 Q While we want to provide different programs to
7 high school students depending on their career goals, surely
8 we could establish a uniform set of minimum standards for
9 literacy and numeracy?

10 A Let me stress it one more time so that it won't be
11 misunderstood. I can't imagine a test of basic skills that
12 is appropriate for all high school students. As I say, for
13 sixth-graders, but I would use additional data.

14 Q Despite your criticism of minimum competency
15 tests, do you not think that the overall effect on the
16 public, on students, and on teachers will be a positive one?

17 A No. I don't think so. I think the long-run
18 effect -- and I am not alone in my judgment -- will be
19 negative. I think the public is going to find out what the
20 truth is, and I think the truth is already beginning to
21 appear.

22 According to local newspapers in the Bay area, in
23 December the State of California reported that it looked
24 like one out of eight students, seniors in California, would
25 fail to get their diploma solely on the basis of competency

1 tests. Another one out of eight would fail because they
2 have failed the course of study.

3 By June, just recently, Bay area papers are now
4 saying that scarcely anyone is going to fail, less than 1
5 percent. It is a virtual miracle. In July, very shortly
6 thereafter, Linda Bond, the assistant to Assemblyman Gary
7 Hart, who authored our competency test, said to the paper,
8 "I find it very hard to believe that all seniors passed the
9 exam." She continued, "It appears that some districts are
10 actually teaching the test."

11 Well, of course, districts are teaching the test.
12 Any district with an ounce of sense in one of these systems
13 now has materials designed for each objective. You fail an
14 objective and you are handed the worksheets. Objectives
15 keep very narrowly to the materials. If you don't do that,
16 you are going to fail too many students, you are going to
17 look bad, and in fact you are going to wind up in court.

18 Professor Donald Campbell, an eminent and
19 respected social scientist, has the following to say:
20 "Anytime a social indicator is used for decisionmaking, it
21 will be corrected and will correct the social processes it
22 is intended to monitor." It has happening in competency
23 tests, and it is going to get worse."

24 Q Do you not think that a high school student should
25 have to meet some standards before they get a diploma? In

1 other words, do you not think that we need standards before
2 diplomas are awarded?

3 A Well, of course, we need standards, and I think we
4 need very strong standards. And there is a place for tests
5 for setting and maintaining these standards, not for the
6 individual but across programs in schools, for screening,
7 for monitoring. They serve a variety of useful purposes.

8 There are alternative ways to decide how well
9 schools are -- how well students are educated and to ensure
10 accountability. And most, if not all, of these hinge on
11 competent teaching.

12 It is interesting to note in California that the
13 California law, as written, does not require tests, it
14 doesn't talk about a test. It says the standards must be
15 set and maintained. And in fact, a solidly graded core
16 course at the high school level would satisfy the law, as
17 written, and it could vary from one high school track to
18 another.

19 Burlington, Vermont, has a mentor system at the
20 secondary level, where faculty members are assigned to
21 students and they work with them as individuals.

22 It seems to me the important thing here is to
23 think again about the purposes of the American high school.
24 They face an interesting dilemma: How are you going to
25 balance equality of educational opportunity for all

1 students, appropriateness of our educational offerings to
2 the needs of the society, and excellence of educational
3 achievement?

4 That is a tough job, but I think it is doable, and
5 I think American high schools are today and have in the past
6 and I hope will in the future do a good job in spite of what
7 appear to be increasing external pressures. We need to
8 remember, though, what the high schools are for.

9 Don Kennedy is the president of Stanford
10 University and spoke to this point recently with words that
11 I like. He said, "Increasingly, the secondary school
12 curriculum has become diluted with courses designed to meet
13 narrow objectives in pursuit of what euphemistically is
14 called preparation for life. The result has been a relative
15 decline in the ability of California students. We are
16 talking about what they are like when they come to our
17 university and the University of California, and not test
18 scores."

19 He continues, "If preparation for life is what we
20 really want, the way to get it is by teaching people how to
21 think. No group is more central to that outcome than
22 teachers, and no process is more critical than good
23 teaching. The best analysis cannot be understood, nor can
24 the best ideas be interpreted, without the mediation of
25 teachers."

1 I like that advice. I don't think tests teach, I
2 think teachers teach. And if we are concerned about the
3 high school, we need to strengthen, support, and reinforce
4 the teaching staff.

5 DR. MADAUS: Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross?

7 CROSS EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. POPHAM:

9 Q Professor Calfee, the con team opened this session
10 of testimony by suggesting that they were in support of
11 testing, and you have spent a great deal of time castigating
12 tests. Do you believe it is possible to design tests so
13 that they can validly measure what they purport to measure?

14 A Certainly.

15 Q And yet you spent a great deal of time criticizing
16 tests as though they were not capable of so doing.

17 A I think I was more precise. I think I focused
18 very much on one particular testing format which is in
19 common usage today but for which there are alternatives.
20 Alternatives, in fact, if we were a bit clever and thought
21 about the matter instead of proceeding down this path
22 without examination of alternative routes.

23 We could design alternatives that would be better
24 suited to giving us valid information. There is a separate
25 issue of validating tests. The plain fact is that

1 throughout the history of the testing movement we have
2 designed tests that we validate by comparing them to another
3 test of the same general format. We are chasing our tails
4 around. I don't see that as progress.

5 Q You have to have a test be biased toward
6 college-bound students; you are concerned about that. Is
7 that necessary?

8 A Oh, of course not.

9 Q You mentioned that there were flawed items in
10 particular minimum competency tests. Does that mean that
11 all test items in such tests must be flawed?

12 A No.

13 Q What I am attempting to get at is an image that
14 seemed to me was coming across that these tests were
15 essentially so poor, so weak that they ought not be used.
16 That is not your view?

17 A My view is that they are being misused today
18 because they and they alone stand as a barrier to the
19 granting of a high school diploma.

20 Q Do you know of any situation in which a minimum
21 competency test alone, by itself, stands as the only barrier
22 to high school graduation?

23 A My statement was different. If you fail a
24 competency test although you have passed all the courses
25 with adequate grades in the State of California -- and let

1 me not speak about the rest of the country -- but in
2 California, to repeat the data that appeared in the paper
3 from the California State Department of Education, in
4 December, if nothing had happened, one out of eight high
5 school seniors would be denied the diploma on the basis of
6 that test alone.

7 If you look at black youngsters and Chicano
8 youngsters, those values went to 30 and 40 percent. That
9 test alone --

10 Q I was only quarreling with your assertion, which
11 still seems to me to stand, that you say a diploma is denied
12 on the basis of this test alone.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Is it in any high school in California a requisite
15 to pass a certain number of courses with decent grades in
16 addition to passing the test?

17 A We are talking about failure versus passing.

18 Q If he does not pass those courses, are they not
19 denied a diploma?

20 A Of course, they are denied the diploma.

21 Q Thank you.

22 A But if they do not take the test and pass the
23 courses, they are also denied the diploma.

24 Q I am only attempting to make the point, which you
25 apparently concur with, that it is one of several or at

1 least two criteria. You assert that in a relatively brief
2 minimum competency test we cannot possibly assess the
3 outcomes of ten or twelve years of schooling. Do you know
4 of any situation in which the entire breadth of schooling is
5 attempting to be measured by a minimum competency test?

6 A If you are going to say to a youngster, "You have
7 taken a course of study. You came in at kindergarten and
8 you have been passed along, for whatever reasons. And you
9 have taken the course of study appropriate to you in high
10 school and you have gotten a C or better grade, whatever the
11 standards are in that local setting, so it looks okay up to
12 this point. But you have taken this test and you failed
13 whatever parts of it, however many items. Everything looked
14 good, but you have missed putting a mark in A rather than
15 B. So, no diploma."

16 In San Jose a story was reported just this past
17 week about a youngster who failed the spelling test by two
18 items the first time he took it and one item the second
19 time. No diploma. He is working this summer. He is going
20 to try to pass that extra item. He may have a spelling
21 problem. I hope he passes the test.

22 His mother had some wise words to say about this
23 whole thing. She said, "He may pass the test, but cramming
24 for a test doesn't mean you are learning anything. And if
25 in fact he didn't know anything, that lack is still going to

1 be there."

2 Q You have been a professor for a number of years
3 and have certainly awarded grades many times. I assume you
4 used numerical grading systems. Are you not frequently
5 faced with a decision regarding where to cut a particular
6 grade curve and you indeed must make a decision based on one
7 point?

8 A Oh, yes.

9 Q And we do not like that, do we?

10 A Don't like it at all.

11 Q But we must do it.

12 A I would hate for that to be a decision that was
13 "Yes" or "No" on a Ph.D. or a bachelor's degree or the
14 like. Many of us do it.

15 Q What is the alternative, Professor Calfee, when
16 that is the way it turns out? If you set what you think is
17 a reasonable standard and the student misses it by one
18 point, you certainly can give that student numerous other
19 opportunities to pass the test, but if the student everytime
20 misses by one point this passing standard, would you advance
21 him?

22 A Of course not. But we don't work that way in
23 universities. In fact, your grades across courses, whether
24 you get a baccalaureate or not -- and let's talk about not
25 passing a course but getting a degree -- if in fact that is

1 based upon evidence garnered from dozens of professors and
2 dozens of opportunities to take very different kinds of
3 instruments in different settings.

4 Q In many such programs, are there not required
5 courses which must be passed in order for the student to
6 progress?

7 A Yes.

8 Q So a passing grade in one course can be the sole
9 criterion?

10 A I don't know of a single college degree where
11 there is a single required course that, if you fail it and
12 you are only offered it one time and you differ by one
13 degree, that the faculty member involved would not examine
14 other sources of evidence.

15 Q You have expressed concern about whether or not it
16 is possible for a test to be created by local organizations
17 with modest resources. We have heard a number of witnesses
18 at the state and local level suggest that they could in fact
19 produce reasonably good tests. How do you reconcile your
20 view with theirs?

21 A I think I am more expert in analyzing and
22 critiquing what they have done. I have spent a good bit of
23 time doing that. And it is my professional judgment, and
24 backed up again by the State of California report, where
25 independently some people at the state looked at the results

1 of the California experience.

2 Q Are you going to suggest that experts of the same
3 caliber as you would concur that there are no good tests
4 that have been built locally?

5 A No, I don't think that was my statement. It is
6 very difficult to do that, and I don't think we can feel
7 much assurance that every district can succeed, and if they
8 don't, they don't pay the price, the students do.

9 Q You were concerned about the difficulty of
10 locating fundamental skills that student would have to
11 master because you sensed there would be diversity of view
12 regarding that. Let us take a fairly common one in reading,
13 where a student is given some kind of a passage which might
14 be excerpted from a newspaper or magazine, reads that
15 passage and has to identify from several alternatives a
16 statement that seems to capture the main idea. Do you not
17 think that is a reasonable kind of scale?

18 A Sure. I wouldn't rely on that format as the only
19 evidence about whether the student can do it or not. I
20 would probably want to sit down with the student, with
21 several students, and say, "Read this for me. What is it
22 about?" If they can produce the answer, I would feel much
23 more reassured that they are able to do it.

24 I think I can teach youngsters to do that who
25 really have no ability to assimilate the information. And

1 when you go out and work, you don't have four choices.

2 Q Have you ever used a multiple-choice test?

3 A Yes, when I was first at Wisconsin in 1965. I had
4 been steadfast and rather out of the stream by using essay
5 tests since then.

6 A You cited a quotation by Professor Campbell in
7 which he indicated that quantitative social indicators would
8 be used for social decision making, that they would be
9 corrected.

10 Was not that observation put in the context of
11 statements about unemployment and cost-of-living indices,
12 the Bureau of Labor Statistics and similar large-scale
13 social indices? Do you know of any instance in which
14 minimum competency testing scores are being used in a
15 fashion comparable to the cost-of-living index?

16 A For the cost-of-living index it is the country as
17 a whole. It looks at the results, and we do not make firm
18 decisions one way or another at the level of the
19 individual. So that is certainly an important difference.

20 For the individuals involved in this, though, for
21 their parents, for the districts, for a superintendent who
22 is thinking 10 to 20 percent of the students who are seniors
23 are not going to graduate, I see that as not incomparable.

24 Q It is an important difference, but when you used
25 the Campbell quotation to suggest these are being used as

1 important social indicators, like the cost-of-living index,
2 and therefore we would expect them to be corrected, that
3 difference pertains, does it not?

4 A I am not sure that I get your point. But let me
5 make my independent observation. I think independently of
6 Professor Campbell's observations, that competency testing,
7 being used the way it is, is leading to a corruption of
8 testing. We are in fact teaching the tests, and rather than
9 that serving as an indicator we are perverting it and
10 misleading ourselves.

11 Q As a concluding question, I was particularly
12 troubled by your observations regarding the reports in the
13 San Francisco papers that all of a sudden students were
14 magically able to pass the tests. And I am sure we would
15 all be concerned about that. There is an implication here,
16 though, that I find very troubling. That is, you said that
17 any districts with an ounce of sense would teach directly to
18 the test items. Is that what you said?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Do you consider that immoral?

21 A I don't think it necessarily teaches children,
22 youngsters, what they need to learn.

23 Q Do you consider it immoral on the part of teachers
24 to teach specifically to the items?

25 A "Immoral" is a troubling word. I think it has bad

1 educational consequences. If you view that --

2 Q Do you consider it dishonest?

3 A I think we are fooling ourselves.

4 Q Unprofessional?

5 A Yes.

6 M.. POPHAM: I found the word. Thank you very
7 much.

8 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

9 BY DR. MADAUS:

10 Q In that same article by Professor Campbell on
11 social indicators, did he not also mention the Lexarkana
12 program where they use tests in performance contracting?

13 A I did not read the entire article, so I can't
14 really answer.

15 DR. MADAUS: Thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much. You
17 are excused.

18 The next witness, Dr. Robert Linn, chairperson,
19 Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education,
20 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois.

21 TESTIMONY OF DR. ROBERT LINN, CHAIRPERSON,

22 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

23 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

24 UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

25 URBANA, ILLINOIS

1 provide an independent source of information, often. We
2 have heard a lot about, in today's hearings, about the
3 question of honesty. I think that tests do already provide
4 a good deal of information about what is going on. We have
5 the National Assessment of Educational Progress that does a
6 good job at that.

7 Q Are you in favor of a minimum competency test used
8 for graduation, promotion, or classification?

9 A No, I am not. In fact, I am quite strongly
10 opposed to it for those purposes, in part because I think
11 that tests have a number of limitations. They are good.
12 There are possible good uses, but those depend upon
13 recognizing those limitations and realizing situations in
14 which you are over-relying on the tests, making more use of
15 the test than the technology can really stand.

16 I think there are several things that we will be
17 getting into about tests and also some of those limitations
18 dealing with the degree of accuracy, putting too much weight
19 on a major decision on the test without the opportunity of
20 adjusting that decision on the basis of other information.

21 Q Is part of your difficulty with with the minimum
22 competency test related to the problem of setting a cut
23 score or pass score on the test?

24 A Yes. The passing score is a very difficult thing
25 to set. It is very easy to write a test that if I use the

1 traditional 70 percent passing score, which unfortunately
2 seems to be the thing that more programs fall into than not
3 -- they don't all, but a number of them do -- that could be
4 very lenient, so lenient that almost everyone could pass, or
5 so stringent that almost no one could pass.

6 If you think of the analogy of baseball, 70
7 percent would be fantastic if you were talking about a
8 batting average. But it would be pretty terrible if you are
9 talking about a fielding average.

10 Q Could you explain for the audience what the
11 problems are, from your point of view as a technical expert,
12 in setting a cut score or passing score for minimum
13 competency tests?

14 A Well, the problem is that there is no standard out
15 there waiting for us to discover it. All the
16 standard-setting procedures involve the use of judgment. I
17 think both teams would agree upon that point.

