

# Education *Matters*

August 2005

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## AAE Leaders Meet with Secretary Spellings

No Child Left Behind, Special Education, and Teacher Compensation were the themes of this year's AAE National Leadership Conference



AAE state and national leaders met in late June with U. S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings during AAE's national leadership conference. They discussed a variety of issues directly affecting AAE members, and Secretary Spellings made a commitment that she and her staff would continue to listen to and work with AAE to improve the nation's education system.

AAE leaders received firsthand updates regarding changes in NCLB, special education issues, and the \$100 million teacher incentive fund that is now being considered by Congress.

AAE's state leaders come together each year for a national leadership conference to discuss the greatest challenges facing teachers and public education. AAE continues to expand its position as the nation's preeminent nonunion professional teachers association. This year, the leaders met in Alexandria, VA, June 24-26.

In addition to their private meeting with Secretary Spellings during the conference, AAE's state partners exchanged practical insights about state issues such as teacher compensation, collective bargaining, and trends in state education laws. Each state leader also reported significant growth in membership and a stronger voice in education matters in their respective state capitals.

Because of AAE's continued contact with the Department of Education and with the education committees in Congress, AAE is able to stay up-to-date and involved

with the most recent changes in federal education policy. Tracey Bailey, National Projects Director for AAE, gave an in-depth presentation about the latest news from the Department of Education and from the education committees in Congress.

AAE conferences give leaders an opportunity to confer about their state associations and to build stronger relationships with each other. This year was no exception, as AAE leaders from across the nation

of the best-known names in education: Ms. Leta Andrews, Disney Co-Outstanding Teacher of 1993 and 1993 Texas Teacher of the Year; Mr. Guy Doud, 1987 National Teacher of the Year; Mr. Tracey Bailey, 1993 National Teacher of the Year; Ms. Patricia Ann Baltz, 1993 California Teacher of the Year and 1993 Disney Teacher of the Year; Mr. Gene Bedley, 1986 PTA National Educator of the Year and 1994 Milken Foundation National Educator; Mr. Thomas



Ginger Tinney, Executive Director of Association of Professional Oklahoma Educators and Tracey Bailey, National Projects Director for AAE discuss the concerns of AAE members with Secretary Spellings during a meeting with AAE state and national leaders in Washington, D.C.

shared their suggestions and concerns. In addition, AAE's state partners in Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington each sent state delegations.

The AAE's distinguished Advisory Board also attended this year's conference to provide their expertise on issues that are of critical concern to its membership.

The AAE Advisory Board includes some

Fleming, 1992 National Teacher of the Year; Dr. Lewis Hodge, Professor of Education at the University of Tennessee; and Dr. Kevin Ryan, Director of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character, Boston University.

AAE looks forward to the 2005-2006 school year as a year of growth and continued progress in setting new standards of professionalism and educational excellence for America's teachers. ■

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# Choices for Teachers

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## School choice will lead to more options for teachers

By David Kirkpatrick

A significant result of school choice will be that teachers will have more options. Teachers will be able to present an educational program that best fits their style and interests.

Unfortunately, not many teachers are aware of the benefits of school choice to them. In the true professions such as medicine, dentistry, and law, practitioners have a large degree of autonomy. The result is a variety of options from which the public may choose.

By contrast, in education, while teachers have specialties, they basically function in a one-size-fits-all environment, where a box called a school contains smaller boxes called classrooms, within which students are grouped by age and move forward annually in groups.

Providing the funds to give parents and students the ability to choose their own educational preferences makes possible the ability of teachers to choose as well.

We have two examples to demonstrate that teachers will take advantage of educational choice.

Postsecondary education is a choice system, one where there is neither the power to tax nor the power to compel attendance. That means it must offer something the public wants. While, like all human endeavors, the system is certainly not without its problems, the public may choose from many educational options: two-year junior and community colleges, four-year liberal arts colleges, engineering and technical schools, universities offering graduate degrees and conducting research, plus thousands of private, for-profit trade and proprietary schools offering a long list of educational options.

### The Great Advantage

The great advantage of choice and a market system is that it makes it possible to close down failing or unneeded agencies. Schools do come and go. Certainly it is true of trade schools, as most Americans probably recognize. However, it happens with colleges as well. In the 1960s a new college opened on the average of once a week; for years after 1970 colleges closed on the average of one a month.

