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ABSTRACT

To improve the quality of teaching in New York State's schools, state and local policy-makers must consider a number of issues that affect teaching quality. These issues are outlined in this booklet, which also provides a number of policy recommendations. The basic concepts reviewed are (1) the assumptions that underlie the collaborative endeavor that is effective education; (2) factors affecting the recruitment, training, and professional development of teachers; (3) possible responses to variations in teacher supply and demand; and (4) appropriate development and application of certification standards and professional requirements. Additional concepts covered are (5) various forms of teacher compensation, incentives, and rewards; (6) the need for defining incompetence and establishing effective procedures for teacher discipline; (7) the characteristics of effective schooling and the value of decentralizing authority as determined through research; and (8) the importance of cooperation among educators and educational policy-makers at all levels to develop strong, coordinated approaches to educational improvement. (PGD)

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# Toward Better Teaching



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*A Position Paper of the*  
**NEW YORK STATE  
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

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# Preface

*One of the clearest, strongest messages sent to the American public in recent months by national task forces, eminent educational researchers, and powerful legislative officials is that the pursuit of excellence in education leads directly to teachers. Of the billions of dollars annually spent on public education, that portion invested in direct support of the act of teaching pays the greatest dividend for our children. Local school boards, fundamentally responsible for hiring teachers and shaping the instructional budget, take the investment seriously.*

*This policy paper outlines issues in need of understanding and directions to support in the search for better quality teaching. Written primarily for local school board members, the paper covers what might be called the four "r's" of teacher quality—recruitment, retention, reward, and research—and how they affect educational policy.*

# Summary Of Policy Recommendations

As an official statement of the New York State School Boards Association, *Toward Better Teaching* outlines issues in need of understanding and suggests both local and state policies that will improve the quality of teaching. Organized by section titles, the following policy recommendations are incorporated in the paper. Numbers in parentheses refer to pages of text.

## Assumptions

- Teachers and students, as partners in learning, should recognize that individual and institutional improvements demand collective involvement, an atmosphere of success, and high expectations. (1)

## Recruitment and Preparation

- Local school boards should adopt policies which describe desirable criteria for teacher candidates, call for motivational assessments in the hiring process, and aim toward reducing or eliminating duties for teachers which divert efforts from instruction. The policies should declare local board commitment to minimizing interruptions to instruction, and promote teaching as a worthy and appreciated profession. (3)
- To help reverse the continual devaluation of teacher education, local school boards should look carefully at the link between teacher education programs and the public schools. From this examination, school boards should state clearly what competencies, skills, and attitudes they expect teacher education institutions to instill. The state should encourage cooperation by providing funding and technical assistance aimed toward new arrangements for apprenticeships and master/mentor teacher guidance for teachers in training. (5)
- By setting policy and budgetary priorities, school boards should strengthen their leadership in providing staff development cooperatively with higher educational institutions. (5)
- NYSSBA should explore the potential expertise of its membership to promote better communication and stronger staff development bridges to higher education. (6)

## Supply and Demand

- At both state and local levels, special precautions should be taken to maintain teacher quality control standards as supply and demand patterns shift. (8)
- Over the next decade, school districts should concentrate their efforts to upgrade teacher quality on the current teaching staff. This should be done by a combination of enhanced staff development opportunities and stronger teacher disciplinary standards. (8)
- There should be closer communication between state and local levels to achieve better coordination between legislative goals and the realities local school districts must face. (8)
- Local school boards should explore such promising alternatives as high school "cadet" teacher programs, establishing summer institutes to bring together outstanding teachers and promising students, competitive grants to encourage teachers to conduct special projects for the schools, and increased local funding for staff development in partnership with local business and industry. (9)
- The state should establish a centralized, efficient job bank information network through which qualified teachers can be matched with available positions in their specialties and within the geographical areas and types of school districts they desire. (9)
- The state should increase funding for staff development opportunities, in particular those representing logical partnerships with business and industry. (9)

## Certification Standards

- State level research should be applied to the inconsistency of timelines for tenure and certification. (11)
- NYSSBA should continue to seek more flexibility for local school boards in abolishing teacher positions. (11)
- Legislative proposals to establish a new professional practices board for teachers should be opposed. (12)
- The Regents should change regulations on the composition of the State Teacher Education, Certification and Practices Board (TECAP) so that school boards would be formally represented. (13)
- NYSSBA, either independently or in cooperation with the State Education Department, should conduct a major study on interrelationships among certification, pre-service, and in-service education for teachers; tenure and seniority; and on the possibility of linking all of these to such reform proposals as master/mentor teacher arrangements, career ladders, internships, and performance evaluation. (13)

## Compensation: Incentives and Rewards

- School boards should recognize that higher pay for teachers is generally desirable; however, pay is only one type of reward, not a panacea. A better general strategy is for school boards to define what they want in teacher candidates, to compare the definition with the desires of current and prospective teachers, and to apply what we know about rewards and motivation in a responsible and cost effective manner. (14)
- School boards are encouraged to test merit pay variations thoughtfully and carefully. Well designed and evaluated experiments should be conducted. (16)
- The ideal notwithstanding, school boards experimenting with merit pay plans should consider restrictions on the number of teachers who may qualify so that the plan will not be distorted by ulterior motives or the negotiations process. If extra pay for extra work is given, a time limit should be placed on the receipt of such pay so that the extra pay is regarded as special. The best conception of superiority, nevertheless, is better work, not more work. (17)
- Teachers should be involved in the design and conduct of evaluation, but not control of the process, which is a fundamental managerial or supervisory responsibility. School board policies should set the standards for evaluation, and administrators who are expected to conduct evaluations should be trained and prepared to do the job well. A variety of criteria for evaluation should be used. (18)
- School boards are encouraged to experiment with career ladder variations. Plans should be locally varied rather than state mandated, and rely upon the expertise of teachers. New systems should rely upon proven methods of performance evaluation and create new opportunities for professional development. (19)
- NYSSBA should support legislative proposals that would give incentives to school districts to conduct pilot projects involving career ladders. (20)
- The state legislature should not mandate a statewide minimum teacher salary. (21)
- If teachers will be expected to participate in staff development activities scheduled outside of the current school year calendar, consideration for extra pay should be bargained. If the activities are scheduled within the current calendar, extra pay for participation should not be provided. (21)
- In summary of policy relating to teacher salary and reward: Teacher salaries are not the key to transforming teaching into something infinitely better than it is now. Such rewards and the systems behind them are an integral part of the issues of educational excellence which school boards and teachers should resolve together as partners. (22)

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## **Competence And Discipline**

- Research is needed to learn more about what constitutes teacher incompetence, and to update statistics connected with Section 3020-a disciplinary proceedings. (23)
- NYSSBA should continue to work in the legislative arena to negotiate a mutually acceptable program for effective teacher discipline with the organizations that represent teachers in the legislature and at the bargaining table. (24)

## **Effective Schools, Effective Teaching**

- In formulating local policies, school boards should give careful consideration to research-based principles about teaching frequently found in effective schooling studies. (25)
- The value of decentralizing authority and responsibility to the individual school level should be recognized by school boards; yet boards should maintain a strong profile in setting policies. Those policies should create ample opportunity for student and staff self-control. (26)

## **Partnerships**

- Partnerships of all types and at all levels should be sought as a means of producing better teaching. NYSSBA will attempt to become involved in varied partnerships in order to bring the best teaching, and thus the best learning opportunities, to the future children of New York State. (28)

# Assumptions

The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) is committed to a better future for teachers, just as it is strongly committed to a better educational future for children. Our public school teachers and students are two indispensable partners on the learning team. Among other things, this team must be able to build upon an abiding faith in the work and welfare of the individual and confidence that positive change can occur in the school system through the responsiveness and leadership of school boards and the administration. Team members need to understand that individual and institutional improvement occur most effectively with collective involvement; they must recognize the importance of an atmosphere of success and high expectations.

