

Freeing Teachers to Earn the Pay They Deserve

By Polly Broussard



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It is an election year, and every savvy political candidate is going to promise to try to raise teachers' salaries. Low teacher pay is certainly a problem that needs to be addressed.

The education establishment and the teacher labor unions will continue their mantra—we must “invest” more money in public education. However, the political debate and heated rhetoric will not touch on the one issue that would resolve the problem of continually having to find scarce state dollars for teachers' salaries: How do we take school teachers out from under government control and bureaucratic constrictions that prevent them from earning what other professionals make?

Politicians should seriously consider paying teachers in the same way other professionals are paid: by market wages tied to competencies and demand. Why should politicians be involved in deciding a profession's rate of pay? Only in the profession of teaching is this true.

In the schools of today, stifling limitations and constrictions are placed on teachers as

professionals when compared to all other professions of the 21st century. Architects, lawyers, nurses, and engineers can choose from among several options to practice their profession. Other professionals can be employed by organizations, they can work with other colleagues in private practice, or they can remain independent and work for themselves in an individual practice.

Unfortunately, schoolteachers do not have any options unless they are willing to leave the public school setting or leave the field altogether. If they choose to be classroom teachers in public education, they must do so as employees of government/tax-financed school boards. Only new options for teachers in public school settings can deliver true professionalism and offer the market dynamics that produce higher salaries and better products.

School systems traditionally contract for some services year-to-year, such as transportation, food services, building maintenance, school lawyers, and consultants. Why not contract for instructional services in a similar way? To be treated like other professionals and earn comparable salaries, teachers must be willing to accept competition like other professionals. Opportunities for career growth and better wages for teachers must be broadened beyond the status of mere public employees. Ironically, if teachers were actually working for the U.S. Government, or on a state government payroll, they would be making more than they are now.

Excessive legislative wrangling, prestigious blue-ribbon commissions, union bargaining teams, and boards of education committee meetings have only served to fossilize and polarize our public education system and turned the teaching profession into a labor industry. More public charter schools, private contracting for instruction, parent-teacher cooperatives, and opportunities for individual teachers to be able to “opt out” of

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 “Only new options for teachers can deliver true professionalism and offer the market dynamics that produce higher salaries.”

one-size-fits-all union-negotiated contracts, plus other choices that change the education dynamics, will fulfill the “promises” of better pay for teachers.

Is it not time for teachers and students to have more options and opportunities for teaching and learning, without fatuous bureaucratic restrictions and the self-serving politics?

Sadly, we can count on just more politics as usual—unless we rethink the education delivery system and provide innovative and flexible ways to pay teachers. **EM**

Polly J. Broussard is the Executive Director of the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (an AAE affiliate), and was recently elected to the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Ms. Broussard has been a public school teacher for over twenty years, serving as an early childhood educator.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

A Friendship, Still Unfaded	2
Ohio Teaching Shows Premium Results. 3	
Signs of the Times.	4
System Flooded with Cash.	5
The Latest Bogeyman: Teacher Retention . 6	
Top 5 EIA Quotes of the Year	7
Charter Schools Affirmed	7
Comprehensive Sex Ed	8
Study of Sexual Activity	8

Quote of the Month

“As long as she's not bringing it into the classroom, maybe it's not a problem.”

—Carol-Ann Kock-Weser, head of the Alameda County (California) PTA, commenting on the recent plea bargain of teacher Shannon Williams and upholding Berkeley's reputation of judging none and tolerating all. Williams had a prostitution charge dropped in exchange for pleading no contest to disturbing the peace.

A Friendship, Still Unfaded

By Margaret Renkle

I come from sturdy Alabama farming stock, from pecan orchards and peanut fields. By rights my favorite flower ought to be something straightforward and simple, something that thrives in red clay and drought—zinnias, maybe, or marigolds or black-eyed Susans. It's true I've always been fond of these ordinary yard flowers, plants that drop their own seeds and come back, summer after hazy summer, without any effort on the gardener's part. I've come to think of these plain blossoms, which have no real fragrance, as the floral objectives correlative of myself. But despite my appreciation for them, they aren't the ones I love best. My favorite flower is not a sturdy State Fair zinnia. My favorite flower is a fragile, milky white, heavenly scented gardenia.

I was in high school before I encountered a gardenia bloom for the first time. It was floating in a glass bowl on my favorite teacher's desk, and when I walked in a little early that morning, her whole classroom was filled with its scent. For a moment I forgot the chalk dust and the cinderblock walls and the frantic fervor of movement out in the hall. For a moment I stood still and breathed in that heady, perfect fragrance. It was the divine sort of scent that ought to accompany an apparition of the Virgin Mary or the opening of heaven's gates before a loving and generous soul.