The other example is in basic education itself, with the emergence of the charter school movement. There were none in 1991; today there are some 3,400, enrolling an estimated one million students. Hundreds of charter schools have been started by teachers, including the very first one,

**Providing the funds to give parents and students the ability to choose their own educational preferences makes possible the ability of teachers to choose as well.**

St. Paul Academy in St. Paul, MN, which was created by two teachers. Their goal was to reach out to dropout students and persuade them to complete their education. Starting and remaining small, it has had nearly a 100 percent success rate,

helping students not only graduate from high school but also go on to college as well.

Even where someone else started a charter school, it is common for them to be oversubscribed by not only students but also teachers. The result? A wider variety can be found within the 3,400 charter schools than among the 86,000 public schools.

Perhaps the most important commonality of charter schools is that those starting new are much smaller than public schools. Even including large public schools that converted to charter status, average enrollment is less than three hundred. This is arguably a major reason they tend to be more successful, with higher academic achievement, lower dropout rates, and higher levels of satisfaction among students, parents, and teachers alike.

We must face the fact that teaching is not a profession. Whatever their personal attributes may be, teachers are public employees with little control over what, when, where, and how they teach. However, choice and competition are, at long last, moving it in that direction. Three million teachers, each free to exercise his own judgment and ingenuity, clearly will come up with more successful educational programs than a handful of individuals, however brilliant, in the state and national departments of education.


Providing choices will not ensure perfection. However, it works in virtually every other aspect of American life; and is the major reason we have enjoyed such progress. The same will be true in education, as is becoming clearer every day. ■



*David W. Kirkpatrick is Senior Education Fellow, U.S. Freedom Foundation, Washington, D.C., and Senior Education Fellow, Buckeye Institute, Columbus, OH. David is former president of NEA-affiliate Pennsylvania State Education Association.*

## Attention AAE Members

### Please Update Your E-mail Address.



The Association of American Educators works to provide the services and benefits that our members tell us they want or need. Our membership surveys are an important way for you to let us know what is important to you. If you have not recently

sent us a current e-mail address, please do so by sending it to [email@aaeteachers.org](mailto:email@aaeteachers.org). If you do not have an active e-mail address but would like to be included in our surveys, drop us a note and we will mail you a survey with a postage-paid return envelope.

# Teachers Matter Worldwide

## New Study Finds Similar Challenges Around the World

The Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is out with a comprehensive examination of the teacher policies of twenty-five nations, entitled “*Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers.*” The study found:

At the top of the salary scale, only Korea and Japan offer higher teacher salaries than the United States. The U. S. is also among the highest salaries at the new-teacher mark and the fifteen-year mark.

Countries that pay their teachers higher salaries to make up for giving them larger class sizes get more bang for their buck, in terms of student performance, than countries paying teachers lower salaries in exchange for giving them smaller class sizes.

The U.S. does a particularly bad job of hiring teachers without full qualifications; we join five other countries (Finland, Israel, the Slovak Republic, Belgium, and Sweden) in reporting a rate higher than 10 percent of teachers who lack full credentials—while most countries manage to keep the percentage under 4 percent.



Merit pay is widely used to address the ill distribution of qualified teachers to underserved schools. However, other countries, particularly France, are also using other creative tactics. French teachers can earn bonus points towards an assignment in their dream school by working in a more challenging school for a period of time. In something akin to a “Special Forces” strategy, France is also assigning teams of new teachers who trained together to work in underserved schools.

Teacher education gets the same bad rap in most countries, with most countries reporting that the required coursework is not sufficiently relevant to what actually happens in the classroom and that the field experiences are far too limited.

To read the report, visit [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org). In the website’s search box, type the words “Teachers Matter” to find the report *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers.* ■

Source—TQBulletin, a bimonthly publication of the National Council on Teacher Quality; [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org).

# Tenure Battle

The California governor has set a referendum on teacher dismissals

By scheduling a special election for November 8, California's Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) is challenging one of teachers' most cherished rights: tenure.

Among three governor-driven initiatives that will be hotly contested at the ballot box this fall is a plan to increase from two years of teaching to five the time it takes K-12 educators to earn the right to "due process" before they can be dismissed.

Supporters of the proposal contend that toughening the probationary period puts children first, instead of protecting unions that have proved to be a mighty deterrent to school reform.