The *quality* of teaching is determined by *all* of the various influences which affect it. Among the molders of quality are parents who express opinions about teachers, teachers who serve as models for students thinking about becoming teachers, school boards and staff (including teacher colleagues), teacher educators, regulatory and legislative bodies, and teacher unions. Attention should be focused on how these factors interplay if the quality of teaching is to be improved. To illustrate how a lack of attention to these factors can spell failure, Schlechty and Vance (1982) have pointed out the following probability:

... The reason past efforts to improve the academic quality of the teaching corps have failed is because these efforts have concentrated primarily on recruiting more able people to teacher education and on changing the quality of teacher education programs themselves rather than attending to the structuring of schools in ways that would be attractive to these increasingly able candidates. (p. 36)

Contrary to the claims of critics, the public schools of New York State are *not* crisis ridden. Educational standards and results, applied to either teachers or students, have been historically high in New York. Attempts to elevate standards have been continuous. For example, well before the recent onrush of proposed reforms by national groups, the Regents Action Plan was formulated on the basis of comprehensively revised goals for public education. It includes new expectations and diploma standards for students, new vehicles for preparation of teachers, and new requirements to establish accountability for results.

The dollars needed to make new plans come true are a constant concern. But there is good reason for at least short-term optimism. In 1984-85 the schools received the largest increase in state aid in New York's history—some \$500 million. Our public schools spend approximately \$13 billion annually. About three out of every four dollars go for teacher salaries and fringe benefits. Only the state of Alaska and the District of Columbia pay a higher average teacher salary (1983-84). Moreover, our teachers are well educated; about two-thirds have masters degrees or better. They are experienced in education, typically having worked 14 years in their field. They are well qualified by state standards; 9 out of 10 have permanent certification.

## Recruitment and Preparation

**W**hy does someone choose to become a teacher? According to John Goodlad, based on teacher surveys associated with his study, *A Place Called School*, the main reasons focus on the nature of teaching itself. Goodlad identifies as especially important: the desire to teach in general or to teach a subject of interest, in particular, the belief that teaching is a good and worthy profession, and a willingness to serve others. What makes these motives significant for school policy makers is that job motivational research confirms that such needs and expectations bring about superior and inspired work. So-called intrinsic needs and desires—over which the individual has some control—can be fulfilled by the act of teaching. Goodlad found that teachers who entered their careers with strong beliefs about the intrinsic worth of teaching were most likely to feel fulfilled and willing to choose a teaching career again, if given a second chance. On the other hand, those who entered teaching due to the influence of others or for economic reasons were the least likely to feel fulfilled by their jobs.

Equally revealing are reasons given by teachers for leaving the profession. Goodlad found the reason most often cited by teachers was "personal frustration and dissatisfaction in the teaching situation". Less significant reasons given were conflicts with colleagues or students, and poor resource tools. Concludes Goodlad, "If one goes into teaching with expectations of being able to teach and to be of service and then is frustrated in realizing these expectations, dissatisfaction sets in and quitting becomes an alternative. There is nothing unusual about this." (1984, p. 172)

What do these findings imply for local policy? School boards should adopt policies which clearly describe desirable criteria for teacher candidates, call for motivational assessments in the hiring process, and aim toward reducing or eliminating duties for teachers that divert their efforts from instruction. Such policies should declare board commitment to minimizing classroom interruptions, and to promoting teaching as a worthy and appreciated profession.

The decision to pursue a teaching career often is made during college undergraduate years, after many of the basic, required teacher preparation courses already have been taken. By the same token, many decide at this point *not* to become teachers. Unquestionably, there are fundamental, quality-related problems associated with the education offered prospective teachers. A federally funded, four-year

national commission study of undergraduate education and teacher education in the 1970's showed startling student disenchantment with the limited opportunity available for creativity, subject specialization, occupational skills training, faculty advice and guidance, and course relevance. (Spillane and Levenson, 1976)

It does not seem likely that the situation has changed much in the 1980's. The central features of teacher preparation in the United States have remained unchanged for many years. They include a baccalaureate program in the liberal arts, a specialty in at least one subject area, a knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings and research literature of teaching, and opportunity for supervised practice teaching. Unfortunately, the relationship and balance among these basic parts has stirred endless controversy, impeded constructive change, and tended to downgrade the reputation and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs.

Attempts to make positive changes have not quite borne fruit as hoped. For example, the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs popularized in the 1950's and 60's provided a logical sequence—an extension of scholarship in one's liberal arts major, an abbreviated yet intense period of studying the art and science of teaching, and an extended, supervised teaching internship. An excellent idea, the elements of which deserve to be re-infused into current teacher education programs, the MAT programs died out as the demand for new teachers dwindled.

In the 1960's and 70's, the Teacher Corps used federal sponsorship for a multitude of innovative approaches to teacher education. Envisioned as a domestic parallel to the Peace Corps, the Teacher Corps typically used a two-year, work-study program for preparation to teach low-income, disadvantaged populations in urban settings. Emphasis was placed on interagency cooperation, team teaching, and actual practice teaching. Like the MAT, it proved to be effective in recruiting the best and the brightest into teaching; but those who entered the classroom tended to move on to other professions after only a few years. As teacher demand and federal funding dwindled, the Teacher Corps became diffused and fragmented.