As I stood there in the doorway, lifting my nose again and again and sniffing like some sort of animal whose very life depends upon smells carried in the air, my teacher looked up from her desk and smiled. "The blooms last only a day," she said, "so I always cut them and bring them along. I can't bear to let the fragrance go to waste in an empty house."

To me the scent of a gardenia is invariably a reminder of that teacher, Ann West Granberry, who taught me both British poetry and the necessity of flowers. But because I loved her, and because she was very ill during the last year she taught me—dying, at thirty-seven, the summer after I graduated—the bloom of a gardenia is also a reminder of just how brief our time on earth can be.

For three years, Ann Granberry was the adult I needed most besides my parents.

Because she was both my teacher and an advisor to the school newspaper I edited, I spent more than two hours a day in her company. But I was not the only student who loved her, and it was never easy to find a moment for private conversation. I used to stand outside the school, in a grove of trees between the parking lot and the gym fields, and wait for her to leave the building. For a few moments in the failing light, I could have her all to myself.

"Margaret, are you grieving over Goldengrove unleaving?" she would joke in autumn, quoting Hopkins when she saw me standing there among the red dogwoods and the yet low maples beside the teachers' parking lot. I always laughed, to prove I got the joke. I was sixteen. I never imagined the grieving would begin so soon.

In the late spring of my junior year, Mrs. Granberry discovered a lump under her left arm. By the time she returned to teach in the fall, she was gravely ill. My classmates and I knew she was dying; for her part, despite unwavering hope, Mrs. Granberry understood how poor were her odds. She talked to us honestly, in a way that adults rarely talk to

teenagers, not only about love and art and death—those abstractions that come up again and again in poetry—but also about her own feelings that dark year.

"I'm going to look a little different when I come to class tomorrow," she told us one morning, her voice quavering, the fingers of one hand twining nervously through what had been her thick brown hair. "I had to get a wig. It'll look odd, I'm sure, and I wanted to warn you so..." Her eyes suddenly glistened, and she didn't go on.

There were other times when a note of fear would creep into Mrs. Granberry's voice. She would clear her throat or wince or put her head into her hands for a moment, and we would look around at each other, terrified. It didn't happen often, but it happened, and when it did, not one of us knew what to say. We were still kids, still felt like kids, but abruptly our roles had been reversed; suddenly it was our job to offer comfort, to pat her on the shoulder, to murmur awkwardly that everything was going to be all right. Half the time we would sit wordless at our desks and look miserably at our folded hands.

That year I spent less time doing my homework than writing Mrs. Granberry letters, night after night, trying to put into words what she meant to me, trying to give her courage to go on. I kept drafts of those letters, only a few of which I ever delivered, and reading them now is a source of both embarrassment and wonder—at my juvenile philosophy, at my awkward words, at my inexpressible love. Across the years I become the girl I was, struggling to understand what as a grown woman I still can't accept: people die no matter how much you love them.

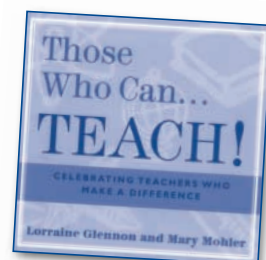
Mrs. Granberry's memorial service was one of my life's surreal events. It was a glorious full-summer morning, and the church was packed. As a sign of his faith in her ultimate resurrection, her deeply religious husband had dressed himself and both their little boys entirely in white, and the organist played, to my shock, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*. I didn't sing along. I stared around me at the immobile, stained-glass windows, at the sprays of bloodless, snow-white flowers whose fragrance was too weak to fill that cavernous church, and I tried to imagine what my world would be like without her in it.

Ann Granberry has been dead now half my life, but in fact my world has never lacked her presence. I spent twelve years teaching teenagers the same poems she taught me. I keep her picture on my desk. And today, my gardenia bush bloomed in its pot on the back-door steps. I caught its scent early this morning even before I saw the single creamy flower opened among the glossy green leaves. As always, it seemed to me a scene fit for angels.

Suddenly, standing very still, I thought of Tennyson and a poem Ann Granberry taught me long, long ago:

*Far off though art but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee though I die. EM*

The story above is one of many featured in *Those Who Can... Teach! Celebrating Teachers Who Make a Difference*, by Lorraine Glennon and Mary Mohler.