18 There have been a number of techniques suggested,
19 and it turns out that it makes a huge difference when you
20 try to apply a very systematic procedure, use it
21 conscientiously; you come up with very different answers
22 that affect who will be denied it, who will be denied a
23 diploma, who will be promoted and who will not, depending on
24 which method you use and who it is that is involved in
25 setting the standards.

1 Q There is some data to show us on that?

2 A Yes. The chart illustrates some results of the
3 study that I might need to give some background on first.
4 First, it was conducted in the State of Kansas by Poggio and
5 a couple of co-authors who looked at four different
6 standard-setting techniques that have been suggested in the
7 literature. One of these was suggested by an earlier
8 witness today, Professor Ebel, another one by Angolff, a
9 third by Nedelsky, and a fourth is not associated with
10 someone's name.

11 Three of the procedures involve looking at
12 individual test items, carefully reviewing the items, and
13 making a decision of the form, "Should a person who is
14 minimally competent," whatever that is in the view of the
15 judge, "be able to pass this item, or should they be able to
16 eliminate the wrong alternatives?"

17 A fourth procedure involves a rather different
18 approach that has teachers make judgments as to who is
19 minimally competent and who is not. And then ask what test
20 score would best discriminate those two groups.

21 Well, as you can see from that chart, the results
22 you get from these four different methods that we used by a
23 total of over 900 teachers in the State of Kansas varied
24 dramatically from grade to grade and within a grade from one
25 procedure to another.

1 For example, at grade six on the 60-item test, one
2 procedure would set a passing score of 47, another of 28,
3 which would result in a difference of between slightly over
4 a thousand students failing the test and over 13,000
5 students failing the test. So this is a huge swing
6 depending on which method you happen to use to set the
7 standard.

8 Q And do you have data about the different people
9 using the same method, perhaps?

10 A Yes. If you skip the chart here, this one is
11 actually showing results that are also from comparing
12 different methods. It shows what happens if you have the
13 most lenient procedure at the eighth grade, which this
14 happens to be, which would fail approximately 2 percent of
15 the students as opposed to the most stringent procedure
16 which would fail approximately 29 percent. So you have, a
17 swing of 27 percent of the students. About one student in
18 four will pass or fail depending upon which method you
19 happen to use to set the standard.

20 Q Depending on the method, one out of four is the
21 swing. Okay.

22 A Now, you asked whether or not it makes a
23 difference who does the judging. The study that looked at
24 this rather carefully was conducted by Professor Jaeger at
25 the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and some

1 colleagues, in which they really pursued in some detail a
2 procedure that seemed to me to be about as good as I have
3 seen for trying to set standards, that they did it with
4 three different groups.

5 Teachers are one obvious group that might set the
6 standard, but there are others. There are curriculum
7 experts, principals, teachers, registered voters. In any
8 event, he had three separate groups within the State of
9 North Carolina, a sample of teachers, a sample of principals
10 and counselors, and a sample of registered voters who were
11 selected from random lists of registered voters.

12 And each of these groups used the same method and
13 tried to set the standards for passing the test within the
14 State of North Carolina. They also had available the actual
15 cut score that was used.

16 This process was not just a one-pass. Each group
17 went through setting the standards actually three times.
18 They went through a procedure and asked a question for each
19 individual item, "Should every regular high school graduate
20 in North Carolina be able to answer this item correctly?"
21 Then they were given feedback about what other people in
22 their group had decided on that. And they were also told
23 the percentage of eleventh-graders in North Carolina who
24 actually answered that item correctly.

25 Then they went back and did the same reading again

1 on these items, and they finally were given more
2 information, again told what the other people in the group
3 were doing, and given information about the implications of
4 their judgments in terms of the number of eleventh-graders
5 who would have actually failed the test if they had followed
6 their procedure.

7 Q What does the chart show?

8 A What you have is again a chart showing the
9 difference between the most lenient of these groups in this
10 case using the same method and the most stringent. And you
11 have in reading, the chart that is there now, a difference
12 between 9 percent if you use the most lenient group and 30
13 percent if you used the most stringent. So for about one
14 student in five it would make a difference as to whether you
15 pass or fail.

16 In math, the difference is even more dramatic. In
17 situations that I looked at, it is commonly the case that
18 there seems to be rather different standard set in math than
19 in reading. And my interpretation of that is that it has
20 less to do with the fact that the students are less
21 competent for necessary skills than it has to do with how
22 easy it is to write test items in mathematics than in
23 reading and how when people look at it a student really
24 ought to be able to answer that sort of mathematics question
25 because the answer is clearer.

1 In any event, the swing with the different groups
2 here in mathematics would make a difference for over half
3 the students between the most lenient method, which fails 14
4 percent, and the most stringent, 71 percent.

5 Q So every other student in this particular method
6 might even be denied a diploma depending on which group was
7 setting the standard?

8 A Precisely.

9 Q It is obvious that very important decisions are
10 made on the basis of these tests. We heard that over the
11 past day and a half. Are minimum competency tests reliable
12 and accurate enough to make such decisions by themselves?

13 A No, I don't think they are, by themselves. I
14 think the tests, as we have heard other testimony, are often
15 more reliable than some other types of judgments. But if
16 you look, if you sit down and take a test, if you took it on
17 Monday and had to take an alternate form of that test, one
18 that was intended to be as comparable as possible on Friday,
19 you wouldn't expect to get the same score.

20 The difference between these results are what
21 people in the measurement community, at least, refer to as
22 "measurement error." This measurement error is often fairly
23 substantial, enough so that I think it is unwise to make
24 major decisions on the basis of a single-point difference.

25 Q Would you give us an example of how it might make

1 a difference?

2 A Well, if you look at the precision of the test,
3 the measurement error on one test that is well known,
4 published by the Educational Testing Service, the
5 Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, they have a statement
6 about that test which I think applies to a number of other
7 tests. It is not the test used for minimum competency
8 testing programs, and I didn't mean to imply that.

9 But the statement implies much more generally.
10 Their statement is that the precision of any test is limited
11 because it represents only a sample of all the questions
12 that could be asked. And under this carefully constructed
13 test, which has a range of 20 to 80 on the scale, they have
14 a standard error of measurement, a unit that is used to
15 gauge how accurate the results are of four points,
16 approximately.

17 This means that if a student really should receive
18 a score of 50 on this test -- that is, if you could give it
19 many, many times, many versions of it and on the average
20 they would get a score of 50 -- about one time in six you
21 might expect them to get a score below 46. Another one time
22 in six you might expect them to get a score above 54.

23 Another example that you might consider is on the
24 spelling test. Imagine that you set a standard of 70
25 percent and this was intended to apply to a large list of

1 spelling words, that you would like to say that the pass
2 score is that the student should be able to spell correctly
3 a list of 70 percent of all these items in this long list.

4 Well, what happens on the test, of course, is that
5 you have to take a sample of these items out of this larger
6 number. So if you took, for example, a sample of 20 of the
7 items, a student who actually knew 80 percent of this large
8 pool of items would have a fair chance of ending up failing
9 the test, in fact would have about one chance in eleven,
10 just by the luck of the draw, of failing that time.

11 That is one side of the coin. The other side of
12 the coin is even different or worse, possibly, without even
13 taking into account the chances of guessing on a
14 multiple-choice test. A student who really knew only 60
15 percent of the items in this domain, this long list of
16 words, would have about one chance in four of actually
17 getting over 70 percent because he was lucky and got 14
18 words that he happened to know from the 60 percent.

19 Q We have heard a lot of testimony that minimum
20 competency tests have a higher failure rate for minority
21 students than whites. Did you look at some data that would
22 indicate that to be true also?

23 A Yes, it is true. It is true undoubtedly for many
24 reasons. We have heard a lot of the reasons, testimony
25 about a lot of the reasons today also and yesterday,

1 differences not only in educational experiences, but in a
2 long history of differences of experience for minority and
3 majority students in this country.

4 So, for example, on the Florida minimum competency
5 test in 1977 the chance is about one student in October of
6 '77 about one student in four failed among the white sample,
7 but about three in four failed amongst the black sample on
8 the math test.

9 Q Is it true, Dr. Linn, that a wrong answer to one
10 or two multiple-choice questions on a 70-question test could
11 result in substantial numbers of students failing a test and
12 thereby having their diplomas withheld who otherwise might
13 have passed?

14 A Yes. It is quite true. And that effect is
15 difference for, say, blacks versus whites in the State of
16 North -- I am sorry -- in the State of Florida. If you
17 recall the results I gave on the early studies the
18 arbitrariness of setting the standards, in one of the cases
19 in Kansas the swing was as many as 24 points. So it seemed
20 only prudent to consider looking at what would happen in
21 terms of who would pass and fail if you switched this
22 passing score by at least a few points. One, two, or three
23 is what I actually looked at.

24 The passing score of 70 percent -- it is actually
25 a 58-item test -- a passing score would require 41 correct

1 answers. So what I did was look at what percentage of the
2 people would pass if you lowered that to 40 correct answers,
3 39 or 38. And the chart shows the results separately for
4 white students and for black students.

5 Now, because the cutting score is set at the
6 location of the distribution where there are many more black
7 students, a larger proportion of black students than there
8 are white students, you end up with a larger reduction in
9 the amount of adverse impacts, the differential between the
10 two groups as you lower that cutting score by those three
11 points. In fact, you would reduce by lowering the cutting
12 score by three points it would change for black students
13 about 6 percent, which would amount to roughly 1300 students
14 in that particular test.

15 Q That is the communications test?

16 A That's right.

17 Q What about the mathematics test?

18 A The mathematics test, you have even a bigger gap
19 because the cutting scores are set in a region where there
20 are more students involved in both groups, and you would
21 change by reducing the cutting score three points in that
22 case an additional 8 percent of white students would have
23 passed and an additional roughly 14 percent or 3000 black
24 students would have passed the test.

25 Q About how many students overall then would have

1 been denied a diploma on the basis of those three items?

2 A Well, in the case of the math test you would have
3 had an additional 300 -- I am sorry -- 3000 black students
4 who would have failed to meet that passing score on that
5 administration.

6 Q 3000. So, given that particular fact, with the
7 fact of the way the cut score is set or who sets the cut
8 score, it makes a big difference. A few items can make a
9 big difference in the classification of students.

10 A That's right. It can make a big difference in the
11 classification, and it can make a big difference and create
12 an adverse impact.

13 Q Some people say that there are some questions on
14 these tests that are unfair to minority students. Have you
15 ever attempted to substantiate that particular charge?

16 A Well, I have done several studies of bias
17 involving a number of different tests. It is an area where
18 the methodology is far from perfect. We are still
19 developing, and there are a lot of uncertainties in how to
20 go about it. The most relevant results that I have are some
21 analyses that I did, again of the Florida test, based upon
22 two different ways of looking at the question.

23 One way was to take the results of expert-witness
24 judgments in the Debra P. trial.

25 Q That is the Florida litigation?

1 A That's the litigation involving the Florida
2 functional literacy test.

3 In that trial, expert witnesses identified 19
4 items that in their judgment they thought were suspect,
5 potentially biased, if you will. I did an independent
6 analysis which looked at it from a statistical point of view
7 and looked to see if there were items that were unusually
8 difficult or more difficult than you would expect on the
9 basis of results on the other items for black students
10 within the test.

11 My results did not agree perfectly, by any means,
12 with the results of the expert witnesses. But they agreed
13 much better than mere chance. Eight of the items were
14 identified as potentially suspect by both methods.

15 Incidentally, my statistical analysis identified
16 14 items as potentially suspect. Now, I am not claiming
17 that those 14 items are necessarily biased. But they are at
18 least suspect on two different grounds. And it seems to me
19 in that situation, especially if you are making a very major
20 decision on the basis of the test, that it again makes sense
21 to look at what the implications are of what would happen if
22 you removed those items or replaced them with different
23 items.

24 Q Could you show us what does happen?

25 A Yes. I did that in the last chart that we have up

1 there. This looks again at a comparison of what would
2 happen now. The first two bars with the zero under them are
3 the results you have already seen. That is the situation
4 where you have all the test items in there.

5 The next pair for whites and blacks shows what
6 happens when I removed a single item, the one that was the
7 most suspect in terms of my statistical analysis and was one
8 of the 19 identified by the witnesses. When you remove that
9 single item, a few more whites would have actually passed,
10 about one-fourth of 1 percent, and about 1.5 percent
11 additional blacks would pass, or 300 students.

12 If you removed all eight of them, the amount is
13 larger, as you would expect. And about 4.7 percent, or
14 about 1000 additional black students would have passed the
15 test with those items removed.

16 Q Dr. Linn, we have seen evidence now that one, two,
17 or three items can make a big difference in classification
18 of students. We have also heard from the other side that
19 the students will be able to take the test multiple times,
20 so it really does not make any difference. How would you
21 react to that?

22 A Well, I think that is a very curious argument.
23 Obviously, students should have the opportunity to take the
24 test a number of times. I agree with that.

25 But if, in fact, a strong motivation is to get rid

1 of the so-called "counterfeit" diploma, then one way to do
2 it is to get people enough times taking this same or
3 essentially the same test -- and I hope it is essentially
4 the same, at least -- and by mere chance, a large number of
5 them are eventually going to get over that borderline. And
6 once they are, you don't keep testing them and asking are
7 you now under, so I am now going to say you failed.

8 DR. MADAUS: Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Cross?

10 CROSS EXAMINATION

11 BY MR. PCPHAM:

12 Q Professor Linn, what is the alternative to using
13 student performance on tests to make educational decisions
14 even though those tests are less than totally accurate?

15 A I did not argue that -- well, I will talk about an
16 alternative if you want, but I did not argue that tests
17 should not be used in making those decisions. I think that
18 they are one important component in the decision, but I am
19 arguing against putting a reliance on them that says that
20 this is the necessary requirement to pass at a particular
21 cutting score on this test.

22 I think that it is important to have some ability
23 to go back and question that when you are very close to that
24 decision, for a teacher who is very close to the situation,
25 for example, may have a better judgment about some of the

1 implications of passing or not passing and can use the test
2 score as part of that information.

3 Q And it is acceptable to use the test score in that
4 fashion?

5 A As far as I am concerned, in fact, it is desirable.

6 Q There are several themes I would like to focus on,
7 the first of which deals with standard-setting because you
8 spent some time on that. Do you believe that standards on
9 these kinds of tests must be set arbitrarily, capriciously,
10 and mindlessly?

11 A You want me to answer each of those individually?
12 I would distinguish between those labels. I think they have
13 somewhat different connotations.

14 Q One at a time, arbitrarily.

15 A Arbitrarily, yes. I think there is no God-given
16 standard that we are trying to find and will eventually find
17 and it will be the right answer.

18 Q The Oxford English Dictionary, in its meaning for
19 "arbitrary," suggests a pejorative meaning, a negative
20 meaning. That is, in fact, arbitrary equals capricious and
21 mindless. That is not what you are saying?

22 A No, I am not saying that.

23 Q This is nice arbitrary?

24 A It is arbitrary in the sense that there isn't a
25 right answer that is God-given that we are going to find.

1 Q But you are not opposed to judgmental
2 standard-setting procedures, are you?

3 A I think there are no other kind of
4 standard-setting procedures except ones that involve human
5 judgment.

6 Q Then it follows you are not opposed to it?

7 A I am not opposed to standards. I am opposed to
8 setting cutting scores on a test that are arbitrarily set by
9 good procedures, but well-intentioned and a lot of work
10 going into those judgments, but still arbitrary standards on
11 this test that you can then make a very major decision on on
12 the basis of.

13 Q So you are opposed then to judgmental
14 standard-setting on these kinds of tests? You are
15 thoroughly opposed and think it ought not to be done?

16 A That is not what I said.

17 Q I am trying to tease out what you did say.

18 A I think that I am not at all opposed to trying to
19 set standards on the test. You might -- well, let me try to
20 illustrate because there are fine distinctions here.
21 Setting a standard judgmentally, as you have to, on the test
22 as a target is quite different from setting a standard that
23 is then going to be used with no possibility of overruling
24 in an individual case.