Opponents, including the California Teachers Association (CTA), say the measure is punitive, that it only hurts young teachers, and stymies would-be iconoclastic educators who might now be

more worried about maintaining job security than implementing change.

While the battle is generally painted as political, with Democrats supporting teachers and their unions and Republicans supporting a more corporate structure in the schools, lines are not so neatly drawn. Sen. John Kerry (D) of Massachusetts, for example, came out against teacher tenure in the late 1990s. Experts say the more important divide is not partisan but rather between teachers seeking job protection and districts in pursuit of flexibility.

The CTA approved a \$60 fee increase per teacher to raise \$50 million to fight the governor's initiatives. Not everyone is opening their pocketbooks happily, though. John Kenney, a high school physics teacher in San Andreas who backs the



Governor Schwarzenegger talks to students during his tour of Rock Creek Elementary School in Rocklin, CA.

governor's initiatives, signed a letter to the CTA in opposition to fee hikes. He says he believes many more teachers would come forward in opposition but are cowed by the dominant culture in schools.

"The CTA is such a powerful union in the state," says Mr. Kenney. "Teachers are brainwashed to think that without tenure, they'd be doomed. That's not true."

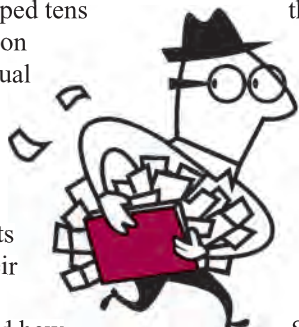
Source: Sara B. Miller, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor.

# Union President Tells of Embezzlement

Former Washington Teachers' Union president Barbara A. Bullock recounted recently in court how she dropped tens of thousands of union dollars a day in casual shopping, and how she and her two fellow union leaders milked the union bank accounts to buy anything their hearts desired.

Bullock described how she, former office manager Gwendolyn Hemphill, and former treasurer James O. Baxter II never blinked at how

much an item cost, focusing only on how to hide their \$5 million embezzlement of the union funds.



Bullock, 70, is serving a nine-year prison sentence after pleading guilty in 2003 to her role in the embezzlement.

She is the star witness in the government's prosecution of her former friends, Hemphill and Baxter. Prosecutors charge that

Bullock, Hemphill, and Baxter stole from the union to finance their lavish lifestyles from 1996 until teachers complained about dues overcharging, and an external audit found millions of dollars missing in 2002.

James Goosby, a former union accountant, is also on trial. He is accused of helping to hide the thefts by filing phony financial reports.

Source: Carol D. Leonnig for The Washington Post. [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)



Statistics show that when a child is abducted, the first three hours are the most critical to recovering the child alive.

Recognizing their unique ability to provide timely assistance to law enforcement in these unfortunate situations, the wireless industry and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) have partnered to launch Wireless AMBER Alerts, an initiative that will help galvanize 182 million wireless subscribers in the search for an abducted child.

Any wireless subscriber capable of receiving text messages, and whose wireless carrier participates in the Wireless AMBER Alerts Initiative, may opt in to receive alerts by registering at [www.wirelessamberalerts.org](http://www.wirelessamberalerts.org) or his wireless carrier's website. A subscriber may designate up to five geographic areas for which he would like to receive Wireless AMBER Alerts.

"To date, more than 200 children have been successfully recovered as a direct result of AMBER Alerts," said Ernie Allen, NCMEC president and CEO.

AMBER stands for "America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response" and was created in 1997 when Dallas-Fort Worth broadcasters teamed with local police to develop an early warning system to find abducted children.

# Character Education...Our Shared Responsibility

The U.S. Department of Education's recently updated brochure entitled "Character Education: Our Shared Responsibility" is printed in English and Spanish and emphasizes the importance of character education.

Among its recommendations, the brochure recommends school officials take a leadership role to bring the staff, parents, and students together to identify and define the elements of character they

want to emphasize. It also encourages schools to provide training for staff on how to integrate character education into the life and culture of the school.



Parents, schools, community groups, and others interested in ordering this brochure can receive up to 100 free copies by calling the U.S. Department of Education's Publications Center toll-free at 1-877-433-7827,

or by ordering online at [www.edpubs.org](http://www.edpubs.org).

## Relaxing a NCLB Deadline

The U.S. Department of Education announced that they would extend the deadline for paraprofessionals to become highly qualified under NCLB.