To order copies of the book, call 1-800-247-8850.



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Ohio Teaching Initiative Shows Premium Results

Ohio schools are reaping the benefits of increased teacher recruitment efforts among military personnel in the Dayton area, particularly at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The Ohio Department of Education is coordinating the recruitment project, which is funded by a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Ohio's program, entitled Expanding the Pool of Qualified Teachers (EPQT), is the only one of its kind nationally. Ohio was selected for the program through the support and effort of Congressman Ralph Regula (R-16th District). The program provides military personnel up to \$4,800 in tuition support plus \$500 for fees toward the necessary coursework to qualify for state teaching credentials. Candidates may also apply for additional financial support through the national Troops to Teachers program and the GI Bill.

Ohio began recruiting military personnel through the EPQT program last spring. The goal is to generate candidates for subject areas that are in demand, as well as for schools in high poverty urban and rural areas. EPQT participants commit to teach in a high-need Ohio school or subject area for at least three years.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Tave Zelman said that military personnel are talented, committed, diverse, and well-prepared individuals who can bring a wealth of experience and maturity to Ohio schools.

"EPQT provides the tuition assistance to attract to the teaching profession mature individuals who already have a background in high-demand content areas such as mathematics, science, and foreign languages," Zelman said. She added that several EPQT candidates also are enrolled in the much-needed field of special education (intervention specialist).

ODE is partnering with Wright Patterson Air Force Base, as well as universities and public schools in the greater Dayton area, to implement the program. Nearly thirty candidates have already completed summer coursework or are enrolled in fall classes at the University of Dayton and Wright State University. Ten of the EPQT recruits have already qualified for an alternative educator license and are teaching in the Dayton area

while they complete requirements for full licensure.

The Ohio Legislature implemented an alternative route to the teaching profession in 2000, in response to teacher shortages in several urban and rural school districts as well as in certain teaching fields like special education, mathematics, and science. The goal is to create a fast-track way of placing qualified people in the classroom, with the expectation that, while they are teaching, they will pursue the necessary coursework to earn full state licensure.

To qualify, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree and must have completed six or more semester hours of professional education coursework. The Praxis II teacher education examination is required for the two-year alternative educator license. Applicants for the one-year conditional teaching permit must pass the Praxis I basic skills test.

The conditional teaching permit is a stepping stone to the alternative educator license, which is a stepping stone to the provisional and professional teaching licenses.

According to Tom Moe, retired Air Force colonel and a former coordinator of Troops to Teachers in Ohio, military candidates

entering the teaching profession already have considerable classroom experience on both sides of the teacher's desk. Officers and enlisted personnel are continuously engaged in training, and most have conducted training and education programs throughout their careers in the service. The military also has formal training courses in teaching a coursework design.

"The fact that they may have to take coursework to learn how to work with younger students and fulfill state teacher licensure requirements does not deter them," Moe said. "Training and coursework is the rule, rather than the exception, in the military."

Until recently, Ohio candidates for the alternative teaching license were required to have prior sponsorship of a school district that had reviewed their credentials and given them a promise of employment. The EPQT program provided the motivation for a more streamlined approach to the alternative educator process. Beginning this fall, candidates no longer have to have a promise of employment to qualify. ODE staff

members now review and evaluate the academic transcripts and documented experiences of candidates and provide an approval letter that can be presented to potential employing school districts.

The early success of the EPQT program, and Ohio's use of the alternative educator credentials, could develop into a model for replication statewide, and even nationally. Already, steps have been taken to expand the program to higher education institutions and school districts in northern Ohio. Recruiting will be accomplished with the assistance of the Cleveland Coast Guard.

Candidates for the EPQT program must hold at least a bachelor's degree and must have served honorably in the armed forces—active, guard, or reserve. Persons still on active duty may apply and take evening or online courses if they are available to begin teaching full-time by May 2005. **EM**

Additional information about Troops to Teachers and the EPQT program can be found on the ODE web-site at www.ode.state.oh.us/Teaching-Profession/Teacher/Certification_Licensure/ohiot3.asp.

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A Special Opportunity for AAE Members in the Northeast!

May 21-23, the National Association of Scholars will hold its annual conference at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City.

This year's theme is "What Our Universities and Schools Owe Each Other." Featured speakers will include Diane Ravitch, E.D. Hirsch, Bruce Cole, and Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom.

Of particular interest to AAE members may be the session on "Ensuring Learning in Our Schools: Grammar, Papers, and History Standards," on Saturday afternoon.