More recently, our teacher education institutions have been pursuing a set of reforms called Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE). The program is designed to identify, teach, and evaluate those skills and competencies that result in mature and effective teaching. Engineered, accountable teaching is the goal. Implementation has proven to be expensive, however, and the technical knowledge base needed to make CBTE work never has materialized. The image of CBTE as an attempt to transform teaching into something rigid and mechanical has prevented its widespread acceptance. (Sykes, 1984)

## Why Teacher Education Initiatives Have Failed

Each of these initiatives has had praiseworthy elements. None has endured. Why? Could it be declining teacher demand, inadequate funding, time constraints, lack of planning or a technical base? Partly, but perhaps more fundamental and damaging in the long run is the apparent absence of conviction expressed by educational leaders, including university professors, superintendents, and school boards, about the value and purpose of teacher education programs. The impact of this absence of conviction is aptly expressed by Gary Sykes (1984) in *Against Mediocrity*:

The enterprise of preparing teachers in our society is not esteemed, and the consequences . . . are devastating. Without sufficient caring we have no appreciative framework for teacher education, no shared conception of quality, no capacity to recognize or vocabulary to describe excellence, nor occasions to celebrate it. The process of educating teachers is essentially invisible, a sure sign of its undervaluation in our culture. (p. 190)

Other analysts have pointed out the difficult competition for time and money which confronts teacher education at the undergraduate level, and the weak commitment to research and development for teacher education in the university setting. (Clark, 1984)

What can school boards do to help reverse the continual devaluation of teacher education? They should begin by looking carefully at the link between teacher education programs and the public schools. Common to nearly all reforms proposed for teacher education in the last 30 years has been a stronger connection between theory at the university or college and practice in elementary or secondary school. One outgrowth of local district review should be a clearer statement from school boards of what competencies, skills, and attitudes they expect teacher education institutions to instill. At the same time, increased cooperation, especially if encouraged with state funding and technical assistance, could produce promising new arrangements for apprenticeships and master/mentor teacher guidance for teachers.

School boards, through policy and budgetary priorities, should rationalize and reinforce their leadership in providing staff development opportunities in cooperation with higher education. The role is a logical one for the school board because the goals and programs involved should be district-wide and reflective of system-wide cooperation with teachers. The power of a school board to effect change in teacher preparation *should* be exercised. John Goodlad (1982) explains why:

The improvement of teaching is rarely placed on a school-wide agenda. Staff development continues to focus on the individual teacher, not on the school as a whole. Consequently, the improvement of teaching continues to be a matter of individual responsibility. It is high time we brought teaching out of the closet and addressed its improvement as a total faculty responsibility. This will not come about easily, but, until it does, we will make few inroads into present inadequate, little-varying pedagogical procedures. (p. 19)

New York State provides a favorable set of circumstances for change in teacher education to occur with local school board assistance. There are longstanding organizational links between teacher educators and the public elementary and secondary schools through BOCES, teacher training centers (strengthened by 1984-85 state aid legislation), university field service arms and study institutes, and local school district in-service activities now directly supported by state aid. Individual school board members often are intimately familiar with the dynamics of organized teacher education because about 11 percent of them (more than 500 estimated) are professional educators.

NYSSBA plans to explore the potential expertise of its membership to promote better communication and build stronger bridges for staff development between teacher education programs in higher education and elementary and secondary schools.

## Supply and Demand

**T**he quality in teaching is related in many ways to issues of supply and demand. Since 1950 the State has gone through two contrasting market periods, and is now in the midst of a third. From approximately 1950 through 1970, increasing student enrollment created by the post-World War II baby boom resulted in a 125 percent increase in the national size of our teacher corps. In New York, the number of teachers increased by 133 percent. The local school district objective was simply to find individuals with college degrees who were willing to teach.

As the State entered the 1970's, the trend shifted to oversupply and shrinking demand. Between 1970 and 1980 New York State enrollment declined by 18 percent and the number of staff dropped 10 percent. Recruitment became more selective at the elementary level because secondary school enrollment continued to increase on a statewide basis well into the 1970's. It is interesting to note that the seeds of the teacher shortage were sown during this period of oversupply and underdemand. During the decade, the number of provisional and permanent teaching certificates granted in New York declined from more than 66,000 to around 30,000, a 55 percent loss.

More than the three preceding decades, the 1980's are proving to be a period of crosscurrents in supply and demand. Elementary and secondary enrollments are projected to continue to decline until 1988, then moving upward slightly by the early 1990's. On the whole, schools still seem to be oversupplied with teachers. Although multiple applications may be involved, in 1982 there were nearly 73,000 applications for about 5,400 open teacher positions (excluding New York City). At the same time there are selective shortages. From 1968 through 1980, the number of certificates issued to teach math dropped by 76 percent; for science, 85 percent. Somewhat steeper than the norm, these declines help to explain why more attention is being given to current staff shortages in areas of math and science.

In New York we can add to the list foreign languages, occupational education specialties, and special education fields. In New York and across the nation, within just a few years, shortages of specialized teachers will turn into a more general shortage of qualified teachers. A recent Rand Corporation study predicts that the supply of new teacher graduates may meet only 80 percent of the growing demand by 1993. (Darling-Hammond, 1984) Unfortunately, no systematic long-range projections of staffing needs resulting from either enrollment trends or new state mandates have been developed thus far for New York State.

The rate of teacher preparation and certification is just one facet of a growing problem. Surveys show that at least a quarter of the math and science teachers, the majority of them younger staff, are planning to leave teaching jobs for employment in private industry or elsewhere. (New York State Education Department, 1982 and 1984)

One 1984 survey conducted by NYSSBA showed that of a statewide total of 24,000 math, science, and foreign language teachers about 2,000 are eligible to retire. If all such staff decided to do so, districts would typically lose between 6 and 10 percent of their math, science, and foreign language teachers. Retirement eligibility among teachers of these subjects is somewhat higher than for teachers generally. A second Association survey focused on grades seven and eight found that nearly half of the responding school districts anticipated having to hire additional staff to be able to provide newly required instruction in technology education and home and career skills. What conclusions with respect to quality can be drawn from these data?

*First, the composition of our current teacher staff reflects different standards of quality applied under differing conditions of supply and demand.* In a period of high demand and undersupply, whether selective or general, special precautions should be taken to maintain quality control standards.

*Second, at least for the next decade, the relatively slow rate of new recruitment will mean that school district effort to upgrade teacher quality should be concentrated on the current teaching staff,* through enhanced staff development opportunities, strengthened disciplinary standards, or a combination of both.

*Third, closer communication and coordination between state and local levels are needed to assure not only that goals are shared and reachable, but also that state initiatives are not, in fact, counterproductive.* For example, the Regents Action Plan to revamp and expand diploma requirements for math, science, foreign language, and occupational subjects, while laudable, sets dates to start the new requirements without any clear proof that the schools can meet the demand for staff or the required teaching standards. A different example is the recently enacted legislation to establish a statewide early retirement incentive plan in which districts may allow teachers to participate. As NYSSBA warned the legislature and the governor unsuccessfully, this legislation probably will intensify staff supply problems in subject areas already struggling against shortages.

*A fourth important conclusion is that supply, demand and quality issues can be resolved to the advantage of local school districts only if the solutions reflect variety as well as flexibility.* Some promising steps in this direction already have been taken by the Board of Regents and the legislature. These include a competitive grant program that has

initially funded more than 40 teacher resource and computer training centers to cover staff development, research, and curriculum development; an employment program designed to encourage business to hire math, science, and technical education teachers during the summer so that their skills and knowledge may be improved; and establishment of several hundred undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships for prospective teachers of math and science.