25 Q You describe at some length the fact that

1 different standard-setting techniques yielded different
2 standards. That does not surprise you, does it?

3 A No, it doesn't. I would expect that they would
4 yield quite different results. It surprised me that they
5 are as different as they are. I would have, as I believe
6 Bob Ebel testified, he would like them to be closer
7 together. So would I. I think that they are radically
8 apart.

9 Q Is it not true, Professor Linn, that educational
10 researchers have only in recent years been devoting much
11 attention to solving the technical problems of how to set
12 performance standards?

13 A That's true. That has received much more
14 attention in recent years. And I think that we are more
15 aware of some of the pitfalls, but we don't have the
16 solutions.

17 Q You described Jaeger's method as a prominent one,
18 and it is getting some attention on the part of our
19 colleagues. Do you not think that there is some cause for
20 optimism?

21 A I think that we can improve on how we set a
22 standard. Certainly, I would think that going through a
23 process such as Jaeger's would be much more defensible than
24 coming up with 70 percent, which is often commonly done.

25 I would go back to the point, though, that I would

1 still make the distinction between what you are going to use
2 that standard for.

3 Q I would like to turn to another theme which has to
4 do with the impact of several items on the performance of
5 youngsters, hence the decision made regarding those
6 youngsters. You traced for us your analysis of some items
7 which were initially identified by experts in a trial as
8 being potentially biased. Who were those experts?

9 A Hilliard and Lilly James were the two, I think,
10 that identified them.

11 Q And then you took the items and empirically, if I
12 understood, tried to decide which items were missed more
13 frequently by black youngsters than by white youngsters? Is
14 that the way you looked at them? I was not quite sure how
15 you did that statistically.

16 A Well, I am sorry, I thought you would have been
17 able to figure that out from the exhibit I sent you.

18 I did it by a fairly standard procedure, one that
19 involves basically a difficulty index which happens to be
20 called "Delta." It is an index used by the Educational
21 Testing Service.

22 Q But in essence, it is chiefly determined by how
23 many youngsters who are black missed the item versus how
24 many youngsters who are white missed the items?

25 A Relative to a difference, if there is one, on how

1 many missed them on other items; that's right.

2 Q So then you took these items and on the basis of
3 these items discerned that if certain of the items were
4 eliminated, that a greater proportion of black youngsters
5 would have passed the examination; is that correct?

6 A That's right.

7 Q Okay. Now, this argument appears to me to be
8 eminently circular. Let me describe why I think it is, and
9 perhaps you can tell me why it isn't.

10 If we were trying to devise a test and discovered
11 that certain items were answered more frequently correct by
12 a left-handed youngster than by a right-handed youngster and
13 we removed several of those biased items from the test, we
14 would not be surprised when more left-handed youngsters
15 thereafter passed the test, because they obviously would not
16 have missed those items on which they did not perform well.

17 Now you tell us precisely the same thing is true
18 in the case of the Florida test. You find some items that
19 more black youngsters missed than white. You take the items
20 out, and, not astonishingly, more black youngsters pass the
21 test. Is that what you are saying? And is that not
22 circular?

23 A I am glad you are not astonished. I think what it
24 does is display the difference in another modality, one that
25 is maybe more understandable; that is, it shows what

1 difference it makes to individual students, what possible
2 impact it would make if you removed those individual items.
3 I don't consider it circular.

4 Q Let us take a different example. If I recall, you
5 said -- and we are not focusing on biased items -- but you
6 said if you took some items out of an examination, if the
7 scores around the cutting point happen to fall in the area
8 of the distribution where more of the students were, let us
9 say, more black youngsters than white youngsters, that more
10 of those black youngsters would be disadvantaged by those
11 items and hence would pass the test if you took those items
12 out. Right?

13 A That's correct.

14 Q Now, let us assume a different situation. Let us
15 say we devise a test of the history of an ethnic minority --
16 this is an ethnic minority history test -- and we give it to
17 members of that ethnic minority and we give it to members of
18 the majority.

19 And we discover that most of the members of the
20 ethnic minority performed rather well and that most of the
21 members of the majority do not perform very well. And we
22 set the cutoff score down here in the middle of the
23 majority. Not too many ethnic minorities get down that low
24 because they do not do badly on the test of their own
25 history.

1 Then we take some items out and, not surprisingly,
2 more members of the majority advance. Is that essentially
3 what you are seeing in this case?

4 A That is an explanation of what is going on. And
5 in fact, I tried to say essentially that, but maybe not as
6 eloquently as you just did.

7 But the point is that the consequence is that the
8 amount of adverse impact varies as a function of where you
9 set this standard, and the standard is arbitrary.

10 Q What I am attempting to reduce your very
11 sophisticated and eloquent argument to is their basic core,
12 which is if you take some items out that most members of a
13 minority group are missing, then members of that minority
14 group will do better, and if you take some items out, that
15 happen to fall around the cut score, then most of the
16 students performing around that cut score will do better.

17 That is, in essence, what you are saying; is it
18 not?

19 A That is a summary of it.

20 Q Thank you. Final point: You have commented about
21 this 80-percent speller's performance on a 20-item test
22 which is drawn from a pool of items. And on that particular
23 pool of items a 70-percent pass score is set. And you
24 assert that if that 80-percent knowledgeable speller takes
25 the 20 items that one time out of eleven that student would

1 unjustly fail the test. Is that correct?

2 A "Unjustly" was not the word I used. But they
3 would fail the test because of errors of measurement.

4 Q Well, they know 80 percent and 70 percent is the
5 cutoff score. They did not pass. So would that not be
6 unjust, in your estimate?

7 A It would be to be expected within the margin of
8 error of the test. That is part of my point.

9 Q But do you not consider it unjust?

10 A That is part of my point, that we are dealing with
11 a fallible instrument here and that we should not put undue
12 reliance on this technology to make very major distinctions
13 about very small differences.

14 Q Certainly, when you point out that one time out of
15 eleven a person will fail the test when you might have
16 anticipated they would pass it, it is something. Give me an
17 adjective that would satisfy you. "Nasty"? "Unwholesome"?
18 "Unsavory"? "Bad"? "Unfortunate"?

19 A It is unfortunate.

20 Q It is unfortunate. One out of eleven. Do you
21 realize that if a student is given four opportunities to
22 take that test or an equivalent form, the same situation
23 prevailing, that the chance is that certainly would have a
24 unfortunate experience are one in 10,000?

25 A I didn't do the calculation, but that sounds like

1 a very plausible number and not surprising. Might I add one
2 more comment, however. That is looking at only one side of
3 the coin. The other side was the student who failed -- I am
4 sorry -- the student who passed, who by the way in which the
5 standard is set, did not really know 70 percent of the
6 words. That student does not take the test four more times.

7 Also, between the times the student fails it the
8 first time and the time the student takes it the fourth time
9 and passes it one of those four times, some other things are
10 going to happen to that student, that maybe didn't need to
11 happen, that may have had consequences.

12 Q You are again talking about the imprecision of
13 measurement?

14 A That's correct.

15 Q And we all concur. You have been an advocate of
16 that most of your professional life that errors will be made
17 in the use of tests. The question is what is the legitimate
18 alternative?

19 A Well, I think a legitimate alternative, as I tried
20 to articulate earlier, is for the test to be used as a piece
21 of information that is then used by professionals in
22 consultation with parents and with students to arrive at a
23 decision about what makes the most sense. What is the most
24 likely beneficial outcome the following year, say, if we are
25 talking about grade-to-grade promotion, in the judgment of

1 the teacher? Is it more likely that that student will learn
2 more by being passed or is it likely that they will learn
3 more by being held back?

4 That is an important piece of information, the
5 test score, in making that judgment. But the teacher who is
6 closest to it, and the principal and the parent, are also
7 important in that decision.

8 Q One truly last question. Is it not possible in
9 some situations, since you wish to rely so heavily on
10 teacher judgment, that teachers will have a vested interest
11 in moving students ahead and therefore passing them when
12 they really do not deserve to be passed?

13 A It is certainly possible. I would not want to
14 have a major decision such as whether or not a student was
15 going to get a high school diploma based upon one teacher's
16 judgment either.

17 MR. POPHAM: Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Is there further redirect?

19 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. HANEY:

21 Q To borrow Dr. Popham's questioning, your analysis
22 was "unfortunate" or, to use his equivalent, "somewhat
23 nasty." I would like to draw out the point you made in your
24 own testimony which Dr. Popham was ignoring. We tried to
25 imply that your reasoning in your analysis of potential bias

1 in the Florida test was circular. I would like to ask you
2 did you identify biased items strictly on the basis that
3 black students tended to miss those items more frequently
4 than white students?

5 A No. The items that were involved were the ones on
6 which there was concurrence between the expert-judgment
7 opinions and the statistical analysis I did.

8 Q Is it fair to say that you used two independent
9 methods to identify biased items?

10 A That's right.

11 Q I would like to ask one last question. Compared
12 to this analysis of potential bias in the Florida test,
13 using two independent methods which gave similar results,
14 would you say there was similar evidence concerning the
15 validity of the Florida test as a measure of functional
16 literacy, which is what the test was commonly known as or
17 claimed to be measuring in Florida?

18 A I don't know of good evidence on validity of the
19 test measuring functional literacy.

20 MR. HANEY: Thank you very much.

21 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Is there recross?

22 We will take a 15-minute recess and return at 3:45.

23 (Brief recess.)

24 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: The hearing is reconvened.

25 The next witness to be called, Mr. Nathan

1 Quinones, executive director, Division of High Schools, New
2 York City Board of Education.

3 TESTIMONY OF NATHAN QUINONES,
4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF HIGH SCHOOLS
5 NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 BY MS. PULLIN:

8 Q Doctor, Professor Jordan has indicated that you re
9 Executive Director of the Division of High Schools in New
10 York City. Could you briefly describe what that position
11 entails?

12 A Briefly, it means that I am the chief
13 administrative and supervisory officer for the 110 public
14 high schools in New York City.

15 Q All right.

16 A Excuse me. I don't have a doctorate.

17 Q I would be the last person to give someone a
18 worthless degree.

19 (Laughter.)

20 You have minimum competency testing in your State?

21 A Yes, we have.

22 Q And you are implementating that program in the
23 city schools of New York?

24 A Yes.

25 Q In the current senior class, how many students

1 have yet to pass the test for diploma requirement?

2 A You are saying as of now?

3 Q As of now.

4 A As of now, we have 716 senior students who failed
5 to get a diploma by virtue of not passing the Regent's
6 competency examinations in New York City.

7 Q And those are students who failed the test but
8 otherwise met all standards for receipt of a diploma?

9 A Yes.

10 Q All right. And approximately what percentage of
11 the senior class would that number be?

12 A That constitutes approximately 1.7 percent.

13 Q New York City and its public schools have a
14 significant number of students with different language
15 backgrounds, is that correct?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Could you indicate for us the variety of language
18 backgrounds from which these students come?

19 A Well, this year we identified some 40 different
20 languages in New York City and have asked the State to
21 prepare examinations in those languages; that is. Since the
22 State having established a standard for competency
23 examinations, we then felt that the next logical extension
24 of that would be to establish examinations in those
25 languages as well.

1 Those languages range from Spanish, French,
2 Creole, Greek, Urdu, Tagalog, Farsi, et cetera, et cetera.
3 That is not a language.

4 Q A significant variety. Why did you as an educator
5 feel it was necessary that tests be developed in those
6 languages?

7 A Well, the State Education Department has
8 established that itself, although I must say that it did not
9 so initially. Initially, it indicated that all students
10 would have to adhere to a singular criterion of one
11 examination. That included initially special education
12 students as well as the limited-English-proficient students.

13 It since changed that to allow for alternative
14 tests to be developed and to be administered for the
15 students in those two categories.

16 Q Did the State then provide you with the translated
17 tests or foreign-language versions of the tests for all
18 40-some of those foreign languages?

19 A Only for some, but not for all.

20 Q What was the distinction?

21 A Well, the distinction is a multiple one. For some
22 there was a translation of the test in mathematics, for
23 example. The students also have to pass a test in English
24 depending on the number of years that they have been here.
25 And then a written sample also in their native language.

1 Now, in some instances where the tests were not
2 developed by the State Education Department, the extreme was
3 that the high school principal would have a great amount of
4 authority and jurisdiction by virtue of developing or having
5 the student write an essay of some 250 words and then trying
6 to assess on that basis whether the student was proficient
7 enough to be granted a diploma.

8 Q Do all of your principals have proficiency in 40
9 languages?

10 A Hardly.

11 Q You have indicated that there were some translated
12 versions of the tests available in other languages.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Have you looked at any of those tests and the
15 items on them?

16 A Well, I happened to look at the more recent
17 examinations, particularly the ones in Spanish.

18 Q And what was the conclusion you reached as a
19 result of reviewing those examinations? I presume that you
20 are a Spanish speaker?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And is that your native language?

23 A That was my first language.

24 Q All right. Thank you. I am sorry.

25 As a result of a review of those items in Spanish,

1 can you indicate to me what you found and how the impact of
2 those items might be felt by students taking the examination?

3 A I think first that to translate an examination is
4 totally inadequate, because you get into not only the
5 syntactical problems but you get even into the problems of
6 culture that then in a very subtle fashion establish even
7 more obstacles for the student to overcome.

8 Let me cite one example for you, and this one was
9 from a very recent examination. It is very brief, and I
10 will read the English portion: "Martha began mowing a lawn
11 at 10:00 a.m. and finished at 1:30 p.m. How many hours did
12 it take her to mow the lawn?" Very simple for anyone who is
13 raised in this country.

14 To raise this question or to translate it to a
15 student who comes from India, who comes from Latin America,
16 who comes from the South Bronx, let alone, poses a variety
17 of problems that are totally alien to the experience of that
18 youngster. And I would say that if anyone knows a foreign
19 language here, that I would challenge them to translate "mow
20 a lawn." It is uniquely American and middle-class American,
21 and then, consequently, interferes with what the major
22 intent of that question is. And that is to assess the
23 mathematical ability of that student.

24 Q All right. Very good. Did you find other
25 indications of difficulty with tests which might result for

1 children who had limited English-speaking ability?

2 A Let me cite the most recent examination. This was
3 one was given on June 15 of this year; again, a translation
4 into Spanish, although that would have to be in quotes. And
5 I will have to read it in Spanish, but you will see the
6 intent for that:

7 "Todas las semanas Susana tiene las siguientes
8 deducciones de su sueldo: \$5.50 para el impuesto federal
9 ('Federal income tax'); \$1.55 para el impuesto estado
10 ('State income tax'); y \$1.10 para el seguro social ('social
11 security'). ¿Que cantidad de dinero le deducen a Susana de
12 su sueldo todas las semanas?"

13 One would have to question -- is this a
14 translation? What are all of these English words doing
15 there? What is the intent of the question? Then look at
16 the variety of different elements being introduced into a
17 question of simple mathematics.

18 Q I would presume that there might be a compounding
19 factor introduced by the fact that children from some
20 cultures and perhaps even children from the mainstream
21 American culture may not be familiar with the concepts of
22 social security withholding or federal income tax.

23 A When you consider that the inner-city youngster
24 not only in New York City but throughout the country is
25 impoverished and also is unemployed and all of the variety

1 of elements that that connotes, this is truly an alien
2 question to the majority of those youngsters as well.

3 Q Could you explain to us whether you think it is
4 fair that the minimum competency tests used in New York and
5 in New York City, your own school district, place a very
6 large penalty on students who fail the test?

7 A Did you say whether it is fair?

8 Q Do you think it is fair?

9 A Patently unfair.

10 Q Why do you feel it is patently unfair?

11 A First, you are focusing your major sanction during
12 the terminal grades without having had a sufficient
13 intervention during the early grades. That youngster then
14 has been lulled into a false sense of security -- and
15 certainly those families have as well -- into having been
16 passed throughout eleven years and then in the terminal and
17 twelfth grade being denied a diploma but ostensibly having
18 met all of the other requirements of our school system.