The previous deadline fell in the middle of this school year—half a year before the deadline that teachers face.

Paraprofessionals will now share the same deadline as their more credentialed compatriots in the classroom: end-of-school-year 2006.

Given that plenty of people working at the mall make more than most teacher aides, the move seems sensible.



According to NCLB, paraprofessionals working in a program supported with Title I funds must have: 1)

Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education or obtained at least an associate's degree; or 2) Passed a test demonstrating knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics.

Source—*The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) TQ Bulletin*, a weekly e-mail newsletter. NCTQ website: [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org).

## Rules for Teachers in 1872



*The Red School House*, Winslow Homer, 1873 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

- 1 Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
- 2 Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
- 3 Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
- 4 Men teachers may take an evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
- 5 After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
- 6 Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
- 7 Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
- 8 Any teacher who smokes or uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity, and honesty.
- 9 The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will see an increase of 25 cents per week in his pay.



*Oh my! How times have changed!*

# Civics 101



(Psst,kids...Flag Etiquette 101: don't let it touch the ground.)

## High School Students Apathetic and Unknowledgeable about the First Amendment

By Kate McGreevy

Most high school students in the United States do not understand or are apathetic toward the First Amendment, according to a survey released in January by the University of Connecticut. The survey, however, suggests media studies classes and student journalism give students a greater appreciation and understanding of First Amendment rights than they would have without that background.

For the project, “The Future of the First Amendment,” commissioned by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, more than 100,000 students, almost 8,000 teachers, and more than 500 administrators and principals at public and private high schools were surveyed.

“These results are not only disturbing, they are dangerous,” said Knight Foundation President and CEO Hodding Carter III in the Knight news release. “Ignorance about the basics of this free society is a danger to our nation’s future.”

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the freedoms of religion, speech, press, and assembly, and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances.

### Civics Education Missing

Findings of the survey indicate that a majority of students are apathetic and unin-

formed about First Amendment protections. For example:

- Nearly 75 percent of students surveyed either do not know how they feel about the First Amendment or admit they take it for granted.
- 75 percent falsely believe it is illegal to burn the U.S. flag as a form of public statement.
- 50 percent think the government can censor the Internet.

“Schools are not teaching the principles of the First Amendment broadly enough,” Richard Lee Colvin, director of the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media at Columbia University, said in the report. “That’s in part because civics education has all but disappeared.”

The survey does not offer any direct commentary on traditional civics courses. It does suggest, however, that increased exposure to the First Amendment through news media in the classroom and through student journalism increases student appreciation of the First Amendment.

For example, among students who have completed courses in media or the First Amendment, 87 percent believe people should be permitted to voice dissenting opinions; the number drops to 68 percent

among those who have not taken such courses.

A primary researcher for the study, Dr. Kenneth Dautrich of the University of Connecticut, acknowledged, “There are a variety of sources from which students might get knowledge of or form opinions about the First Amendment. The survey asked about their parents’ behavior, the extracurricular activities—like student newspapers—that they are involved in, etc. For each student we also have attitudes of the principal and the school environment—for example, a school paper, TV station, radio, etc.”

### Media, Journalism Programs Waning

The report also reveals that media programs and journalism opportunities are waning in many high schools, and less than 20 percent of administrators surveyed consider journalism a high priority.

“The last fifteen years have not been a golden era for student media,” said Warren Watson, director of the J-Ideas project at Ball State University. “Programs are under siege or dying from neglect. Many students do not get the opportunity to practice our basic freedoms.”

According to the survey, of the high schools that do not currently offer student newspapers, 40 percent had eliminated

“Civic education is crucial to developing well-informed and responsible citizens.”

those papers in the past five years. Schools in lower-income areas had a more sizable decrease in student newspapers, 21 percentage points greater than in upper-income schools.

#### Administrators Blame Costs

Administrators cite financial constraints as the main obstacle to the expansion of student media options.

With public attention often fixed on No Child Left Behind, high-stakes testing, and myriad other educational measures, the authors of the report believe the survey is a call to action.

“Civic education is crucial to developing well-informed and responsible citizens,” said Dautrich, who conducted the research with University of Connecticut colleague Dr. David Yalof, of the school’s public policy department.

“By surveying students across the country as to their awareness and appreciation of First Amendment rights, Knight Foun-

ation has provided a timely window into this important and often overlooked aspect of the educational process.”