Some promising alternatives local school boards might consider include: 1) high school "cadet" teacher programs in which teachers identify and encourage interested and talented students to participate in the teaching process by means of tutoring (Boyer, 1983, p. 308); 2) summer institutes in which students who are both gifted and interested in teaching can be brought together with outstanding teachers for a diversity of learning and sharing experiences; 3) competitive grants to encourage teachers to conduct special projects which can be implemented in the schools; 4) increasing state and local funding for staff development opportunities, particularly those which represent logical partnerships with business and industry; 5) a centralized, efficient, job bank information network through which qualified teachers can be matched with available positions in their specialties and within the geographical areas and types of school districts they desire.

*Finally, more attention should be paid to the relationships between quantitative and qualitative aspects of our teacher corps.* It is one thing to encourage more undergraduates to enter teacher education programs, but it may be quite another to upgrade their *quality*, assuming an agreement can be reached on just what quality is measured by.

One of the great ironies associated with teacher recruitment is that practically no published research has shown a connection between teachers' academic ability and their teaching competence. In fact, interpersonal skills seem much more important than SAT scores as a predictor of teaching success (Heath, 1984). Yet academic ability has become the yardstick by which most policy makers and policy analysts are judging a decline in teaching standards.

To the extent that opinion places a premium on academic ability, the implications for future teacher supply become enormous. The following are potential consequences of a hypothetical policy that would deny admission to teaching to those college graduates who scored in the lower fifth of all college graduates on measures of academic ability:

- Approximately 35 percent of education majors would be denied entry into teacher education programs.
- By conservative estimate, the supply of teachers would be reduced by 30 percent.

- The number of teachers likely to stay in teaching beyond age 30 would be reduced by up to 50 percent.
- About 75 percent of the blacks who enter education would be prevented from doing so.
- From among the ranks of those recruited into teaching and intending to *continue* teaching, a disproportion of males would be excluded. (Schlechty and Vance, 1982, pp. 32-35)

The *real* problem stems from the fact that the more academically proficient teachers are apt to leave teaching sooner, thus perpetuating mediocrity in the ranks of remaining experienced teachers. The generally lower academic qualifications of teacher recruits from the undergraduate level creates an undesirable public relations image for teachers and probably discourages a stronger human and financial investment in teacher education programs. Surely, rational policies involving standards which will affect supply and demand for teachers in years to come should be founded more securely than they are on evidence of what teaching excellence is, and what qualities and attributes in a teacher will produce it.

## Certification Standards

Certification represents the most direct opportunity to control the quality of teaching—and the least well utilized.” So states a special report issued in 1984 by a study committee of the the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (1984, p. 17). The report provides a number of recommended policy changes and areas for further study, many of them valid considerations in New York State. For example, it is noteworthy that the granting of tenure and permanent certification are separate, unrelated acts, in both Pennsylvania and New York State. Typically, in New York State, a provisional certificate is valid for five years, and a permanent certificate requires two years of school experience and a masters degree. The tenure decision occurs after three years. Thus, a new teacher can be given lifetime job protection at a point when only a provisional certificate to teach is held. This is true, at least for school districts *other* than New York City, where legislation in recent years has prohibited granting tenure unless the individual is permanently licensed to teach. Since the timelines for tenure and certification are not synchronized, some research-based consideration should be given to a logical link between the two.

A special concern in New York State is the precedence of seniority over certification in abolishing teaching positions. For at least six years, both the State Education Department and NYSSBA have worked toward legislation that would enable school boards which desire to abolish teaching positions to consider the certification status as well as the length of service of individuals affected by a reduction in staff. Continued, successful opposition to this proposed legislation tends to discredit and demean the teaching certificate; what's more, it prevents school boards from using enrollment decline and its necessary staff cutbacks as an opportunity to upgrade the quality of teaching. Of course, length of experience in education is important, but it is only one important dimension in the picture of educational effectiveness. School boards need more, not less, flexibility in this area.

Indeed, there has been progress in strengthening teacher credentials. As of September 1984, all beginning teachers will have to complete successfully a certification examination which will show satisfactory knowledge of English, social studies, mathematics, science, and pedagogical practices. Speciality examinations will be required for those seeking certification in subject areas. This is a laudable step, but remember that the exams set only a minimum standard of knowledge and do not guarantee acceptable teaching performance.

Certification examinations were originally proposed by the Board of Regents as one of several reforms associated with establishing

teaching as a licensed profession. The anchor of those reforms, proposed as legislation in 1978 and still pending, would be a state board for teaching, also known as a professional practices board. This plan included a statutory definition of teaching, definitions of and penalties for misconduct, and a system of licensure with various procedures involved. NYSSBA has been generally supportive of many of the Regents' attempts to upgrade teacher standards, but the notion of a professional practices board is unacceptable.

The intended composition, powers, and activities of the board are misconceived. Teaching will not become a profession by merely establishing such a board. School boards and others interested in public education have regarded teachers as professionals for years. However, school boards carry fundamental statutory responsibilities regarding teachers. There is an employer-employee relationship which clearly distinguishes teachers from other professional types currently subject to the apparatus and control of licensure.

The current framework through which teachers are held accountable to the public would be duplicated or violated by a state professional practices board. The board would not specifically include school board representatives, leaving the public out of the process of defining needed teacher competencies and standards. Moreover, the Commissioner and the Regents would not be given formal advice from school boards with regard to licensure (certification) requirements and circumstances which might constitute professional misconduct.

In contrast to boards provided for all other professions, a state board for teaching would create regulations duplicating others already in place and inviting lawsuits. At the first level, the local school board would determine who is to be employed, whether tenure is to be awarded and—if misconduct is alleged—whether charges should be brought in a 3020-a proceeding which could lead to dismissal. At the second level, a state board would define requirements for licensure and pass judgment on certain kinds of misconduct which might lead to loss of license. The arrangement would be cumbersome and confusing at best. At worst, it would spawn lawsuits expensive for the taxpayers, while circumventing local accountability for quality teaching.

Complicating matters further is the present use of a State Teacher Education, Certification and Practices Board (TECAP). In many respects, it already operates like a professional practices board. It helps to define certification standards, *recommends* granting or continuing certification in individual cases, *recommends* hearings on removal of certification, and serves as a quality control group with respect to teacher preparation and in-service education. To date the TECAP Board has been able to avoid the functional conflict that an autonomous state practices board would create.

**The crux of the Association's concern is that, historically, becoming a professional has been closely identified with self-regulation.**

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In NYSSBA's view the TECAP Board is hampered because it does not sufficiently represent the public interest. The Regents' rules which set the Board's composition provide for 12 members who either hold permanent teacher certification or are teacher educators, plus one public member—someone not professionally engaged in education and the parent of a public school child at the time of appointment. *No formal provision is made for a school board member to serve.* Unfortunately, the Commissioner of Education has misinterpreted a NYSSBA request for a change in Regents' rules to allow school board representation as an attempt to gain *organizational* representation, and he has rejected the Association's request.

The crux of the Association's concern is that, historically, becoming a professional has been closely identified with self-regulation. Therefore, guaranteeing adequate teacher competency and protecting the public interest appears to be less important to licensure advocates than restricting entry into the profession, gaining recognition and status, and accomplishing self-governance. Granted, status and recognition are sorely needed by public school teachers, and teaching standards must be strengthened. But this should not be done—in fact, it *cannot* be done—by setting up a new state level apparatus through which the teaching profession is made any less accountable than it is now to school boards and the general public. The public interest must be served *before* self-interest.