AAE Members receive a special discount on the registration fee (\$40 for AAE members versus \$150 for regular non-NAS members).

You can register online at www.nas.org.



ALSC Report on Freshman Composition

The Association of Literary Scholars and Critics (ALSC) has released a report on the state of freshman composition courses at American colleges and universities. "Writing Without Reading: The Decline of Literature in the Composition Classroom," by John C. Briggs, is available on the ALSC web-site, and can be accessed at <http://www.bu.edu/literary/projects/briggs/riggs-report.pdf>. We urge you to read this ground-breaking report on the current condition of higher education's only universal requirement. **EM**

Can the Teaching Commission Succeed Where Others Have Failed?

The Teaching Commission is a group that was put together by former IBM Chairman Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. Its members are a notable panel of past and present members of the education establishment. Last month, the commission released "Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action." The study's recommendations are surprising only in the context of the report's signatories, who are hardly wild-eyed reformers or members of the vast right-wing conspiracy.

The commission has nineteen members, including former Democratic governors James Hunt and Roy Barnes, former U.S. Secretary of Education (under Clinton) Richard Riley, current San Francisco schools superintendent Arlene Ackerman, and, AFT President Sandra Feldman. "Our members have unanimously signed off on the report," stated Gerstner, and immediately declared the report's purpose to be to "break through the barriers to meaningful improvement efforts—such as low standards; low, lock-step pay; mistrust of efforts to identify what makes for effective teaching; education schools out of touch with current school needs; and outmoded and inflexible work

rules and district regulations—so that student learning, rather than teacher protection, is the number one priority."

Gerstner calls for "a new compact with teachers," which would include raising salaries, "while also asking teachers to be measured and compensated based on their classroom performance, including the academic gains made by their students. We also propose higher pay for teaching subjects such as math and science, and for working in our toughest classrooms."

That Sandra Feldman signed onto the report is significant because differential pay is the third rail of teacher union policy, as NEA learned to its chagrin during its performance pay debate in 2000. But the commission correctly noted, "Effective teachers who dramatically raise student achievement and who make other teachers better through their knowledge, leadership, and skills are treated exactly the same as those who make no positive difference in their classrooms. We say that quality teaching matters, but we treat quality teachers as if they don't."

The report calls the single salary schedule "outmoded" and says it "removes the possibility of reward for success and accountability for failure." It decries seniority and tenure rules that protect poor teachers. It advocates higher pay for teachers, but states unequivocally that "any across-the-board increase in teacher pay must be combined with a pay-for-performance approach."

"The Teaching Commission will not measure its success by what it recommends," said Gerstner. "Its effectiveness will be determined by its ability to bring these ideas to life at the federal, state, and local levels." The makeup of the commission brings some hope of revitalizing education reform that was beginning to fade. **EM**

Source—The Education Intelligence Agency (EIA) Communiqué. You may find more information about EIA at www.eiaonline.com.

It's Like Renaming Prison "The Happy, Fun Place"

Pity the parent whose child has come home asking for help with a "text-to-text connection" (aka book report). Or perhaps Junior returned to the house late and crying due to a visit to the "reflection room" (detention). Maybe little Johnny wouldn't have received all those F's if his teachers had learned to "vertically articulate and dif-

ferentiate instruction" or at least to give "authentic, outcome-based assessments." The *Washington Post* reveals some of the sillier lingo that has become de rigueur in schools. Although amusing to those of us immersed in annoying edu-speak, it also raises the troubling specter of teachers facing lower evaluations for not buying into the lingo. **EM**

Source—Teacher Quality Bulletin, a weekly e-mail newsletter of National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). Web-site: www.nctq.org.

Malcolm Baldrige Award Winner

Belated congratulations to Community Consolidated School District #15, which serves seven municipalities in northwest suburban Chicago, Illinois, for becoming only the third school system to win a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The award, founded in 1998, spurs excellence in organizational performance, recognizes the quality and performance achievements of organizations, and publicizes successful performance strategies. U.S. DOE judges lauded District #15 for its success in raising student performance (in the 2002-03 school year, 84 percent of district second-grade students were reading "at or above grade level") and innovative efforts to "gauge" student, parent, and faculty satisfaction. Moreover, in tracking what it calls "market performance," the district has shown that it spends less per percentage point of student achievement on state tests than three comparable districts. (Previous winners: Alaska's Chugach School District and New York's Pearl River School District.) For more information, please go to: http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/releases/district15.htm. (District #15's application can be found at http://www.ccsd15.net/WhatsNew/Baldrige/PDFs/Baldrige_2003.pdf.) **EM**

Quiet Progress in Iraqi Schools

Last month, 20,000 Iraqi high school teachers began U.S.-supervised teacher training. We thought that we'd take this opportunity to point out two great articles about the reconstruction of Iraqi schools, both of which make use of the accounts of highly placed U.S. officials on the ground.