#### Government, History Courses Needed

Victoria Hughes, president and founder of the Bill of Rights Institute, agreed.

“Knight Foundation has provided a great service with this comprehensive survey that spotlights the lack of civic knowledge among our high school students,” she said.

Hughes is optimistic because she believes there is general agreement among teachers and administrators in many states with regard to civics standards and the value of teaching the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. However, she notes two possible barriers to achievement.

“First, teachers do not always possess the knowledge necessary to teach, in a meaningful way, the First Amendment. Some are not comfortable going into great depth,” Hughes laments. “Second, textbooks do not approach the Constitution with any

sustained in-depth treatment. These issues are difficult, and teachers and students need appropriate resources.”

Hughes also warns that although media studies and student journalism are educationally beneficial for some students, journalism is not the answer for all.

“Students should be learning about the First Amendment and civics through the core curriculum—that is, in required American government or American history courses,” she said. “We have to get down to business and educate our students to be active, informed citizens.” ■

*Kate McGreevy (mcgreevy@gmail.com) is a freelance education writer from Indiana. She formerly worked with the Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School for Public Policy in Washington, D.C.*

## How does a FREE year's membership in AAE sound to you?

*Here is a chance to save \$150 for doing what you may already be doing.*

If you recruit two new members this fall, your annual membership dues for the coming year will be complimentary! That's it! Just recruit two new members for one free membership. (This special promotion may not be offered by all AAE state partners. Please call about availability.)

For details, and to order extra brochures to help you recruit your friends, call toll-free, 1 (800) 704-7788, or e-mail Kelley at [Kelley@aaeteachers.org](mailto:Kelley@aaeteachers.org).

Thank you for helping make the AAE stronger than ever.

association of  
american educators   
*Teachers by calling, professionals by choice.*



AAE member benefits include: a \$2,000,000 liability insurance policy; access to legal assistance at the onset of problems; additional and supplementary insurance benefit plans; teacher scholarships and classroom minigrants; newsletter covering the cutting-edge of the teaching profession; professional development workshops; updates on education policy and changes in education law; and reasonable annual dues. Save \$300 to \$400 versus union dues.

# Teachers Able to Continue Doing What They Love to Do: Teach

## Thanks for Saving My Career



I've been accused of teaching religion numerous times over the past twenty-seven years. The legal representation you provided has been outstanding. I do want to thank you for the unrelenting excellence you've shown me. Every call I've made, every e-mail I've sent, has been answered promptly and thoughtfully.

The letter from attorney Harry Korrell kept me from being placed on probation. According to union representatives, I'd be placed on probation at the earliest possible date. Thanks to Northwest Professional Educators (NWPE), it didn't happen. I haven't forgotten that it was a representative of NWPE who took notes at the meeting with the principal and vice principal. I credit NWPE with saving my career.

The letter would never have been written without the assistance of NWPE and its national affiliate, the Association of American Educators.

When I first visited the NWPE website and saw the things the organization represents, I thought it was too good to be true. I waited several weeks before I called. I shouldn't have. To educators who have seen the website, been impressed, and are thinking about joining all I can say is, "Trust what you see. You won't be disappointed."

Sincerely,  
Stan Long  
Ellensburg, WA

## Thanks for Stopping the Bullies



As of June 3rd, I officially retired from Lincoln-Way Central High School in New Lenox, Illinois. I taught history for 33 years. It was the only occupation I ever considered performing and I loved my in-class duties as much on June 3rd as I did in August 1972 when I began my career.

There were many rough spots, though, as society changed, political correctness reared its ugly head, and administrators abused teachers' rights. I belonged to both the AFT and NEA at various points and NEVER felt that they looked out for the day-to-day welfare of me or my fellow teachers.

Several years ago, however, I discovered AAE. For a fraction of the dues mainstream labor groups had charged, AAE provided me with liability insurance, teaching tips, and releases of the latest educational research. Perhaps most important was the invaluable legal advice from La Rae Munk, AAE Director of Legal Services.

I can't tell you how much I appreciated her expertise when my school's "suits" sought to bully me and a few of my colleagues. Armed with her wisdom and knowledge, we stopped the bullying of the "suits" and were allowed to continue doing what we loved: the daily molding of the minds of the next generation. Thanks so much!

Sincerely,  
Darrell Holmquist  
New Lenox, IL