In connection with the Regents Action Plan, the State Education Department is conducting a year-long study of course requirements for certification, along with a special study of a current regulation which allows school districts to assign teachers to subject areas outside of their certification for a period not to exceed five classroom hours per week. NYSSBA calls for a major expansion of the study, to be accomplished either through the TECAP Board with school board representation, or through an independent study committee effort sponsored by the Association. Of concern would be interrelationships among certification, teacher pre-service and in-service education, tenure, and seniority. Results of the study should be linked to such proposals as master/mentor teacher arrangements, career ladders, internships, and existing performance evaluation.

## Compensation: Incentives and Rewards

Compensation, whether it comes in dollars or psychological gratification, pays off differently for different people, even though they may be in the same organization or career field. So it is with teacher compensation or reward. Each teacher, and each member of the education community interested in teachers, brings a different personal *and* organizational perspective to the issues. Compensation issues have raised critical questions in today's educational reform movement. Conscious of both the importance of compensation in the campaign for better teaching, and the need to promote a better understanding about compensation reform, NYSSBA has identified certain key questions and developed policy guidelines that respond to each question.

### *1. Is higher pay needed to enhance the quality of teaching?*

The first inclination is to answer this central question *yes*. Over the last decade the typical teacher salary has been outpaced by inflation. Beginning teacher salaries seem not competitive enough to attract career candidates with outstanding qualifications. The solution seems simple—pay more money. It will keep teachers happier, more productive, and strengthen recruitment.

Most realize the solution is not so simple. There is a mass of evidence to show that the academic ability of education majors is relatively low. In fact, studies dating back to the 1920's confirm the low scores of education majors on academic achievement as well as ability or intelligence tests. More recently, the situation has worsened because social and economic factors have expanded professional opportunities for academically able women whose only viable career choice in the past might have been teaching.

Will higher pay attract people into teaching who have better academic qualifications? Maybe, but in subject areas such as math and science where shortages of staff already have emerged, the average entering salary of teachers would have to be doubled to become fully competitive with technical positions available in private business and industry. Even if already overburdened local property taxpayers could afford that, one should critically examine what attracts students into teaching. According to recent studies at several universities, salary does not influence early interest in a teaching career so much as knowledge, skill, and interest in an academic subject long before it becomes a teaching specialty.

Yet another consideration, previously pointed out, is the scarcity of evidence to show that academic ability correlates with good teaching. An intellectual grasp of one's subject does not guarantee that the

subject can be taught effectively. Opinions still vary widely about what good teaching is. More research is needed to determine that precisely.

A full answer calls for an analysis of retention as well as recruitment. While low pay is suggested as a significant cause of teacher departures, a sense of ineffectiveness in the classroom, frustration from a lack of opportunity for professional growth, inadequate preparation time, conflicts with administrators, student misconduct, and low public esteem *all* forcefully contribute to teacher decisions to leave the job. (Fiske, 1982; Cresap, McCormick and Paget, 1984)

Higher salaries may help solve the problems but not necessarily reach the roots of the issue now draining the vitality of the profession. Those considering salary-related problems of the teacher work force should take note that its composition is changing, making public expense and motivation very real concerns. NIE researcher Gary Sykes (1983) has observed:

... The teacher work force is developing a middle age bulge. At the lower end of the age distribution, declining enrollments have meant no new hires and reductions-in-force by seniority in many districts. At the upper end, there has been an increase in early retirements. This shift creates two problems: As school district staffs are increasingly tenured and at the top of the scale, they become more expensive. The age shift in the teaching population has escalated the costs of education. And an aging, tenured teacher work force is difficult to motivate. Salary incentives are gone, teachers in their 30's and 40's feel burned out and dead ended, and the effects on staff morale and school climate may be devastating. (p. 27)

Rewards can be classified in many different ways. Some may derive just from being a part of the school staff – basic pay, job security, pleasant working conditions, seniority, fringe benefits, and so on. These rewards are significant, not so much because they motivate outstanding performance, but because without them one can become dissatisfied.

Beyond these, research tells us that the truly meaningful and motivating parts of reward stem from two types of conditioning. 1) feeling that one is being challenged to use valued skills and abilities, and given some self-responsibility, 2) being able to build upon personal and professional values, adapting them to the school system's needs. In other words, one becomes motivated by becoming personally identified with the goals and purposes of the organization. There are various ways for management to nurture this identification, but for immediate purposes, it should be emphasized that more salary probably has little to do with such nurturing.

To summarize briefly, higher pay is a generally desirable, but grossly

oversimplified solution to a complex of problems. A fully reasoned answer to the central question entails looking at what school boards want in teacher candidates, looking at what the candidates want, questioning what is wanted by those already in the field, and applying what is known about rewards and motivation in a responsible and cost effective manner.

2. *Is merit pay for teachers a more effective way of improving public education than continued maintenance of the single salary schedule with across-the-board salary increases?*

The logic of merit pay seems compelling. Based on recent national surveys, the public favors it for teachers two to one, and four out of five superintendents approve the concept. According to a Harris survey published in June 1984, 71 percent of a national sample of questioned teachers agreed that merit pay could work *if* a teacher's merit could be judged by an objective standard. (Metropolitan Life, 1984) However, a 1984 Gallup poll of teachers has contradicted this view by finding two-to-one opposition to merit pay because of the evaluation difficulties and morale problems it might create. (Phi Delta Kappan, 1984) *Opinions about the idea* can be misleading. *Experience* in the public schools, and certainly in private business and industry, has shown that merit pay plans will work well only if certain prerequisites are met.

Among these are carefully designed and clearly understood teacher evaluation procedures, adequate basic salary levels to begin with, board and management commitment along with staff involvement in plan development, well-defined educational goals and priorities with an emphasis on improving instruction, valid and reliable measures of results, and enough money for merit or incentives to make the receipt satisfying both personally and professionally.

Take note of what merit pay plans are *not* or *should not be*. They are neither a remedy nor a penalty for poor teaching. So-called formative evaluations should be used to help poorer teachers improve their performance. Incompetent or otherwise inadequate teachers should be removed from the profession by means of fair, prompt, and publicly affordable 3020-a proceedings. NYSSBA is seeking this goal in the legislative arena. Merit pay plans are *not* necessarily what has been seen thus far in most of the growing number of states that have initiated statewide improvements in teacher compensation.

In its simplest terms, merit pay can be assumed to mean paying a teacher for the quality of his or her teaching performance. Most of the enacted merit pay reforms have instead structured rewards around *more* or *extra* performance, or *different* responsibilities, or readily measurable evidence of professional growth. The problems of defining and evaluating superior performance lie between the reality of today's reforms in compensation and tomorrow's ideal merit pay system.