EducationNews.org has an excellent interview with Dr. Hind Rassam Culhane, the senior advisor to the RISE project in Iraq. Dr. Culhane describes the extent to

New Title I Funding Estimates Show Education System Flooded with Cash

States to Receive Large Increase under FY2004 Omnibus Appropriations Bill although Hundreds of Millions from FY2000-2002 Still Unspent

which schools had decayed in Iraq. Low pay of teachers (\$5 a month) lowered teacher morale so low that teachers would eat, drink, and smoke in class, and accept bribes from parents in order to supplement their otherwise insufficient incomes. The U.S. and its coalition partners have since raised salaries to \$200-\$300 a month.

Along the same lines, Bill Evers had a piece in the *Wall Street Journal* last month describing his six months spent as an advisor in Iraq. He paints an optimistic picture, noting that Iraqi students and adults are grateful and eager to get on with fixing the schools.

Furthermore, Evers reports that "Iraq is not Afghanistan" and that there is both a strong tradition of education and the well-established value that girls are just as entitled to education as boys.

"An Iraqi Education," the *Wall Street Journal*, January 15, 2004
<http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110004557>

"Training Iraqi Teachers"
EducationNews.org, February 3, 2004
<http://www.educationnews.org/training-iraqi-teachers.htm>. **EM**

Source—Teacher Quality Bulletin, a publication of National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). Web-site: www.nctq.org.

Teacher Certification without Indoctrination?

President Bush's new budget eliminates funding to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and instead allocates \$7M over and above the \$35M already allocated in October 2003 to the new American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE).

Dr. John Stone of Education Consumers Clearinghouse says, "In spite of the education establishments' claims to the contrary, the new ABCTE teacher certification **does** require teachers to pass an exam in pedagogy; but the exam is not geared to the NCATE-, INTASC-, or NBPTS-mandated doctrines.

With their new \$35 million grant [plus \$7M more], ABCTE will be able to develop and validate more certification exams and carry their message to more states. As more states come on line, **certification without indoctrination** will become a very popular option for prospective teachers."

To learn more about ABCTE, please go to <http://www.ABTEach.org>. **EM**

States will receive another hefty increase in federal No Child Left Behind Title I education aid later this year, despite the fact that many are still sitting on unspent Title I funds appropriated for their use as long as three and a half years ago, according to new figures released last month by the House Committee on Education & the Workforce. Since No Child Left Behind was signed into law, states will have received an average increase of 42 percent in federal Title I aid, the report shows.

"We are pumping gas into a flooded engine" said House Education & the Workforce committee chairman John Boehner (R-OH). "The federal government has increased education spending so rapidly that many states haven't even been able to spend down the money we appropriated for them two years ago, when No Child Left Behind was first enacted."

Boehner blasted the National Education Association (NEA) for applying a different standard to President Bush

than it applied to President Clinton on the topic of education funding.

"When Democrats controlled Congress and the White House, they routinely appropriated less than they technically authorized for major education programs, yet the NEA never once accused President Clinton of under funding education," Boehner noted. "But when a Republican president moved into the White House, the NEA moved the goalposts."

According to a new report released in January by the House Committee on Education & the Workforce majority staff entitled "No Child Left Behind Funding: Pumping Gas into a Flooded Engine?," states would receive another significant increase in Title I aid targeted to disadvantaged students under the House-passed FY2004 Omnibus spending bill, expected to be passed later this month by the U.S. Senate.

*(Continued on page 7)
See New Title I Funding..*

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AAE Annual Survey— We want to hear from you!

This fall the AAE will celebrate our 10th anniversary of serving our members across the nation.

From the start, we have always tried to provide the services and benefits that our members tell us they want or need. With that in mind, we will be surveying our membership this spring to determine what you want to see more or less of from your organization.

We'd love to hear from each and every

member! If you have not recently sent us your current e-mail address, please send it to email@aaeteachers.org as soon as possible.

If you do not have an active e-mail address but would like to be included in the survey, drop us a note and we will mail you a survey with a postage-paid return envelope.

Thank you. Your participation will help us set our course for the next 10 years!