19 Q Given this and given some of the problems that we
20 have heard about minimum competency testing and the use of
21 that testing, do you hear within your school district any
22 kinds of comments about the appropriateness of using this
23 approach?

24 A We have very early on expressed -- and by "we," I
25 don't mean just myself but the chancellor of the Board of

1 Education -- our concern with using such a unitary and
2 singular standard for the denial of a diploma. Not
3 necessarily that that connotes our lack of interest in
4 raising standards for all students, but when you match that
5 together with an insufficient or, in some instances, an
6 inadequately prepared curriculum, then that I think is a
7 reflection on poor educational standards.

8 Q I suspect Mr. Popham might say that you as an
9 educator are simply afraid of being held accountable in any
10 way for the success of your school system. Do you feel the
11 school system is successful and is delivering the kinds of
12 services it should be delivering?

13 A Anyone in education has to be brought into the
14 terrible dilemma that feeling that for as many years as he
15 or she may spend in education, you are never going to be as
16 successful as you should be.

17 MS. PULLIN: Thank you. I have no more questions.

18 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Mr. Popham.

19 CROSS EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. POPHAM:

21 Q Mr. Quiones, you described the fact that 716
22 students would not graduate on the basis of failing the test
23 but had mastered all other requirements.

24 A I would simply change "would not" rather to "have
25 not."

1 Q Have not. Well, if I understand you, then, the
2 716 students have been able to go through the rest of the
3 program and yet have not been able to pass a test. How many
4 students are in that grade level? About 40,000?

5 A We have approximately 42,000.

6 Q 42,000. And 41,000-plus had passed. We cannot
7 consider it a terribly stringent exam, then, I assume. And
8 yet the 716 students have not passed the test. The question
9 is is this a comment on the test or a comment on the system?

10 A First, there seems to be an assumption that the
11 test is adequate regardless of the number of students who
12 fail it or who may pass it. And I don't accept that
13 assumption.

14 Beyond that, I would hope that we place much more
15 emphasis on the adequacy of our curriculum and on the
16 adequacy of instruction. We continue to have a system where
17 the accountability rests on that youngster. That youngster
18 will have to take a competency examination in mathematics
19 even if he or she has never had a fully licensed teacher of
20 mathematics. Now, that is patently unfair also.

21 Q Do I take it, then, that you might be more
22 favorably inclined toward these examinations if, as you
23 describe, earlier accountability, responsibility was leveled
24 against teachers, such that in fact the youngster had many
25 opportunities to prepare along the way? Would that be a

1 somewhat more palatable system?

2 A I would say, first, that I don't have the
3 discontent with examinations as I believe your question
4 implies. But my concern is that it not be used with such
5 singular emphasis as it currently has.

6 Q I recall your saying that you thought it was
7 unfair late in the game and if they had had earlier
8 opportunities it would have been more fair; something along
9 those lines?

10 A And together with a developed curriculum
11 criterion, reference examination, and adequate staffing and
12 teaching.

13 Q You are singing our song. Thank you.

14 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Further questions?

15 Thank you very much.

16 Our next witness is Dr. Roger Farr, Director,
17 Lester Smith Center for Research in Education, Indiana
18 University, Bloomington, Indiana.

19 TESTIMONY OF DR. ROGER FARR, DIRECTOR,
20 HENRY LESTER SMITH CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION
21 INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION

23 BY DR. MADAUS:

24 Q Could you please describe for the audience your
25 area of expertise and education?

1 A Yes. I consider myself a specialist in both the
2 areas of reading and measurement. For the past ten years I
3 have been conducting studies and summarizing research on
4 literacy trends in the United States. I have also worked
5 extensively with schools and teachers in planning and
6 instituting reading programs across the United States.

7 I am the author of two nationally standardized
8 reading tests, a consultant to the National Assessment of
9 Educational Progress, a past president of the 70,000-member
10 International Reading Association, author of a 1970 book
11 entitled "Reading: What Can Be Measured?"

12 I am presently professor of education and director
13 of the Henry Lester Smith Center for Research and Education
14 at Indiana University. And during the past year I have
15 testified on reading achievement and reading trends before
16 two congressional committees.

17 Q Now, you have been watching the development of
18 minimum competency testing across the country. To what do
19 you attribute the rapid development of minimum competency
20 testing?

21 A I think the rapid development of minimum
22 competency, which I think is a simple-minded solution to the
23 wrong problem, has grown out of three or four different
24 concerns. First of all, it is the public dissatisfaction
25 and the assumed decline in education, particularly the

1 assumed decline of students' reading ability. The public
2 belief seems to have become quite strong in the past ten to
3 fifteen years that education is not accomplishing what it
4 ought to be.

5 I should emphasize that criticism of education is
6 not new and probably the most serious attacks on education
7 occurred at the time that comprehensive free public
8 education was first established in the United States.
9 Nevertheless, the criticism continues.

10 I would base that criticism on a number of
11 factors. First of all, there is an increasing expectation
12 of what the schools are supposed to accomplish. Census data
13 clearly reveals that the average grade completed of parents,
14 adults in the United States, has been constantly
15 increasing. Those better-educated parents expect more,
16 indeed demand more and better education for their children.

17 Secondly, the public media constantly emphasizes
18 the negative about education. If I could, I would like to
19 read you two paragraphs that make that point, I think.

20 The first paragraph comes from a little pamphlet
21 put out by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
22 It is a very objective, straightforward statement about how
23 youngsters in this country are reading. I would like to
24 read you just the first paragraph of that statement. It is
25 entitled "Three National Assessments of Reading: Changes in

1 Performance, 1970-1980." The paragraph goes as follows:

2 "Results of three reading assessments indicate
3 that significant gains by nine-year-olds, first observed
4 between the 1971 and 1975 assessments, continued into the
5 third reading assessment. Performance of 13- and
6 17-year-olds remained relatively stable from the first to
7 the third assessment, with 13-year-olds gaining slightly in
8 literal comprehension, while 17-year-olds declined slightly
9 in inferential comprehension."

10 I now would like to read to you from the front
11 page of the New York Times. The date is April 29, 1981, an
12 interpretation of that data. Again, I would like to read to
13 you what most people read, the headline for that article and
14 the first paragraph. The article is headed as follows:
15 "Reading Data Indicate Decline in Reasoning Ability."

16 "New evidence of lower achievement in schools
17 throughout the country was provided yesterday by the
18 National Assessment of Educational Progress, which found
19 that the inferential reasoning of 13-year-olds and
20 17-year-olds declined on reading tests in the 1970s."

21 I am pleased to say the article does go on, and
22 the fourth and fifth paragraphs start to get back to some of
23 the positive data. But there are lots of people who read
24 only that headline and lots more who read perhaps just the
25 first paragraph.

1 There is a third issue that I think needs to be
2 taken into account when we consider what the schools are
3 accomplishing. Over the past 25, 35, 40 years, the schools
4 have begun to provide an education for 90 percent of our
5 population that 25 years ago was provided for only the top
6 50 percent.

7 Our strong and important national efforts for
8 increased equality may have lowered our average achievement
9 levels, but we have to remember that more students are
10 included in that population, so we are indeed accomplishing
11 higher levels of literacy for a much broader spectrum of our
12 children. Basic literacy skills are at an all-time high.

13 The fourth point is the decline in some tests,
14 particularly the Scholastic Aptitude Test, which seems to
15 have been taken as the essence of what education is all
16 about. The Scholastic Aptitude Test that is administered to
17 high school seniors is not an indication of where we are in
18 education in this country. And the Willard Wertz report
19 that reviewed that data and the decline in the SAT scores
20 carefully pointed that out in just two brief quotes from
21 that report, the Willard Wertz report:

22 "Any generalization from the SAT statistics has to
23 be carefully qualified. It should not be extended to cover
24 the situation of American youth as a whole or the overall
25 effectiveness of the learning process."

1 And a second brief quote: "Recently published
2 College Board guidelines on the uses of College Board test
3 scores and related data warned sharply against their misuses
4 as measures of the broader effectiveness of elementary and
5 secondary education in general."

6 Q Does the SAT measure basic literacy?

7 A No way. The SAT does not measure basic literacy.
8 Nor was it ever intended to measure basic literacy. It
9 assesses a very high level of reading comprehension and
10 vocabulary knowledge. Studies we have begun to conduct at
11 Indiana University indicate that a minimum ninth- or
12 tenth-grade level is necessary in reading ability for a
13 student to even obtain a minimal score on the SAT.

14 Q Will the minimum competency testing movement
15 around the country reverse the SAT decline?

16 A I don't think so. There isn't any indication that
17 it will. I believe that, in fact, we will get an emphasis on
18 the wrong things if we follow the minimum competency test.

19 Q It could make it worse?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Is basic literacy declining? Let us get back to
22 that, because a lot of the reasons put forth for minimum
23 competency testing is that basic literacy skills have
24 declined.

25 A No. Obviously, that answer, however, needs to be

1 qualified, and it depends on what one means by "basic
2 literacy." If the definition of "basic literacy," however,
3 are those reading skills and reading ability generally
4 taught in the first to sixth grades and those things that
5 are measured on what we call sixth-grade reading ability,
6 then there is no decline in basic reading skills
7 whatsoever. Indeed, basic literacy is increasing.

8 If I may, I would like to point to some charts
9 that we have that emphasize this data, I think, quite simply
10 and clearly. This is data from the National Assessment of
11 Educational Progress. This first chart is the data for
12 nine-year-olds, and as you can see from the chart the first
13 column indicates the 1970 data, and the second column 1975,
14 and the third column 1980. And the four groupings are
15 across four areas.

16 First of all, all exercises on the test; secondly,
17 literal comprehension; third, inferential comprehension; and
18 fourth, reference skills. Those increases that you see in
19 the third column in each grouping indicate the largest gains
20 that National Assessment has ever witnessed on any
21 examination they have ever administered in the United States.

22 We might take a look at the 13-year-old data; that
23 is the second chart. That one shows generally a flat
24 picture with certainly no decline, and a slight increase on
25 literal comprehension. Basically, though, it is pretty flat

1 data with no decline or increase.

2 If we could turn to the third data, the
3 17-year-old data, you can see on that chart again it is
4 basically a flat picture. The only significant change was a
5 slight decline on inferential comprehension. So we have
6 nine-year-olds on basic skills going way up; 13-year-olds
7 relatively flat, with a slight increase on literal; and
8 17-year-olds relatively flat with a slight decrease on
9 inferential.

10 Commenting on that data, National Assessment --
11 where again its only vested interest in this process is to
12 provide the best data possible to the nation so that a best
13 policy decision can be made -- I would like to give their
14 quote:

15 "Much more sophisticated analyses of National
16 Assessment would flesh out the general trends suggested by
17 this synopsis. However, even so general a sketch as this
18 one suffices to make a point with far-reaching implications
19 for policy and practice. The Assessment results show that
20 most 17-year-olds possess the basic literacy skills. The
21 proportion of disadvantaged young people who have acquired
22 these skills are still lower than the proportion of
23 advantaged teenagers. But that gap narrowed significantly
24 throughout the '70s."

25 A study that we conducted in Indiana, a comparison

1 of reading achievement, matched the performance of nearly
2 8000 sixth- and as many tenth-graders in 1976 against a
3 larger sample representing about one-fourth of the State's
4 students in those same grades in '44-'45. I hasten to point
5 out that many more dropouts, many more students were
6 dropping out of schools in that '44-'45 period than in 1976.

7 The 1976 Indiana study shows that today's
8 children, those youngsters in Indiana at that time, read far
9 better than students their age 30 years ago. When the
10 scores were adjusted for the significant age differences,
11 the 1976 sixth-graders outscored their earlier counterparts
12 significantly on every skill measured and on total scores.

13 The adjusted scores of the 1976 tenth-graders were
14 also significantly higher than those of the 1944-45 students
15 on all such tests except one.

16 The major conclusion of the Indiana study was that
17 the reading achievements of the 1976 were markedly improved
18 over those at the '44-'45 students.

19 Another conclusion, and I think a very important
20 one, from that study suggests that the contention that
21 students today do not read as well as those from the past,
22 at least as far as basic literacy is concerned, is a dismal
23 myth.

24 There are many other trend indicators and many
25 other studies. Those who don't like just test scores and

1 what they measure, I could go on and tell you about studies
2 that have to do with reading habits, the numbers of
3 libraries, the numbers of books in print, and percentage of
4 students that visit those libraries. And all of those are
5 positive indicators.

6 Q Does the International Reading Association have a
7 position on the use of minimum competency tests?

8 A Yes, because minimum competency tests in the area
9 for reading are quite common. It is usually the first area
10 that someone sets about assessing.

11 Our board of directors and, later, our delegates
12 assembly at our convention, both our world congress and
13 international congress, adopted the following position,
14 which I would like to read to you. It is very brief:

15 "No single measure or method of assessment of
16 minimum competencies should ever be the sole criterion for
17 graduation or promotion of a student. Multiple indices
18 assessed through a variety of means, including teacher
19 observations, student work samples, past academic
20 performance and students self-reports, should be employed to
21 assess competence.

22 "Furthermore, every effort should be made through
23 every possible means to remediate weaknesses diagnosed
24 through tests. Retention in grade or nonpromotion of a
25 student should be considered as only one alternative means

1 of remediation and one that should be considered only when
2 all other available methods have failed.

3 "For these reasons, the board of directors and the
4 delegates assembly of the International Reading Association
5 is firmly opposed to the efforts of any school, state,
6 provincial, or national agency which attempts to determine a
7 student's graduation or promotion on the basis of any single
8 assessment."

9 Q Dr. Farr, as a reading specialist and a person who
10 is engaged in testing in reading, can all important aspects
11 of reading be measured by a multiple-choice test?

12 A No. As an author of reading tests and as a
13 reading specialist, our tests can measure some things. It
14 is interesting that those aspects that are most easily
15 measured and most often measured on our tests are not the
16 end goals of reading instruction but only the means to that
17 end goal.

18 The ultimate goal of the reading instruction is
19 whether a person uses print materials as one more avenue to
20 a rich, full life. Comprehension, especially critical
21 retention of what one has read, and the integration of new
22 ideas with what one already knows are really the evidence of
23 the goal we are after.

24 Reading tests, particular minimum competency
25 tests, focus on very low-level literal comprehension, and I

1 don't believe it determines whether a student can even
2 understand what he reads.

3 They also emphasize word-recognition skills tested
4 in isolation from comprehension. Many specialists in
5 reading and researchers seriously question the value of
6 testing isolated reading skills.

7 Q Do you think that this emphasis on the isolated
8 reading skills that minimum competency testing has and is
9 focusing on will eventually hurt reading?

10 A I don't think there is any question at all that it
11 will. And I would like to explain how I think that is going
12 to happen. There are three concerns:

13 First of all, the emphasis on basic
14 word-recognition skills and minimum literal comprehension
15 seems to detract from an emphasis on the teaching of
16 higher-level reading comprehension ability. Higher-level
17 reading comprehension ability doesn't start in twelfth
18 grade; it starts in first grade. Indeed, it starts before
19 then. What tests emphasize will always be the focus of
20 instruction.

21 The emphasis on teaching minimum competency
22 skills, basic lower-level reading comprehension, and
23 isolated word-recognition skills may help to explain the
24 decline of reading competency and comprehension at the
25 higher grade levels. Research by Dolores Durkin at the

1 University of Illinois, and others, substantiate the facts
2 that the teaching of reading comprehension beyond the
3 simplest literal interpretation is being very badly
4 neglected at the lower grade levels.

5 Secondly, if minimum competency testing increases
6 an emphasis on minimal basic reading skills, we will be
7 emphasizing an area of reading instruction which has been
8 constantly improving, as the data indicates. In an area
9 where we are already at an all-time high achievement level.