While school boards are receptive to the idea of merit pay and many of the individual prerequisites for its successful implementation, they also recognize that the single salary schedule has its own set of pros and cons. For example, over the years the current types of schedules have proven to be relatively easy to administer. They have promoted the increased academic preparation of teachers, recognition that teaching is in many ways learned from experience (and thus should be rewarded by that measure), equity in pay between men and women, and the security of consistent salary raises.

On the con side, across-the-board percentage increases in salary have been repeatedly applied to district schedules in such a way that the difference between starting and experienced teacher salaries has grown large. The artificially depressed salary level of the beginners has had a negative impact on recruitment. What's more, the slow progression of teachers through salary steps in some cases, and the relatively quick progression to a cap in others, has spawned dissatisfaction with compensation at all stages in the teaching career. Also, if financial awards are given without discrimination to superior and merely adequate teachers, the system ignores teaching talent and effort.

Unquestionably, merit pay represents new ground to be broken, new ideas to be carefully and thoughtfully tested. Well designed and well evaluated experimental attempts should be made to put merit-based plans into place. Variations on merit pay which show promise, according to a 1984 Urban Institute report, include: 1) offering a menu of awards ranging from cash bonuses to district financial support for special instructional projects or workshop attendance; 2) making the merit pay plan voluntary, thus allowing a teacher to avoid in advance the potential embarrassment of not receiving an award; 3) including a group incentive component in the plan, thus encouraging teamwork toward a common goal; and 4) use of a performance-by-target approach to evaluate employee performance for merit pay purposes. (Hatry and Greiner, 1984) We must find out what is fair, what really works, and above all, *what will motivate teachers to the kind of behavior all can associate with superior performance in the classroom.*

### **3. Should merit pay be made available to all who qualify?**

Most studies of merit pay systems stress that arbitrary limits on the number of people who can qualify will cause distrust and resentment. In addition, the inclination to apply such limits may reflect an unwillingness to properly fund the system at the outset, thereby guaranteeing its demise.

While these points may be valid, the question still remains – what is the real purpose of a merit pay system? Without a well understood,

agreed upon, and clearly defined set of criteria for merit, a system can easily turn into a subterfuge for maintaining the status quo. If this happens, one can understand why a demand for limits is justifiable.

In California and Florida, merit pay/mentor teacher/career leader schemes have elasticized the concept of merit to the point where it means little more than taking on additional tasks and adding to one's paper credentials. In some respects, merit pay is being used as a lure for generating state funds to increase the salaries of nearly all who want to apply.

Merit pay ideals notwithstanding, restrictions on the number who qualify may be necessary to ensure that the plans do not become distorted by ulterior motives or the negotiations process. If a teacher receives extra pay for doing a superior job, one obvious limit should be the period of time for which such pay is received. This preserves the extra amount as something meritorious and special. Better work, not more work, produces the best conception of superiority.

*4. Should evaluation of teacher performance be largely controlled by other teachers who themselves have been judged to be outstanding in the classroom?*

NYSSBA supports teacher *involvement* in the design and conduct of evaluation, but certainly not their *control* of the process, which it perceives as a fundamental managerial or supervisory responsibility. What does this issue have to do with the future of teacher compensation? Everything, especially if one is interested in establishing some usable, non-threatening connections between teacher performance and pay. Evaluation and pay also share in common the potential to motivate staff. According to a 1983 critical issues report issued by the American Association of School Administrators, teacher morale is less affected by salary than by three other factors all associated with evaluation: 1) whether teachers have a role in managing their professional functions; 2) the extent to which they are helped to perform better; and 3) how well they are informed about what is expected of them and whether they are meeting these expectations. Perhaps more clearly than any other process, evaluation can communicate standards and expectations, thus channeling effort toward the fulfillment of goals and objectives.

In addition to giving teachers some control over their professional destinies, their role in evaluation – in particular, that type of evaluation intended to diagnose and improve performance – can ensure that the appraisal reflects a practicing knowledge of the materials and skills being taught. Teachers should be involved in peer review and evaluation as a factor in advancing through career ladders. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Terrell Bell has endorsed the use of "career ladder

review panels" which would rely upon "ample representation from teachers who are well informed and respected for their competence and good judgment". This makes sense in many ways, although the Bell proposal rightly would call upon such panels to *make recommendations* to the superintendent rather than to *dictate final decisions*. Administrators are paid to implement the evaluation policies school boards should develop. Those policies should set the standards for evaluation. (Bell, 1984)

Just as every school board should have a sound policy on teacher evaluation, so too should every administrator who will be expected to conduct evaluations be well trained and prepared to do the job.

**5. *Should evaluation of teacher performance take measures of student achievement into account?***

One of the cardinal principles of evaluation is that criteria should be explicit, conducive to objective judgment, and linked to performances and behaviors that bear directly upon the performance and behavior of students. Although student test scores seem to fit neatly under this principle, using test scores for final evaluation intended to determine the net worth of teacher performance, has threatening potential. Unfortunately, there is precious little research about the relationship between teacher characteristics and behavior and student outcomes. Moreover, those outcomes may not be measured easily by existing tests of achievement. For the time being, NYSSBA recommends using a *variety* of criteria in evaluation. Ways should be sought to apply the criteria as objectively as possible. Research should seek ways to evaluate by measuring outcome or productivity rather than relying exclusively on measures such as the number of graduate credits and years of experience accumulated.

**6. *Are career ladder or master teacher plans a more effective way of improving public education than continued maintenance of undifferentiated teacher ranks?***

The Association views the use of career ladder plans as a promising development in public elementary and secondary schools. Not only can career ladders encourage good teachers to stay within the profession by opening opportunities for advancement, but the ladders may rejuvenate teachers by creating new job tasks and motivate those who are superior by increasing their prestige, responsibility, and compensation. (Cresap, McCormack and Paget, 1984) Nevertheless, there are reservations about some *statewide* plans either already operating or proposed. These seem exorbitant and bureaucratic, requiring standardized job classifications.

The career ladder idea has sound underpinnings in job motivational theory. Researchers have discovered that recognition, prestige, and

opportunity for advancement motivate excellent job performance more effectively and consistently than does increased salary. *Without* career ladders in place, teachers often have had no choice but to seek administrative positions or leave teaching altogether. Career ladders have the potential to keep able teachers on the job, while at the same time involving the best ones in helping teachers with less experience and in developing better methods of instruction and curriculum. According to a 1984 Harris poll, about 9 out of 10 teachers agree that career ladders would positively affect the quality of teaching.

*Locally* developed career ladder programs, such as those underway in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, and in Toledo, Ohio, demonstrate the advantage of unique variations. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg plan design stresses career development spanning three career levels and preceded by a probationary period of four to six years. During probation, teachers must complete in-service requirements equivalent to a masters degree and receive satisfactory evaluations. The three career levels produce progressively higher salaries, and increasingly varied responsibilities for evaluating curriculum, assisting probationary staff, and conducting in-service activities or research. Evaluations are conducted by trained, full-time observers/evaluators. The program's aim is to create new options, not to replace present ones. So only *new* teachers are *obliged* to participate, and those who do join the program cannot lose current benefits as long as their performance meets current expectations.