The Latest Bogeyman: Teacher Retention

By Jack Wenders



Jack Wenders

In recent days a spate of press releases by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) lament supposedly low retention rates among public school teachers. Some observations are needed to place this in perspective.

1. Consider the source. NCTAF, despite its high-sounding name, is simply another private organization dominated by the education establishment. (Whenever the establishment sets up a lobbying group, it's called a "commission" to give it a aura of authority. They are "commissioned" by no one but themselves.) Its stated agenda is to increase the certification and licensing requirements of teachers and to "professionalize" teaching. Sounds fine, but let's take a closer look.

NCTAF's Board is dominated by NEA, AFT, NCATE, and NBPTS members. As education researchers Dale Ballou and Mike Podgursky point out:

"Both [NCTAF] and NCATE have close links with the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. Of the current thirty-one-member NCATE executive board, seven are NEA- or AFT-appointed, and include the following: the president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer of the NEA; and the president and vice-president of the AFT. All examining teams sent to a college include at least one teacher. That teacher is drawn from a pool of examiners selected by the NEA and AFT. A recent NEA budget contained \$366,600 for NCATE. The same budget contained \$306,550 to support certification through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, and \$213,765 to support efforts 'to make licensure...a process controlled by the profession.'" In other words, controlled by the NEA and AFT.

There is considerable effort by NCATE and NBPTS to insinuate themselves more deeply into lower education by lobbying for more state and federal legal mandates consistent with their agenda. Much of this effort comes through NCTAF. Ballou and Podgursky give a withering evaluation and indictment of both the incestuous relationship among these organizations and the methods they use to further their self-interest.

2. Note how the spin from the establishment has switched from emphasizing the

bogeyman of "shortages" to a new one, teacher "retention." Apparently, due to the accumulated and clear evidence to the contrary, the shortage bogeyman has ceased to be credible, and for good reason.

Idaho's State Board of Education, through its Idaho MOST project, tried to spin the shortage bogeyman about a year ago. That effort fell flat when its own numbers showed a huge teacher surplus in the state, despite the MOST Report's attempt to hide the surplus and spin it as a shortage. (Of course, the press dutifully reported the surplus as a shortage.)

Recently, a study of the alleged teacher shortage in Arizona projected a 20 percent surplus for the state.

These are only the latest in a series of studies and press stories questioning the shortage spin that has been going on for about twenty years. While credible studies from the beginning showed the shortage spin to be a myth, only recently have they gotten through the press filter, which, in general, follows the education establishment line without question.

Don't forget, the motive behind the shortage and retention stories is exactly the same: soften public opinion in order to get the public to pour more money into the system, and to increase empty certification requirements to mop up the huge teacher surplus. It's always about money.

3. To understand what is really going on, the reader needs to distinguish between teacher turnover, attrition, and retention. "Turnover" usually refers to the percentage of teachers who leave a particular school during any year. It does not mean that they leave the profession altogether. When they leave the profession, that is usually called "attrition." That's why it is possible to have high turnover, and low attrition, as teachers merely switch schools for one reason or another. "Retention," the converse of "attrition," simply means the percentage of teachers who stay from one year to the next. The recent reports do not make clear what they are talking about when they use these terms.

4. Historically, the public school teaching profession has had very low attrition rates, relative to employees in the private sector. In any state, 92 to 96 percent of the

teachers are retained each year. The public school teacher attrition rate is about half that of private schools, where about 13 percent leave teaching each year and another 4.7 percent leave for public schools. (The average "separation" rate in the private sector is three times what it is in teaching.) The U-shaped relationship between the attrition rate and age means that generally teachers only leave their jobs early or late in their careers.

A typical pattern of employment is to teach for a few years out of college, drop out to raise a family, and then, possibly, return at a later date once children are in school. Having children in school makes teaching jobs very attractive because of the almost exact correspondence between the parents' and the child's work/school schedules. About 40 percent of "new hires" in any year are returning teachers from the vast reservoir of previous ed school graduates.

5. Note how the recent spin in the press emphasized only the retention rate of new teachers, and even there it is not always clear if retention refers to individual schools or for the profession as a whole. In any year, new teachers make up only 6 to 7 percent of the total number of teachers. So when NCTAF complains about the fact that about half of new teachers leave in five years, this is half of a small number.

While the retention rate for new teachers—those coming into teaching at the bottom of the salary grid—may appear to be low, this hides the fact that retention rates for the whole profession are very high compared to the private sector. (It's worth mentioning that historically only about half of ed school graduates get jobs in teaching, and this is one of the reasons why there is such a general surplus of teachers, which the establishment, through NCTAF, is continually trying to mop up with artificial certification and licensing requirements.)