10 Finally, it is quite possible that these basic
11 minimal comprehension skills will become the standards for
12 success for a school. I certainly believe we will hear
13 schools claiming that they are successful if 100 percent of
14 the students achieve the minimums. And our concerns for
15 reading in the '80s and '90s and the next century should be
16 on higher-level reading, critical reaction skills. It is an
17 area where society demands more of its readers, and it is an
18 area that is not going to be emphasized if we continue to
19 fiddle around with minimum competency.

20 Q One last question -- quickly, because we are
21 running a little behind.

22 Is it possible to effectively identify the most
23 disabled readers without the use of minimum competency tests?

24 A Sure it is. There are a number of studies that
25 have contrasted teacher judgments with all kinds of other

1 in a set of skills automatically indicate that the level of
2 those skills is sufficient?

3 A Not in any way at all. And I don't think that the
4 opponents have argued that a flat-score pattern or
5 not-increased pattern is evidence that we shouldn't have
6 minimum competency tests.

7 Q Could you not be in favor of minimum competency
8 testing without in any sense supporting the notion that
9 there has been a decline? Could you not just say it is not
10 good enough?

11 A Surely. And the International Reading Association
12 is clearly in favor of minimum competency assessment using a
13 wide variety of assessments.

14 Q I was pleased to hear the Association's advocacy
15 of multiple indices when important decisions are to be made
16 about youngsters. Are you aware of any minimum competency
17 testing program in which passage of the test is the only
18 criterion for graduation?

19 A No, I have studied the minimum competency tests,
20 but not their rules for graduation and promotion. So I
21 would rather not comment on that.

22 Q If you find one, I would like to know.

23 A If you do, I think that would be a very bad sign,
24 and I think it would be a very bad indication of educational
25 practice if indeed they relied on a single assessment.

1 Multiple assessments are what we are after.

2 Q There appears to be some inconsistency in your
3 testimony that I am sure you can clear up. It seemed to me
4 that you were saying that paper-and-pencil tests have
5 difficulty in capturing higher-order reading skills that you
6 would like to see measured. Is that correct?

7 A I think I said that, as well as the end goals of
8 reading instruction.

9 Q Right. And yet, having decried the ability of
10 these tests to tap these higher-order skills, you cite a
11 wide array of data which were drawn, by and large, from
12 paper-and-pencil tests. That seems inconsistent.

13 A Not at all. As a matter of fact, I was going to
14 add, and Dr. Madaus cut me off -- well, didn't cut me off --
15 but told me not to expand on the data, the number of
16 libraries. As a matter of fact, I could cite a large number
17 of studies that indicate that library usage is going up very
18 rapidly in this country, that we have had a 2500 percent
19 increase between 1960 and 1975 in the number of paperback
20 books on our shelves, 2500 percent.

21 Q But you did, Dr. Farr, place some substantial
22 emphasis on reports of those tests that had been used?

23 A Yes.

24 Q But yet you say those tests do not measure
25 higher-order skills, and that bothers me. It seems

1 contradictory.

2 A Yes. I did use that test data. And again, in a
3 minimum competency testing movement, I would use test data.
4 We already use test data extensively in the United States.
5 We have so much testing going on now that I am often ashamed
6 to say I am a test author because of the massive
7 overtesting. And we are now adding minimum competency
8 testing on an already overburdened system that tests enough
9 to know everything it needs to know without another testing
10 program.

11 Q Have you addressed these remarks to your test
12 publisher?

13 A No, just to my son's tuition-taker.

14 Q From your testimony, one would conclude that you
15 think the caliber of reading instruction in the United
16 States is eminently adequate. Would you like to go on
17 record today as indicating that the level of reading of
18 students in this country is satisfactory?

19 A "Satisfactory" is obviously a term that depends on
20 what you mea. by that and what is expected and so on. Just
21 like the setting of standards are arbitrary and they vary
22 for one student and one person.

23 Is it in pretty good shape and better shape than
24 in the past? The answer to that is "Yes."

25 Q Is it sufficiently good that we don't need to do

1 much to improve it?

2 A I don't know of a single profession or single
3 social endeavor where we don't need to improve.

4 Q But you did try to create the impression that it
5 was not all that bad?

6 A I sure would like to create the impression that
7 it's not all as bad as the media tends to paint the
8 picture. Indeed, it is a quite a bit better than the media
9 paints the picture.

10 Q But still worse than it should be?

11 A All professions and all segments of society can
12 certainly improve, and education can, too.

13 Q So the answer to that question is "Yes"?

14 A Yes, it is.

15 Q Thank you. Now, you were commenting that many
16 experts believe that skills cannot be taught in isolation.
17 I assume from that that some do.

18 A There are those who believe that skills can be
19 taught in isolation. Most of those want to immediately
20 apply them in a meaningful context, however, not assess them
21 in isolation. I don't think I can cite for you a single
22 reading specialist who would not believe that the end goal
23 of reading is the application of what is read to some human
24 endeavor.

25 Q Right. Would you believe, though, attempting to

1 isolate precursor skills, that a student could read a
2 complex paragraph but who could not identify the meaning of
3 words?

4 A You used "identify the meaning of words" as a
5 precursor skill. And obviously, the "meaning of words" is a
6 comprehension skill and not the kind of isolated
7 word-recognition skill I talked about a moment ago or the
8 isolated literal comprehension skill. I am talking about
9 the kinds of skills that I have seen on minimum competency
10 testing, the matching of letters with sounds. And we know
11 many youngsters who cannot match medial diphthongs, sounds
12 and letters, and yet read exceptionally well beyond
13 seventh-grade levels.

14 Q I know many youngsters who do not even know a
15 medial diphthong. If you were thinking about the kinds of
16 tests that you see, minimum competency tests, in which there
17 was an attempt to capture a student's ability to comprehend
18 the central idea in a fairly extensive reading passage,
19 would that seem more acceptable to you?

20 A The kinds of tests, if you put it in that frame of
21 reference -- and I would never accept a single test score
22 for making such a decision -- multiple indices, such a test
23 as part of a set of multiple indices, would certainly be
24 acceptable to me.

25 MR. POPHAM: Thank you very much.

1 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Further questions?

2 Our next witness is Dr. Melvin Hall, assistant
3 professor, Department of Psychology, Sangamon State
4 University.

5 TESTIMONY OF MEL HALL

6 ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
7 SANGOMON STATE UNIVERSITY, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

8 DIRECT EXAMINATION

9 BY MS. PULLIN:

10 Q Dr. Hall, were you the participant in a study of
11 student evaluation and minimum competency testing in
12 Illinois which was conducted for the Illinois State
13 Department of Education?

14 A Yes, I was.

15 Q And could you describe for us briefly what the
16 purpose of that study was?

17 A When the Illinois Legislature was considering
18 minimal competency legislation, the Illinois State Board of
19 Education sought to provide background information on
20 current student evaluation practices in Illinois districts.
21 So the state Board of Education staff selected a number of
22 districts which would be involved in case visitation.

23 Q Could you describe the methodology you employed in
24 conducting your study?

25 A Once the state Board of Education staff had

1 decided what districts would be visited, a team of three
2 researchers were pulled together, of which I was one of the
3 three, and a two to three-day site visit occurred to each
4 district. During the site visit we interviewed
5 superintendents, testing directors, building principals,
6 parents, teachers; and the people that we saw in each
7 district were selected by the district superintendent or
8 district staff.

9 Q Could you name for us some of the sites you
10 visited in Illinois? I assume that many of those names are
11 names that would be familiar to our audience.

12 A Well, we visited a selection of sites, but under
13 the original agreement of the research, we were attempting
14 not to protect completely the anonymity of the districts but
15 not to identify specific districts. So it would be fair to
16 say that we visited ten districts which ranged in size.
17 Some were unit districts, some were elementary districts,
18 and they were both rural and urban, in varying parts of the
19 state.

20 And in the case study we included ten districts
21 which had extensive two to three-day site visits, and
22 another nine districts which had shorter one-day
23 visitations. But they do range in size and makeup around
24 the state.

25 Q And you, I take it, encountered within that sample

1 of districts a number of districts which did use some form
2 of minimum competency testing or what they would call
3 minimum competency testing; is that right?

4 A Yes. The staff purposely selected sample districts
5 which had consciously decided to use a minimum competency
6 type of student evaluation system, and another set of
7 districts which had consciously chosen not to or who, at
8 least, were in the process of making a decision on the
9 minimum competency issue.

10 Q Is it safe to presume that those uses of minimum
11 competency testing varied from district to district?

12 A Yes. We found a wide range of practices, we found
13 a wide range of expectations, and also a wide range of
14 implementation procedures.

15 Q Did you find districts that used minimum
16 competency testing for diagnostic purposes?

17 A We found districts which had as a part of the
18 basis of their minimum competency program the diagnosis or a
19 diagnostic use in terms of students. We did also find that
20 when we interviewed teachers and principals about the
21 diagnostic use of minimum competency tests, we found that,
22 in reality, the tests contained too few items. In most
23 instances they contained too few items on a particular
24 competency to allow a teacher to actually make a diagnosis
25 or prescribe a program of remediation.

1 Q So the teachers were telling you there just
2 weren't enough questions that the student had been asked in
3 order for them to reach a conclusion about what the
4 student's educational strengths or deficiencies were?

5 A Yes, or that they would be able to directly
6 prescribe from the information provided by the minimum
7 competency test exactly what the student needed to do in
8 order to pass the competency.

9 Q Did you also find districts which use minimum
10 competency testing to determine promotion or retention in
11 grade?

12 A Yes. We encountered a number of districts who
13 were in the process of establishing or implementing their
14 minimum competency programs. Some were in the developmental
15 stage. We did visit districts, one in particular, that had
16 tied the minimum competency examination to the high school
17 diploma awarding.

18 Q Among the districts you studied in your survey,
19 did you find attempts to use minimum competency test results
20 linked to remedial programs?

21 A Yes. In one case in particular there was a
22 district which used the failing of a minimum competency exam
23 to require students to take a refresher course. If the
24 student failed the minimum competency exam the first time,
25 they had an option as to whether to enroll in the refresher

1 course. But on the second administration of the test, which
2 normally would have been in the senior year, the student was
3 required to enroll in the refresher course.

4 Q Did you find much variety in the type or nature of
5 remedial programs offered in the districts?

6 A Again, referring to the district I have just
7 mentioned, there was a great hesitancy on the part of at
8 least some of the teachers we interviewed because -- while
9 both the tests and the refresher materials had been hastily
10 developed -- there had been some conscientious debugging of
11 the test. Whereas the refresher materials were generally
12 prepared just in time for implementation.

13 So there was some concern, at least in that
14 district, about the amount of preparation reflected in the
15 refresher material. There were other districts which were
16 much more developed, and while the one particular district I
17 am thinking of did not have in place a system, they had at
18 least explored the possibility of extensive
19 computer-assisted refresher materials which would be
20 available to students at study halls and, in fact, in the
21 corridors through the use of Plato terminals.

22 So there was a wide variety in the way districts
23 were attacking the development of refresher materials.

24 Q It would seem to me, and I am just a lay person,
25 but it would seem to me that the use of computerized

1 instruction would be a very sophisticated and probably
2 highly successful method for remediating educational needs.
3 Did you find that to be the case in that district?

4 A Unfortunately, the system was just being
5 implemented, so it was too early to have definitive data as
6 to whether it was more effective or less effective; but at
7 the time we visited the district, it was implemented to the
8 point where they were hopeful that they would have a good
9 tracking system, that they would be able to identify how
10 many students at a particular building had not passed the
11 exam and which exam they had not passed, and how many times
12 the student had used the machine for remediation purposes.

13 So while they were not yet in a position to look
14 at the outcome or the effectiveness of the computer-assisted
15 instruction, they were in a position to begin to say how
16 much utilization there had been.

17 Q I would say that -- Would it be safe to conclude
18 that that doesn't necessarily mean that students were in
19 fact being provided an opportunity for increasing their
20 skills?

21 MR. ALLEYNE: I want to caution counsel to avoid
22 leading questions on direct examination.

23 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Are you making an
24 objection?

25 MR. ALLEYNE: This is a formal objection to a

1 competencies they had failed, but that did not necessarily
2 put the teacher in a position of explaining why they had
3 been judged incompetent on a particular competency.

4 Q Did you have an opportunity to observe the
5 methodology employed in constructing the test used or to
6 make some conclusions about the methodology used in
7 constructing the actual tests themselves?

8 A Again, we found a wide range, as one might
9 expect. We found some things which, at least in the report
10 we indicated were disturbing. We found one case where
11 teachers were given, three teams of teachers were given two
12 weeks summer pay to write a test.

13 Q In other words, they wrote a whole test in two
14 weeks?

15 A Yes. They generated the items for three minimum
16 competency tests with two weeks of summer pay. We went from
17 that extreme to the other extreme where a wealthier district
18 employed an outside consulting firm to develop the minimum
19 competency type examination, and that test was submitted to
20 extensive validation studies, an IMN analysis and so forth.

21 Q Did you have opportunities in your interview to
22 ask any questions of school people about their motivations
23 for adopting minimum competency testing programs?

24 A Yes.

25 Q What kinds of things did they tell you?

1 A Probably some of the more striking examples would
2 be a district which was undergoing a rapid racial change.
3 The district in nine years went from an 8 percent minority
4 population to a roughly 65 percent minority population. And
5 in that district both district staff and parents indicated
6 that the minimum competency exam was attractive because it
7 would guard the academic standards of the district.

8 Q Against an onslaught of increasing numbers of
9 black students?

10 A Yes, of minority students.

11 Q I see.

12 Did you also have an opportunity to question
13 something that has been discussed here very widely, and that
14 is the extent to which minimum competency testing resulted
15 from a public demand for improved educational services?

16 A Yes. In practically every district we attended
17 which had a minimum competency program, there was some
18 reference made to community demand, demand from business,
19 demand from employers, and in each case we asked for
20 examples of that demand. In none of the cases was there
21 really a well-formulated or systematic response from the
22 community.

23 There were attempts initiated by the district in
24 some cases to ascertain by survey community interest, but
25 generally the information we got was anecdotal. For

1 example, in one district several people, at least three,
2 indicated that one of the reasons for the minimum competency
3 exam was the owner of a local fruit market did not trust
4 high school graduates to make change until he had supervised
5 their making change.

6 Q Are you saying that that was offered as the only
7 example of a reason why minimum competency testing ought to
8 be implemented?

9 A In that district I would estimate that at least 80
10 percent of the time that we asked the question what is the
11 basis of the minimum competency exam, we received the same
12 anecdote as the explanation.

13 Q Okay. You indicated earlier that there were
14 articulated racial motivations in some districts for the
15 initiation of minimum competency testing programs. That is
16 a pretty troublesome kind of statement. Did you have any
17 other kind of documentation for that reasoning behind
18 minimum competency testing?

19 A There is a more recent study that I am aware of
20 where Dr. Thomas Kearns looked at several variables that
21 might be used to describe a local district and attempted to
22 establish which of those variables would be a best predictor
23 or indicator that a district might be inclined to have a
24 minimum competency test program.

25 Q And what did that research indicate was the most

1 official determination based upon the charge we were given
2 by the state board staff that we were to broaden our
3 investigation to beyond minimum competency and deal with
4 student evaluation in general, so that it was neither "pro"
5 or "ne" minimum competency, and in fact there was an obvious
6 effort to make it even-handed and explore the larger
7 picture, even to the point of looking at how minimum
8 competency fit into larger or broader student evaluation.

9 Q I am trying to get at the matter of what kind of
10 resources -- I mean you have described some situations that
11 don't sound all that good. What I'm trying to get at is
12 that you had the feeling that in Illinois substantial
13 resources had been devoted by the state Department to
14 nurturing the minimum competency testing program. And I
15 would infer that that has not been the case, that these
16 districts are pretty much doing it alone. Is that right?

17 A At the time our study was commissioned, I am not
18 able to speak directly to what proportion of resources or
19 exactly how much guidance was being offered by the state
20 board, but I do know that the study I was a part of was part
21 of a ten-part policy study, and the purpose of the study was
22 to provide information to both local districts and to the
23 legislature.