In Toledo, a plan for supervision, evaluation, and goal-setting reflects some aspects of the career ladder. Internships give assistance and evaluation to first year teachers from outstanding, experienced teachers, termed "consulting teachers". The consultants carry responsibility for observing, evaluating, and meeting with the interns. The intern program is governed by a review panel comprised of union and management representatives. At any time, union or management may terminate the program. An intervention program intended to improve the performance of poor teachers (or to terminate their employment) similarly relies upon experienced "consulting teachers" and union-management cooperation.

In New York State, career ladders and mentor teacher arrangements have undergone little testing. NYSSBA advocates legislation that would provide state funding for experimental local projects to use career ladders hoping that practical experience can be gained and shared widely. Career ladders have the potential to inspire greater cooperation among teachers, thus creating an environment in which all teachers—not just those who advance up the rungs of the ladder—can improve their performance. For this to happen, however, teacher trust should be earned by use of teacher expertise in planning. Proven methods of performance evaluation and new opportunities for

professional development are prerequisites for long-term success with career ladders.

**7. *Should the state legislature mandate a statewide minimum teacher salary?***

Salaries are the matrix of the collective bargaining system mandated for the public sector by New York State law. When the Taylor Law was enacted, the legislature recognized that salary issues should be resolved at the local collective bargaining table, not in the State Capitol. If the legislature were to interfere by mandating minimum teacher salaries, the time-proven balance which has evolved in contractual negotiations could be upset, leading to a multitude of teacher strikes. Our State has an enviably low record of strikes, and it should be preserved.

Furthermore, a mandated statewide minimum salary would ignore current variations among school district salary schedules, and would pit teachers against one another locally. In many districts, more experienced teachers would resent not having their salaries increased to compensate for the elevation of the beginning teachers' level. In other districts, the proposed statewide minimum would fall below that which is offered currently. Without variation, the minimum would not account properly for regional variations in the cost of living.

**8. *Should teachers be provided extra pay for participation in in-service education?***

Quality staff development opportunities are the best and in some cases the only way reforms proposed in the Regents Action Plan can be realized. The Association strongly supports in-service education as the key to professional renewal and effective educational change. The difficulties lie in making the in-service experience meaningful; new state aid and regulatory provisions have been put in place to try to elevate the quality of staff development and direct it toward identified needs and goals.

If teachers will be expected to participate in staff development activities scheduled outside of the current school year calendar, consideration for extra pay should be bargained. If the activities are scheduled within the current calendar, extra pay for participation should not be provided.

School districts are strongly encouraged to look for new, innovative, and goal-targeted methods for staff development. A major concern is the extent to which the funds now available at the local level get pre-empted by higher education credits which ultimately supplement teacher salaries and may help teachers learn more, but cannot guarantee that they will perform better.

*9. Should higher pay for teachers be accompanied by higher standards for the teaching profession?*

One of the main reasons why teaching has lost status and appreciation in our society has been a widespread perception of teachers as incompetent, academically inferior, unsuitable as a social role model for the young, and rather unscrupulous in their organized efforts to generate higher salaries and fringe benefits without accountability for educational results. The Association is optimistic that this perception can be changed. The American public is beginning to realize that if the quality of schools and the standards held for students are to become synonymous with excellence, then excellence must be no less strongly identified with high expectations and standards for teachers.

The new examination requirement for teacher certification, strengthened undergraduate coursework and internship requirements, and state support for new types of staff development are all promising developments. Equally important would be statutory changes to expedite teacher disciplinary proceedings and to make them work more effectively in weeding out incompetency and immorality.

Teacher salaries are not the key to transforming teaching into something infinitely better than it is now. But such rewards and the systems behind them are an integral part of the issues of educational excellence which school boards and teachers must either resolve together, as partners, or not at all.

## Competence and Discipline

**T**eacher incompetence or misconduct is generally regarded as the opposite of teaching excellence. A topic fraught with definitions nearly as ambiguous as its opposite, incompetence among tenured teachers in New York State is addressed by a relatively rigid set of statutory, due process procedures known as Section 3020-a of the Education Law. Enacted in 1977, the State's so-called teacher dismissal law, amended by Section 3020-a which includes hearing procedures and penalties, has turned the ideal of a simple process for removing incompetent or otherwise seriously deficient teachers from the classroom with fairness to all parties concerned into a nightmarish ordeal.

Incompetence among teachers appears to be all too common, though seldom proven under the law. On three different occasions throughout the 1970's, an American Association of School Administrators (AASA) survey found that teacher incompetence was regarded as the nation's third most serious school administrative problem. From 5 to 15 percent of teaching staffs were estimated in the surveys as performing below expected levels. (Bridges, 1983) And yet, in New York State, in 1981-82, fewer than one in every 1,500 teachers were brought up on disciplinary charges. (Brody, 1983) The law provides that grounds for such charges include insubordination, immoral character, conduct unbecoming a teacher, incompetency, inefficiency, physical or mental disability, neglect of duty, and failure to maintain certification.

The unique difficulties of New York State with regard to teacher disciplinary proceedings are documented thoroughly. In essence, the worst difficulties are inordinate delays in the resolution of cases, excessive expense for the school district, divisiveness caused by the adversarial union-versus-management overtones associated with the hearing process, duplications of process caused by overlaps with certification removal hearings and criminal prosecution. An eloquent and detailed summation of the problems, in the form of an article by Robert Brody, was published originally in the May 8, 1983 issue of *Newsday* magazine. Brody pinpoints what is perhaps the most alarming long-range implication of the process:

Many educators in the staff believe that dismissal cases cost too much and take too long, that arbitrators tend to side with teachers, and that panel findings are seldom final. *For these reasons, many school districts forego 3020-a cases in the first place.* (p. 10)

Yet another problem identified by Brody and others is the lack of a usable legal definition of incompetence. A failure to impart knowl-

edge, for example, is so subjective and difficult to document that it would not result in dismissal through a disciplinary hearing. Much more likely to qualify as a competency-related reason for dismissal would be gross failure to maintain student discipline.

However, more policy research is needed. Relevant questions include the following: What actually constitutes incompetence in the classroom? How do different types of incompetence—researchers already have attempted classifications based on disciplinary cases—relate to one another, possibly forming a pattern of failure which is potentially reversible? How do administrators identify and evaluate incompetence? What sanctions actually work best? What are the implications for the school and for the individual teacher when that teacher is brought up on disciplinary charges but subsequently vindicated? Can that teacher still teach effectively and get results? (Bridges, 1983)

Another type of research initiative is needed to bring up-to-date the statistics associated with 3020-a hearings originally developed by surveys conducted from 1978 through 1981 by the Council of School Superintendents. Ample documentation of cost and delay strengthens the cause of legislative reform. Since the enactment of 3020-a, the Association has sought through legislation to remedy its problems. Many of those remedies have been specific to various parts of the disciplinary process. At its 1984 Annual Convention, the Association's membership adopted a resolution designed to encompass the many specifics under one legislative initiative to "produce greater flexibility in discipline of tenured employees and to reduce delays in and costs of disciplinary and discharge proceedings".