6. Further, the spin is that teacher attrition is always bad. Whether it is bad depends on the relative competence of those who are leaving and staying. If those who are leaving are the worst teachers, then attrition is good. Any organization wants to retain productive employees and turn over bad ones.

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The Latest Bogeyman: Teacher Retention

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Unfortunately, there is evidence that in public school teaching too many of the better—smarter—teachers are leaving. This is because of the inflexible salary grid that fails to reward good teachers rather than bad ones—they all get paid the same no matter how well they perform. Thus, ironically, the problem in the teaching profession is not in the amount of attrition, which is already very low, but in the nature of the attrition.

This also points out the counter-productive nature of popular across-the-board salary increases as a way to improve teaching. Giving everyone on the salary grid a raise is a windfall for most (that's why they are popular), and merely further raises the retention rate for those who the schools want to replace with better teachers.

And NCTAF wants to perpetuate this? Again, remember, this is all about money, not about the education of our children or "America's future." **EM**

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New Title 1 Funding

(Continued from page 5)

Since the No Child Left Behind legislation was signed into law in January 2002, Title I funding will have increased by \$3.6 billion once the FY2004 spending bill is signed into law, including the \$1.6 billion increase in FY2002 and \$1.3 billion increase in FY2003.

The report highlights the fact that increases in federal education funding are coming as states are sitting on \$5.75 billion in federal education funding, including nearly \$2 billion in Title I aid, from FY2000 through FY2002.

Boehner also highlighted results of a recent national survey released by Americans for Better Education showing public support for the No Child Left Behind education law remains rock-solid, particularly among African-Americans and parents with children in public schools, even after two years of "false and negative attacks" by education reform opponents. **EM**

Top Five 2003 ELA Public Education Quotes of the Year

Of the millions of quotes spoken and written about public education each year, only a few dozen are provocative or revealing enough to merit inclusion as Education Intelligence Agency "Quotes of the Week." Of these chosen few, only the most provocative or revealing rise to the level of "Quotes of the Year." With that as a criterion, EIA is proud to present the 2003 Public Education Quotes of the Year, in countdown order. Enjoy!

"If the teachers unions ran the NFL, all players would be paid according to their years in the league. If the team needed a quarterback and a great rookie prospect were available, the team would have to pay him less than a third-string defensive lineman." —*Orlando Sentinel* columnist Mike Thomas. (September 14 *Orlando Sentinel*)

"As I sat through hour after hour of mind-numbing debate on such items as should we have a Mr. Rogers Day, I was struck by how little of the action of the convention will affect the daily lives of the hard-working people whose dues money allows this yearly potlatch to occur." — Plainview Congress of Teachers President Morty Rosenfeld, on his experiences at the 2003 NEA Representative Assembly in New Orleans. (July 9 *Teacher Talk*)

"[T]he study isn't reliable. It was conducted by avowed opponents of testing, its key assumption is suspect and its methods were flawed. Other than that, it is a fine piece of work." —*Sacramento Bee* columnist Daniel Weintraub, reviewing *The Impact of High-Stakes Tests on Student Academic Performance*, a study written by Audrey Amrein and David Berliner of Arizona State University. (January 23 *Sacramento Bee*)

"Our goal was to make it nearly impossible." —Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association Executive Director Jade Moore, explaining why so few teachers are participating in the performance pay program the union helped design. (April 3 *St. Petersburg Times*)

"The public discussion about what schools are supposed to do isn't reflected at all in the internal dynamics of the schools." —Jim Harvey, a researcher at the Center on Reinventing Public Education, a division of the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs. (July 28 *Associated Press*) **EM**

The Education Intelligence Agency conducts public education research, analysis, and investigations. For the full list of "Quote of the Year," visit EIA on the Web at www.eiaonline.com.

Charter Schools Affirmed by State of California

Last month, the State of California's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) issued an assessment of that state's charter schools and included the following recommendations:

- Removing the cap on the annual growth of charter schools
- Reforming the Charter School Categorical Block Grant
- Allowing for Multiple Authorizers

The LAO concluded "charter schools are a viable reform strategy—expanding families' choices, encouraging parental involvement, increasing teacher satisfaction, enhancing principals' control over the school-site decision making, and broadening the curriculum without

sacrificing time spent on core subjects."