24 Q But did you get the feeling that the state
25 Department of Education was actively nurturing minimum

1 competency testing in those districts where you visited?

2 A The state board at that time was under the
3 direction of a house or legislative bill to provide
4 information to local districts on minimum competency, and as
5 part of that whole initiative this policy study was just one
6 part.

7 Q Very well.

8 Are you in general positive or negative regarding
9 minimum competency testing?

10 A In terms of the findings of the districts and the
11 minimum competency programs I have observed, I have not
12 found enough evidence that minimum competency programs are
13 adding significantly to the student evaluation practices
14 that already existed to warrant their use.

15 Q That was an eloquent answer, but does that mean
16 negative?

17 A You could generally surmise that I am against
18 minimum competency testing. Primarily because for most of
19 the billing or the proposed uses of minimum competency
20 testing, it is not generally necessary to use individual
21 cutoff scores for purposes of curriculum evaluation,
22 curriculum modification and so forth. You do not often need
23 to use individual test scores.

24 Q Dr. Hall, would you agree that case studies as a
25 methodology are particularly susceptible to the biases of

1 the study analysts themselves?

2 A Case study methodology or case study researchers,
3 as any researcher, are vulnerable to having their
4 preconceived notions determine important decisions that they
5 make in their research. At the point that any methodologist
6 decides to go from one step of their methodological activity
7 to another, they make subjective judgments that it is
8 appropriate to move on and what they should do next.

9 Q Isn't the case study method particularly,
10 susceptible since so many of the data which are recorded are
11 in fact derived from the perception of the case analyst?
12 Particularly susceptible. I am not suggesting that others
13 aren't.

14 Q I would respond by saying in the particular
15 example I am referring to, the report contains direct quotes
16 from witnesses in the field, and the conclusions are, of
17 course, the result of the team's reflection of those
18 statements. But in every case, all but the final section of
19 those reports were direct quotes or results of looking at
20 documents in the district, and in fact they were sent back
21 to each district for the district staff to verify that they
22 were reasonably accurate before they were ever published.

23 Q I am not questioning the accuracy. I am just
24 trying to get you to answer the question as to whether or
25 not case studies are particularly susceptible to case study

1. investigator bias.

2 A In my professional opinion, there are different
3 kinds, qualitatively different kinds of biases that a case
4 study researcher may be subjected to, but that varies and is
5 different for different methodologists.

6 Q Let me read you a quotation from your report,
7 which of course was the basis of much of your testimony.
8 Page 6: "Some degree of caution is required in interpreting
9 the findings of site visit teams and the relationship of
10 these findings to a picture of statewide student
11 evaluation. Student evaluation in the school districts of
12 Illinois presents an extremely complex picture of hybrid and
13 distinctive systems.

14 "While the observations are accurate for each site
15 and while general and specific conclusions can be drawn
16 relative to minimum competency testing and student
17 evaluation systems, the observations are not suitable to be
18 generalized to all districts of the state. As essential
19 similarities of target case history cases of interest are
20 observed, the target becomes a basis for a natural
21 generalization. No prediction is intended nor should be
22 inferred from data and analysis reported here."

23 Is that an accurate quotation from your study?

24 A I believe, yes.

25 DR. POPHAM: Thank you very much.

1 MS. PULLIN: I have one question.

2 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

3 BY MS. PULLIN:

4 Q Did you not in your report include, particularly
5 from controversial sites, separate sections, one section
6 written as if it were recounting the arguments by advocates
7 for a program and another section by persons who had a more
8 adversarial approach to the program?

9 A Yes, we certainly did.

10 DR. POPHAM: Thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much. We
12 appreciate your testimony.

13 The next witness is Mrs. Patricia Shea, a parent
14 from Peoria, Illinois.

15 TESTIMONY OF MRS. PATRICIA SHEA

16 PARENT, PEORIA, ILLINOIS

17 DIRECT EXAMINATION.

18 BY MS. PULLIN:

19 Q Mrs. Shea, Professor Jordan has already indicated
20 you are a parent. Could you tell us the extent to which you
21 are a parent?

22 A Yes. My son Donald was in special education.

23 Q How many children do you have?

24 A I have seven.

25 Q Let's talk about Donald.

1 A All right. He is the second youngest of the
2 children, and he has been in special ed all the way through,
3 ever since first grade.

4 Q Let's talk about the kind of school career Donald
5 had up until the end of the high school years. He
6 progressed through school, and I suspect that you had some
7 indication about whether he was trying and how well he did.

8 A Yes.

9 Q What did you know about Donald's success?

10 A Well, Don is a person that will never give up. He
11 keeps trying. He works very, very hard. He has been an A
12 and B student all through school in special ed. In grade
13 school when he gets through with his work his teachers would
14 let him help other children, which raised his self-esteem
15 greatly.

16 Q Do you know why Don was placed in special
17 education programs?

18 A Don has a learning disability. It is hard for him
19 to learn. You explain more in detail to him than you do to
20 the average person. He does grasp everything but it just
21 takes a little bit longer.

22 Q But somehow in spite of his learning disability
23 Don was able to proceed through school with A and B grades?

24 A Right.

25 Q And did Don complete an individualized education

1 program?

2 A Yes, he did.

3 Q All right. Does Don go to school in the Peoria
4 school district or did he?

5 A He did, yes.

6 Q And as a result of attending school in the Peoria
7 School District, was he required to pass a minimum
8 competency test to get his diploma?

9 A Yes, he was.

10 Q Did Don take that test?

11 A Yes, he did.

12 Q Did he take it more than once?

13 A He took it five times.

14 Q Do you really think that Don tried on that test?

15 A I know he tried.

16 Q Why do you know that?

17 A Well, the fourth time he took the test he prepared
18 for two weeks prior to this over Christ s vacation, and
19 when he took that test he finished the complete test and
20 rechecked every answer and was so sure he had passed, and
21 then when the result came back that he did not pass it, he
22 was actually crushed. He did take it one more time, but I
23 refused to let him put in the effort that he did on that
24 fourth time.

25 Q So you would say that Don made a conscientious and

1 well-studied attempt to pass that exam?

2 A Very definitely.

3 Q Would you say that Don's teachers attempted to
4 prepare him to pass that examination?

5 A Yes, they very definitely did. Almost his whole
6 senior year was strictly geared to passing that test.

7 Q Yet despite that and despite the many
8 opportunities, he still failed.

9 A Right.

10 Q As a result of that test failure, was Don denied
11 his high school diploma?

12 A Yes, he was. He did not get his diploma.

13 Q What happened to him after that?

14 A After that, Don joined the National Guard and he
15 took all the tests for the Army, the scholastic tests and
16 the mental tests, everything that they give.

17 Q How well did he do on those tests?

18 A Well, he did well enough that he is qualified for
19 any state college in Illinois that he would like to go to.
20 He has been in the National Guard almost a year now, and
21 when he is in a year, he can go to any college he would like.

22 Q What else has Don done since he got out of high
23 school without his diploma?

24 A Okay. After he finished his basic training in the
25 National Guard, he was home a month and was looking for

1 work, and so he decided to buy a business, and he has a
2 business of his own that is very successful right now.

3 Q Don is making a good deal of money?

4 A Yes, he is.

5 Q He probably makes more than I do.

6 A He probably does.

7 Q How does Don get along in day-to-day life?

8 A Don is exceptional. He has an excellent
9 personality. He has no enemies that I am aware of. He just
10 has a personality that everyone loves him. He is
11 outstanding. He will do things for people that the average
12 person wouldn't do.

13 Q He is a nice guy?

14 A Yes, he is.

15 Q But I'm not worried whether he is a nice guy. Can
16 he get along in the world?

17 A Oh, he can get along great.

18 Q Does he do things like fill out an income tax form?

19 A Don does his own income tax.

20 Q Do all of your children do their own income tax?

21 A No, he is the only one.

22 Q Has he ever had his income tax form sent back
23 because of mistakes?

24 A No.

25 Q Did the state Department of Education in Illinois

1 recently enter an order against the Peoria School District
2 requiring them to award diplomas to handicapped students who
3 have failed the test?

4 A Yes, they did.

5 Q Mrs. Shea, what is your opinion as a parent about
6 this whole test for diploma scheme?

7 A I am very definitely opposed to it, for the simple
8 reason that my definition of minimum competency is exactly
9 what Don learned. Don was taught how to shop, how to
10 comparison shop, he was taught how to figure interest, he
11 was taught how to do his income tax, how to invest money,
12 how to be a hard worker. He filled out hundreds of job
13 applications. He has just had the individual training that I
14 wish all my other children could have had.

15 Q I take it all your other children have high school
16 diplomas?

17 A They all have high school diplomas and they had
18 regular division teachers, but the special ed teachers are
19 out of this world. They are outstanding in their teaching
20 of these children, and I see where it has no bearing, this
21 test, on how a child does in life. It depends on their
22 determination, their desire to get ahead, and their
23 willingness to want to set goals and to get somewhere in
24 life. This is for anyone. It's not just my son. It's for
25 any person.

1 Q . Regardless?

2 A Regardless.

3 MS. PULLIN: I have no more questions. Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Dr. Popham?

5 DR. POPHAM: Professor Jordan, the Pro Team has no
6 quarrel with differential standards for youngsters with
7 diagnosed learning disabilities. We are immensely happy for
8 Donald and we have no questions.

9 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you. You are
10 excused.

11 The next witness is Miss Kathleen Gilbert, a
12 teacher, Hope Valley Elementary School, board member,
13 Atlantic Center for Research in Education, Hope Valley
14 Elementary School, Durham, North Carolina.

15 TESTIMONY OF KATHLEEN B. GILPERT

16 TEACHER, HOPE VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

17 DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

18 BOARD MEMBER, ATLANTIC CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

19 HOPE VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

20 DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

21 DIRECT EXAMINATION

22 BY DR. MADAUS:

23 Q Would you briefly describe your background and
24 education for us?

25 A Yes. I am a fourth grade teacher in a public

1 school in Durham, North Carolina, where I have taught for
2 seven years, and I am a member of the Atlantic Center for
3 Research in Education there.

4 Q Is there a commercially available non-reference
5 test mandated in the state of North Carolina?

6 A Yes. The state legislature mandates its use in
7 the spring of the third, sixth and ninth grade, and right
8 now they are voting this week on extending that use to the
9 first and second grades.

10 Q How do they use it?

11 A Well, the purpose of the legislation was to assess
12 the educational program and to help school teachers and
13 local school systems identify student's needs in the basic
14 skills. That's how it was supposed to be used.

15 Q So to provide information to the community and
16 help teachers make group evaluations.

17 A Yes.

18 Q Are you opposed to that use of tests?

19 A No, not at all. It could be helpful.

20 Q Are some districts using that same test, some
21 districts in North Carolina using that same test to make
22 decisions about an individual's promotability from one grade
23 to another?

24 A Yes. This appears to be a growing trend. Several
25 school systems, including the state's largest school system,

1 Charlotte-Mecklenburg, use the test for retention decisions.

2 Q How do they use the test? How does the test
3 become the mechanism for retention decisions?

4 A Children who score in the bottom 25th percentile
5 are targetted for retention. If the classroom teacher feels
6 that this score does not reflect the child's progress in
7 class or if the child attends summer school, he or she can
8 take an alternate form of the same test. However, if the
9 score on this test is below the 25th percentile, the child
10 is automatically retained regardless of any other criteria.

11 Q Regardless of what the teachers say or anything
12 else?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Have you talked to any other teachers about this
15 practice of using this particular test that way?

16 A Yes, I have.

17 Q What are their concerns?

18 A Well, a significant concern is that when a test
19 is this important, the curriculum can be determined by that
20 test and the curriculum can become teaching for that test.
21 I know teachers who have planned vocabulary and math
22 programs after copying the vocabulary and math items on the
23 particular achievement tests.

24 Then recently when colleagues of mine met to adopt
25 a math textbook series to be used for the next five years,

1 and the mother was distraught because she had not been aware
2 that the child was having any problems at all in school. So
3 she took the child to a university professor for a private
4 evaluation.

5 The child returned from this evaluation saying
6 that the test was not bad and she had been taught she wasn't
7 supposed to worry if she didn't know the answer to every
8 item. Interestingly, this child, whose scores on the first
9 test ranged from the 7th through the 40th percentile, scored
10 in the 65th percentile on the second test. And although a
11 number of variables could be responsible for that, I think
12 it is clear the danger of relying on a single test score to
13 determine retention.

14 Q So in this instance, if this particular parent had
15 not had the money to go and have that independent testing
16 done, that child might have been retained?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Have scores gone up on this particular test?

19 A Yes, they have.

20 Q Do you think that the pupils are any better in
21 terms of their skills?

22 A No, I don't think so. I think teachers have known
23 for some time that coaching can work, and I don't think that
24 is necessarily an indicator of improved skills.

25 Q Do you think you need this kind of test to

1 identify disabled reading people, children who are disabled
2 readers or who have problems in reading?

3 A Not really. One problem is the test is
4 administered in the spring, and after several weeks of
5 school it is clear to the teacher who is having
6 difficulties. At this point the teacher can refer the child
7 to specialists who can diagnose these difficulties and
8 recommend appropriate ways to remediate them.

9 This process pinpoints individual weaknesses with
10 much more precision than a group-administered standardized
11 test can.

12 Q Do you think pupils should be promoted if they
13 don't have basic skills?

14 A No, of course not.

15 Q How should the decisions for promotion be made?

16 A Allowing a test to make the decision for us I
17 think is a copout. Instead, as educators we need to accept
18 full responsibility for these difficult decisions. A team
19 consisting of the classroom teacher, a principal, special
20 teachers and parents must examine all available criteria in
21 assessing a child's development. We must look at teacher
22 observations, a child's academic, physical, social and
23 emotional growth, a child's performance on classroom tests
24 and criterion reference tests as well as the child's
25 performance on norm reference tests to fairly evaluate any

1 child.

2 Q So you would use tests and a lot of other data?

3 A Certainly. I use tests every day as one indicator
4 of a child's performance.

5 Q But the decision ultimately is yours and others
6 working on the team together.

7 A Yes, it is. And if someone disagrees with my
8 decision, I would call in special teachers, principals or
9 parents. I welcome other people to participate in the
10 decision-making.

11 DR. MADAUS: Thank you very much.

12 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Questions?

13 CROSS EXAMINATION

14 BY DR. POPHAM:

15 Q Miss Gilbert, you have been particularly critical
16 of a commercially published norm-reference standardized
17 achievement test. Is that correct?

18 A I don't mean to be particularly critical of that
19 particular test. I have no problem with the test itself.
20 My problem is using it as the only criterion evaluating a
21 child.

22 Q You were particularly critical, however, of norm
23 reference achievement tests and using those as a single
24 criterion, right?

25 A I feel that a criterion reference test could be

1 better, but as I said, that's not my concern. My concern is
2 using it as the sole criterion no matter what test you use.

3 Q Are you aware of any laws which require norm
4 reference tests to be used as the test in minimum competency
5 testing programs?

6 A No.

7 DR. POPHAM: Thank you.

8 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: No further questions.
9 You are excused. Thank you.

10 The next witness is Mrs. Claire Sullivan,
11 Educational Consultant, Former Assistant Superintendent,
12 Pinellas County, Florida; President, Florida Association for
13 Supervision and Curriculum Development

14 TESTIMONY OF MRS. CLAIRE SULLIVAN

15 EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT

16 FORMER ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

17 PRESIDENT, FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION

18 AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

19 DIRECT EXAMINATION

20 BY MS. PULLIN:

21 Q Could you indicate for us what your title and
22 position were at the time of the implementation of the
23 minimum competency testing in Florida that we have heard so
24 much about today?

25 A I was Assistant Superintendent for Secondary

1 Education in Pinellas County.

2 Q What did that mean? What was your responsibility?

3 A I was directly responsible for the educational
4 program implementation and development in the county, which
5 is a county of 96,000 students. We had 13 high schools.
6 They ranged in size from about 1800 students to about 3000
7 students, and I was responsible to 22 middle schools that
8 had about 32,000 students.