In the past, the Association's attempts to reform the 3020-a process have been thwarted by the teacher unions. The broader approach expressed by the proposed resolution may provide more room to maneuver in the legislative arena and to negotiate a mutually acceptable program for effective teacher discipline with the organizations which represent teachers in the legislature and at the bargaining table. It appears that teachers are every bit as concerned about incompetence as policy makers. In a recent national survey conducted for Metropolitan Life by the Harris polling organization, teachers agreed by an *84-14 percent margin* that making it easier to remove incompetent teachers would have a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Furthermore, they indicated in the survey a strong willingness to have their performance evaluated by methods that might help to better define competence, including retesting of teachers in their subject areas (57-42 percent margin), and performance evaluation by standardized tests of teacher skills (60-39 percent margin). (Metropolitan Life, 1984)

## Effective Schools, Effective Teaching

One of the more promising conclusions reached by virtually all of the "excellence" studies is that schools do indeed make a positive difference for children. Even better, academic researchers have been able to identify and generally agree upon a number of determinants of school effectiveness, and more specifically classroom teaching effectiveness which can have a verifiable impact on student achievement. Such factors as strong instructional leadership, an orderly school climate, high expectations, an emphasis on basic skills, and frequent assessment of student progress have a strong common sense appeal which strengthens their acceptance among laymen who in the past have been rightfully suspicious of ivory tower remedies.

A complete review of effective schools research is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper. That many of the findings can be translated into excellent instructional policies already has been discovered by a number of organizations interested in elevating the role of school boards in promoting better education. The National School Boards Association illustrates this discovery in its publication entitled, *A Blueprint for Educational Excellence (A School Board Member's Guide)* (1984). Also available from both NSBA and NYSSBA are board workshop and research materials on "policies for excellence". NYSSBA strongly supports the use of these materials and the assumption which underlies them—namely, that school boards can effect better teaching through adopted local policies based on solid research.

Certain general, research-based principles about teaching should be carefully considered by local boards in the policy-making process. Corcoran and Hansen (1983) helpfully summarize them in the following abbreviated statements:

1. Effective teachers have high expectations of success and a strong sense of personal efficacy (the ability to achieve results).
2. Effective teachers are purposeful and organize their classrooms to ensure that maximum time is spent on instruction.
3. Effective teachers are also good managers.
4. Effective teachers pace instruction to maintain motivation.
5. Effective teachers are active teachers. They are highly verbal; they constantly teach, whether it is to the entire class or a small group.
6. Effective teachers maintain an academic focus within a warm, supportive environment.

7. Effective teachers reward high performance and foster it through praise, encouragement, and individual attention to student work.
8. Effective teachers set regular homework for students and make sure it is done at home—not in school.
9. Instruction is most effective when school policies and procedures minimize absenteeism, tardiness, cuts, and intrusions.
10. Teachers are more effective when they are assigned classrooms. The organization of the classroom and materials is so critical that “floating teachers” have much less chance of being successful. (pp. 11-12)

To these guides for policy and practice some perspective should be added. Schools function best when they function as a coherent whole. Whether one calls it climate, ethos, or norms, there is something critically important which unites the individuals in school and gives them a collective identity and a sense of common purpose. (Pratzner, 1984) The presence of that influence can be strengthened and made positive by the building principal, who might maintain high visibility among the staff members, promoting their self-esteem, using informal rewards and incentives extensively, or protecting against loss of staff morale by enforcing policies with consistency and equability. Or it can be strengthened by the teachers, who create the impression of really caring about their students, relying heavily upon immediate feedback and informal praise to shape student behavior. Whatever it's called, this unifying influence is associated with *individual schools*, and it is nurtured by providing as many varied opportunities as possible for staff and students to feel a sense of cooperative ownership of the activities of the individual school. (Finn, 1984)

At the same time, schools should not be isolated from one another. Interaction and exchange among schools is educationally enriching and instrumental to the pursuit of district wide goals. At the individual school level, or perhaps through creative reorganization *within* an especially large school, teacher quality can be enhanced. (Goodlad, 1984) School boards should maintain a strong profile in this process of enhancement by developing policies that encourage and guide school building level innovations while creating an awareness of the district's overall mission.

One approach or strategy for accomplishing this is to emphasize results as well as standards. If too many standards are set, organizational and instructional arrangements which have produced good results in the past can be damaged. This is especially true if those standards are too inflexible and place a premium on uniformity. In contrast, stressing results rather than the detailed methods for achieving those results can ensure accountability, of course, as well as the type of flexibility and value sharing noted in effective schools. We recommend this

viewpoint be considered not just by local school boards, but also by the Board of Regents and the state legislature. Vanderbilt University Professor Chester Finn calls this strategy "bureaucratic self-restraint". As he puts it, "After fixing the educational destination and the approximate timetable for reaching it, policy makers should step back and let school teams choose their own routes for the journey." (1984, p. 520)

## Partnerships

**A**s stated at the outset, the purpose of this paper has been to explain issues and point out directions toward fulfilling the mission of better teaching. The focus has been on teaching and teachers. The issues discussed imply strongly that numerous circumstances and policies, organizations and individuals collectively define the *quality* of the acts and occupation of teaching. Certain partnerships show how the quality of teaching can be improved when efforts are coordinated.

To illustrate, recruitment and preparation can be improved by strengthening links between school boards and teacher educators, and the organizations they represent. Issues of supply and demand suggest the need for partnerships between school boards and both the State Education Department and the legislature, whose programs may dramatically affect the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the teaching occupation, thus creating circumstances of education success or doom at the local level.

Certification standards call for a new cooperative effort among teachers, teacher educators, state agencies, and local school boards. If the goal is to resolve the knotty conflicts surrounding certification in relation to pre-service and in-service education for teachers, tenure, seniority, and various "career path" types of reforms proposed by national study groups, all groups must work together.

Various issues of teacher compensation, incentives, and reward have a great deal to do with legislative partnerships through which more state aid can be made available to assure *adequate* compensation. Also, partnerships should be sealed among teachers, school boards, and administrators. An open-minded and trustful local effort can redefine the notions of reward, evaluation, accountability, and esteem needed to elevate the status and performance of teachers.

Competence and discipline demand partnerships for research to give us a better conception of teacher competency. Partnerships within the legislative arena can help us reform the 3020-a process for the ultimate benefit of children.

Effective schools and effective teaching cannot be realized without partnerships among virtually every constituency or "public" associated with the educational community. In fact, perhaps the most important dimension of school effectiveness—the climate, ethos, or norms of the individual school—*requires* a sense of cooperative endeavor and teamwork to thrive.

Although this paper has not profiled all types of partnerships in sufficient detail to serve as a comprehensive policy guide, it does serve notice that local school boards have a role of paramount importance in the campaign for educational excellence through better teaching. NYSSBA anticipates strong involvement in a full range of joint initiatives to bring the best teaching, and thus the best learning opportunities, to the children of New York State's future.

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