This research from the Golden State is further verification of what charter school advocates around the country are claiming—charter schools perform well, are cost-efficient, and states with laws that allow a variety of sponsors yield better and more high-quality charter schools.

For more information, contact Gary Larson at the California Charter Schools Association at (415) 722-0127, or, to view the full report, visit the LAO's web-site at <http://www.lao.ca.gov/>. **EM**

Source—Center for Education Reform, 1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, www.edreform.com, or 202-822-5077.

Study Finds High Levels of Sexual Activity and Drug Use in Suburban Public High Schools

A new Manhattan Institute study, *Sex, Drugs, and Delinquency in Urban and Suburban Public Schools*, authored by Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow Jay P. Greene and Senior Research Associate Greg Forster, finds that **suburban public high school students are just as likely as their urban counterparts to have sex, smoke, drink, use illegal drugs, and engage in delinquent behavior. It also finds that students engage in these behaviors far more often than most people realize.**

These results are based on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, which is sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and other federal agencies.

Students taking the survey listened to the questions through headphones and entered their answers on laptop computers, so their privacy was particularly well-protected, making the survey a breakthrough for research on adolescent behavior.

Parental concern about the rising influence of sex, drugs, and delinquency in urban public schools has long been recognized as a significant factor in the last few decades' population flight from the cities to the suburbs. Parents are fleeing urban schools not just because of low academic performance but also because they believe suburban public schools are safer and more wholesome. This study finds that fleeing from the city to the suburbs doesn't produce

much difference in the level of these problems one finds at local public high schools.

Highlights of the study include:

- Urban and suburban schools are virtually identical in terms of widespread sexual activity
- Pregnancy rates are high in both suburban and urban schools, although they are higher in urban schools
- Urban and suburban students are about equally likely to engage in other delinquent behaviors such as fighting and stealing

For a copy of *Sex, Drugs, and Delinquency in Urban and Suburban Public Schools*, please go to: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_04.htm. **EM**

New Resource—

A More Comprehensive Sex Education Curriculum Now Available

For those of you who are frustrated with the sex education program used in your school, help is on the way! The Scott & White Memorial Hospital/Clinic in Temple, Texas, has developed a sex education program called Worth the Wait®, which may be the most medically accurate, up-to-date sex education program in the country.

The director of Worth the Wait® is Patricia Sulak, M.D. Dr. Sulak's credentials are impeccable: Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Scott & White Memorial Hospital and Clinic; Professor, Texas A&M Health Science Center; and Director, Division of Ambulatory Care. Dr. Sulak is also a contraceptive researcher who unapologetically believes that the healthiest choice for teens is to remain abstinent until marriage.

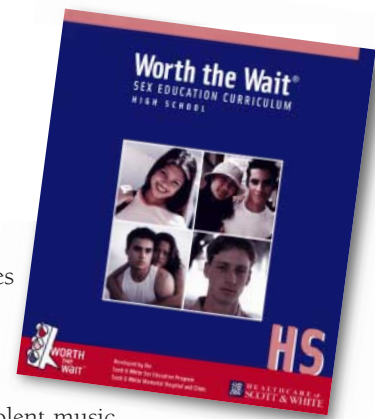
The staff of Worth the Wait® has just completed the 5th edition of curriculum for grades 6, 7, 8, and the 2nd edition of the

high school curriculum. The materials are not only medically and legally accurate but also very teacher friendly. Each lesson contains information for both the teacher and the student. The lesson plan is so well-explained that a substitute teacher or a person teaching outside his field could successfully deliver the instruction to the students. Each unit ends with a parental interaction form that helps parents to dialogue with their children about what has been learned in the lesson.

Three new editions of Worth the Wait® cover such subjects as positive personal character traits, teens' emotional needs, physical and emotional changes during puberty, reproductive anatomy, pregnancy and fetal development, impact of teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (basic facts, symptoms, transmission rates, characteristics, treatment, consequences, and prevention), teen brain development, relationship building, bullying, gender

differences, consequences of risky behaviors (alcohol, drugs, smoking, violent music, body piercings/tattoos, obesity, and eating disorders), and failure rates of contraceptives (with current information presented through detailed medical charts).

If sex education is to be taught at all in public schools, educators and parents want the most factual, medically based, up-to-date information available; and Worth the Wait® offers that. The cost of the curriculum, CD-ROMS, posters, and other ancillary materials is minimal. Personnel at very small schools with limited budgets should call the Scott & White Worth the Wait® office at (254) 724-7359 to see if special pricing can be arranged. For more information, visit www.worththewait.org. **EM**



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