9 Q Did you have any responsibility vis-a-vis the
10 minimum competency testing?

11 A I was completely responsible for the development
12 and implementation of the remediation program, of preparing
13 teachers, of informing principals, of conducting workshops.
14 I mean directly responsible. I stood in front of the
15 principals and had to explain exactly what the state was
16 trying to do and what the legislative group had mandated.

17 Q Did you also get out and into the schools and
18 observe how minimum competency testing was impacting these
19 schools?

20 A Yes. I was responsible to go out into the schools,
21 work with teachers and directly report to the board in a
22 workshop we had prepared with my supervisors, teachers,
23 students, et cetera.

24 Q How did you react to the implementation of this
25 new educational strategy?

1 A I have to tell you a little bit about my
2 background to tell you my reaction. I am by training an
3 educational planner. I have never been a school-based
4 principal. I came to the county at the request of the
5 superintendent because of my background in development
6 education.

7 I have also been a consultant in Finland for a
8 year and a consultant in West Berlin, Germany for a year,
9 and taught and worked in Japan. So I had a background in
10 perceiving and analyzing education beyond just what the
11 American system was like.

12 And as I reviewed and began to look at the
13 implications of implementing what the Florida legislative
14 group had done, I think my educational planning background
15 came out and said, look, let's start looking at the
16 consequences of this kind of program; let's go beyond just
17 whether the testing is good or not good and look at the
18 socioeconomic and political implications, and they have been
19 alluded to quite frequently during the other testimony.

20 So what occurred as I was held responsible for
21 carrying this out, I began to say we have some very heavy
22 implications through this state program, and as an
23 educational planner I was not sure that we had asked some of
24 the significant questions before trying to carry this out.

25 Q Let's talk about those a little bit. First let's

1 look at the impact on the curriculum, and when I ask you
2 this question, let me ask if you are going to be responding
3 on the basis of what you saw in Pinellas County or whether
4 you are also responding on the basis of information you have
5 gathered as a result of your office in the Association for
6 Curriculum.

7 A All of my responses will be partly based on my
8 specific experience but they also are based on much larger
9 discussions than that limited experience.

10 Q In your professional association?

11 A Yes.

12 I would like to start with defining curriculum
13 beyond just a program. I am to also look at instruction. I
14 would like to start with the impact on the students
15 themselves as you talk about a student failing a part of the
16 program, a part of the assessment and then being asked to go
17 into remediation class.

18 We found in many situations that we took students
19 at the senior high level where we really became concerned.
20 We took students out of programs, often vocational programs,
21 and put them in some of the remediation programs, at a
22 detriment to their whole educational experience.

23 Q Why was that detrimental? I assume they were put
24 in the remediation programs because it was felt they could
25 not do things.

1 A In many cases we found they were functioning quite
2 well in some of the vocational situations. I think we
3 really need to discuss much more fully whether these "basic
4 skills" are really tied in an absolute sense to the ability
5 to function, to fix an automobile, to be a carpenter, to
6 work in a program with plumbing. I'm not sure we have
7 really done enough studying to say that a student cannot
8 function in a vocational program if they cannot pass the
9 basic skills test.

10 So one of the problems was the fairly drastic
11 change in some of these students programs.

12 Q What kinds of changes did you see?

13 A Certainly in terms of the atmosphere, the program
14 emphasis within the schools, and I think we are beginning to
15 discover, for example, social studies is suffering because
16 we have talked about reading, writing and arithmetic. If
17 you look at class sizes that social studies teachers are
18 allowed to have in comparison to some of the remedial
19 classes, certainly the learning situation is less than
20 desirable. We have skewed many of our senior high
21 experiences, and that is a concern at that level.

22 We also are beginning to become very clear that
23 some of the programs themselves, for example, literature,
24 there was a survey done in the state of Florida among
25 supervisors of language arts on the impact of the competency

1 test.

2 Q What was the impact on the language arts or
3 literature studies?

4 A Definite decline in the literature requirements,
5 the literature experience, a decline in the oral competency
6 experience, and if one is going to discuss assessment
7 programs and their impact on such things as SATs, I think
8 one really has to raise some serious questions whether by
9 reducing literature opportunities for some of our stronger
10 students, are we really helping the SAT potential or are we
11 possibly in the long run going to affect it.

12 The language arts teachers are very concerned.
13 The saw literature as the application of reading, and many
14 students were being encouraged to continue the reading
15 process, which is not content, and where these students were
16 really ready to participate in a good literature course.

17 So I think we have evidence in terms of program
18 skewing.

19 Q What kind of impacts did you see on perhaps what
20 we could call the stronger students, the students who seemed
21 to be more capable in the curriculum?

22 A Number one, they went around bragging that they
23 passed the test. I think that is very serious.

24 Q Why?

25 A Because it is the first step of saying "I have

1 accomplished what I am expected to accomplish." They are
2 not willing to acknowledge that that might be far beneath
3 the ultimate goals that they should be striving for.
4 Secondly, in many situations elective programs had been
5 reduced. This is part of the whole supposedly back to
6 basics.

7 For the stronger student, the reduction of valid
8 electives -- I'm not talking about ice cream making or
9 basket weaving. I think we have confused the issue. We are
10 talking about very valid elective programs.

11 Q You are saying that those valid elective program
12 offerings were being reduced as a result of the minimum
13 competency tests?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Let me ask you now whether there was an impact to
16 the minimum competency testing program, and particularly the
17 use of the minimum competency testing program to make
18 critical decisions about students on school dropouts.

19 A That was the area that really got me started
20 enough to write a dissertation on the whole high school
21 diploma issue. One of the things that concerned me in terms
22 of the crucial analysis that should have been done before we
23 really implemented it was how was this going to impact the
24 borderline student, was this going to be a pushout in terms
25 of some of the students who were staying in school because

1 the diploma was something that promised some kind of
2 economic mobility?

3 One really had to reflect on the whole current
4 concern of keeping students in school for the 12 years,
5 Jesse Jackson's concern for Operation PUSH, to finish high
6 school and you will make it.

7 So in two different situations I turned to look at
8 the dropout data, number one when I was doing my second
9 chapter in my dissertation, and I found some very startling
10 evidence. I looked at the dropout data of the year 1976 and
11 '77, which was just prior to the implementation. In the
12 state of Florida there had been a decline in the number of
13 dropouts.

14 Q This was before minimum competency testing was
15 implemented to make critical decisions about students? In
16 the year immediately prior to the initiation of that
17 program, the dropout rate was down?

18 A That's right, it was down. The very next year,
19 which would have been the first year the program was
20 implemented and the students walked around thinking they
21 were going to be denied the diploma, et cetera, the whole
22 diploma issue started. That was 1977-78. There were 14,000
23 more dropouts in the state of Florida.

24 Q I see.

25 It would seem logical to conclude, then, that

1 perhaps some students just never bothered to show up to take
2 the test the second time after they learned they had failed
3 it the first time. Did you have any indication of that?

4 A I had indication in a very informal sense because
5 the state did not really do a direct follow-up. But in
6 sitting and working with the director of testing in a
7 particular county, when we were looking at the number of
8 students who would have taken the test again in the 12th
9 grade in '78, I found that about 600 students had sort of
10 disappeared. They had not appeared for the retaking.

11 And in looking at the number of new students that
12 had to take it, it was about 600 to 700 students.

13 Q I see.

14 Are there any other indications that you have come
15 upon in your work in education in the state of Florida that
16 minimum competency testing is not really giving us the
17 information it purports to be giving us and is providing us
18 with a false sense of confidence that things are improving
19 in Florida?

20 A I was very intrigued with the discussion of the
21 multiple choice test versus a production type of test. I
22 have some data on that -- Florida did a production writing
23 assessment on a random sampling of students.

24 Q What do you mean by production writing?

25 A Where the student actually had to fill out forms,

1 actually had to write a business letter, the type of test,
2 writing assessment, that we would like to have but certainly
3 in terms of mechanics it is very difficult to carry out.

4 The state of Florida, to its credit . . .

5 Q Difficult to carry out why, because it's expensive or
6 time consuming?

7 A Expensive and time consuming when you talk about a
8 system like Pinellas County where you might have 8,000 or
9 9,000 students. The whole question of how you assess the
10 writing skills in the most efficient, cost-effective and
11 manageable way.

12 Q But somehow they had developed a writing skills
13 assessment test that required students to really write
14 things.

15 A That's right.

16 Q What were the results of that?

17 A They did that on a random sampling. The results
18 are extremely interesting and really raise some questions on
19 the quality question and the truth in testing question. One
20 item that stood out clearly was the one on filling out
21 forms. In the state assessment, part 2, the minimum
22 competency, the funky lit, whatever they call it, the
23 multiple choice test, about 98 percent of the students were
24 able to do that, to fulfill that skill.

25 Q They could answer those questions?

1 A They could answer those questions. Ninety-eight
2 percent met that requirement.

3 Q What did you find, though, when you looked at the
4 numbers of students who could actually do that kind of
5 writing?

6 A Twenty-nine percent.

7 MS. PULLIN: Thank you. I have no more questions.

8 CROSS EXAMINATION

9 BY DR. POPHAM:

10 Q Professor Alleyne has pointed out an interesting
11 fact unobserved by most. Are you aware, Mrs. Sullivan, that
12 you followed a witness named Gilbert?

13 A Yes. As it was pointed out to me. Yes, it was
14 pointed out. Do you want a little Pirates of Pinzance or
15 something?

16 Q We did not have an opportunity to review the last
17 study that you cited, so we don't wish to comment on that,
18 but we would like to focus our attention on the
19 dissertation, I guess, which you have used to draw the
20 conclusion that the minimum competency testing program in
21 Florida was a cause of increased dropouts. Has the
22 dissertation been approved yet?

23 A It's in the process of being approved. I would
24 like to correct something. I did not state it as an
25 absolute. My whole dissertation and the whole response that

1 I have raised here is that these are crucial educational
2 planning questions that should have been raised prior to the
3 implementation of the imposing of the diploma mandate. That
4 is what I am focusing on.

5 And I used data, much to my concern, that had to
6 be inferred from several situations, because the state had
7 not, in its testing program, seen fit to collect data on the
8 possibility of a pushout. Certainly that is raised by many
9 people who are concerned about the high school diploma and
10 the significance put on the minimum competency tests.

11 Q Don't you go further than just suggesting a
12 possibility? The implication of some of the language in
13 your dissertation, which I assumed might be a report, it
14 talks about a possible indication of student reaction to
15 external achievement examinations, the high attrition rate,
16 therefore, is a reflection of that.

17 There is language peppered through there that,
18 didn't you apply that just a few minutes ago when you were
19 describing the year when the minimum competency test was
20 installed with graduation requirements, 14,000 more students
21 dropped out? Isn't that the implication?

22 A Yes.

23 ? What about the year before that and the year
24 before that? Let's go back one year and you said that in
25 effect there were, in 1977-78, the year of your concern

1 55,000 dropouts and one year before that 14,000 fewer --
2 41,000 dropouts. But the year before that there were 50,000
3 dropouts and the year before that only 31,000 dropouts. In
4 other words, 19,000 dropouts occurred more two years ago,
5 and yet you are going to suggest the fact that the minimum
6 competency test caused that attrition?

7 A You got 50,000 two years prior?

8 Q 50,000. In your dissertation you carefully avoid
9 1975, '76 and '74, '75.

10 A The data were not available.

11 Q The data were not available from the State
12 Department of Education on dropout data?

13 A Let's look at the following year.

14 Q Wait. I would like a response.

15 A No, I did not have the data.

16 Q You did not have the data or they were not
17 available?

18 A I did not have the data.

19 Q You spend a good deal of time in your dissertation
20 talking about Dade County and the fact that Dade County
21 dropout rates increase right after the competency test was
22 installed as a diploma requirement.

23 One infers, therefore, that you think that the
24 existence of the minimum competency test caused the
25 increased in dropouts in Dade County?

1 A Yes. One can raise a concern about that.

2 Q Since in three other counties in the state, in the
3 same period, the dropout rates declined, can we also assume
4 that the minimum competency test is the cause of that
5 reduction and attrition?

6 A I think one would have to, and this is again going
7 back to the educational planners' responsibility. One would
8 have to look at how the programs are carried out. In one
9 county they had had that kind of assessment prior to the
10 state assessment, so that there might have been a phenomenon
11 occurring prior to even the implementation of the state
12 assessment.

13 Q But, Mrs. Sullivan, doesn't it worry you,
14 fundamentally, with issues of this significant import, to
15 take gross summary statistics of the kind you have and at
16 least create an impression that an important event, namely
17 the minimum competency testing program in Florida, caused
18 that increase in dropouts when so many factors -- increased
19 immigration, the move of youngsters from the cities to the
20 private schools, even the Florida dropout data are reported
21 in attrition rates, not in dropouts technically -- it is a
22 very confusing picture and yet you have chosen, as I can
23 infer, to create the image that this was a cause of
24 increased dropouts in Florida. Isn't that a little risky?

25 A Okay, not on two grounds. One because I think,

1 and I am not going to focus on Florida, but I think
2 nationally we have not raised that issue significantly
3 enough. That is, are we going to push students out who we
4 have worked very hard to keep in because, as it was pointed
5 out, historically the numbers that are staying in our high
6 schools post-World War II are far higher. And I feel that
7 nationally we have not raised the issue. Is this going to
8 go back again to pushing out some of the students?

9 I also feel very comfortable with raising it, as I
10 did in my dissertation, which was a policy analysis, because
11 of the fact that Florida did not, in setting up its
12 procedures, deliberately gather data on the student who does
13 not appear again for the test, did not set up procedures to
14 gather good data, not data that you would have to conjecture
15 on.

16 Q Isn't it a little difficult to fault a state for
17 not gathering all the useful data that we want? This is an
18 area of limited resources.

19 A Not in a state that has spent a tremendous amount
20 of money on auditing counties in terms of how they are
21 carrying out some of these things.

22 Q The data are at least available from the state
23 regarding summary statistics and I submit that if you
24 inspect them carefully you cannot reach the conclusion that
25 you reach in your dissertation. I hope your dissertation

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1 committee does not inspect them carefully.

2 Thank you.

3 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Further questioning?

4 MR. HANEY: One question on redirect.

5 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. HANEY:

7 Q Dr. Popham has clearly raised an important issue,
8 whether in a situation like this, raising a terribly
9 important policy question concerning the possibility that
10 minimum competency testing is connected to a high school
11 diploma may increase dropouts from high school.

12 Would you also think that this might be a question
13 that would be raised by people who are now only beginning to
14 implement high school graduation competency tests might ask
15 of themselves?

16 A That's the whole point of the dissertation and I
17 think Dr. Popham is pulling that section out of context a
18 little bit without fully looking at the first chapter, et
19 cetera. That is exactly the function there.

20 The other aspect of the willingness to make some
21 of these assumptions is that I was so involved and it is not
22 always the quantitative data that sets you to some of the
23 assumptions, but some of the very firsthand experiences
24 where you can make some of these conjectures, where you are
25 in a county of that size and begin to observe them firsthand.

1 MR. HANEY: Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you very much.
3 Thank you.

4 Our last witness, Mr. John Myrick, Counsellor,
5 Winter Haven High School, Florida, President of Florida
6 Teaching Profession, National Education Association.

7 TESTIMONY OF JOHN MYRICK, COUNSELOR,
8 WINTER HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL (FLORIDA)
9 PRESIDENT, FLORIDA TEACHING PROFESSION
10 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 BY MS. PULLIN:

13 Q Mr. Myrick, could you please indicate your
14 professional background?

15 A I am a counselor at North East Junior High School
16 in Winter Haven and for the last twenty years I have been a
17 teacher in the secondary schools in Polk County, Florida. I
18 have taught every level from seventh grade to twelfth grade
19 and presently I am on leave of absence from my teaching
20 position as President of the Florida Teaching Profession,
21 National Education Association.

22 Q What is the Florida Teaching Profession, National
23 Education Association?

24 A The FTP/NEA is the largest teachers organization
25 in the state of Florida. We have about 34,000 members and

1 represent over half of Florida's teachers in the collective
2 bargaining arena. We are into curriculum development,
3 legislative guidance, sometimes called lobbying, collective
4 bargaining, instructional and professional development. In
5 fact, anything that teachers feel their professional
6 organizations should be doing for them. We are the state
7 affiliate of NEA.

8 Q In Commissioner Turlington's testimony this
9 morning he indicated that there was no major group in the
10 state of Florida -- I don't think he even said "major
11 group". He said there's no group in the state of Florida
12 that opposed his testing program.

13 Did you hear that statement?

14 A Yes, I did.

15 Q What was your reaction to that statement?

16 A Well, it's no secret in Florida that the
17 Commissioner and I and the teachers of Florida are all
18 moving toward the same goal -- educational excellence.
19 There has been some question about if we are moving the same
20 way toward that goal.

21 Our position is one in opposition of using a
22 minimum competency test as a criteria for graduation.

23 Q And why has your organization of teaching
24 professional taken that position about this minimum
25 competency testing program?

1 A Well, there are a lot of reasons and I can't
2 reiterate all of them, but let me reiterate the ones that I
3 think loom highest in our concerns.

4 First of all, let me say that we have not made
5 this decision lightly. The decision we have made is based
6 on teacher involvement through our various locals, through
7 our legislative committees, through our IPB committees and
8 through our board of directors and, ultimately, through our
9 representative assemblies, all boards made up of teachers
10 and chaired by teachers.

11 One of the problems that we have is that we simply
12 don't believe in the use of any competency test as a sole
13 criterion for promotion. We think it has a narrowing effect
14 on the curriculum. Now that sole criterion issue is an
15 issue that I have heard discussed much today and our
16 definition of sole criterion is perhaps different than what
17 everyone else is using, so let me share that.

18 Q Please do.

19 A We think that the sole criterion is a criterion
20 that will make the decision alone, even if there are other
21 decisions involved in it. We would more likely call it a
22 deciding criterion. It is the same thing to us.

23 Q So you are saying that in the State of Florida the
24 minimum competency test is the deciding criterion?

25 A That is correct. You may do everything else or

1 will be in 1982-83 school year, and was until the Court
2 decision asked for the postponement of that.

3 We also believe that educators ought to reach for
4 mastery rather than meet childrens' needs. Tests of this
5 kind, at least in our knowledge, have not proven to increase
6 the maximums. In fact, the real danger that we are
7 concerned about is the minimum becoming the maximum in the
8 State of Florida.

9 We are concerned about any kind of competency test
10 measuring the ability to get along in life, in fact, ability
11 to get along in anything. If a competency test truly, paper
12 and pencil competency test truly could measure the (ability
13 to do anything, then Howard Cosell would wear a football
14 helmet instead of a toupee and he would be a fullback for
15 the Tampa Bay Bucaneers.

16 Q You have been very eloquent, Mr. Myrick, but I
17 have to think that the folks out there are thinking about
18 the fact that you are not just a professional educator. You
19 are what they might refer to as a union man and it is very
20 possible that they feel that you are opposed to minimum
21 competency testing of students because you fear that that
22 will somehow be used against the teaching profession.

23 A Well, of course, that concern is out there, and I
24 would be foolish to say that it isn't. But that is not the
25 reason that we made this decision. That's not the reason we

1 said this.

2 In fact, in Florida the agreement and
3 understanding is that it is not to be an evaluative use for
4 teachers. I guess the overriding thing that makes the
5 teachers of Florida feel the way we do about this is that a
6 minimum competency test, by its basic nature labels some
7 children as failures and that is against everything that we
8 stand for in education.

9 Let me give you an example. In Orlando, Florida,
10 back when the minimum competency test did indeed make the
11 difference for graduation, one of our teachers, in talking
12 with her student, found that that student was ready to drop
13 out and was going to the counselor that day to do so. When
14 asked why, because he failed the minimum competency test,
15 not just a test that was an individual test but a test that
16 said that he didn't have the competencies to make it in life.

17 And because of that he was going to drop out. And
18 the ironic part of it is that for the past two years he had
19 been the sole support of his family. He was making it in
20 life.

21 Q You also heard I believe, Commissioner
22 Turlington's testimony that he felt that minimum competency
23 testing was promoting educational excellence in your state.
24 And part of the reason that he cited for proof in support of
25 that proposition was the notion that other standardized test

1 scores were going up in your state.

2 Do you have any evidence to indicate whether or
3 not that may or may not be true?

4 A Well, I asked for that data from our research
5 department several years ago and I have asked for it each
6 year since. And we don't have the data to prove that that
7 is true. In fact, to give you an example, I brought a piece
8 of data that we have, using the Preliminary Scholastic
9 Aptitude Test.

10 That is the test that determines who becomes Merit
11 Scholars and who would not become a Merit Scholar.

12 Q Isn't it also a pre-test for the SAT used to gain
13 entry into college?

14 A That's true.

15 Q What were the results on that PSAT?

16 A Well, what I used as a figure was the one percent
17 cutoff, which is what the National Merit Scholarship uses.
18 That one percent cutoff determines who would be able to
19 apply for a Merit Scholarship.

20 In 1973 in Florida --

21 Q This is before minimum competency?

22 A Before minimum competency testing, the one percent
23 cutoff was 193. In 1978, it was 191. As a counselor
24 trained in testing, I would suggest to you that that proves
25 nothing and there really is no data that I know of that

1 proves either way.

2 MS. PULLIN: Thank you very much.

3 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Dr. Popham?

4 CROSS EXAMINATION

5 BY DP. POPHAM:

6 Q Mr. Myrick, in the interest of fairness I am
7 concerned about the accuracy of the statement attributed to
8 Commissioner Turlington during his earlier testimony. Not
9 having access to a direct transcript of those remarks I
10 cannot at this moment deny that they occurred.

11 But since I was questioning him I listened very
12 carefully to his response regarding the support of minimum
13 competency testing in his state. I was asking him precisely
14 about that. When he came to teachers -- he said
15 administrators were in support. When he came to teachers he
16 said I am convinced that a majority of teachers now favor
17 this program. He did not say, in my recollection, that no
18 group was opposed to minimum competency testing in Florida.

19 Isn't that the way you recall it?

20 A No. My recollection was that in the discussion
21 his suggestion was that there was no major group at this
22 time. This was the discussion of in the beginning there
23 were groups opposed to it and his feeling was that now there
24 were no groups opposed to it.

25 Q Well, certainly your group is in opposition, right?

1 A To using minimum competency tests as the criterion
2 for graduation, a deciding criterion.

3 Q And opposing counsel raised the question about the
4 possibility that your stance would be viewed as one of
5 vested interest. Let's talk about vested interest for a
6 moment.

7 If a parent sees a child, their child, and accuses
8 that child of being adorable, we might say that that was a
9 vested interest because it coincides with what the parent
10 wants to say. If that same parent sees their child and says
11 the child is fairly ugly that runs counter to vested
12 interest and we attribute more credibility to the remark.

13 Earlier today we heard a representative of a
14 teacher's organization in another state describing a
15 situation in which their state association was actively
16 supporting minimum competency testing. This runs counter to
17 the vested interests of teachers organizations, for it may
18 be that their deficiencies may be revealed and thereby they
19 would be judged accountable.

20 Your position, however, is consistent with the
21 mother who sees the baby and says adorable, wouldn't you
22 agree?

23 A Well, one thing about teachers' organizations, we
24 don't always agree on issues. If we did, then education in
25 the United States would be, well, I think the answer is

1 self-explanatory.

2 The majority of teachers' organizations, the
3 majority of NEA affiliates, and I deal with them on an
4 everyday basis, have, I believe, a similar mind.

5 Q And that majority, you believe, is somewhat
6 consonant with the vested interests of teachers'
7 organizations in general?

8 A Our vested interest is student excellence.

9 Q You have talked about the danger of a sole
10 criterion and defined it in such a way that it is a deciding
11 criterion. If a course of study in a particular state calls
12 for the student to pass a course in U.S. Government in order
13 to get a high school diploma and the student fails to pass
14 that course in U.S. Government, is that a sole criterion,
15 for indeed it is a decisive criterion in whether or not a
16 student gets a diploma. Is that a sole criterion in you
17 view?

18 A It is a deciding criterion but of a different
19 nature. It's a deciding criterion based on teacher
20 observation, numerous tests, numerous experience, and
21 evaluative instruments that that student went through in
22 that course.

23 Q But it is a single criterion, passage of the
24 course, the grade. And the teacher awards the grade and it
25 may be an A, B, C, D, F, but if the teachers says F the

1 student doesn't get the diploma, right? So it is sole
2 criterion?

3 A Not in our interpretation. A sole criterion or
4 decisive criterion is one single entity, one single test,
5 for example, or one single kind of thing. A passage of a
6 course is not one single thing but an accumulation of things
7 that either passes or fails.

8 Q Isn't it that you are talking about the way in
9 which the data are aggregated to make the decision about the
10 criterion? You seem to be suggesting that if many data
11 sources are somehow put together in yielding a grade that is
12 acceptable, but if scores on tests on basic skills in
13 reading, writing and math are used, that is not acceptable.
14 Isn't that the way you are describing it?

15 A Because that is one entity. In the course you
16 described a student takes many tests, may fail some, may
17 pass some. But it's the aggregate of all of that together
18 over a period of time that makes the difference.

19 Q I think our interpretation is the same. You
20 mentioned your research department. Is that the department
21 in the teachers' organization or is that the Department of
22 Research in the State Department of Education?

23 A No, we have our own research department.

24 Q So you went to them rather than the State
25 Department of Education? I suspect that Commissioner

1 Turlington was probably going to his research department
2 rather than yours, is that correct?

3 A Probably so, although our people work very close
4 together and our data is their data and their data is our
5 data for the most part.

6 Q I get the impression that there is much comradery
7 in Florida.

8 A There certainly is.

9 MS. PULLIN: I have one question.

10 DR. POPHAM: Professor Alleyne has a question on
11 CROSS.

12 CROSS_EXAMINATION

13 BY MR. ALLEYNE:

14 Q You testified in direct exam, I believe, that the
15 NEA affiliate of which you are the head in Florida has taken
16 a position against minimum competency testing, at least as a
17 requirement for graduating from high school, is that correct?

18 A That's correct.

19 Q Can you tell me when the NEA affiliate in Florida
20 took that position?

21 A We took the position, or at least took a position
22 similar to our present position, said those same kinds of
23 things, back before minimum competency testing became a
24 reality in Florida.

25 Q Approximately what year?

1 A I would have to guess that our decision to do this
2 must have been in the early '70s -- '71, '72.

3 Q And minimum competency testing became a reality in
4 Florida when?

5 A Became a reality in Florida in '73, isn't it?

6 Q So it's possible that the Commissioner in his
7 testimony could be right, that at this time a majority of
8 teachers in Florida favor minimum competency testing.
9 That's at least a possibility?

10 A Well, within our organization, whatever positions
11 we take we reevaluate every year. By the way, it was 1976,
12 the Accountability Act of 1976. And our position is
13 reevaluated by boards of teachers and representative
14 assemblies each year, and that position has been affirmed
15 each year. So even though the original position was back in
16 '72 or '73, it is still just as live and just as real today
17 as it was then.

18 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: The time for direct
19 examination has expired. Was there some redirect?

20 MS. PULLIN: I will pass.

21 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: We thank you for your
22 assistance, Mr. Myrick, and you are excused.

23 That concludes the witness list. We now will have
24 summaries of approximately two minutes each by the Pro Team
25 Leader and the Con Team Leader and we will begin with

1 Professor Popham.

2 SUMMARY OF THE DAY'S SESSION

3 BY DR. POPHAM, PRO TEAM LEADER

4 DR. POPHAM: Thank you, Professor Jordan.

5 These five minutes summaries Professor Madaus and
6 I are making are getting shorter and shorter, I note, and I
7 appreciate that, though.

8 Our team today tried to present an array of
9 witnesses who would support the general contention that
10 minimum competency testing programs would have positive
11 effects on students, on the curriculum, on teaching and on
12 public perceptions of education.

13 Many of our witnesses were drawn from the ranks of
14 educators who are actually implementing minimum competency
15 testing programs. We are particularly impressed with the
16 presentations of several of those witnesses who used minimum
17 competency testing not as a defensive stance against the
18 imposition of the public but rather as a catalyst for
19 improving the caliber of instruction in their state and in
20 their district.

21 We heard a representative from a major state
22 association, education association, describe that a
23 forward-looking teachers' organization can in fact support
24 this kind of legislation, for indeed they could thereby hold
25 that program in a fashion more consonant with their desire

1 to improve the quality of instruction.

2 We heard one of America's foremost testing experts
3 suggest that the caliber of testing technology at this
4 juncture is sufficient to support minimum competency testing
5 programs.

6 And you have half a minute left over.

7 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thank you.

8 Professor Madaus?

9 SUMMARY OF THE DAY'S SESSION

10 BY DR. MADAUS, CON TEAM LEADER

11 DR. MADAUS: Today we tried to show, and I think
12 we have, that the technology in testing, and we also have
13 one of the foremost experts in the United States testifying
14 on this -- several, as a matter of fact -- are not up to
15 making these kinds of decisions alone on the basis of the
16 test score.

17 And our position, as we have tried to have it
18 emerge from the day's testimony is that while we are not
19 against using tests, tests play an important role in
20 decisionmaking. What we are against are these programs that
21 use the test as the final hurdle.

22 Now I think we have to put today's testimony,
23 which was very technical and doesn't really lend itself to
24 this kind of arena, to this kind of forum, I think we have
25 to put it in human terms. We have to say what does it mean

1 to those children right around the cut score that are denied
2 a diploma, that are kept back. And even if they take the
3 test again, for the four months that they wait are labeled
4 functionally illiterate or incompetent, are taken out of
5 classes and put into remedial work. The peers know that
6 these kids have failed.

7 The labeling has a very human dimension and what
8 we tried to show you today is it doesn't take many items to
9 make a difference. It doesn't take much in the way of how
10 you set the cut score to make a difference.

11 In one method of setting the cut score we saw that
12 one out of every two kids would have had a different
13 decision if one particular group had used one method. We
14 showed you what happened about various methods. So a lot of
15 this is just arbitrary.

16 The truth-in-labeling restoring meaning to a high
17 school diploma is nonsense, particular for kids around the
18 cut score. We also tried to tell you that we are for
19 standards. We are for restoring meaning to the diploma, but
20 we think that the best way to do it is in terms of
21 professionals using all kinds of data to make decisions.

22 The teachers, the administrators, the parents have
23 a wealth of data and rather than use a single index they
24 should use all of that data to make these important
25 decisions. That's what we tried to do today.

1 I was interested in some of the testimony today,
2 particularly from Florida, since yesterday Dr. Popham's
3 chief witness, Professor Scriven, said that Florida was an
4 example of a bad state minimum competency test.

5 I was also happy today that Professor Popham
6 joined us in agreeing that minimum competency tests should
7 not be used for learning disabled or handicapped students.
8 We consider that a big victory. He was supposed to contest
9 that. Welcome aboard. We hope that the American public in
10 those states that are still using it that way take notice.

11 Thank you.

12 HEARING OFFICER JORDAN: Thus concludes day two of
13 the minimum competency hearing.

14 Tomorrow, the final day, we will convene the
15 hearing at 9:00. We hope that you will join us. We thank
16 the witnesses for appearing and sharing information with us.

17 The hearing is adjourned.

18 (Whereupon, at 5:50 o'clock p.m., the hearing was
19 recessed, to reconvene at 9:00 o'clock a.m., Friday, July
20 10, 1981.)

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